

North Yorkshire County Council

Corporate & Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the remote meeting held on Monday 13th September 2021 commencing at 10.30 am.

County Councillor Bryn Griffiths in the Chair. Plus County Councillors Margaret Atkinson, Mike Jordan, Richard Musgrave, Andy Paraskos, Yvonne Peacock, Tony Randerson, Matt Scott, Cliff Trotter and Annabel Wilkinson.

Officers present: Marie-Ann Jackson, Keeley Metcalfe, Matthew Robinson, Steve Walker, Nigel Smith and Deborah Flowers.

Other Attendees: Philip Allott, Police Fire & Crime Commissioner & Fiona Kinnear.

Apologies: County Councillors Val Arnold and Caroline Goodrick

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

158 Minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2021

Resolved –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2021 having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

159 Apologies & Declaration of Interest

There were no apologies or declarations of interest to note.

160 Public Questions & Statements

There were no public questions or statements received.

161 Attendance of Police Fire & Crime Commissioner

Philip Allot, the Police Fire & Crime Commissioner attended the meeting to provide an update on the implementation of the plans for collaboration between North Yorkshire Police and North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service. The presentation confirmed the retention of two separate Services each with their own ethos and traditions, but highlighted:

- The pooling together of back room services, which had led to improved logistics, with savings from estate, servicing of fleet and resources;
- Opportunities for combined working and associated efficiencies through co-funding and co-commissioning;
- The introduction of a combined support function 'Enable North Yorkshire',
- £350K of savings to date, broadly in line with the expected savings at this stage as identified within the business case - there had been some additional costs associated with the setting up of 'Enable'.
- A new combined Police & Fire Station in Ripon, purchased out of capital budgets, to be

- operational within 14 months, possibly sooner;
- The re-investment of savings in to frontline services;
- The money from the sale of Newby Wiske Hall had already been spent up front to purchase the Alverton Court site in Northallerton, as the new combined Headquarters.

It was noted there were currently four combined offices of Police & Crime Commissioners across the UK, with plans as part of the Government's White Paper to encourage every PCC to take on the responsibility for Fire.

Members raised concerns about use of the 101 number, which they considered unfit for purpose, and it was suggested that all PCC and PFCC should work together to seek a complete overhaul of 101. In response, the Commissioner confirmed it was number one on his agenda with £139K additional funding having already been made available. He recognised that the biggest issue for the service was the mass fluctuation in the number of calls (made worse by the pandemic) which could not be handled by the number of trained staff available. He confirmed additional staff were now being trained and work was underway to introduce new software to show the public the number of calls waiting in real time, in the hope this would manage expectations and allow the public to make an informed decision about their call. To alleviate the number of 101 calls, the Commissioner also confirmed the roll out of an online facility to be able to report ASB and other issues.

In an effort to combat ASB, the Commissioner confirmed he had funding available to engage young people in adversary activities, and suggested that Councillors may like to apply for a grant to support activities in their divisions. He also confirmed his plan to introduce a good citizenship programme aimed at talking to young people in school about the privileges that come with living in the UK and also the responsibilities e.g. protecting the environment in their community.

The issue of rural fire services was also raised and the importance of volunteer firefighters. Members questioned how best to retain those volunteers and what incentives existed. The Commissioner confirmed reform was underway for on-call fire fighters to make the pay more attractive, and in the more rural areas, the introduction of more public safety officers, who were on-call firefighters and first responders with some of the powers of a PCSO. He confirmed he would welcome a more diverse set of recruits, particularly females and members of minority communities.

The Commissioner noted that North Yorkshire had the lowest crime rates in England, and that 20% of the crime reported was cross border crime from adjacent regions. He also confirmed it would be possible through his office, to arrange the attendance once a year of a local beat officer at Parish Council meetings.

Finally, the Commissioner issued an invitation to Committee members to visit the new Police Control Room and Members agreed to take up that offer.

