

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

23 JULY 2014

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

Waste Management

On 4 August 2014 the County Council will be introducing a charge at Household Waste Recycling Centres for the disposal of hard-core and rubble. This includes materials such as breeze blocks, bricks, ceramics (eg sinks and toilets), concrete, flag stones, soil, slates, plasterboard, etc. Household waste and recyclable items will not be affected and will not be charged for. The charge will be £2.50 for 25kg.

At the same time we are opening all our HWRCs to take commercial waste from businesses and traders to help encourage recycling and provide cost effective and local disposal. Currently only Harrogate and Northallerton HWRCs accept commercial waste.

Public Passenger Transport

Bus Services

Extensive changes to bus services were introduced in April and May following our decision to reduce the amount of subsidy available to operators. The level of disruption seems to have been moderate. In the few instances where issues have been identified we have been able to address these positively.

At the end of May, Pennine Motors in Skipton withdrew their commercial bus services. With no alternative operator willing to take on the services commercially the Council used its own fleet of vehicles to provide a replacement service which ensured that access to essential services was maintained.

In January the Executive asked the Corporate Director - BES to give further consideration to further subsidy reductions in 2015/16. This work has progressed alongside a Scrutiny Task Group which will report formally in October. It is clear that there is more detailed work to be done to ensure that we maintain access to essential services and this cannot be completed in time for changes to be introduced in 2015/16. I can confirm that there will be no reduction in the budget for bus services in 2015/16, however, this service area has already met its savings requirement for 2020 North Yorkshire for 2015/16.

Rail Services

The DfT has issued TransPennine Express rail franchise and Northern rail franchise: stakeholder consultation with responses required by 18 August 2014. The consultation documents are available from the DfT website and Graham North the Council's Rail Officer is the main contact for any member who would like more information.

Trading Standards

Farming Food & Health

Food - officers continue to investigate the issue of peanuts in 'peanut free' takeaway meals. A programme of sampling has been undertaken at 47 establishments across North Yorkshire with 7 requiring further investigation into the level of peanuts present, despite assurances by the restaurant that the meals were 'peanut free'. Clearly this is a serious issue and we will continue to pursue the matter robustly.

Investigations and Safeguarding

In May, I reported that on 27 February 2014, following prosecution by North Yorkshire Trading Standards, Monty Croke and his two sons, Billy and Monty Junior, appeared before Teesside Crown Court to be sentenced for conspiracy to defraud and money laundering offences following the victimisation of a number of vulnerable consumers for over charged and unnecessary property repairs. Their criminal activities included taking over £250,000 from a 61 year old Ryedale resident with Parkinson's disease for unnecessary building work and a fraudulent investment in the building of holiday cottages. Monty Croke was initially sentenced to 5 years imprisonment and Monty Croke junior and Billy Croke were sentenced to two years and one year imprisonment respectively. These sentences were considered to be unduly lenient in view of the nature of the offending, including particularly, the way in which the Ryedale resident had been 'groomed' over a period of years. Trading Standards therefore asked the Attorney-General's Office to consider referring the sentence to the Court of Appeal. The Court of Appeal heard the case on 16 May 2014 and found that all three sentences were unduly lenient. They increased Monty Croke's sentence to seven and a half years taking into account the fact of his guilty plea; Monty Croke Junior's sentence was increased to four years taking into account his guilty plea; and Billy Croke's sentence was left unchanged following submission of medical evidence.

Economic Development

Local Growth Fund

The York, North Yorkshire and East Riding LEP has secured £110.1 from the Government's Local Growth Fund to support economic growth in the area – with £34.1m of funding confirmed for 2015/16 and the balance from 2016-21

In a competitive process this is significantly more than the 'fair share' for this geography and represents a good deal for the County and the LEP. This reflects the quality of the partnership between the LEP and Local Authorities at both a District and County level and both the ambition and growth potential of our area.

Successful investments include:

- Olympia Park, in Selby
- North Northallerton
- Junction improvements at Catterick
- Middle Deepdale in Scarborough
- Development of a National Agri-Food Innovation Campus at Sand Hutton
- A new college extension in Harrogate; and
- £24m towards additional highways maintenance across North Yorkshire

The investments by 2021 will create over 4000 new jobs, enable over 5000 new homes to be built and leverage over £600m private sector investment.

