

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**24 JULY 2013****STATEMENT OF RURAL SERVICES, WASTE DISPOSAL,
PUBLIC PASSENGER TRANSPORT, TRADING STANDARDS AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO HOLDER
COUNTY COUNCILLOR CHRIS METCALFE****Waste Management**

Waste prevention campaigns continue to focus on home composting and reducing food waste. Another training session was held last week for volunteer Rotters who will help us to encourage people to compost more. The 'love food hate waste' campaign continues to pass on simple hints and tips to make food last longer, reduce waste and save money. I am pleased to let Members know of a further unique and innovative approach we are using to help spread the waste message. We are working with a local poet, John Wedgwood Clarke, who is poet in residence at the Centre for Environmental and Marine Sciences at the University of Hull. He will visit Seamer Carr HWRC over the next year and will then produce a collection of poems to inspire people help bring the waste message to a new audience in a creative way.

I reported on 20 February that the Secretary of State had decided not to call in the planning application for the Allerton Waste Recovery Park. Members will be aware that since then there has been an application for a Judicial Review of the decision to grant planning consent by Marton cum Grafton parish council. The Court has scheduled the hearing for 30 and 31 July 2013. Only when this process is concluded will the Council be able to consider the final value for money and affordability of the project. This decision is unlikely now to be before the end of this year.

Members will be aware that on 21 February Government advised the Council that they were withdrawing Waste Infrastructure Credits from our Waste PFI project. This decision was made without any consultation or notice, and given the close working relationship we have had with DEFRA and their waste infrastructure delivery programme over the years, it was disappointing in the extreme. We have begun a process of seeking to challenge this decision through the courts. Given the nature of this dispute I am unable to go into more detail at this time.

Public Rights of Way

This month has seen the re-launch of the 'Centenary Way' walking guide. This popular long distance route between York Minster and Filey Brigg has been updated by volunteers. The guide is available on the web site for free, or in hard copy at a small charge to cover printing costs. This is an important example of how we can use the services we provide to help strengthen the tourism offer within the county helping to sustain the visitor economy.

Countryside volunteers have also been busy helping to maintain and improve the public rights of way network, and carry out ecological surveys. They have helped to install stiles, gates and boardwalks and have carried out surveys to make sure the rights of way network is free from obstructions. Our volunteers are an increasingly important element of the way we provide services and I am grateful for their continued and valuable support.

Trading Standards

The Trading Standards Service has reported significant increases in workloads. In particular it reports an increase in Safeguarding activity and currently is running 6 major safeguarding investigations involving North Yorkshire victims, some in their 80s or 90s who have been

cynically targeted in respect to bogus house repairs or gardening services. One victim, a gentleman in his 90s suffering from dementia was taken to his bank on several occasions to withdraw significant cash amounts to hand over to the villains. Members will be aware that the Service has successfully prosecuted a number of individuals, including 11 in 2013 so far, for conspiracy to defraud, fraud and money laundering in relation to these sorts of incidents leading to terms of imprisonment up to 7 years 8 months and to confiscation orders under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, including one made in April 2013 for £413,000, some of which will be used to repay known victims in full.

The current economic climate also means that some consumers have to buy products from the cheaper end of the market. This can mean that manufacturers and importers have cut corners and that products are unsafe or misdescribed. Recent successful investigations have included engines falsely described as reconditioned and upholstered furniture not meeting fire safety requirements, being potentially unsafe, and on sale despite being subject to a suspension notice served on the seller.

Last financial year saw a 66% increase in new business contacts to the service. This was in the main small new businesses seeking advice on trading laws. So far this trend is continuing and would appear as a direct correlation with the Service's growing partnership arrangement with the LEP. Interestingly the Heseltine report "No Stone Unturned In Pursuit of Growth", stated that new businesses who took early regulatory advice were twice as likely to grow as those that did not.

500th No Cold Calling Zone

The 500th "No Cold Calling Zone" covering part of Pateley Bridge has been set up. This initiative started eight years ago, when the first zone was introduced at an elderly persons' sheltered housing complex in Great Ayton where residents were being targeted. Since then, similar schemes have been put in place around the county. Surveys repeatedly show that over 90% of residents in existing zones feel safer when answering the door and the number of cold callers they get has dropped significantly.

National Trading Standards eCrime Centre

Members will be aware that our Trading Standards Service host the trading standards National E crime Digital evidence recovery laboratory. This project is funded by the National Trading Standards Board (NTSB). The success of the team is such that the NTSB has now agreed that additional funding will be made available so the lab's remit will include this expert support to all NTSB funded national and regional investigations.

Economic Development

The York, North Yorkshire & East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership is now developing its 5 year strategy in line with Government proposals. It has been allocated £97.5m over the period 2014-2020 from the new EU Structural & Investment Fund. Additionally it will have the opportunity to bid into the £2bn Single Local Growth Fund developed by pooling resources at a national level. The LEP is increasingly becoming a key vehicle to attract funds to stimulate Economic Growth and we continue to support their strategic plans.

