

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

20 MAY 2015

**STATEMENT OF RURAL SERVICES, WASTE DISPOSAL, PUBLIC PASSENGER
TRANSPORT, TRADING STANDARDS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO
HOLDER COUNTY COUNCILLOR CHRIS METCALFE****Waste & Countryside Services****Allerton Park**

At the last meeting of the Council, I informed you that the site was being prepared for the commencement of construction. I am pleased to report that work was completed on time. I had the pleasure of attending the ground-breaking ceremony at the site on 2 March 2015 along with Councillors John Fort and Clare Wood who have also held the waste management portfolio since the project started. Work on the development is progressing well, with the deep excavations for waste bunkers completed and a significant volume of concrete has already been poured as work begins to bring the construction up to ground level. The local liaison group has met three times, and Amey Cespa is continuing to build relationships with those people that will be their neighbours for the next 25 to 30 years.

Bedale, Aiskew, Leeming Bar Bypass (BALB) Roman Villa

Members will be aware that a Roman Villa was discovered during construction of the Bedale, Aiskew, Leeming Bar Bypass. On site archaeological excavation is now completed on the part of the roman villa that is within the road corridor.

Although the villa building was known about earlier, it was only once the area had been stripped of topsoil that the quality and state of preservation of the villa was properly understood. The area directly affected by the road has been fully excavated and the remainder is being characterised through cleaning and recording of the upper surfaces. The area outside the road corridor has subsequently been designated as a Scheduled Monument of National Importance by Historic England. This designation will have no impact upon the bypass.

The excavations of the villa have revealed a mix of partial floor surfaces and foundations with evidence for painted walls. It is currently thought the villa was established in the mid-3rd century and was occupied for approximately 150 years, going out of use in the late 4th century. The foundations of the villa survived and based on their massive size, it is believed that the villa was two stories high with a tile and stone slate roof, easily visible from the nearby Roman road, Dere Street. There was a real statement of the importance of the owners with well-appointed rooms, under-floor heating, glass windows and painted walls. However, there are few high status finds and very little metalwork other than iron nails, which tentatively suggests that the occupants were careful with their prized possessions and therefore true Yorkshire men.

Woodhall Bridge

Woodhall Bridge in the parish of Sicklinghall is a bridleway bridge providing access across the Wharfe. It is the only non-motorised user crossing of the Wharfe in the area. In 2013 the bridge was damaged as a result of debris striking one of the bridge piers. The bridge was immediately closed due to safety concerns.

In July 2014 the County Council agreed to fund the repairs and set aside £300,000. We had originally hoped to have the bridge open before Christmas but a run of poor weather before and after Christmas resulted in the bridge remaining closed until the Easter weekend. There is still a small amount of work to complete but the public can now use this extremely important strategic link over the Wharfe.

Public Passenger Transport

Bus Services

In April new contracts for local bus services were introduced in Hambleton, Richmondshire and Harrogate. Overall the renewal of these contracts has reduced the amount we spend subsidising bus services by £300k per annum. This is a significant step towards our desired position to reduce the amount of subsidy to £1.5m during 2016/17. Consultation on our proposals to get to this figure was issued on 15th May 2015 – full details are on the council's web site.

Community Transport

At the end of the last financial year the DfT invited bids for two packages of funding related to community transport. First a £25m fund for communities to bid for money to buy minibuses there were 300 successful bids of which 16 were in North Yorkshire. The council has also been successful in its bid for funding through the "Total Transport Fund". Our successful bid will enable us to work closely with the health sector to explore the potential for better patient transport services, reduced costs and wider benefits.

Trading Standards

Business & Consumer Services

Consumer Rights Act

The County Council's Trading Standards Service is preparing for changes due to be brought into force in October 2015, following the Consumer Rights Act gaining Royal Assent on Thursday 26 March 2015. The Consumer Rights Act 2015 replaces 12 existing laws including the Sale of Goods Act 1979 and the Supply of Goods and Services Act 1982. It provides a clearer route for consumers who were supplied with goods or services which fail to do what they were supposed to, and clarifies the periods for repair, replacement and refunds of goods and services. For the first time, the legislation addresses digital content as a separate product category and sets out a consumer's right to repair or replace faulty intangible digital content such as e-books and downloadable games. The Trading Standards Services no longer provides consumer advice and so responsibility for publicity and consumer education will fall to Citizens Advice. The Act will also implement an EU Directive on alternative dispute resolution and the Trading Standards Institute has been appointed by Government to approve alternative dispute resolution providers. The Act introduces a new single set of enforcement powers which will replace the existing powers contained in individual pieces of legislation and used by trading standards staff in the course of their enquiries and investigations.

Farming, Food and Health

Food safety – Peanut free meals

Mohammed Khalique Zaman, owner of the Indian Garden takeaway restaurant in Easingwold, has been summoned by North Yorkshire Trading Standards & Planning Services to appear at Northallerton Magistrates court to answer charges relating to food safety offences following the death of Paul Wilson in January 2014.

Mr Wilson, a North Yorkshire resident suffered a severe anaphylactic reaction and died following consumption of a takeaway meal that he purchased from the Indian Garden restaurant.

North Yorkshire Trading Standards Services have worked closely with North Yorkshire Police in connection with this case and the Crown Prosecution Service have charged Mr Zaman with manslaughter by gross negligence, perverting the course of justice, and an employment offence under the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006. The two investigations have now been joined for prosecution by the Crown Prosecution Service.

The initial hearing is scheduled for the 24 April 2015 when all matters will be sent to the Crown Court for trial.

