

# North Yorkshire County Council

## Executive

Minutes of the remote meeting held on Tuesday, 28 July 2020 commencing at 11.00 am.

County Councillor Carl Les in the Chair, plus County Councillors David Chance, Gareth Dadd, Caroline Dickinson, Andrew Lee, Don Mackenzie, Patrick Mulligan, Janet Sanderson and Greg White.

Other Councillors Present: County Councillors Derek Bastiman, John Ennis, Stanley Lumley, Janet Jefferson, Karin Sedgwick, Annabel Wilkinson, David Goode and David Blades.

Officers present: Richard Flinton, Barry Khan, Gary Fielding, Richard Webb, Stuart Carlton, Justine Brooksbank, Stacey Burlet, Andrew Leeming, Barrie Mason, Victoria Ononeze, Ray Busby and Melanie Carr.

Apologies: County Councillor Michael Harrison

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### Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

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#### 463. Minutes

##### Resolved –

That the public Minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2020, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed by the Chairman as a correct record.

#### 464. Declarations of Interest

County Councillor Carl Les declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 5. He confirmed that as a Board member of Welcome to Yorkshire he would abstain from voting on Recommendation C in the report.

#### 465. Exclusion of the Public and Press

##### Resolved –

That on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public was excluded from the meeting during consideration of agenda item 10 - Healthy Choices.

#### 466. Public Questions and Statements

County Councillor Carl Les confirmed that a written statement had been submitted by

Northallerton BID Co. Ltd in connection with agenda Item 8 – Northallerton High Street Parking. He confirmed that the Chair of the BID would be joining the meeting to present the BID's statement when the Executive reached Item 8 on the Agenda.

#### 467. Quarter 4 Performance & Budget Monitoring

Considered –

A joint report of the Chief Executive and Corporate Director for Strategic Resources, bringing together key aspects of the County Council's performance on a quarterly basis.

County Councillor Carl Les introduced the end of year outturn report and thanked officers for the Executive summary which highlighted the in-depth focus on Public Health and the Council's ambition of 'Modern Council'.

County Councillor David Chance provided a brief summary of the massive impact of COVID-19 on North Yorkshire, and the excellent work of officers in rising to the challenges it had brought since lockdown began, which included:

- The development of an Outbreak Control Plan and the establishment of local and regional contact tracing mechanisms
- The number of contacts from members of the public – 38K+
- The average number of volunteers employed per week (1,400) with the delivery of 50,000 volunteer hours
- The processing of 703 grants for food and energy
- The provision of appropriate PPE for all employees where required
- The delivery of 820 shops per week and 625 prescriptions
- 2000 new library members since the start of lockdown
- The co-ordinated response of the County Council, District and Borough Councils, Community Support Organisations and the role of the Stronger Communities Team in supporting that process
- The growing number of staff working remotely from home

County Councillor David Chance confirmed the report provided strong evidence of progress in delivering all four of the County Council's ambitions, but highlighted the following challenges:

- A backlog in registrations
- Protecting the 72,000 jobs furloughed across North Yorkshire during the lockdown
- The cost of placements in Residential Nursing Homes – 54% above the Authority's approved rates

In response to a number of questions from members of the Scrutiny Board, Executive Members confirmed:

- The rationalisation of Council owned properties was being considered in response to the increase in number of staff able to work from home, and the CO2 and climate change benefits that may bring were noted.
- The Brierley Building would remain part of the Council's property portfolio but its future use may evolve over time.
- Broadband services throughout the pandemic had held up well, with only a minimal number of outages.
- The intention was to open all schools in September 2020, with a number of initiatives being considered to address logistical problems associated with both social distancing in smaller

schools across the County and home to school transport – Government guidance was expected.