162 Annual Update on Stronger Communities

Marie-Ann Jackson, Head of Stronger Communities Programme introduced the report and provided an overview of the work continuing through the 23 CSOs still in operation. This included supporting those contacted by the Test & Trace Service and those looking to reclaim and regain their independence. She confirmed:

- As of June 2021, there were still 5000 people seeking practical support from the CSOs;
- There was national funding available to retain the CSOs until the end of March 2022;
- The flexibility of the CSO model had been recognised through a recent independent evaluation, with partners in the community and voluntary sector being heavily involved in their creation, which proved fundamental to the success of the model;

- The depth and integration of the CSOs in to their local networks was also one of the factors of their success;
- The CSOs had represented strong value for money as evidenced by the significant number of volunteer hours captured through the CSOs, and the savings made to other public sectors as a result;
- A majority of partners were keen post-pandemic, to continue their contribution to the support being given and evolve in to organisations that work alongside statutory services;
- A 12-month pilot in the Selby area was underway involving 3 CSOs in a community anchor role;

She also highlighted that whilst focussing on the work of the CSOs, the Stronger Communities team had continued with other pandemic related work and its broader 'business as usual' work, as detailed in paragraph 7 of the report.

Keeley Metcalfe (Resourcing Solutions Business Partner, Human Resources and Organisational Development (CSD) provided a further progress update on key elements of the Corporate Volunteering project. This included an overview of the work of the Covid Support Volunteers and an update on the introduction of an online application process for volunteers. Members noted the celebration events that had taken place over the summer, and the development of a volunteer feedback survey to create a baseline of data from which to identify any improvements required.

It was confirmed there would be no October half term support, with activity packs next being provided at Christmas. However, the online resources were still accessible with the potential for its re-promotion. Members requested that it be re-promoted ahead of the February half term as well.

For future reports, it was suggested that it would be helpful to receive information on what could have gone better, and what other models could be considered in order to achieve it. Concern was also expressed about scope creep with the exceptional level of support provided during the pandemic becoming an expectation from receivers. It was agreed that it was about re-education and weaning those individuals off the high level of support they had become used to.

Members thanked officers for their update and it was

Resolved –

That the update be noted, and a further update be provided in 12 months time.

163 Youth Justice Service Performance Update

Steve Walker, Youth Justice Services Planning & Development Officer provided an overview of performance and drew attention to the key priorities within the new Strategic Plan for 2021-22 e.g.:

- Reducing number of first-time entrants – it was noted that the pace of reduction in North Yorkshire was slowing;
- Reducing Re-offending – it was noted that North Yorkshire was several percent above most other areas in regard to whether or not a child re-offended in the 12 months after the Service had worked with them, but the frequency of re-offending in North Yorkshire had continued to reduce since 2016/17;
- Reducing the number of children in custody – it was noted that North Yorkshire was comparing favourably with most other areas;

It was confirmed that as a result of the Youth Justice Service's integration in to the Early Help Service, it had now significantly increased its leverage, providing opportunities to

work with the broader Early Help Service to improve prevention and diversionary activities. It was noted that a key factor was reducing exclusions and keeping children in school, with a particular focus on Elective Home Education, which was sometimes used as a way of removing a problematic child from a school roll. It was also noted that 70% of young people in the system had an assessed speech, language and/or education impairment.

It was confirmed that the 'My Assessment & Plan' model had been positively reviewed, and fit well alongside the Children's Services strength in relationships practice model. It was also noted that the feedback systems were working well, with a high rate of satisfaction from victims, families and children.

Attention was drawn to the recent national inspection findings which showed 'Desistence' as outstanding, 'safety & wellbeing' as good, but fell short of a good rating for 'safety of others'. In response, it was confirmed that steps had subsequently been taken to modify the model and retrain the team.

Finally, attention was drawn to the key objectives for the coming year, as shown on page 29 of the new Plan.

In response to members' questions, it was confirmed:

- The Service worked with schools on early prevention and diversion with a particular focus on inclusion for children from hard to reach families and those with high levels of social need;
- There was a huge gap in the provision of special centres from troubled youths nationally and North Yorkshire had a number of young people with extremely complex and challenging behaviours. There was also a national issue around the number of children who did not have a formal diagnosed mental health condition but were in such a vulnerable, distressed and chaotic state that they needed that level of care and support, with a huge gap in the provision of that;
- There was a loss of pastoral benefits for excluded children that came from learning to play and cooperate with others. Exclusion also prevented the observation in a normal classroom setting that was required for an EHCP;

Finally, concern was expressed about the situation in the Scarborough area where the rates of offending and re-offending were much higher than in other areas of the county. The proposed focussed partner review project was welcomed, but its potential to improve the situation in Scarborough was questioned. In response, it was acknowledged that by itself, it could not have a transformative impact, but it was a step in the right direction.

