

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

18 FEBRUARY 2015

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

Waste Management

At the last Council meeting, I gave an undertaking to keep you up to date with progress on the Allerton Waste Recovery Park project. Since that last meeting Amey Cespa have completed the off-site highways works and are in the process of setting up the construction site. A local liaison group has been set up and has met twice. A contract management group has been convened and meets monthly to manage the implementation of project agreement. In a linked development, highways improvements have been carried out to enable us to start the development of a waste transfer station at Kirby Misperton which will be required to deliver waste to Allerton Waste Recovery Park when it becomes operational.

Public Passenger Transport

Rail

The DfT has announced the award of the East Coast Rail franchise to joint venture between Stagecoach and Virgin. The new franchise promises significant investment in rolling stock and 6 trains each day between Harrogate and London. This is a significant improvement and something the County Council has pressed for a number of years and will undoubtedly bring economic benefits to the Harrogate area.

Bus Services

I am pleased to be able to report that there is continued investment in commercial bus services in North Yorkshire. Arriva has included the services they operate between Selby and York; Whitby and Scarborough and Darlington and Richmond in their high end MAX and Sapphire brands. These offer passengers high quality vehicles with improved passenger comfort and free wifi.

Trading Standards

Business & Consumer Services

The sale of motor vehicles continues to generate the largest proportion of consumer complaints in North Yorkshire, and ensuring cars sold in the County are safe is a priority for trading standards officers. Dominic Grunwell, a car trader based in Scarborough, was prosecuted by the Service at Scarborough Magistrates' Court on 16th January 2015 for selling an unroadworthy car and failing to tell the purchaser that the car had been a category C insurance write off. Mr Grunwell was fined a total of £2,500.

Farming, Food and Health

Food – on 19 January 2015, Mr Helal Miah of Tandoori Nights, Richmond, pleaded guilty at Northallerton Magistrates Court to providing food which was mis-described and potentially injurious to health in that it contained peanuts when the purchaser specifically asked for a ‘peanut free’ meal. The substitution of expensive nut ingredients for cheaper peanut based ingredients can be potentially life threatening to those with allergies and it is hoped that successful prosecutions such as this coupled with the provision of advice regarding allergen regulations will prevent future injuries. Mr Miah was fined £1000 and ordered to pay costs of £640.70.

Animal Health –Avian Influenza - on 16 November 2014, Avian Influenza was confirmed at a farm in the East Riding of Yorkshire. A 10km restriction zone was immediately imposed which required strict monitoring of poultry movements whilst the poultry at the infected farm were destroyed to prevent spread of the disease. Subsequently concerns were raised of an outbreak within the North Yorkshire border when a significant number of birds died on a North Yorkshire farm without clear reason, close to the East Riding protection zone. These concerns were subsequently proven to be unfounded and on 21 December 2014, the protection zone installed to restrict the movement of poultry within the infected zone in East Riding was lifted. Both incidents have highlighted the need to remain vigilant and prepared for future potential outbreaks.

Public Health – We are continuing to contribute to the implementation of the North Yorkshire Tobacco and Alcohol Control Strategies by virtue of the provision of both legislative enforcement and pro-active education aimed at key target audiences. In an effort to interact with the local schools and to educate children before they start smoking and/or drinking, we are facilitating a project which encourages young people to actively engage with the message that drinking and smoking are detrimental to both their current and future health, and that businesses that continue to sell these products to children are breaking the law.

Economic Development

I reported at the last Council Meeting that following the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding LEPs successful £110million Growth Deal announced in the summer, a further £6million was being negotiated. Following successful negotiations, we have secured £12.1m. This will allow investments in North Yorkshire in Malton Agri-food Park, flood alleviation in Skipton and improvements to the A1/A59 junction.

Additionally I am pleased to report that both the other LEP investment funds are fully invested, that is;

£3.8m business grants to support capital expenditure and

£9.3m Growing Places fund, which provides repayable loans for capital infrastructure.

This fund has also received and reinvested its first £1m return.