Additionally the LEP have secured £4m from the latest Regional growth Fund bid to provide grants to small businesses which are investing.

CHRIS METCALFE

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

24 July 2013

STATEMENT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COUNTY COUNCILLOR CHRIS METCALFE

LIBRARIES

Library Service Peer Review

On 4 & 5 July, the Library Service was the subject of a Peer Review managed by the LGA and funded by the Arts Council.

The role of the peer reviewers, who were experienced managers from other library authorities, was to be “critical friends” in reviewing our service and assisting us with the future direction of travel as we revise the Library Service Strategy.

It was pleasing to note that they identified some key strengths and some further areas for consideration as the revised Strategy is worked up. At the same time, they provided some very useful ideas that will be useful for further updating the strategy and improving the Service.

The full report will be available at the end of July, and further details from this will be brought to the next County Council and as part of the quarterly performance monitoring report to the Executive.

Apprentices

On Friday 12 July, I chaired the Library Service’s own version of “The Apprentice” when 18 library apprentices met “dragons” from the Libraries and Adult Learning management teams to pitch their own ideas for improving library services for young people. These include building pathways for future users, teenage game nights and loyalty card schemes.

The outcome of the panel was unknown at the time of this statement going to press. However, the winner(s) will have the opportunity of spending £1,000 on implementing their project within an operational library setting, and further details will be brought to the next County Council.

Summer Reading Challenge

This year’s Summer Reading Challenge theme is “Creepy House”. Young people have to read six library books during the summer to complete the three steps of the challenge: the ‘Awful Upstairs’, the ‘Gruesome Ground Floor’ and the ‘Spine-tingling Cellar’. There are rewards for each step taken including posters, bookmarks and a glow in the dark wristband.

The launch date is Saturday 13 July, and the Challenge is aimed at all children aged 4-11 years of age. Libraries are also running a host of activities during the summer to entertain families and keep children reading, details of which will be sent to members.

Awards

The Library Service was chosen as one of the finalists for the Operational Risk Management Award at the 2013 Alarm Awards. The service was shortlisted from a total over 50 and Alarm recognised the work done to minimise risk during the transformation of the Library Service to meet the required budget reductions and the associated impact on communities.

In addition, NYCC Libraries have been awarded one of ten training places across the region for Arts Award Advisor building on work already undertaken with Skipton Rewind.

New Services

Wi-Fi

The first phase of a programme to install state of the art Wi-Fi at libraries across North Yorkshire to improve access to digital services in local communities has commenced. Wi-Fi is now available for free at a number of libraries for customers to access the internet via their own devices including Tablets, Smartphones and Wi-Fi enabled laptops. Full roll-out of Wi-Fi at all libraries is planned to be completed by this autumn; installation starts mid-July.

The NYCC e-library

Two new services have been launched and will further develop the “e-offer” for library users: ‘Find My Past’ and e-magazines. Find My Past offers access to millions of family history records. It provides a complete listing of births, marriages and deaths from 1837 to 2006. It also has exclusive access to records covering 650 years, including parish records, workhouse records, passenger lists and military records. These are easily accessible in a user-friendly way, making it easier to find elusive ancestors. Zinio, the new online magazine service, was launched last month - available on the PN and via the libraries page of the NYCC website using the borrower ID to set up an account. 56 magazine titles can be read online or downloaded to devices.

Library users now also receive reservation and overdue notices by text, voicemail or email, receiving notifications more quickly whilst saving the Service the cost of postage.

Reading Well

All libraries across North Yorkshire are participating in a new scheme which will use reading to help people who suffer from conditions such as depression and anxiety. “Reading Well” will enable GPs and other health professionals to recommend 30 self-help titles for people to borrow from the local library.

Libraries are an access point for the NY Local Assistance Fund with DWP/Jobcentres customers able to call to the Customer Services Centre from library telephones.

Library Outlets

Local collections and outlets continue to grow, with an NYCC library presence in Cold Kirkby and further developments at Botton Village and Deansfield Court Extra Care at Norton to follow soon.

Archives

The Community Covenant- funded 'Garrison Voices' Project continues to attract widespread interest and media coverage. Partnership events in the Richmond and Catterick areas have regularly attracted more than 100 people. Aimed at creating a "people's history" of the Garrison by gathering recorded reminiscences, photographs and archive material, the project will culminate with a special event on 27 September at the new Catterick Library to launch a travelling exhibition which will visit a variety of locations through the rest of the year and into 2014.

Good progress is being made in developing e-commerce to improve the marketing of Record Office goods (such as photographs, maps, and publications) and services (including research and learning events), and a pilot Archives e-shop will soon be available at <http://archiveshop.northyorks.gov.uk>. Feedback from a test group of users will be used to refine the new facility, which will be the subject of a high-profile launch to the public in September. It is anticipated that this work will improve the Archives income stream and, at the same time, increase accessibility to audiences both locally and worldwide.

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