

Selby and Ainsty Area Constituency Committee

Better Together Programme Update

25 September 2020

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To update the Members of the Area Constituency Committee on progress in relation to the Better Together Programme.

2.0 Introduction and Background

- 2.1 Since 2013 North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) and Selby District Council (SDC) have worked together to establish greater collaboration in service delivery to the benefit of both the public and the two organisations. The Better Together Programme was established to enable shared expertise, intelligence and leadership between the two councils to maximise how assets are used to deliver savings whilst redesigning services to achieve the best possible outcomes to all customers in the locality.
- 2.2 The vision for the Programme is: “To enable the most effective use of joint resources of the two organisations in providing services to our shared client base”.
- 2.3 Following the establishment of the joint role of Chief Executive of SDC and Assistant Chief Executive of NYCC in October 2013 the Better Together Programme has gained strength, momentum and pace demonstrated by the excellent feedback that was provided on the programme within the NYCC LGA Peer Review (March 2016) and the SDC LGA Peer Review (November 2017).

3.0 Governance Framework

3.1 Better Together Steering Group and Joint Members Group

The Programme is governed by a Joint Members Group and an Officer Steering Group which includes the Chief Executives from both organisations (please see governance diagram at **Appendix A**). The governance model in existence ensures the right level of sponsorship and communication at the senior leadership level of both organisations to be able to resolve issues and accelerate progress. The governance arrangements have assisted in ensuring that the programme maintains momentum and has been supportive of the innovative approach to service delivery. It has also ensured that the principles of the collaboration are upheld and provides scrutiny to the projects being delivered.

3.2 Collaboration Agreement

In 2015 the two councils agreed to enter into a formal collaboration agreement to evidence the parties' intentions, the principles of collaboration and the obligations in respect of the services to be provided. The Better Together Collaboration Agreement was agreed by the NYCC Executive at its meeting on 7th July 2015. SDC Executive delegated responsibility to the SDC Chief Executive in April 2015 to enter into the formal agreement. The initial term for the overarching Agreement was for 5 years and both the NYCC Executive and SDC Executive agreed at its respective meetings in February and March 2020 to extend the agreement for a further three years until June 2023.

3.3 The Collaboration includes the following services at present:

- VOIP Telephony System
- Registration Service – Office Accommodation
- Lagan CRM System

- SDC Website/Intranet Support
- Shared IT Infrastructure Service
- Natural Environment Advisory Service and Landscape Architectural Advice
- Financial Service
- Learning & development (Learning Zone)
- Legal Services
- HR Service
- Payroll Service

4.0 Benefits of the Programme

- 4.1 There are a number of key benefits that have been identified across the Programme to date that have resulted from effective joint working initiatives and the specific services delivered under the Collaboration Agreement.
- 4.2 Sharing of back office services under the Collaboration Agreement (resource and expertise) in an appropriate and sustainable manner which has enabled us to be much more customer focused. We have been able to achieve increased resilience in service delivery, increased level of skills from pooled resources, improved opportunities for staff career progression and succession planning (Finance Service). A more client focussed approach to service delivery and economies of scale have also been realised (E.g. Integrated Finance Functions, Shared ICT Infrastructure, Shared Telephony and Customer Relationship Management System, Payroll, E-Learning, Recruitment, Legal Services, HR Services, Archaeology and Ecology Services).
- 4.3 Focused, joined up delivery of services at a community level. Building capacity and strengthening local community networks that already exist in communities by developing Community Hubs designed on differing local needs. Ensuring wider partner involvement where required (E.g. Selby Safer Hubs Integrated Neighbourhood Management between SDC, NYCC & NYP is delivering efficient, integrated, multi-agency front line processes whilst reducing demand for services). The joint Customer & Community Programme supported:
- An increase in the number of online direct debit payments (139%)
 - a 322% increase in the number of volunteers at community hubs
 - across all libraries in the district volunteers gave 15,760 hours to deliver services, including assisting 1,865 individuals to access services online of which 732 related to NYCC or SDC services
 - increased resilience for Community Hubs through enabling income generating services (meeting room hire at Tadcaster Hub and improved facilities at Sherburn Old Girls School)
 - increased business levels resulted in Sherburn being awarded Highly Commended in the NY Library of the Year awards.
 - Selby Library has seen a 27% increase in visits and a 12% increase in active users since the refurbishment
 - broader health and wellbeing benefits such as improved mental health and reduced isolation which are all community led
 - the establishment of Selby Health Matters
- 4.4 Innovative digital platforms for our customers and communities accessing information and services through modern online platforms, enabling service delivery re-design and channel shift (E.g. SDC Website).