- Work was ongoing to ensure all children has access to an electronic device to access schooling.
- Throughout the pandemic, the County Council had continued to support public transport providers through the continued payment of concessionary fare reimbursement based on the previous 3-month period, pre-lockdown. It had also continued to pay contracted service providers.
- Over 80% take up of the first phase of small business grants, administered by the District/Borough Councils.
- Work was underway to address the challenge of delivering an increased number of winter flu vaccinations in a social distanced way
- The new streamlined safeguarding measures introduced in Autumn 2019 had proved much more proportionate.
- A number of new ways of contacting individuals at risk of domestic abuse had been initiated during the lockdown, with additional support being provided by the voluntary sector.
- Domestic Abuse remained a focus of Children's Services and its partners with a good level of referrals coming in from the Police.

#### Public Health

County Councillor Caroline Dickinson provided an overview of Public Health functions, highlighting the strengths and challenges associated with protecting and improving the health of people in North Yorkshire.

#### Modern Council

County Councillor Greg White drew members' attention to how well libraries had done throughout the pandemic with an increase in membership and the use of virtual services. He also highlighted the challenges around the Registrars Service with a backlog in weddings and birth registrations. He raised concern at the potential number of unregistered births coming to light in future years. Finally, he confirmed that work was underway to ensure the continued delivery of online committee meetings and homeworking post COVID-19,

County Councillor Carl Les thanked officers for their detailed performance update.

#### Revenue

County Councillor Gareth Dadd introduced the section of the report on the revenue budget, confirming there was little movement between Quarters 3 and 4, with COVID-19 having a minimal effect on the Quarter 4 outturn position, helped by an underspend resulting from a number of one-off non-recurring elements. He confirmed the full impact of COVID-19 would become clearer in future finance quarterly reports.

He also provided some reassurance over commercial investments, and their expected returns, and drew Members attention to the ongoing issues around the Dedicated Schools Grant and growth and demand in HAS and Children's Services. It was confirmed a 68% increase in Education & Health Care Plans had resulted in a greater financial pressure and a growing deficit.

Finally, County Councillor Gareth Dadd confirmed it was vital that the County Council invest in Welcome to Yorkshire activities this year, in light of its previous success at boosting the county's economy through tourism. County Councillor David Chance added his support to the proposed continued investment in the organisation.

Members voted unanimously in favour of the recommendations relating to the Revenue budget, as shown on page 85 of the report, with the exception of County Councillor Carl Les who absented

himself from voting on Recommendation C in relation to Welcome to Yorkshire.

#### Treasury Management, Prudential Indicators & Capital

County Councillor Gareth Dadd introduced the sections of the report on Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators the Capital Plan. In regards to Treasury Management he noted the continued reduction in debt detailed in the report.

In regard to the Treasury Management, Gary Fielding, Corporate Director for Strategic Resources drew members' attention to the interest earned but expressed caution about the future year as a resulting of falling interest rates. He went on to highlight:

- None of the prudential indicators had been exceeded;
- The request for a parental indemnity for Brierley Homes;
- The re-tendering for two schools in order to achieve better value
- The ongoing legal work aimed at ensuring a positive outcome for the Better Care Schemes

As there were no questions arising, County Councillor Carl Les referred Members to the associated recommendations on pages 122 of the report and there was a unanimous vote in favour.

#### **Resolved – That:**

- a) The contents of the Performance Report be noted
- b) The outturn position for the County Council's 2019/20 Revenue Budget as summarised in paragraph 2.1.2 be noted
- c) The additional pledged contributions of £76,600 and £215,000 (from the Directors of Development fund) to Welcome to Yorkshire (paragraph 2.4.1) be approved
- d) The position on the GWB (paragraphs 2.6.1 to 2.6.3) be noted
- e) The position on 'Strategic Capacity – Unallocated' reserve (paragraphs 2.6.4 to 2.6.6) be noted
- f) The performance of the Treasury Management operation during 2019/20 and the outturn position on Prudential Indicators be noted.
- g) The position on capital outturn as detailed in Appendices A to E be noted.
- h) The proposed carry forward to 2020/21 of the net capital underspend totaling £0.6m as set out in paragraph 4.14 be recommended to the County Council
- i) The financing of capital expenditure as detailed in paragraph 4.16 and Appendix F be approved
- j) The Parental Indemnity arrangement for Brierley Homes details of which are set out in paragraph 4.28 be approved
- k) The budget uplifts to two Basic Need schemes as detailed in paragraph 4.29 be approved