Members thanks the officer for the update and

Resolved –

To note the presentation.

164 Resilience & Emergencies Overview

Matthew Robinson, Head of Resilience & Emergencies provided a presentation which familiarised Councillors with the legalisations that governed the Authority's response to major incidents. He drew attention to the statutory requirements of his team and the various workflows, (previously not reported on) and questioned which if any of those the Committee would like to scrutinise in the future.

As a result of revisions to the legislation in 2004, which introduced categories of organisations with specific requirements, it was noted that Local Authorities were in category 1, with 7 statutory requirements, i.e. to cooperate with other organisations; share

information; risk assess; ensure emergency plans were in place; warn and inform the public; have business continuity arrangements in place, and support businesses with their continuity arrangements.

Matthew Robinson went on to provide an overview of:

- Organisations in the other categories and their requirements;
- The 15 National Resilience Standards - he confirmed that North Yorkshire was aiming initially to achieve the desired outcome (the basic level of requirement) and establish local political scrutiny of the governance arrangements;
- Partnerships, and the service level agreements currently in place across North Yorkshire with 6 of the 7 District Councils and City of York Council;
- The Integrated Review for Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, introduced in March 2021, to build resilience at home and overseas and review the Civil Contingencies Act;

In particular, he drew attention to the work of the North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum, with a focus on its strategic aim for the period up to 2024, its four objectives and associated strategic plans e.g. for flooding.

Finally, he provided an overview of the coordinated response and recovery approach that would be initiated as part of the Integrated Emergency Management Cycle for Local Authority and Multi-agency partnerships within North Yorkshire.

In response to questions from Members it was confirmed:

- A County Council Local Resilience Register was in place and publically available online via the Local Resilience Forum website;
- The Military came under the 'Other Co-ordinating Bodies' category and were seen as a key player on the Forum at all levels;

Members thanked officers for their update and it was

Resolved –

That the update be noted, and a further update be provided in 12 months time.

165 Update on the Operation of the Parish Portal & Parish Council Engagement

Nigel Smith, Head of Highway Operations introduced his update on the Parish Portal and Members' Dashboard. He confirmed that of the 731 parish councils, 411 now had portal accounts, with the volume of use steadily increasing. He went on to provide a brief overview of the ongoing improvements to the Portal, and the services already 'integrated' into the asset management system. It was noted that training was available for the Parishes to support them to use the portal, and that those yet to sign up were still being encouraged to do so.

In regard to the Members' Dashboard, Nigel Smith confirmed that it had been tested with the help of some Councillors, resulting in positive feedback, and was now ready for rollout to all members.

Deborah Flowers, Highways Customer Communications Officer drew attention to the list of 12 services yet to be integrated in to the asset management system (as shown at paragraph 3.1 of the report), and confirmed that work was underway to enable their integration. She also outlined the benefits to members of the public from the work completed to date and confirmed that an online application for a dropped kerb was being developed.

Concerns were raised about the accuracy of the feedback information provided via the portal – an examples were given in regard to reported problems with street lighting, where the portal had been updated to show the repair work as complete, even though the lighting had not yet been fixed. Furthermore, anybody else trying report the problem was unable to do so because it had already been logged. For a Member to then report the continuing problem, they had no option but to do so by telephone. Officers confirmed the particular issue referred to had been resolved and following an investigation, a number of lessons learnt and acted upon.

Members requested that those Parish Councils still not using the portal be targeted to encourage their take-up of the system. It was suggested that the Parish Councils that had a problem using the portal when it was first introduced, were likely to be the ones who were reluctant to use it

Members thanked officers for their update and it was

Resolved –

That the update be noted, and a further update be provided in 12 months time.

166 Work Programme 2020/21

The report of the Principal Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer inviting Members to consider the Committee's Work Programme for the remainder of 2020 taking into account the outcome of discussions on previous agenda items and any other developments taking place across the county.

County Councillor Richard Musgrave requested that an update on the performance of the Brierley Group be brought forward from the March 2022 meeting to the next meeting of the Committee on 6 December 2021.

Resolved – That the work programme be updated as above.

The meeting concluded at 1.24 pm.