Through the LEP, development funding has also been committed to support feasibility work on several projects with a view to developing future capital bids. These include funding for sites in some of our more deeply rural areas including, Askrigg, Bentham and Kirbymoorside.

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

Library Consultation

Members will know that the Library service has just spent 3 months from 3rd November to the 8th February consulting on proposals on how to save £1.6 million from its library service budget. The proposals are that there should be 7 core libraries with staff, one in each District; 5 hybrid libraries with a single member of staff supported by volunteers and 20/21 community managed libraries, with volunteers involved in the delivery of services in every library.

At the time of this statement going to press, over 7,000 consultation questionnaires had been returned. In addition to this; emails, letters and 6 petitions have been received from residents in Stokesley, Whitby, Starbeck, Knaresborough and Settle as well as one representing communities Ryedale and Hambleton. This exceeds the 6,200 responses received in 2010/11 and a further difference from the last consultation is that the majority of responses this time have been on-line (5,450).

The library service also made extensive use of social media with regular Facebook posts and Twitter feeds which have increased awareness of consultation events and boosted the number of responses to the consultation.

The service learnt from their experience of the previous consultation and provided more information online from the outset, including information sheets on each library, and FAQs. We were also more proactive in providing face-to-face opportunities for Members, current partners and the public.

- Members with proposed community managed libraries had individual meetings with officers before the consultation started
- Meetings were held early in the consultation with each of the current community managed libraries and the community library groups that extend opening hours in libraries.
- The library service held information days in its 33 county-run libraries
- “pop-up” information sessions were held in 40 other venues like supermarkets and leisure centres, which enabled staff to raise awareness with a range of other members of the public.

Local Members have arranged public meetings in Bedale, Filey, Helmsley, Kirkbymoorside, Knaresborough, Norton, Sherburn and Stokesley. The service also attended the 7 Area Committees, and Parish/ Town Council meetings in Bentham, Crosshills and Glusburn, Easingwold, Filey, Norton, Pickering, Richmond, Skipton, Stokesley and Thirsk. Other meetings attended included Easingwold and Villages Forum, Nidderdale Plus AGM, Tadcaster Community Engagement Forum plus Learning Disability and Physical and Sensory Impairment Partnership Boards, Older People's Forum and Youth events.

Over the next few months the responses will be analysed and a report putting forward recommendations will be taken to Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5 June before being taken to The Executive for decision at the end of June/early July.

I would like to thank all Members who have been instrumental in galvanising support for the consultation throughout this period.

National Libraries Day / Harry Potter Night

Libraries across North Yorkshire marked National Libraries Day on Saturday 7 February 2015 with a range of magical events for library users and supporters to enjoy. The day is a celebration of the work done in libraries to promote learning, literacy and the enjoyment of reading. Many libraries entered into the world of Harry Potter to celebrate the modern classic that got so many people hooked on books as the first ever world-wide Harry Potter Book Night is also celebrated. Young wizards, witches and muggles joined library staff for games, activities and quizzes.

Reading Well / Dementia

A new collection of books for people with dementia and their carers is now available from libraries across North Yorkshire. The new books are part of the services established Reading Well Books on Prescription scheme, which was pleased to work with Public Health to provide the 19 book collections purchased. The books on the Reading Well Books on Prescription dementia list include a wide range of titles from those which help people who have just been diagnosed with the condition through to picture books for reminiscence sessions and stories from those with first-hand experience of living with dementia.

Registration Service

The first wedding ceremony at the new Selby register office took place on the 30th January.

Selby Civic Centre became the new home of the registration office for births, deaths, civil partnerships and marriages on 15 January. Compared with the previous office, it has more parking spaces, a café, more room for guests at ceremonies, and better access for all. Brighter, more modern rooms at Selby Civic Centre mean couples getting married or entering into civil partnerships are able to celebrate in style.

The move from the existing Register Office in Union Lane was part of Better Together – an innovative partnership arrangement between North Yorkshire County Council and Selby District Council which is giving taxpayers a better service as well as better value for money.

CHRIS METCALFE