

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL20th February 2019**STATEMENT FROM PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR STRONGER COMMUNITIES,
LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES, CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT,
SCRUTINY, AREA COMMITTEES, PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND
LOCALITY BUDGETS****COUNTY COUNCILLOR DAVID CHANCE****STRONGER COMMUNITIES****Strong and Steady**

It is now almost 12 months since the Executive Member for Public Health - Councillor Dickinson and I attended the official launch of the countywide physical activity service for older people; Strong and Steady. The targeted element of this service, which is focussed on more intensive support tailored to individual needs, has now fully rolled out with 16 sessions running regularly across the county. 166 people are being supported by the Programme, the majority of who are over the age of 75. The focus for the coming year will be on universal sessions, providing a structured community led opportunity for social interaction through age and ability appropriate physical activity and sport.

Area Constituency Committee Showcase

Members will remember the Community Showcase organised by Stronger Communities early in 2018. These visits to community projects across the county demonstrated the dedication and commitment of local communities to help one another and add to the richness of local life. It is right that we continue to recognise and celebrate the work of communities. This year, to coincide with the new Area Constituency Committees, the Stronger Communities Team have invited a local group or project to attend and share their story with Members.

Volunteering Strategy

As well as the work of local communities, it is important that we, as a Council, support and celebrate those volunteers who play an increasingly important role in helping to develop and deliver Council services.

A comprehensive volunteering strategy is being developed for the Council; led by the new internal volunteering advisor and supported by a sub-group of the Stronger Communities Programme Board. The purpose of the strategy is to set out the Council's principles and practices for involving volunteers, and focussing on standardising ways that we can improve recruitment, management, retention and the celebration of our volunteers.

Enabling Social Action Programme

The Council has been named as one of six national partners for the Enabling Social Action Programme, working with the DCMS, University of Hull and University of

Sheffield. The Programme aims to understand how communities can work in partnership with health and social care to support older and vulnerable people to live independently in a deeply rural area, and develop community led services. Stronger Communities submitted the bid focussing particularly on the Upper Dales 'A Good Life' project, and the role of that community in supporting challenges around social care provision.

Working with Communities

'Working with Communities' is one of the strands of the Beyond 2020 transformation programme, considering service areas which might deliver significant additional savings through a greater involvement of communities, beyond that already being undertaken through Stronger Communities. A range of options have been drawn up from across the Directorates with a decision about the future priority areas expected later in the year.

LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

Area Constituency Committees – the committees have now met three times and have established robust work programmes and practices that focus upon key strategic issues in their areas. The committees are taking a more scrutiny like approach to their work and ensuring that any reviews that they undertake have a clear outcome, follow up and means of escalation. There is a strong move against accepting reports 'to note' and a desire to influence the development of policy and commissioning in their local area. The work programmes for the 6 committees are wide ranging, which reflects the geographic rather than thematic focus of their work.

Overview and Scrutiny – we still await new statutory guidance on overview and scrutiny in local government. It was going to be published in December 2018 but publication has been pushed back. It is likely that the guidance will address a number of key issues that came out of the 2017 Communities and Local Government (CLG) Committee inquiry into overview and scrutiny in local government. These may include: greater clarity around the support that council executives and senior officers give to scrutiny; the restatement of the importance of the independence of scrutiny; access to and use of information in scrutiny; how scrutiny is supported to engage with the public; scrutiny of "external bodies"; and more detail on how scrutiny of financial resilience and sustainability of councils is undertaken.

School Admission Appeals – the appeals team in Democratic Services continues to administer education admission appeals on behalf of schools in the county. The number of appeals heard is over 400 a year. The quality and reputation of the appeals team is such that they have been approached by a number of councils in the North East to see whether they are able to administer school admission appeals on their behalf.

Committees – a project is underway with Technology and Change to see whether it will be possible to do audio recordings of all public meetings of the Council. At present, only the meeting of the County Council and the Police Fire and Crime Panel are routinely recorded. I am supportive of this project as it will help promote engagement with and accountability to the public. I will update members as this work progresses.

Performance Management

Over the last year we have continued to develop our performance management processes and reporting. The quarterly performance report received by Executive is now clearly aligned to the Council Plan.

Indeed the Council Plan put to you at this meeting now contains specific performance indicators aligned to the Ambitions and Priorities set within it. These will form the basis of our performance monitoring over the next year and will be reviewed annually alongside the Council Plan.

We believe this degree of transparency and rigour is important, even in an organisation with such an enviable track record of delivery as ours.

Our enhanced approach to monitoring performance has recently seen North Yorkshire County Council cited as an example of good practice by the Local Government Association.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR LOCALITY BUDGETS

Since the start of the scheme for this financial year on 14 May 2018, I have approved 354 recommendations from 66 Elected Members for funding totalling £281,323.95 (78.14% of the annual budget) for projects that benefit the communities they represent. The final date for recommendations to be submitted this financial year is 28 February 2019.

The scheme for the next financial year will start on 13 May 2019.

DAVID CHANCE