

North Yorkshire County Council

Corporate and Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 2 March 2020 at 10.00am at County Hall, Northallerton.

Present:-

County Councillor Derek Bastiman in the Chair

County Councillors Val Arnold, Margaret Atkinson, Caroline Goodrick, Mike Jordan, Andy Paraskos, Yvonne Peacock, Cliff Trotter and Annabel Wilkinson.

North Yorkshire County Council Officers: Justine Brooksbank (Assistant Chief Executive), Fiona Sowerby (Head of Insurance & Risk Management) Jonathan Spencer (Project Manager for North Yorkshire's Refugee Resettlement Schemes) and Melanie Carr (Principal Democratic Services & Scrutiny Officer).

Also in Attendance: County Councillor David Chance and Julia Mulligan - Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner

Apologies for Absence were received from County Councillor Bryn Griffiths, Richard Musgrave & Tony Randerson

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

117. Minutes

Resolved –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2019 having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

118. Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest to note.

119. Public Questions or Statements

The committee was advised that no notice had been received of any public questions or statements to be made at the meeting.

120. Attendance of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner

Julia Mulligan, Police Fire & Crime Commissioner provided an overview of the work undertaken since the transfer of governance of North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service, and drew members attention to the 'One Year On' report which detailed the progress against the Local Business Case.

Members noted:

- the appointment of a new Chief Fire Officer and his work to understand and start to address, the challenges facing the Fire Service.
- The changes to the Fire Service's senior leadership team.
- The ongoing debate between the National Pay Body and the Fire Union and the resulting limitations on the delivery of additional services like the Cadet Scheme and life courses.
- The need to improve the relationship between staff and management, and address the culture of the organisation
- The issues around recruitment, particularly in regards to increasing the number of female fire fighters

The Commissioner confirmed that the long term budget situation for the Fire Service was problematic in contrast to North Yorkshire Police who were receiving appropriate funding. Members noted the gap in funding and expenditure, leading to very little capital expenditure taking place and the consequent deterioration of Fire Service buildings and the lack of appropriate facilities for female fire fighters. Some suggested that communities would support an increase in Fire Service Precept.

The Commissioner also provided an overview of the pilot scheme which had introduced two Public Safety Officers in Craven District (a PCSO and on call Fire Fighter dual role), and the prevention benefits the role had brought to the rural area, building community resilience. It was confirmed that the intention was to increase the number to 28 across the region, based in Community Safety Hubs.

Members acknowledged the significant contribution of the Fire Service during the time of the Floods as part of the Fire & Rescue role, and passed on their thanks.

In regards to North Yorkshire Police, County Councillor Caroline Goodrick drew attention to their move into Ryedale District Council's head office and the subsequent problems experienced in its reception area and the intimidation of frontline council staff. Members noted this was in stark contrast to the situation at Scarborough Borough Council head office. The Commissioner confirmed her awareness of the problems and the work ongoing to address it.

County Councillor Yvonne Peacock drew attention to the lack of appropriate vehicles for rural PCSO's based in the Dales and the Commissioner acknowledged the fleet had been run inefficiently but that measures were being put in place to address it.

County Councillor Derek Bastiman thanked the Commissioner for her attendance at the meeting and for her work during her time as Commissioner, and it was

Resolved –

That the One Year update provided by Police Fire & Crime Commissioner be noted.

121. North Yorkshire Syrian Refugee Settlement Programme

Considered –

An update and progress report on the resettlement in North Yorkshire of people resettled under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) and persons resettled under the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme.

Jonathan Spencer, Project Manager for North Yorkshire's Refugee Resettlement Schemes provided an overview of the ongoing work with the 238 refugees already

resettled across the eight local authority areas in North Yorkshire. He also confirmed that all of those Authorities had confirmed their commitment to participate in the scheme over the coming four years.

Members noted:

- Seven families had chosen to move away from the area since their original settlement either to move closer to family or for work purposes;
- 30% of those settled in North Yorkshire had complex health needs;
- A range of mental health issues had started to appear in years two and three;
- The difficulties associated with the lack of an extended family, particularly in regards to supporting children;
- The language barrier remained an issue for some, with some non-attendance at English classes
- The lack of schooling in their native country, particularly for the men had had an adverse effect. The women tended to have better literacy skills and the children were learning much quicker than the adults, and the resulting change in family dynamic had proved more difficult for some families.
- A lack of access to translators, particularly in the Health Service had been problematic, in some cases delaying initial Health Care assessments
- An earlier assessment of their range of complex needs would have helped in the provision of appropriate support once resettled
- The successful use of volunteers and volunteering agencies to support refugee integration

In regard to the new Global Resettlement Scheme Members noted that approximately 200 new refugees would be resettled across North Yorkshire between 2020 and 2024, and that the County would continue to receive support from the Refugee Council throughout that time, alongside receiving similar levels of funding. Members were pleased to note the careful consideration to be given to the country and cultural background of the refugees to be settled under the new Scheme, recognising it was a deciding factor in how successful each resettlement would be.

