

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL 20 July 2011

TRANSPORT, ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Chairman's Statement

The Committee met on 8 June 2011 and the following items were considered:

1.0 Update from the Corporate Director Business & Environmental Services; David Bowe

This is our regular update report from the Corporate Director regarding the impact of cuts and any issues.

Reduction in bus subsidies

There have been some positive interactions with bus operators in an attempt to mitigate the reduction in bus subsidies for example in the Whitby area a 'use it or lose it' mantra has been adopted. The service is operating by charging a premium fare in order to make it sustainable. If the service is not used it will not be financially viable for the operator to run. An example in the Selby area sees evidence of the 'Big Society' in action with a local Parish Council contributing towards the retention of the service.

Closure of Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) on Wednesday each week

Members had previously been advised that the HWRCs would be closing on Wednesdays from the beginning of July 2011. Mr Bowe emphasised that the key element to the closure was that members of the public should not turn up to the HWRC on the first Wednesday they were closed. Communication with customers included distribution of leaflets and staff in the HWRC speaking to people.

Highway Maintenance

Work with contractors had not produced such a positive result. A saving of £1.25m was hoped for but this had not been possible. There would still be savings and the County Council would continue to work with contractors on efficiencies.

Staff Savings

BES staff are currently working through a number of restructures including the Economic Development Unit and the Partnership Unit. The 'One Council' approach will be applied to all restructures.

2.0 Winter Maintenance Update

It was interesting to hear how the pilot schemes that had taken place last winter had worked and the proposals to work with local communities to facilitate their delivering winter maintenance in cases of extreme winter weather. It was stressed that this is in addition to any service the County Council provides and does not in any way replace the County Council winter maintenance service.

We were reminded that it was intended to have 7 pilot areas that would undertake a self help approach in extreme circumstances. However, only 2 pilots took place and these were in Hovingham and Appleton Wiske In those Parishes the County Council provided the salt and tuition on how to use it. The Parish provided the shovels and brushes.

The key issues that prevented other areas from being involved were a difficulty in getting volunteers and concerns around insurance. The County Council offered guidance so that

the clearing was done in a responsible manner. However insurance cover is required. We were advised that the Parishes of Hovingham and Appleton Wiske secured insurance cover at no extra cost to them.

3.0 Draft Preliminary Flood Risk assessment

We welcomed the paper that introduced and summarised the North Yorkshire Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) Report. The submission of the report is a requirement of the Flood Risk Regulations (2009), which transposed the European Floods Directive (2006) into the law for England and Wales.

Although the draft report must be submitted to the Environment Agency by the 22 June 2011 there are provisions for the inclusion of any comment from overview and scrutiny after that date.

4.0 Feedback from Airport Consultative Committee representatives

The County Council has three representatives who each sit on an Airport Consultative Committee. County Councillor Trotter provided a feedback report that outlined meetings of the Leeds/Bradford Airport Consultative Committee. The main point of interest in his report was the proposal by the Airport to introduce a fee of £2 for using the 'drop off' point.

I am now the representative on the Durham/Tees Valley Airport Consultative Committee and look forward to feeding back to the Committee in the future.

Gillian Ivey is the third representative and she sits on the Robin Hood Airport Consultative Committee. Her report informed us about the Surface Access Strategy; The provision of the FARRRS link road is key to improved access to the airport and reduction of surface journey times. (The link road would run from Junction 2 of the M18, direct to the Airport.)

At their April 2011 meeting it was announced that the Finningley and Rossington Regeneration Route Scheme had received the green light from the Regional Growth Fund. She added that there were high hopes that the widening of White Rose Way would also get the go-ahead with European funding, however no official announcement had been made.

5.0 Reducing street lighting

County Councillor Michael Heseltine presented the draft final report of the scrutiny task group on reducing street lighting to the Committee. The report provided information on the reasons why the County Council should reduce street lighting, the powers and duties related to street lighting, the options for reducing street lighting which included switching off, part night lighting, dimming, trimming and utilising low energy equipment. It also went on to look at the excessive lighting on the A63 Selby bypass as well as what other Local Authorities were doing and the thoughts of the North Yorkshire Police.

Consideration by the Executive

The report was well received when it was presented to the Executive on 5th July 2011 with comments that it put forward 'pragmatic and sensible' recommendations and that it was a 'very informative report'. The recommendations were agreed.

County Councillor David Jeffels
July 2011