- 4.5 Co-location opportunities have been implemented through an asset management review, improving working environments and generating income for both organisations (E.g. Registrars, NY Police and Align Property Partners colocation at SDC Civic Centre).
- 4.6 Joined up approach to planning services both in terms of communications, prioritisation, processes and consistent relationship management with developers and external organisations. As part of the last Tour de Yorkshire event we have seen real benefits to the relationships formed in this area where we have been able to respond flexibly to customers and each other's needs which presents a joined up approach to the community. We were also able to complete works quickly and at a reduced cost to what had been anticipated.
- 4.7 Improved experience for business customers through joined up communications, relationship management and processes (e.g. Planning Services and Primary Authority Schemes).
- 4.8 Joint Investment in areas such as public transport to improve passenger experience (E.g. Selby Bus Station Upgrades), the Sherburn 2 development which will create around 2,000 new jobs and the development of Community Hubs (see section 4.3 above).
- 4.9 Maximising council tax base and business rates income through the joint investment in a SDC Property Inspector and an Empty Homes Officer.
- 4.10 Supporting our residents to "live well" through the joint work on Health, Social Care and Housing work. Multi-disciplinary team approach where we are taking a multi-disciplinary team approach to undertake accommodation reviews and the support needs of complex cases, homelessness prevention and DFG Assessments. The continued engagement of the Vale of York CCG and Selby's Primary Care Networks with SDC and NYCC community and social care reps has resulted in a regular meeting throughout the current period which has been focused both on the immediate response to Covid 19 but also how we may work together going into the future.
- 4.11 SDC have worked with NYCC, Ryedale and Scarborough to develop a new partnership approach between NYCC and all of the District Council Housing Authorities in relation to the provision of homeless prevention and support services which went live in October 2019. This represents a fundamental change as it moves away from previous external contracting arrangements to a joint working approach with Selby as lead authority due to the Better Together partnership. The current Covid-19 circumstances have placed significant strain on all housing related services but all feedback is that the services are responding flexibly and effectively to manage the situation. Districts are linking well with adult social care, mental health and substance misuse services to ensure that people are supported and are looking at innovative approaches to ensure people are safely housed in line with the government directive that all rough sleepers be housed. We believe the response to this unprecedented situation by all parties supports the commissioning decisions taken in partnership with the Districts and NYCC.
- 4.12 In addition to the benefits set out above there have also been a significant amount of cashable savings that have been realised. Combining the projects undertaken where cashable savings have been identified and income has been generated, at present a total of **£1,720,206** has been achieved and a further **£312,770** has been identified. This, therefore, provides a current total achieved and forecasted saving for the programme from April 2014 to March 2021 of **£1,987,206**.

5.0 Current Workstreams

5.1 Health, Social Care and Housing

This work spans the district and focuses on health, social care and housing support to vulnerable people. At the Better Together Steering Group Meeting it was agreed that joint working on health, social care and district council services should be a key focus for the Better Together Programme going forward and that we should be “jointly helping people to live well in the locality”.

5.2 The three key areas of focus under this work stream are currently:

- Transfers of Care / Multi-Disciplinary Team Approach
- Disability Facilities Grant (DFG) Assessments
- Public Health/Selby Health Matters

5.3 Transfers of Care / Multi-Disciplinary Team Approach

The Better Together Steering Group agreed that the most effective way of reviewing and improving issues in this area was to establish a Multi-Disciplinary Team to take this forward. Leads from SDC and NYCC HAS have been exploring the opportunities to work together more effectively and to shape the scope of this work.

5.4 Following improvement workshops held with partners the SDC Housing representative is now attending NYCC Adult Social Care led MDT case discussion meetings and is now a mainstream approach. The development of MDT delivery has been accelerated by the current situation and a daily MDT meeting was established in order to discuss any needs arising in the transfer to/from care and to respond to cases potentially requiring escalation. The system has worked well from a SDC perspective requiring limited input. However, the information sharing support has been invaluable.

5.5 Alongside this work a meeting was held by the Selby Primary Care Network to align priorities of local services. The meeting included SDC, NYCC Public Health, CCG and TEWVE. The outcome was to look at the establishment of a MDT approach. The CCG have provided a Lead Officer to focus on the establishment of partnership approaches to setting up the local PCN's so this is a great level of capacity to help deliver on the work.

5.6 The next step is for the Head of Community, Partnerships and Customers (SDC), Public Health Consultant (NYCC), Assistant Director Health and Integration (NYCC) and representative from the CCG to plan how the approach can now be deployed. We will use the learning from the operational work to support this. Timescales continue to be fluid at this stage due to current operational restrictions.

5.7 Disability Facilities Grant (DFG) Assessments

SDC have also been working with NYCC in relation to Occupational Therapy services and additional capacity for work on Disabled Facilities grants and Council House adaptations.

5.8 NYCC are working with the Districts, supported by SDC, to develop proposals to ring fence capacity to DFG assessment work within the Districts and improve waiting times for assessment going forward. This would help reduce waiting lists in the Districts and has potential to improve the system overall by providing additional capacity for this work over and above the statutory provision currently provided by NYCC.

5.9 Engagement and agreement on how the resource would be deployed and allocated would be made with the districts going forward and discussions continue between NYCC, SDC, Ryedale DC, Harrogate BC and Scarborough BC to develop proposals. This work has not

progressed as quickly as originally planned as the main focus in this area has been the transfer of Children's OT services from HAS to CYPS, however it has been agreed that the DFG assessment work should re-commence.