CHRIS METCALFE

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

LIBRARIES

Summer Reading Challenge – It's a-MAZE – ing!

The 2014 reading challenge is about to take over libraries across the county – to date 108 young people have signed up to volunteer – up from 90 in 2013 – and there is still time for more to join in. Libraries are looking to maintain the excellent record of over 10,000 children participating in the Creepy House reading challenge. Children sign up at their local library, receiving a free poster, with stickers, bookmarks and fridge magnet to encourage them to keep reading. When they have read six books they receive a 'Mythical Maze' medal and a certificate. The only rule is that the books they read are borrowed from the library, but they can choose whatever they want including audiobooks. All completing the challenge will be entered into a prize draw to win a day out at Flamingo land for all the family.

Bookstart Week

Libraries across the county also celebrated Bookstart Week with Teddy Bear sleepovers, special storytimes and free books. Whitby Library hosted a sleepover for Teddy Bears and have photographic evidence of what the bears got up to once the library had closed for the day. All were safely restored to their owners the following day!

Supermobile

The new vehicle has been delivered and is currently awaiting its livery design which has been created by three young people following the 'design a mobile' competition earlier this year. It is planned the vehicle will be on the road visiting isolated communities by mid-summer.

Hawes Library

Community managed Hawes Library struck another first when they opened at 1.00pm on 17 June with the Post Office in the library. Postman Pat was on hand to help with the celebrations distributing copies of the book Super Duck to children.

Family History

Library staff were on duty on the BBC stand at this year's Great Yorkshire Show in Harrogate to assist with family and local history enquires – in particular promoting the online and other resources held by the library and archive services.

ARCHIVES

Archives at Dusk

The fourth Archives at Dusk event - part of Museums at Night, an annual UK-wide festival which encourages visitors into museums, galleries and heritage sites by throwing their doors open after hours and putting on special evening events – took place on May 15th. This relaxed, fun, interactive evening, with a theme of clubs and societies, attracted 150 people. Visitors had the opportunity to meet the Good Humour Club in their 18th century coffee house, have a family photograph taken in the Victorian studio, see how County Hall was transformed into a hospital during the First World War and view dramatic photographs of early climbing and caving exploits, as well as being able to explore 'behind the scenes' at the Record Office. The event received national publicity and was featured in an article in Discover Your History Magazine which described it as a 'brilliant initiative'.

Home Comforts

The Record Office has also been awarded a grant of £9,800 under the Heritage Lottery Fund's First World War: Then & Now programme for its 'Home Comforts' project. Run in partnership with the British Red Cross, the project will enable communities and individuals to explore and commemorate the Auxiliary hospitals established by the Red Cross throughout the North Riding (including one at County Hall) during the Great War to provide care for the many wounded soldiers returning from the Front. Properties and nursing care were given on a voluntary basis and this project will allow all age groups in the local communities concerned to re-connect with their own history, gaining a greater understanding of how properties were adapted to help the war effort and how local women in particular took the lead in developing voluntary provision. A travelling exhibition will be created with the aim of visiting each of the communities involved over the life of the project and a commemorative publication will be produced to provide a permanent record of the detailed stories that this project uncovers. A special commemorative event will be timed for 11 November 2014. Resultant archive material will be placed for permanent safekeeping and access at the Record Office.

Registration Service

The Tour de Yorkshire was an exciting time for all but perhaps especially so for the couple who got married at the Register Office in Harrogate on the morning of the first stage. The cycling enthusiasts chose Harrogate because of Le Tour and afterwards mingled with the huge crowds on the Stray, the bride still dressed in her wedding gown. July weekends are already a busy time for registrars with wedding ceremonies, but the efforts made meant that all 15 of the weddings in areas affected by the road closures and general disruptions over the three days went ahead.

The date of 10 December 2014 has been set as the date from which couples can convert their existing civil partnerships into a same sex marriage. Further details are awaited.

At the same time as introducing same sex marriages, the Government undertook a consultation and review of the future of Civil Partnerships which are only available for same sex couples. The result of that consultation is that there should be no change to this and they should remain for same sex couples only.

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