

North Yorkshire County Council

Executive

Minutes of the remote meeting held on Tuesday 24th August 2021 commencing at 11.00 am.

County Councillor Carl Les in the Chair. Plus County Councillors David Chance, Greg White, Caroline Dickinson, Michael Harrison, Don Mackenzie, Patrick Mulligan and Janet Sanderson

In attendance: Members of Scrutiny Board - County Councillors Derek Bastiman, Janet Jefferson, Stanley Lumley, Karin Sedgwick and Andy Paraskos.

Officers present: Karl Battersby, Stuart Carlton, Gary Fielding, Richard Flinton, Barry Khan, Tony Law, Anton Hodge, Sarah Fawcett, Melanie Carr and Stephen Loach.

Other Attendees: County Councillor Paul Haslam

Apologies: Executive Members Gareth Dadd and Andrew Lee, County Councillor Annabel Wilkinson, and Richard Web

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

623 Introductions

Members of the Executive and Corporate Management Team introduced themselves, followed by other Councillors present at the meeting.

624 Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 July 2021

Resolved –

That the public Minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2021, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed by the Chairman as a correct record.

625 Declarations of Interest

County Councillor Michael Harrison declared a disclosable interest in Agenda item 6, due to having close family members employed at the County Council. He confirmed he had a dispensation from the Standards Committee enabling him to remain in the meeting and vote on Agenda item 6.

626 Public Questions and Statements

There were no public questions or statements.

627 Appointments to the Executive and Changes to Executive Portfolios

Considered –

The Leader considered a report seeking to revise appointments to the Executive, and

update Executive Member portfolios. The Leader also considered a proposal to update the Constitution to reflect that all Executive Members in carrying out their duties as a portfolio holder were responsible for equality, diversity and inclusion.

Finally, Members of the Executive considered a proposal to make an appointment to the West Yorkshire and Harrogate Integrated Care System Partnership Board.

Resolved – That:

- i. That County Councillor Caroline Dickinson be removed from the Executive from 24 August 2021.
- ii. That County Councillor Andrew Lee be appointed as the Executive Member for Public Health, Prevention and Supported Housing
- iii. That County Councillor Derek Bastiman be appointed as the Executive Member for Open to Business, including growth, economic development, planning, waste management, trading standards unit and business relations;
- iv. That Climate Change be included in the Executive Member for Customer Engagement portfolio, as follows:

‘Executive Member for Climate Change and Customer Engagement including contact centre, website, libraries, digital, performance management (complaints and compliments)’
- v. That ‘including sustainability and transformation plans (issues relating to Friarage and Darlington Hospitals)’ be removed from the title of the portfolio of the Executive Member for Public Health, Prevention and Supported Housing, including sustainability and transformation plans (issues relating to Friarage and Darlington Hospitals)
- vi. That Members of the Executive recommended to the Chief Executive that under his emergency delegated powers, he appoint County Councillor Andrew Lee to the West Yorkshire and Harrogate Integrated Care System Partnership Board.
- vii. That the Constitution (and Council website) be updated by the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) under his delegated powers in Article 15.02(c)(iii) to update the Constitution, to reflect the changes set out in resolution (i) to (vi) above, and to reflect that all Executive Members in carrying out their duties as a portfolio holder are responsible for equality, diversity and inclusion (as detailed in paragraph 2.2 of the report).

628 Q1 Performance Monitoring 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 2021/22.

County Councillor Carl Les introduced the Quarter 1 performance report and thanked officers for the Executive summary which highlighted the in-depth focus on ‘North Yorkshire is a place with a strong economy and a commitment to sustainable growth’.

County Councillor David Chance provided an overview of the report, which highlighted a number of key performance events for Quarter 1, as listed in paragraph 2.3 of the report, including:

- The work of the Community Support Organisations, which continued to help over

3,500 people a month across North Yorkshire;

- Improving levels of prevention activity in support of healthy and independent living
- The findings from a Children's social care Ofsted inspection, which showed continued improvement on the previous 'outstanding' rating;
- The 2020/21 staff survey results, with consistent improvement across all key indicators;

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:

- Supporting strong economic recovery post pandemic
- Demand led pressures in referrals to Children's social care, with the highest level of quarterly referrals in the last 10 years;
- The doubling of the average number of hospital discharges to adult social care, since the start of the pandemic;

County Councillor Caroline Dickinson recorded her grateful thanks to all the staff in Public Health for their help and support during her time as Executive Member, and for the excellent work they continued to deliver, and in turn, other Executive Members recorded their thanks to her for her support and guidance.

North Yorkshire is a place with a Strong Economy and a commitment to Sustainable Growth

County Councillor Don Mackenzie provided an overview of the strengths and challenges associated with County Council's growth strategy aimed at improving the economy of North Yorkshire. He drew members' attention to:

- The launch of NY Highways on 1st June 2021 and the work they had already successfully achieved;
- The improving condition of North Yorkshire's principal highways, with only 3% requiring repairs;
- The early re-opening of the A19 at Chapel Haddlesley;
- The launch of Yorbus – a new demand responsive app-based bus service pilot;

County Councillor Don Mackenzie also paid tribute to the team at NYNet who had done so much to improve the digital infrastructure across the County, which had been of invaluable service to residents and businesses throughout the pandemic.

In regard to the Council's other ambitions, individual Executive Members highlighted the following:

Healthy & Independent Living – The significant pressures in the system through a loss of workforce, with actions underway to limit the impact;

Best Start in Life – An increased number of referrals to children in need and Child Protection Plans. Also, the Fostering Service currently operating at near full capacity and the ongoing joint working with other Authorities to promote fostering;

Innovative & Forward Thinking – The increased number (1m) of NYCC website hits during April – June 2021 in comparison to the same period in 2020, and a 40% increase in the number of digital interactions with the Council, which had freed up resources for focussing on more complex social care enquiries. Also, the provision of disability training for contact centre staff.