5.10 Public Health / Selby Health Matters

SDC, NYCC Public Health and NYCC Strategic Transport have been working together collaboratively to address key health issues in the Selby area. The key development areas are:

- 5.11 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs). The LCWIP phase 2 reports are now concluded and we have 6 bid-ready plans (5 for Selby and 1 for Sherburn/South Milford). The plans total approximately £30m in all ranging from £720k to £11m. NYCC Strategic Transport and SDC Planning Policy will now use this as the basis for local development and funding opportunities.
- 5.12 There has been positive engagement between NYCC Stronger Communities and SDC Community and Partnerships to establish three Community Support Organisations in the area with SDC putting in £25k for the community networks underneath the NYCC service level agreements for the CSO's operations. This has created an opportune moment to reflect on how we work together on community engagement and whether there are further synergies in staffing, asset resource and grant investment that we may wish to explore to strengthen community service delivery.
- 5.13 One area of development however has been the continued engagement of the Vale of York CCG and Selby's Primary Care Networks with SDC and NYCC community and social care reps. This has resulted in a regular meeting throughout the current period which has been focused both on the immediate response to Covid 19 but also how we may work together going into the future. Progress since March 2020 includes:
- Establishment of a Vale Systems Group
 - Locality groups have now formed in Selby District
 - Closer working between district nurses and practice nurses
 - Pilot of a mental health MDT approach in Selby Town PCN
 - Improving support for people with mild to moderate frailty
 - Development of a population health management needs assessment in Selby District
 - Development of a Big Lottery Funding Bid with the Two Ridings Community Foundation
 - Support to design the flu vaccination campaign
 - Development of strategic plan (particularly for Selby Town PCN)
- 5.14 The PCN plan is underpinned by the principles of co-production and co-delivery and starts to consider how we link needs based and place based planning into any re-commissioning of services, how best to utilise system resources and how to have a clear and strong voice in a North Yorkshire and York shared ambitions within a wider STP. The next step is to build on the strategic discussions to firm up priorities and plans at system level.
- 5.15 Economic Growth & Infrastructure
In January 2019 the Better Together Joint Members Group approved the approach for the development of a joint growth and infrastructure delivery plan and agreed that the first priority area for review would be Sherburn-in-Elmet.
- 5.16 This work was to review the development and infrastructure situation around Sherburn in Elmet and Church Fenton, extending broadly to the A64, A63, A1M and East Coast Main Line, over the short, medium and long term with a view to ensuring sustainable growth is achieved. A joint NYCC/SDC Task and Finish Group was set up to take this work forward

and the Group identified delivery mechanisms for specific issues. For the Sherburn in Elmet area it has been agreed to progress the work through existing joint working between the authorities and partners with key areas including; A63/A162 roundabout, Monk Fryston traffic calming, commuting, HGV parking and the optimisation of Section 106 agreements. The following issues will be taken forward through the Local Plan; Traffic modelling, health care facilities, infrastructure funding, alignment of plans and strategies and Church Fenton pinch points.

5.17 There are several significant work streams that require joint working between the District and County Council including:

- Local Plan
- Key development sites - through major applications to the Local Planning Authority (LPA)
- Work to promote Strategic Development Sites; and
- Regeneration and Development Projects

5.18 In line with the Seventh Local Development Scheme (LDS), effective from July 2019 to 2023, we are on target to deliver the objectives for the first LDS of the current plan and the following have been completed / are in progress:

- Initial Evidence Gathering, Stakeholder Engagement and the Preparation of Issues and Options Consultation Document have been completed.
- The District Wide Transport Modelling work has been commissioned with Stage 1 set to undertake a high level assessment to 'Identify locations where the network is constrained or is likely to become constrained within the local plan period' with timescales as set out below:
 - We have now received the draft Stage One report from WSP summarising the analysis and finding and they have also provided potential costs for the Stage Two work which is currently under review by Officers
 - Development Management Policies have been drafted
 - Site Allocation Policies are under development

5.19 The next priority is the preparation of the Preferred Options consultation document (draft plan). This document will be prepared for consultation from January through to February 2021. To achieve this point, a draft will be taken to SDC Executive early December 2020.

5.20 Smarter Working - Primary Authority Schemes

NYCC Trading Standards and SDC have been exploring the opportunities of working together on Primary Authority Schemes agreements with customers. After consultation with Legal Services it has been recommended that a joint protocol will be appropriate as there will be no charging between NYCC and SDC or any significant staffing implications. NYCC have formally approved the protocol and are pursuing the identification of new customers in this area.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 The Better Together Programme continues to deliver benefits to SDC, NYCC and the public whilst also providing a joint platform to identify and deliver new initiatives for improvement. In the earlier stages of the Programme there was a key focus on achieving savings through joint working often in back office support areas, this remains a key objective for the programme however in recent times the Programme has had a major focus on jointly delivering on key outcomes for our respective customers. The Better Together

Collaboration Agreement continues to ensure that joint principles, governance and a legal framework are in place to deliver services and joint projects.

7.0 Recommendations

- 7.1 It is recommended that Members of the Area Constituency Committee note the progress made and the ongoing work of the Better Together Programme.

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