

North Yorkshire County Council

Executive

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 5th 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, Simon Myers, Janet Sanderson, Greg White and Annabel Wilkinson.

In attendance (in person): County Councillors Karin Sedgwick and Yvonne Peacock.

In attendance (virtually): County Councillors Michael Harrison and Paul Haslam, Councillor Di Keal (Ryedale DC) and Paul Shevlin (Chief Executive, Craven District Council).

Officers present: Will Baines, Abigail Barron, Karl Battersby, Stuart Carlton, Gary Fielding, Richard Flinton, Barry Khan, Richard Webb, Neil Irving, Daniel Harry and Mel Hutchinson

Other Attendees: Kerry Metcalfe and Sherri Williamson (Scarborough Borough Council)

Apologies: County Councillor Michael Harrison (in-person, but joined meeting virtually)

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

28 Introductions

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

29 Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 June 2022

Resolved –

That the public Minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2022, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed by the Chairman as a correct record.

30 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

31 Public Questions and Statements

There were no public questions or statements.

32 Re-procurement or In-sourcing of Shared Lives Scheme

County Councillor Michael Harrison introduced the report, explaining that the Shared Lives Scheme in North Yorkshire is a particularly important scheme for adults or young people from the age of 16 who need long-term support to live in the family home of an approved host family or carer. The scheme is very important to the Council.

Abigail Barron, Head of Service Development from Health & Adult Services then gave further background to the proposed procurement of the Shared Lives Scheme, with the scheme currently commissioning the incumbent provider to recruit, train and approve people to become Shared Lives carers and then to work with NYCC Social Work teams to ensure appropriate matching. The provider then takes responsibility for ensuring the placement is successful, and that any emergency short breaks or day arrangements are put in place as required. In return, the Shared Lives carer receives a payment, paid through the current provider.

The scheme currently supports 88 people with an assessed care need and is a great alternative to other care options such as supported living or residential care. It enables people to retain strong links to local communities.

A large and extensive engagement exercise has been undertaken as part of the review process, consulting with the young people involved with the scheme, Shared Lives Scheme carers and members of the public. In conclusion, it was felt that the procurement of the scheme on the open market was most likely to offer meaningful and personalised outcomes for those in need.

If approved, the proposed procurement would be for an initial term of 3 years, with an option to extend for two further periods of 1 year each, making it a potential maximum 5 year term. It is expected that there will be interest from national and regional providers following an extensive period of market testing.

In terms of the re-procured scheme, it is hoped to look to offer Shared Lives in North Yorkshire to care leavers, people fleeing domestic abuse, people with mental health issues or chaotic lifestyles and those who are homeless or seeking move-on from temporary accommodation. This would be done through a new service model, with defined outcomes and clear performance measures, so that outcomes can be tracked to ensure delivery. There is also a desire to grow the scheme across the whole of North Yorkshire to ensure it is a consistent offer across the county.

The review does not anticipate any negative impact of running the procurement for the provision already in place for service users and Shared Lives Scheme carers. The market engagement exercise does not anticipate any rising cost, but do expect it to be a cost neutral proposal.

In summary, the request for the Executive is to note the contents of the report and to approve the procurement of the Shared Live Scheme as an open market procurement.

County Councillor Janet Sanderson welcomed the report and the key transition stage that the Shared Lives Scheme supports.

Resolved – That the Executive note the contents of the report, and to approve the procurement of the Shared Lives Scheme for North Yorkshire, in line with good practice as set out in the report.

33 Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy

Considered – A report of the Corporate Director – Children and Young People’s Service on the ‘We Care Because You Matter’ strategy refresh.

County Councillor Janet Sanderson introduced the report, explaining the Children and Social Work Act 2017 defined in law the responsibility of corporate parents to ensure, as far as possible, secure, nurturing and positive experiences for looked-after children, young

people and care leavers.

In 2018, the Children in Care and Care Leavers strategy, known as 'We Care Because You Matter' was agreed by the County Council. An updated and refreshed strategy in line with changes made since then has now been brought to the Executive for approval. The updated strategy outlines the commitment to working with families and ensuring that children are connected, and sets out the 'Safe' strategic priorities implemented in North Yorkshire. The new strategy also sets out the changes that have taken place in regard to the National Transfer Scheme and the Mockingbird scheme in North Yorkshire since 2018. It was felt that there would be clear opportunities after LGR to do a full review of the strategy, but this refresh was a very worthwhile piece of work.