Economic Development

The focus of the Enterprise Partnership Unit and York, North Yorkshire & East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership has been on preparing the projects within its Local Growth Fund deal for investment to ensure we hit targets for 2015/16.

£15m will be invested in projects in the coming year in addition to the NYCC led investment in Bedale Bypass.

The team achieved all its end of year targets which include;

- Supporting over 2000 small businesses to get professional advice, this included through our nationally acclaimed pop up cafés which delivered across our large rural area.
- £3.8m was invested in grants to business leveraging £24m private sector investment and creating 430 jobs
- Agriculture is a core part of our economy, we supported hill farmers to develop whole farm plans whilst also linking arable farmers to new technologies and supporting farm diversification through a £1.6m Skills Local Response Fund.

CHRIS METCALFE

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

Libraries Consultation

As Members will be aware the consultation on proposals for the Reconfiguration of the Service ran for 14 weeks from 3 November 2014 to 8 February 2015.

The library service learned a great deal from its experience of the previous consultation in 2010/11 and provided more information online from the outset, including information sheets on each library and FAQs and was more proactive in providing face-to-face opportunities for Members and current partners and the public.

- 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 33 libraries (excluding the 9 libraries already community run).
- “pop-up” information sessions were held in 40 other venues including supermarkets and leisure centres, which enabled staff to raise awareness outside of the library.
- Presentations at – 7 Area Committees; 8 public meetings; 15 parish/town council or similar meetings; and Partnership Boards.

The degree of involvement and engagement between the service and users/communities is reflected in the volume of responses to the consultation:-

- 8,159 completed consultation questionnaires (75% of which were completed online)
- 200+ emails and letters
- 7 petitions containing approximately 11,000 signatures
- 2,500+ people at face-to-face events.

There were also 186 mentions in the press and radio interviews on Radio York, Stray FM, Drystone Radio, Yorkshire Coast Radio and Radio Tees.

Consultation Headlines

Initial quantitative analysis of the questionnaires found that more than 50% understood why the Council needs to make changes to the library service and

agreed with communities running their local libraries with support from the Council using volunteers in all libraries. More than half felt that volunteers could undertake more library duties alongside paid staff. More than 1,500 people said they would be likely to volunteer and 952 people said they would be interested in forming a friends or community management group or volunteering (nearly 800 of these provided contact details).

A report outlining the consultation and options for consideration will go to Councillors on the Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5th June 2015 before going to the Executive on 7th July 2015.

Creative Residencies:

February saw the end of the phase one of the Creative Residencies project in libraries, a 3 year programme enabled by a successful £100,000 bid to the Arts Council that has seen North Yorkshires libraries hosting artists to work with communities. Eastfield and Ingleton libraries have welcomed artists working in photography, film, textiles, spoken word, music and mosaics. The creative activities have brought together different generations and perceptions of libraries have changed with people looking at them as places serving the wider needs of the community, providing opportunities for people to meet and to learn new skills. Both libraries have had successful celebration events and are working with local communities to establish a legacy from the project. Already a photography group has formed at Eastfield and the Parish Council is funding additional music workshops for young people. Phase 2 has started in Sherburn and Pickering and will run until February 2016, and a workshop at Pickering Library helping blind and partially sighted people began the first of the residency activities.

Dementia Awareness

The Library Service continues to support the County Council's efforts to support individuals, raise awareness of and address the impact of dementia. Working in partnership with Making Space and Dementia Forward, a number of libraries are now hosting memory cafes. Library memory cafes provide an opportunity for people with dementia and their carers to meet together in a safe and neutral space whether for support and advice from professionals or just for a social visit. As part of its *Reading Well: Books on Prescription* scheme, which is at the core of its health and wellbeing offer, and supported with funding from Public Health, the Library Service has introduced a new collection of books and resources on dementia. There are a wide range of titles from those that 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.

The Library Service is continuing to improve staff awareness and understanding of dementia and through this, enhance the support to those living with dementia. All library staff have now completed training to raise awareness of the symptoms, the difficulties people may experience, practical ways in which they may help people and awareness of how to communicate more effectively with people with dementia. This training now forms part of the Library Service induction for new staff and builds on already high levels of customer support and training for library staff.

Archives

Home Comforts

The Record Office's Heritage Lottery Fund supported 'Home Comforts' project, based around the work of the Auxiliary Hospitals established throughout the North Riding during the First World War, has been long-listed for the National Lottery Awards, reaching the top 14 out of over 600 projects. With the guidance of Record Office staff, project volunteers have published a 212 page illustrated history of the hospitals, have developed a touring exhibition and have held a series of well received talks and presentations. The project has so far reached over 2000 people, including people in Australia, Canada and Tasmania. The formal part of the project will finish in July but the exhibition will continue to be available for display after that and has bookings up to 2017.

Attics and Acres

The Record Office has recently been awarded £96,300 by Heritage Lottery Fund to deliver the Attics and Acres project. This 18 month long project will open up the archive of the Graham family of Norton Conyers which tells the story of over four centuries of the history of the house and estate near Ripon that provided inspiration for Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*. A project archivist will work with volunteers to create a web-accessible catalogue and to deliver a series of talks, exhibitions and outreach events to make access to the fascinating archive available for the first time.

Local and Family History Days

The Record Office held its fifth annual Local and Family History Day at The Pavilions of Harrogate in March. This popular event attracted around 350 visitors who enjoyed a varied programme of talks and workshops from visiting speakers, and displays and stalls from over 30 local archaeology and history organisations.

The Record Office was also represented at family and local history days held at Thirsk, Ripon and Scotch Corner and at *Who Do You Think You Are Live* at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham.

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