

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

15 FEBRUARY 2012

STATEMENT OF RURAL SERVICES, WASTE DISPOSAL, PUBLIC PASSENGER TRANSPORT, TRADING STANDARDS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER COUNTY COUNCILLOR CHRIS METCALFE

INTEGRATED PASSENGER TRANSPORT

As I have reported previously, contracts for transport services in Ryedale and Craven are being renewed as part of a rolling programme. The outcome of these reviews has now been concluded and I am pleased to report that savings have been achieved on home to school transport contracts and contracted local bus services. This is welcome news and helps the council deal with our ongoing budget challenges.

Many of you will have noted that just before Christmas the DfT announced plans to electrify the rail service between Leeds and Manchester. In practice this meant York to Manchester which was positive for North Yorkshire. However I am now able to report that Network Rail have also been asked to look at the costs of electrifying the link between Northallerton and Middlesborough, along with services to Selby and Scarborough. If these plans can be delivered it will be a significant boost to the county's rail network. We will also be pressing for the Leeds - Harrogate - York line to be part of the electrification plans through the Harrogate Line Working Group.

TRADING STANDARDS

Ministry of Agriculture: People's Republic of China

On 16 December 2011, officers from trading standards hosted 13 delegates from the Ministry of Agriculture for the People's Republic of China, at County Hall. This was arranged following a request by UK-China Training Ltd. The visit formed part of a 3-week fact-finding tour of the UK on animal health and welfare service delivery. The delegates were shown how North Yorkshire County Council implements national legislation regarding animal health and welfare along with its contingency planning technique for animal disease outbreaks. Representatives of the delegation asked for their thanks to be extended to the County Council.

Trading Standards wins government funding to run national e-crime project

North Yorkshire Trading Standards, in partnership with City of York Trading Standards and the East of England Trading Standards Association (EETSA), has successfully bid for funding of £900,000 per year over a three-year project plus start up funding of £495,000, to run a national e-crime project for the Department for Business, Skills and Innovation (BIS).

City of York Trading Standards will host the e-crime investigation team within the existing Yorkshire and Humber Trading Standards Scambusters team.

The current Digital Evidence Recovery & Internet Crime (DERIC) computer forensic laboratory within NYCC will be expanded to provide a forensic capacity to support national and regional e-crime investigations. The funding will allow three new forensic analysts to be employed within the laboratory, along with a project co-ordinator.

E-crime, or cyber crime, is costing UK businesses and consumers some £3bn per year and as the use of the internet becomes ever more popular it holds increasing opportunity for criminals to scam and mislead businesses and consumers to buy unnecessary goods, mis-describe products and services or simply charge for work not done or never intended to be done. Although advantageous in many respects, this market place allows the anonymity that criminals desire and makes detection difficult if the enforcement agency has not got the sophisticated means necessary. The e-crime project is aimed at addressing that imbalance.

WASTE AND COUNTRYSIDE SERVICES

Waste Management

The York and North Yorkshire Waste Partnership continues to deliver efficiencies and joined up services with County Council leadership. Most recently, a new contract has been procured for the processing of recyclable materials from about half of the County area. It is especially pleasing to report that Yorwaste, the County Council's own waste management company, won the contract. This procurement has resulted in an additional income of around £1m per year for those Councils for the next 4 years.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The York, North Yorkshire & East Riding LEP, having identified its priorities, has focused on developing initiatives which will support the many small businesses in the region.

The following initiatives were launched in January:

- A new website with business support integrated – www.businessinspiredgrowth.com ;
- Over 40 Business Networks representing over 20,000 businesses have signed up to work with the LEP to support business growth;
- A pilot programme help new businesses to access finance has been launched;
- A small food producers support programme to help food manufacturers to trade beyond their local markets has been launched in partnership with Deliciously Yorkshire. 140 Business attended the launch event;
- Two pilot programmes to help businesses maximise the potential of high speed broadband have been launched. One in partnership with NYNET (Middleton Business Park, York) and one with Ryedale District Council (Malton Business Park);
- An International Trade week is running 21-24 February with events held in Craven, Hambleton, Scarborough & York;

LIBRARIES

During December, Council Members were brought up to date with developments taking place in library services following the Executive's decision on the future delivery of its library services.