#### **468. Quarter 1 Performance Report**

Considered –

A joint report of the Chief Executive and Corporate Director for Strategic Resources, bringing together key aspects of the County Council's performance for Quarter 1 of 2020/21.

As Executive Members and the Scrutiny Board Members had no specific questions in relation to the Quarter 1 report, it was

**Resolved –** That the contents of the Quarter 1 Performance Report be noted

**469. Devolution Deal for North Yorkshire and York**

Considered – A report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) seeking approval to submit a devolution proposal to Government for North Yorkshire and the City of York.

County Councillor Carl Les introduced the report which provided a detailed overview of the work ongoing to develop and negotiate a Devolution deal for the region, with the intention of increasing funding and providing additional flexibilities for the benefit of the region. He drew members' attention to the governance arrangements and the 'Asks' detailed in Annex 3.

County Councillor David Chance proposed an additional recommendation that in light of a recent Minister's statement that it was necessary to submit a request to consider a unitary proposal as part of a Devolution deal, the Executive should instruct officers to carry out all that was necessary to progress a business case for, and promote a suitable unitary proposal on the geography of the whole of North Yorkshire, for presentation to a future Executive meeting and subsequently to an additional full County Council meeting for approval.

County Councillor Gareth Dadd paid tribute to the Leader's ongoing commitment to progressing a Devolution deal for North Yorkshire, which he considered vital in order to ensure future investment for the region, and welcomed the opportunity to support which ever proposal was successful for the region.

County Councillor Carl Les thanked officers for their work to date, and having noted the proposals, Members voted in favour of the recommendations and therefore it was

**Resolved – That:**

- i) The submissions to Government as detailed in Appendix 3 be approved, and the making of any necessary amendments to the submission as a result of each constituent authority's feedback be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader, including taking any necessary action to give effect to this recommendation.
- ii) In light of the Ministers statement that it is necessary to submit a request to consider a unitary proposal as part of a Devolution deal, officers carry out all that is necessary to progress a business case and promote a suitable unitary proposal on the geography of the whole of North Yorkshire, for presentation to a future Executive meeting and subsequently to an additional full County Council meeting for approval.

**470. Northallerton High Street Parking**

Considered – A report of the Corporate Director for Business and Environmental Services detailing the findings of a review in response to a petition received from Northallerton BID Company Ltd requesting the extension of the current 30 minutes free parking on Northallerton High Street to 2 hours free parking.

A statement was read out on behalf of Mr Lindsay Judd, Chair of Northallerton BID Co. Ltd which stated:

We thank Mr Bowe for his report. We have studied it very carefully and it does little to ease our concerns about the commercial damage our High Street is experiencing from the very limited free parking.

## Item 1

One of the disturbing facts from the report is that in the last two years the number of vehicles parking free in the High Street for up to 30 minutes has dropped by almost 50,000, with no compensatory increase in the Applegarth free allowance numbers. These are worrying figures for the economic health of Northallerton.

We also note from the report's own data that traffic flow has remained static. That means one of the main objectives of the original charging regime has clearly not been achieved.

Our own survey shows that businesses feel strongly that congestion has increased since charging was introduced, again defeating the original objectives. The limited free parking allowance makes shoppers feel anxious and rushed. With current restrictions on social distancing, 30 minutes is insufficient even to conduct what Mr Bowe describes as a 'minor errand', let alone a larger purchase.

