

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

19 DECEMBER 2012

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

Economic Development

As you know our economic development role is intrinsically linked with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP_ and as we can see from the Autumn Statement economic growth and the role of the LEPs in facilitating that are a key focus.

Business Support events and workshops are being rolled out across the area in partnership with District councils. These have been developed at no cost to the public sector

Over 60 experienced business leaders are now signed up to offer mentoring to our small businesses

Two events have been held recently in a partnership between NYCC and the LEP promoting 'buying from the public sector' to North Yorkshire Businesses. Two more are due in the New Year.

FERA – Masterplanning is underway to develop the Food Environment Research Agency Campus at Sand Hutton into an innovation campus. This will position North Yorkshire at the centre of the National Agri-Tech Innovation Policy which will address key emerging issues such as food security and the food versus fuel debate. In reality this is our major science asset.

POTASH –The LEP are working with York Potash to ensure that if planning is approved for the proposed mine in Whitby, local businesses get in the supply chain and local people get the jobs. Already over 135 local businesses have been introduced to York Potash to explore potential opportunities

Lobbying for Business – Active discussion are taking place with numerous government departments to influence investment in the area. This includes skills, rural and housing developments. Importantly, within this are discussions with DEFRA around maintaining capacity for the LEADER programme, which funds community based projects in the Dales & Moors. It is funded through Europe and there is a potential two year gap before the next European Programme will be active.

Public Rights of Way

Both the Yorkshire Dales National Park and the North York Moors National Park have now given notice to terminate their respective delegation agreements with the County Council to deliver the rights of way service within their areas. This will result in responsibilities and activity returning to the County Council, negotiations are underway with both those Authorities to implement new agreements starting from 2013/14 with the Yorkshire Dales National Park and 2014/15 with the North York Moors. It is likely that in both cases the National Parks will want to retain the day to day management of the rights of way networks in

their areas therefore the practical implications of the termination of existing arrangements is likely to be limited. I will keep Members informed as and when agreements are concluded.

Natural Environment

Following formal recognition as a Local Nature Partnership in July, the County Council has continued to lead on the development of a strategy and vision for the partnership. Priority landscape areas and themes have now been identified as well as key objectives that will benefit nature, economy and health and wellbeing. The LNP Board is currently reviewing activities within the landscape areas and areas of opportunity. Over the coming months, the Board will focus efforts and target limited resources of partners, both monetary and staff, to deliver better outcomes for nature and for the local community.

Waste Management

Waste prevention campaigns continue with a focus on saving money and reducing food waste at Christmas, with the recruitment and training of more volunteer Rotters planned for January. The volunteers also help in the delivery of waste prevention campaigns. Over the last quarter, 60 volunteers have donated 339 hours of their time at 38 separate events, and have given advice to over 4,200 people on how to reduce waste and save money.

Trading Standards

A rogue roofer who conned victims in North Yorkshire and York out of thousands of pounds was ordered to repay the money he obtained from his crimes, following a Proceeds of Crime Act confiscation hearing in October.

Terence Burnside, of Pease Street, Darlington, had been successfully prosecuted in July 2011 by the County Council's trading standards service and pleaded guilty to eleven charges of failing to carry out work with professional diligence, using aggressive trading practices, and making false statements.

The court found that Burnside had benefited from crime to the tune of £50,000 and that he had assets to the value of £23,564 available to be confiscated. He was ordered to repay the £23,564 by 15th February 2013, or serve 15 months imprisonment in default. Of the monies repaid, £12,939.41 would go to fully compensating his elderly victims.

Burnside had convinced his victims – the oldest of whom was 87 years of age – that their properties required roofing repairs. Burnside charged two victims £2,500 and £2,400 respectively for the resetting of each property's ridge tiles. A surveyor examined each roof and found that the work had not in fact taken place. Burnside pressed one female victim for cash, telling her how much she could withdraw from her bank account each day.

National Trading Standards eCrime Centre

North Yorkshire County Council Trading Standards is one of the lead authorities for the newly created National Trading Standards eCrime Centre.

