

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

19 February 2020

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**Inspire Fund Update**

Members will be aware of the Inspire Fund, which awards small grants of up to £1,000 to encourage people and local groups to get involved in their community, by delivering services, events or activities that increase social connections and community well-being.

More than 250 small grants have been awarded since July 2017, with two-thirds of those grants being awarded to new groups and activities that have never approached Stronger Communities before. While some of these groups have contacted the Programme on the advice of their local Member; I would urge Members to continue to encourage residents and local groups who are seeking, or already contributing to community life, to access the support that is available to help them do this.

Independent evaluation of the Stronger Communities Programme has noted that the evidence for the efficacy of the Inspire Fund is strong. They highlight that in 2018/19, projects that had been supported through the Inspire Fund had engaged with over 40,000 people, 1,600 volunteers (over a third of whom were new volunteers), who gave 32,000 volunteer hours for their communities. In order to understand the ongoing and long term impact of the Inspire Fund, the independent evaluators have just concluded follow up engagement with those groups that received an award within the first 18 months.

School Readiness Pilot

In my last update I informed Members that Stronger Communities is part of the School Readiness Pilot, supporting the development of 'Ready Communities'. This Pilot will inform the wider Public Health and CYPS Childhood Futures Transformation Programme.

Community organisations were being sought to help coordinate and develop community provision across the pilot areas of East Whitby and the main Ryedale urban centres. The competitive grant process has now concluded and the bids that were received will be evaluated in early February with the intention of starting with the successful organisation(s) later in the month.

Social Norms Campaign

I reported in my last update about a social norms campaign that was being developed by the Stronger Communities and Communications Teams to celebrate the commitment and dedication of individuals and communities to help one another and add to the richness of local life. It is one of the great strengths of North Yorkshire.

This campaign has now launched as 'Salt of the Earth' with many stories and acts already submitted. Members may already have seen some of these stories across local and social media. The campaign will continue to shine a light on the informal but impactful ways we can be kind and help those around us, as well as where possible, remove barriers to kindness.

I would encourage Members to share this campaign in their communities and continue to lead by example. Acts of kindness and individual stories can be submitted to:
SaltOfTheEarth@northyorks.gov.uk

Legal and Democratic Services

School Admissions Appeals - during the 2019 bulk appeals season (April to August) the school admissions appeals team in Democratic Services administered 735 appeals by parents and carers against the school place that their child had been allocated. Early indications are that the bulk season for 2020 will be as busy. The team also administers Exclusion Appeals and Home to School Transport Appeals. Although these are relatively few, they are complex and increasing in number. There is also an increasing number of exclusion appeals arising out of primary schools.

Overview and scrutiny – the Climate Change Scrutiny Joint Sub-Committee met in January to review what action is being taken by the Council to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and to meet the 2030 net zero emissions target. Significant progress has been made with the emissions reduction plan and scrutiny of the further development and implementation of the plan will now pass to the Council's five thematic overview and scrutiny committees, with Scrutiny Board playing a key role in co-ordinating that scrutiny.

Area Constituency Committees – the committees have become more established, having met now 6 or 7 times over the past 18 months. The committee work programmes are wide ranging and robust and reflect local issues that are also a strategic concern for the Council. In January 2020, the committees reviewed the Council's budgetary position, with a strong focus on the budget pressures specific to their area. The committee chairs are now setting up meetings with the local MPs over the summer period, so that the dialogue with our Westminster representatives can continue.

County Councillor Locality Budgets

The County Councillor Locality Budget scheme has closed for the 2019/20 financial year. The scheme for the next financial year will start on Monday 11 May 2020.

A report on the expenditure and operation of Locality Budgets in the 2019/20 financial year will be presented to Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

DAVID CHANCE