Members will be aware of the work that has been ongoing with community groups across the county, particularly in those with libraries in "Category 3". Currently, seven of these libraries have established groups of volunteers working towards a "community ownership" model of service delivery after 31 March. The first of these opened ahead of schedule at Masham on 2 February when the library re-opened as part of the Mashamshire Community Office. This already acts as the town's tourist information point, as well as providing access to a range of Council services. As a result of this partnership, library opening hours will increase by 70%.

A further six groups have developed and submitted business plans to deliver services at Great Ayton, Bilton, Gargrave, Embsay, East Ayton and Barby libraries, and Officers are currently assisting these groups in developing their plans to ensure that they can continue to deliver services after 31 March. Officers are still working with the community of Hunmanby which will receive the Supermobile service after 31 March.

Partnership working continues with communities across the county, with libraries in Categories 1 and 2, and another result of successful partnership is now being delivered at Leyburn between the County Council, Richmondshire District Council and Leyburn Town Council. This has seen the re-location of the Community Office to the library at Thornborough Hall whereby volunteers recruited by the Town Council are now working alongside Richmondshire staff and, as a result, opening hours have increased from 19 to 40 hours per week.

Other initiatives following the withdrawal of the mobile library service include a new library outlet which has been developed by the community at Darley and was officially launched by the local County Councillor on Saturday 11 February.

In order to assist communities further in developing their volunteer networks, a new campaign has been developed to publicise a county-wide volunteer campaign for the library service. This includes printed materials available from all libraries, including posters, flyers, banners and bookmarks, and features photographs and quotes from volunteers already working in libraries.

The campaign has already attracted a good deal of press and radio attention, including interviews with the volunteers on the difference volunteering has made to them as individuals and to their communities. This month's edition of North Yorkshire Now will feature volunteer stories, and all articles, features and materials will link to a new website homepage.

REGISTRATION SERVICE

The roll-out of an electronic diary and booking system by the Registration Service continues. The e-diary has been in use internally by staff since last September; it is also now successfully used by the Customer Service Centre and by Craven District Council staff on the Reception Desk at Belle Vue Square, where Craven staff meet and greet Registration clients.

Since early December, members of the public have been able to book appointments for birth and death registrations online themselves via the County Council website. With very little publicity for this initiative thus far, there has been good take-up from the public, particularly for appointments to register births. An average of 3-4 appointments a day are being made direct by the general public; the advantage being that this can activity be done 24/7 from home, rather than waiting to make a telephone call to registration office on the next working day. Initial feedback suggests that 96% of customers are successfully able to make an appointment for their choice of date and time.

From this month, the e-booking system will be given more prominence on the web site which should increase activity from the public. Controlled access will also be given to trusted stakeholders and partners, such as hospitals and funeral directors, so that they may make appropriate appointments on behalf of clients.

ARCHIVES

The County Record Office is engaging with a range of communities based projects across the county with the aid of grant funding and support of volunteers running a number of community-based projects with the aid of grant funding, for example -

- The Whitby Muster Rolls project is a two-year collaboration between the Record Office and Whitby's independent museum, to conserve and digitise 8,000 documents which reveal the lives of Whitby seamen in the 18th century. The exhibition 'Sailor's Sixpence' runs at the Whitby Museum until May, before transferring to the Record Office later this year.
- 'Trawling through Time' is a Heritage Lottery Funded project to catalogue the records and celebrate the history of Cochrane's, shipbuilders of Selby. A grant of £48,000 has supported the appointment of a project officer, and the coming year will see a series of outreach events involving volunteers, schools, former employees and Selby residents.