

# North Yorkshire County Council

## Executive

Minutes of the remote meeting held on Tuesday, 19th July 2022 commencing at 11.00 am.

County Councillor Carl Les in the Chair. plus County Councillors Gareth Dadd, Derek Bastiman, David Chance, Keane Duncan, Michael Harrison, Simon Myers, Janet Sanderson and Greg White.

In attendance: County Councillor Paul Haslam.

Officers present: Karl Battersby, Stuart Carlton, Gary Fielding, Richard Flinton, Barry Khan, Richard Webb, Melanie Carr, Daniel Harry, Andrew Dixon, Mark Kibblewhite, Richard Binks and Andrew Leeming.

Other Attendees: Elizabeth Jackson, Kerry Russett, Kerry Metcalfe and Marcus Lee

Apologies: County Councillor Annabel Wilkinson.

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

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#### 40 Introductions

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

#### 41 Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 July 2022

##### Resolved –

That the public Minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2022, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed by the Chairman as a correct record.

#### 42 Declarations of Interest

County Councillor Michael Harrison declared a personal interest in Agenda item 10, as a resident of Harrogate.

#### 43 Exclusion of the public from the meeting during consideration of each of the items of business listed in Column 1 of the following table on the grounds that they each involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraph(s) specified in column 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to information)(Variation) Order 2006:-

##### 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 11.

#### 44 Public Questions and Statements

There were no public questions or statements.

#### 45 Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Considered – A report of the Corporate Director, Strategic Resources recommending that the Council consulted with Major Preceptors and Stakeholders on a new income banded Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Scheme for the new North Yorkshire Council, to be introduced from 1 April 2023.

County Councillor Gareth Dadd introduced the report confirming his view that the proposed scheme was a more pragmatic approach compared to the current scheme that would better support those residents struggling with their Council Tax, particularly in light of the current cost of living crisis.

Kerry Metcalfe, sponsor for the Revenue and Benefits Finance LGR workstream, provided an overview of the report and confirmed the proposed Council Tax reduction scheme for the new North Yorkshire Council would replace the existing schemes currently in place across all of the District / Borough Councils in North Yorkshire, but would not affect the pension aged reduction scheme set by Government.

It was confirmed the additional annual cost of the proposed new scheme would be £2.3m. Executive Members noted the proposal to ring-fence the additional Council Tax revenue of circa £2m arising from the discounts and premium proposals agreed at the last Executive meeting, would leave a shortfall of £300K. It was confirmed the efficiencies derived from the roll out of the proposed new scheme would more than cover that net funding gap resulting in a cost neutral budget position for the new Council.

Marcus Lee, lead Benefits Manager on the Revenue and Benefits Finance LGR workstream, confirmed the proposed new scheme would provide more support to those on the lowest incomes, would encompass the exceptional hardship scheme, and would be easier for residents to understand.

It was noted that:

- Any transition to a new scheme would likely result in a change to the entitlement for some residents;
- The cost of administering the proposed new scheme would be covered by the new North Yorkshire Council, as the billing authority;
- Consideration had been given to a further discount for those families with more than two children but it had been agreed to keep the proposed scheme aligned with other government benefits;
- A detailed communications plan had been developed to support the proposed consultation process detailed in the report;

Finally, attention was drawn to the Equalities Impact Assessment included in with the report

Members thanked officers for the report and it was

**Resolved** – That the Council consult with Major Preceptors and Stakeholders on a new Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2023/24 onwards for the new North Yorkshire Council as set out in the report.

## 46 Proposal to close Woodfield Community Primary School, Harrogate

Considered – A report of the Corporate Director – Children and Young People’s Service presenting the findings of the public consultation carried out by North Yorkshire County Council on a proposal to close Woodfield Community Primary Schools in Harrogate from 31 December 2022, and seeking authorisation to publish statutory proposals, and to schedule the taking of a final decision on the proposals in October 2022.

Executive members noted that Harrogate Borough Council had submitted a letter requesting that consideration be given to asking the Secretary of State to reverse the academisation of Woodfield Community Primary School, and that the Education Authority secure the future of the school.

In the absence of County Councillor Annabel Wilkinson, County Councillor Janet Sanderson introduced the report and confirmed that a wide and extensive consultation had taken place.

Stuart Carlton, Corporate Director – Children and Young People’s Service provided an overview of the steps taken to date and highlighted the considered amalgamation with Grove Road Community Primary School that had been rejected.

Attention was drawn to:

- The consultation feedback with the report – it was noted that some parents did not want the school to close;
- The current and key issues with the school including its financial deficit, and;
- The various options that had been considered and rejected e.g. academisation;

County Councillor Paul Haslam provided an overview of the reasons behind the drop in the number of pupils on the school roll, and Andrew Dixon, Strategic Planning Manager, Education and Skills summarised the current position regarding allocations for September 2022. It was noted that as from September 2022 the number on the school’s roll would likely be in single figures.

Members agreed it was a sad situation and a lesson for all schools who needed to be vigilant and maintain a working relationship with neighbouring schools. In this instance it was noted that the neighbouring schools were all academies and responsible for their own over subscription.

It was also confirmed there would be no effect on the Home to School Transport Budget as all of the children affected lived within a 2-mile radius of the school they would move to.