We find the report long on data but short on evidence to support Mr Bowe's conclusions that the Council is meeting its parking strategy objectives. His conclusions differ radically from our own research that trade has become significantly worse for 56 per cent of businesses since the charging regime was introduced in 2015. We don't see how his conclusions are consistent with the Council's obligation to link parking strategies to local circumstances which meet the best interests of communities and businesses. Several businesses on Northallerton High Street have not survived the pandemic. This is a time when we all need to work together to preserve jobs and the economic health of our town. Those businesses that are open are attracting only a limited percentage of their normal trade.

I urge the Executive to act positively to establish a fairer parking regime. I know from talking to my many business colleagues how passionately people feel about this. The High Street faces unprecedented challenges. This unnecessary barrier to trade must be eased so it can survive and thrive again for all our benefit. We look to you today for help and leadership for the good of our county town.

County Councillor Don Mackenzie acknowledged that retailers in town centres had experienced a challenging time since the outbreak of COVID-19, and confirmed:

- In response, the County Council had suspended all on-street parking charges from March to the middle of June 2020, only reintroducing them as traffic levels came back up to more or less normal levels.
- Parking charges were a key instrument in managing traffic, especially in town centres, ensuring a turnover of spaces, and encouraging the use of off-street car parks, of which there were plenty in Northallerton run by Hambleton District Council.
- Parking charges in Northallerton were extremely low in comparison with others levied in the area - approximately half of what they were in Harrogate.
- All surplus from parking charges were used for transport related schemes e.g. supporting concessionary fares on buses, bus journeys in and out of Northallerton etc.
- The request for two hours of free parking was contrary to the general direction of travel and anything that encouraged car transport would be detrimental to environmental improvements.

Barrie Mason, Assistant Director for Highways & Transportation outlined the petition received from the BID in February 2020 and presented the findings from a review carried out by officers in response. He also confirmed:

- The current parking management arrangement on the High Street was entirely consistent with the County Council's Parking Strategy, adopted in 2011.

- The half hour free concession period was introduced at the same time as the charging scheme to support the continued ability for drivers to be able to carry out very short term errands such as picking up a newspaper at lunch or on the way to work.
- The current requirement for social distancing due to Covid-19 had compromised the ability to carry out such errands within the current 30-minute time allowance.

Members noted that the report:

- Outlined the performance data considered as part of the review and identified a range of factors influencing trade, parking management being one of them.
- Detailed the transaction data supplied by Hambleton DC which showed an increased use of the Applegarth short stay car park located to the rear of the High Street where one-hour free parking was available.
- Concentrated on a review of the parking management arrangements in a pre-Covid scenario - the context in which the petition was submitted back in February 2020.

Whilst Members acknowledged that the requested increase to 2 hours would be contrary to the County Council's strategic approach to parking management, they were minded to increase the on-street free time allowance in light of the unprecedented challenges facing High Street business, as a result of the recent COVID-19 pandemic. It was therefore proposed that it be temporarily increased to 60 minutes linked to the social distancing measures currently in place.

Finally, in terms of an equitable approach it was suggested that the same temporary arrangement be introduced in the only other location where a free-parking concession was in place within an existing on-street parking zone i.e. the market place in Knaresborough.

**Resolved – That:**

- i. The current half hour free concession period on Northallerton High Street be increased to one-hour on a temporary basis up to 31 December 2020, linked to the social distancing measures currently in place.
- ii. The same temporary arrangement be introduced in the market place in Knaresborough.
- iii. Performance data be assessed at the end of the temporary period

#### **471. Forward Work Plan**

The Forward Plan for the period from 16 July 2020 to 31 May 2021 was noted.

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**Agenda item 13 was considered in private and the public have no right of access to this section of the Minutes.**

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#### **472. Healthy Choices**

Considered -

The report of the Corporate Director – Health & Adult Services regarding the Healthy Choices

Service.

**Resolved –**

That the recommendations in the report be agreed.

The meeting concluded at 1:11pm  
MLC