It was noted that the County Council had been shortlisted for a local government award for its approach to tackling COVID.

In response to questions from members of the Scrutiny Board, the following was confirmed:

- The Youth Justice Service had been returned to a fully integrated location in Children & Families Early Help and the new practice model introduced in the last two years was proving successful at diverting young people in the system from future offending. Work was ongoing with the magistrates and court services to divert from custody where possible, but there was a backlog in cases as a result of the pandemic;
- A review of the Skills Service had recently been completed and a project was underway in Scarborough 'Skills for Work' aimed at providing entry level skills training for 16-19yr olds.
- All areas would be considered for the roll out of the Yorbus, should the pilot prove successful;
- There was now a greater need for short term placements for patients discharged earlier from hospital as a result of the recently introduced national discharge pathway. This was proving challenging due to the severe workforce pressures. The Council's reablement teams were being used to fill the gaps but that was impacting on the Council's ability to deliver respite and reablement services.
- The increase in the work of the Living Well team that prevents people from needing more intensive support later down the line, was thought to be as a result of people not seeking help during the pandemic.
- The pandemic had resulted in an earlier roll out of Microsoft 365 and TEAMS than planned, with its additional functionality proved rewarding. IT business partners were now working closer with services areas to better understand the functionality they required, and staff training and early adopters would support the process. It was acknowledged that new ways of working introduced during the pandemic would play a key part in helping the Council to move forward. The benefits of working together as a team was also noted;
- Work was constantly ongoing to protect the County Council's IT systems from cybercrime, requiring constant vigilance, and Trading Standards continued to work hard to protect the public from scams etc;
- The permit scheme introduced for Utility Companies was working and they were being held to account for the quality of their re-instatement work. The Scheme had also generated a surplus of cash as a result of the financial penalties imposed. Streetwork Inspectors undertook monitoring of their works and forward programming of their works was proving helpful;
- A strong Welcome to Yorkshire providing good advice and guidance to the tourism industry was needed if the levels of tourism seen during the pandemic were to be retained going forward. The planned Festival of Yorkshire in conjunction with the Jubilee next year could also prove to be successful.
- The lack of Ofsted School inspections made it impossible to truly understand the quality of schools across the county. The inspection framework had changed a number of times since some schools had been inspected, and the County Council's School Improvement Strategy was also being revised. There were some specific concerns about 23 schools across the County and work was underway to support and advise them;
- Children with special educational needs being sent out of authority for their education was not good for those children and extremely costly;
- A review of EHCPs was required. The DfE had increased its funding over the last 3 years which equated to £15m more for the County Council, but that still did not resolve the funding issues in SEND.

Executive Members noted County Councillor Stanley Lumley comments that as more and more electric cars came into use, an extra 50% of electrical supply would be required, which may prove difficult in such a rural county. He suggested that other ways of producing electricity should be considered, in particular hydro-electric power making use

of the County's access to waterways and the coast. He also suggested insufficient charging points across the County could affect tourism in the future.

In response, the following was noted:

- Allerton Park generated enough electricity to power 40,000 homes a year;
- Air quality would improve as more and more electric cars came into use;
- Some initial work had already been undertaken to assess EV charging point capacity across the county, and to identify the issues that would need to be addressed as the transition to electric vehicles continued. A bid to the Community Renewal Fund had been made for some further revenue funding to develop a business plan, with a proposition coming back to the Executive in late 2021 / early 2022;
- New technology now allowed for the remote monitoring of EV charges;
- Hydro-power would be considered as part of the Council's response to the Rural Commission's recommendations;

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

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

629 Elective Home Education Policy Statement

Considered –

A report of the Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service, proposing the replacement of the existing EHE Policy & procedures agreed in 2016.

County Councillor Patrick Mulligan introduced the report, confirming there had been a significant percentage increase in the number of children being home educated, as detailed in paragraph 2.3 of the report, but that number only equated to 1% of the total number of children in school. Attention was drawn to the recently completed internal review and its associated outcomes, as listed in paragraph 3.2 of the report.

To reassure members, County Councillor Patrick Mulligan also drew attention to Appendix D of the revised policy which summarised the main features of the legal options open to the local authority if it was satisfied that a child was not receiving a suitable education at home.

Members considered the revised policy and procedures presented as part of the report. They also noted the DfE advice note issued to local authorities in November 2020, the outcomes of the internal review and the appointment of four EHE advisors.

Stuart Carlton, Corporate Director – Children & Young People's Service confirmed the revised policy would provide a strengthened pathway to ensure a decision to home educate was been taken for the right reasons. He confirmed his view that a national review of the guidance was required to enable Authorities to have a higher threshold on what suitable home education was.

County Councillor Janet Jefferson welcomed the revised policy and agreed a national review was required to address the loopholes in the government guidance.

Finally it was confirmed that the four newly appointed Home Education Advisors would start to look at the suitability of the home education being provided by 850 families across North Yorkshire currently, prioritising those that were open to children and social care or those that had a EHCP in place.

Resolved:

Executive Members agreed to recommend to the Chief Executive Officer that using his emergency delegated powers he approve the revised Elective Home Education policy and procedures, replacing those previously approved in 2016, in order to reflect the new pathway and statutory requirements.

630 Area Constituency Committee Feedback Report

Considered – A report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal & Democratic Services) providing an overview of the key issues considered at a recent meeting of the Thirsk & Malton Area Constituency Committee.

Resolved - That the report be noted.

631 Forward Plan

Considered –

The Forward Plan for the period 16 August 2021 to 31 August 2022 was presented.

Resolved - That the Forward Plan be noted.

The meeting concluded at 12.25 pm.