Having accepted that all alternative options had been considered, it was accepted the proposal to close the school was the only way forward at this stage, and it was therefore

**Resolved** – That:

- i. Statutory proposals and a statutory notice be published on 8 September 2022 proposing to close Woodfield Community Primary School from 31 December 2022 - the proposals to include that from 1 January 2023 the catchment area of Bilton Grange and Grove Road Primary Schools be expanded in some form to cover the current Woodfield School catchment area.
- ii. The Executive schedule taking a final decision on the proposals on 18 October 2022.

## 47 Response to the Schools White Paper

Considered – A Report by the Corporate Director – Children and Young People’s Service briefing the Executive on the Schools White Paper and seek approval for the proposed response.

In the absence of County Councillor Annabel Wilkinson, County Councillor Janet Sanderson introduced the report confirming the ambition to move towards a fully Multi-Academy Trust-led system by 2030 through the growth of strong Trusts and the establishment of new Trusts, including those established by Local Authorities, which was previously not allowed.

It was noted that by way of a trail blazer approach, the DfE was now seeking a small number of Local Authorities to work with to develop new Multi-Academy Trusts.

Stuart Carlton, Corporate Director – Children and Young People’s Service provided an overview of report, including the background to the new approach, what the role of a Local Authority will become, and the next steps in the process.

Stuart Carlton confirmed the planned reforms would bring two test and learn opportunities and Members agreed it would be good to participate in them both.

Therefore, having noted the contents of the Schools White Paper and the approaching deadline for submitting expressions of interest to participate i.e. end of July 2022, it was

**Resolved** – That the County Council engage with the DfE and other stakeholders in developing a coordinated strategy towards full academisation in line with the ambition of the Schools White Paper.

#### **48 UK Shared Prosperity Fund in North Yorkshire**

Considered – A report of the Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services seek approval to submit an Investment Plan for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in North Yorkshire a total value of £16,892,952 over the three years between April 2022 and March 2025.

County Councillor Derek Bastiman introduced the report confirming the new UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) was replacing the European Union, Strategic Investment Funds. He also drew attention to the priorities, objectives and interventions associated with the SPF, as detailed in the report.

It was noted that some minor tweaks to the Investment Plan had recently been approved by the LEP Business Board and that elected members (as members of the Board) would be involved in the sign off procedures.

Karl Battersby, Corporate Director for Business and Environmental Services confirmed that subject to the recommendations in the report being approved, the intention was to progress the work on future bids in order to meet future deadlines, ahead of a formal government decision on North Yorkshire’s Investment Plan.

Executive Members thanked officers for their work to date, and it was

**Resolved** – That:

- i. The Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan for North Yorkshire with a total value of £16,829,952 for submission to DLUHC be approved.
- ii. Authority be delegated to the Director of Business and Environmental Services to agree the final detail and submission of the Investment Plan in consultation with Executive Member for Open to Business and the Corporate Director, Strategic

Resources (Chief Finance Officer)

- iii. The proposed governance structure including the creation of three priority theme sub groups based on the YNY Local Enterprise Partnership Boards for Skills and Business be approved, and a third Communities and Place sub group be established.
- iv. The formation of a multi authority delivery team based in the LEP be approved, building on its existing function in delivering Growth Deal and Skills funding programmes.

**49 Decision on whether to proceed with Community Governance Reviews relating to the unparished town centres in Harrogate and Scarborough**

Considered – A report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal & Democratic Services) seeking a decision on whether to proceed with Community Governance Reviews (CGRs) for the unparished areas in the centre of Harrogate and Scarborough that will in the interim have Charter Trustees in place.

County Councillor David Chance introduced the report and provided an overview of the steps that would be required as part of the a CGR process for introducing two new Town Councils for the centres of Harrogate and Scarborough.

The report confirmed that:

- The majority of the county was covered by a parish council with the exception of the county's two biggest towns – Harrogate & Scarborough
- Harrogate Borough Council had previously unanimously agreed that any successor unitary authority should undertake a community governance review for the unparished parts of Harrogate town and consider the creation of a town council.
- Scarborough Borough Council had agreed that more information on options, processes and timescales was needed before agreeing to a referendum and a Member Steering Group was formed to look at it in more detail.
- A three-month consultation would be undertaken with residents in the affected areas

Officers confirmed they would welcome all representations, including those suggesting minor tweaks to the boundaries of the proposed Town Councils. They also clarified that step3 of the process was to seek approval from the Executive and step 6 would be to seek Full Council approval.

In regard to the setting of precepts, it was noted that Charter Trustees may choose not to levy a precept for year 2 onwards (in year 1, costs would be covered by the Unitary Authority).

Having note the report, it was

**Resolved** – That:

- i. Community governance reviews be undertaken for the unparished parts of Harrogate and Scarborough, incorporating Eastfield Town Council.
- ii. The Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) in consultation with the relevant Executive Members be given delegated authority to approve the Terms of Reference once final typographical changes have been completed and to take any necessary action to progress the Community Governance Review.

**50 Forward Plan**

Considered –

The Forward Plan for the period 8 July 2022 to 31 July 2023 was presented.

**Resolved** - That the Forward Plan be noted.

The public meeting closed at 12:24pm. The Executive then moved into private session to consider Agenda item 11 – A59 Kex Gill Diversion Contract Award.

**51 A59 Kex Gill Diversion Contract Award**

The meeting concluded at 1.00 pm.