Members thanked the officer for his work in support of the Scheme and requested a further update in a year's time.

Resolved – That:

- i. The report be noted
- ii. A further update be provided in 12 months' time

122. Workforce Update

Considered

An update on the County Council's changing workforce, a detailed progress update on the implementation of the Workforce Plan and an overview of some key priorities for the year ahead.

Justine Brooksbank, Assistant Chief Executive (Business Support) introduced the report and confirmed:

- Workforce numbers had stabilised and the number of restructures had reduced;
- Beyond 2020, some smaller scale restructures may be required
- There was some Government funding available for new initiatives

- The spend on redundancies included in the next budget was likely to be £2m – a reduction on the £5m included in the two previous budgets
- It was too early to judge the impact of the new grading structure on turnover and work was ongoing to reduce future turnover through redeployment
- The low rate of sickness absence in 2018/19 of 7.38 FTE days, with only a small increase to around 8 FTE expected in 2019/20

Members were pleased to note that the average length of service was almost twice that of the local authority average. Also, that the workforce had 24-hour access to a confidential helpline offering life management and personal support, self-assessment tools and lifestyle plans. They also noted the ongoing work to establish colleague-led support groups on a range of topics.

Members recognised that as unemployment across the county was very low, recruitment was becoming more challenging, particularly in social work and the care sector, and they appreciated that any failure in the care market would lead to increased pressure in Health and Adult Social Care.

Members noted the many ways in which the organisation was engaging with its workforce and the opportunities available for learning and development. They were pleased to note there would be some online learning resources made available to Members and suggested that training be provided on Mental Health issues and dealing with people with Dementia.

Finally, Members were pleased to note that the number of apprenticeships being offered by the County Council had not been affected by the introduction of the apprenticeship levy scheme, and it was suggested that a future opportunity be explored associated with Autism Plus.

Members thanked the officer for the update, and it was

Resolved – That:

- The Update be noted
- A further update be provided in 12 months' time

123. NYCC Corporate Risk Register

Considered -

A report detailing the significant amendments to the Corporate Risk Register since the Committee's last update received in January 2019.

Fiona Sowerby, Head of Insurance and Risk Management introduced the report highlighting the new risks, deleted risks and those risks that had significantly changed.

Members noted the higher ranking now given to Information Governance Risk and the many links between the Directorate Risk Registers and the Corporate Risk Register.

Resolved – That:

- i. The update be noted and;
- ii. A further update be provided in twelve months' time

124. Insurance Claims Analysis Report**Considered -**

Members considered an update on motor and liability insurance claims, together with an analysis of the pattern and costs of public liability claims over the last 5 years.

Fiona Sowerby provided an overview of the commercial motor fleet claims which had remained relatively steady over the past three years and it was confirmed that all Council owned vehicles now had dashcams fitted apart from hire vehicles.

In regard to employer's liability, Fiona Sowerby confirmed that whilst the number of claims were lower than that of public liability claims, they could cost more.

Members noted:

- The varying levels of public liability across the Directorates.
- The decrease in the number of public liability claims for BES
- The most common causes of the claims in BES e.g. potholes, footpaths etc
- Footpath claims were costlier as they usually related to personal injury
- The increase in personal injury claims over the last five years
- The benefits from analysing conceded claims to see how preventative systems can be improved

Members questioned the significant decrease in pothole claims in 2018/19 compared to previous years, and suggested that the cost of defending such claims could be better spent carrying out repairs, thereby reducing the possibility of claims. It was confirmed the reduced number of claims was due to less severe winter weather and additional government funding for repair works

Members noted the request to change the frequency of their update report to every two years, on the basis that claims could be submitted up to three years after an incident and therefore a two-yearly report would provide a more precise annual record of claims.

Members thanked Fiona Sowerby for her update and it was

Resolved – That:

- i. The update be noted
- ii. A two yearly update be added to the Committee's work programme

125. Members' Dashboard

Nigel Smith, Head of Highway Operations provided a verbal update on the creation of an online tool for members, confirming that a prototype had now been developed and work was underway to consider GDPR implications and legal compliance.

He also requested member volunteers to participate in some internal testing over the summer, with the intention of rolling out the new online tool before the end of the calendar year.

Members thanked Nigel for the work carried out to date and it was

Resolved – That:

- i. The update be noted

- ii. County Councillors Val Arnold, Caroline Goodrick and Andy Paraskos assist with the testing of the new online tool before its roll out in December 2020.

126. Work Programme 2020/21

The report of the Principal Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer inviting Members to consider the Committee's draft Work Programme for 2020/21 taking into account the outcome of discussions on previous agenda items and any other developments taking place across the county.

Resolved – That:

- i. The draft work programme for 2020/21 be noted
- ii. An overview of Cyber Protection be added to the work programme for the next mid cycle meeting in April 2020 and Robert Ling be invited to attend.
- iii. Commercial Entrepreneurship be added to the work programme for 2020/21

Meeting Concluded at 12:35pm