The eCrime Centre has been set up by the National Trading Standards Board (NTSB) with funding from the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS). It is in recognition of trading standards' vital role in protecting vulnerable people from unscrupulous traders who hide behind the apparent anonymity of the internet. The eCrime Centre also has a role in ensuring that legitimate on-line businesses are able to operate in a vibrant cyberspace that is free from other, less scrupulous businesses. This is a particularly important role in today's

difficult economic times, ensuring a level playing field to help our small and medium businesses grow and reap the benefits of trading on-line.

A number of significant on line scams have been identified and stopped through this approach and cases are due to go to trial in early 2013

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STATEMENT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

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Libraries

Members will be aware that libraries have been busy recruiting to the enhanced volunteer roles over the last few months and many of the young volunteers who assisted with the Summer Reading Challenge have become regular volunteers. A number of the volunteers are finding paid employment as a result of the experience gained.

Library Outlets

The service continues to work with communities to establish Library "Outlets" in the larger villages. A library "outlet" at Reeth opened in Hudson House replacing the fortnightly Supermobile stop. The library is open daily and has to date enrolled over 100 members. The recently opened facility at Darley has gone from strength to strength with a recent successful author event attended by 65 people.

Events

The Skipton Rewind project has been shortlisted for the Local Government Yorkshire and Humber Making a Difference Awards 2012 and follows its success in winning the national "Libraries Change Lives" award. In addition the service has received interest and requests to speak about the project at national and international conferences.

Yet more broadening of horizons went on at Catterick Library, with a visit from former SAS soldier and author Andy McNab. Over 100 people attended this event with many joining the library for the first time and to sign up for the Six Book Challenge. This event was in partnership with The Reading Agency who were impressed by the audience and are seeking to develop the partnership at Catterick for similar for future events.

Registration

Recent legislative changes are being implemented by the Registration Service.

Firstly, the legal barrier to civil partnerships (CPs) being registered on religious premises was removed late in 2011. This means that religious premises may now apply to the local authority to be licensed to hold civil partnership registrations. On 14 November 2012 approval was given for the setting of a procedure and fee for the approval of religious premises in North Yorkshire; both the procedure and the fee will parallel those already in place for secular premises. Alongside this, current processes and procedures for the approval of venues are being reviewed and updated and these should be in place by the end of the year.

The Marriage Act has been amended to remove the time restrictions on marriage and civil partnership which until 1 October were 8.00 a.m. till 6.00 p.m. The County Council's policy on timings, together with procedures and fees will need to change as a result of the Act and it is expected that premises such as hotels and country houses which are licensed by the County Council will wish to extend their offer to couples. It is therefore proposed to extend the hours for ceremonies in approved premises. Currently, the latest booking is taken for 5.00 p.m.; this will be extended to become 7.00 p.m. In addition it is proposed that the Service prepares to take bookings up to and including ceremonies at 12 midnight subject to staff availability and the setting of premium charges for such ceremonies.

Archives

The Heritage Lottery-funded project 'Trawling through Time' has continued to enjoy great success. Its work to open up the archive of Cochranes, shipbuilders of Selby has generated a great deal of public interest and voluntary effort – more than 600 hours of volunteer time to date. Talks and events held in Selby and district have regularly attracted audiences of over 100 people. The project exhibition at Selby Abbey was opened on 29th October in front of an invited audience, including former employees and members of the Cochrane family, and it will be touring local library venues until the end of the year, when it will transfer to the Record Office in Northallerton. The Heritage Lottery Fund has agreed that the project can be extended until the end of February 2013, to allow it to cope with the flood of material and memories that has been received.

User satisfaction rates at the Record Office have reached a new high. Recent results from the national survey of visitors to archives show that in a two-week period last month, no less than 100% of visitors to the North Yorkshire County Record Office rated the service overall as good or very good. This represents an all-time best performance, but the survey has also identified areas for improvement, for example the service's online presence, and current visitor facilities, which will be the subject of an improvement plan for the year to come in order to ensure that satisfaction remains high.