County Councillor David Chance commended the report and felt it was a positive refresh of the strategy document.

County Councillor Simon Myers agreed and highlighted the innovative steps undertaken in North Yorkshire by the County Council to continue offering services for care leavers beyond the age of 25, with other local authorities now following this approach. He also noted the positive feedback in section 4.1 of the report from the children and young people involved on the work undertaken in this area.

County Councillor Annabel Wilkinson echoed the views of other County Councillors and noted the care leavers that have gone on to work for the County Council through apprenticeships and scholarships.

Resolved – That it be recommended to County Council that:

The refreshed 'Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy - We Care Because You Matter' be formally approved.

34 Highways Levelling Up Fund Bid - submission and acceptance

Considered – A report of the Corporate Director (Business and Environmental Services)

County Councillor Keane Duncan introduced the report, seeking Executive approval for submission of a bid to the Levelling Up Fund for a total of circa £39 million. The bid comprises proposals to improve access arrangements at Thirsk (£5.4 million), Scarborough (£8.4 million) and Seamer (£25 million) railway stations, with the three schemes going together as one package as part of a full business case that is required to be submitted. There is also a requirement for a contribution from the County Council of 10% of the proposed costs, totalling £3.9 million. Officers have worked against tight deadlines to develop a compelling proposal and the plans are supported by the local MPs.

The Corporate Director (Business and Environmental Services) commented that it had been decided not to submit a round 1 applications to the Levelling Up Fund, in order to develop quality proposals across a range of sites as part of round 2, rather than rush a smaller proposal as part of round 1. NYCC officers have worked closely with district and borough council colleagues to align with other Levelling Up Fund Constituency bids, particularly in relation to Malton and Scarborough. Altogether this represents an investment into the county of circa £70 million. It is felt that as a whole package it is compelling for the county and would have significant benefits.

County Councillor Derek Bastiman spoke in support of the NYCC transport bid for Scarborough station, as it would support the other bid developed by Scarborough Borough Council for the Scarborough and Whitby Constituency and benefit the local economy and improve connectivity. On the Seamer station proposal, he felt that it would increase investment and employment opportunities around the Scarborough Business Park and

was long overdue.

County Councillor Gareth Dadd asked about Thirsk railway station and what would happen if the bid were to fail, given that there has been no adequate access for wheelchairs and prams in an area where the population has increased. In response, County Councillor Keane Duncan said that he believed it would be a travesty if the bid was to fail given the work that has gone into developing the proposals and that the Government needs to be investing in all areas, including the rural market towns in North Yorkshire and the travel hubs that allow access to these areas, if Levelling Up is to be deemed a success.

Resolved - that the Executive:

- (a) agrees that North Yorkshire County Council submits a bid to the Levelling Up Fund for £39,246,511, with a local contribution of £3,924,651;
- (b) agrees that the £424,651 shortfall in 10% match funding required be added to the £3.5m already highlighted in the Capital Forward Plan
- (c) agrees that £495,000 should be allocated, at risk, to ensure the bid is developed in time to meet the funding deadline
- (d) agrees to receive a further report, should NYCC be successful, prior to the acceptance of the funding
- (e) Notes other funding bids being made by District and Borough councils and other Local Authorities.

35 Carbon Reduction and Climate Change Update

Considered – A report of the Assistant Director – Policy, Partnerships and Communities.

County Councillor Greg White introduced the report, detailing the work undertaken so far on carbon reduction and the plans to tackle climate change in the future. It was highlighted that a training module is now available for all staff and elected members to develop a good introduction to climate change issues and what the County Council is doing to tackle it.

He was keen to affirm how serious the County Council is about tackling climate change and made an amendment to the report recommendations that a climate emergency is formally declared on behalf of the County Council by the Executive and a pledge to play a full part in tackling climate change.

County Councillor David Chance added that as the seconder of the original motion on Carbon Reduction at the Full Council meeting in July 2019, he was keen to ensure that everything is done to reach our target of net-zero neutrality by 2030, so he was happy to support the amendment.

County Councillor Gareth Dadd felt the Council could be proud of the work carried out so far to deal with the climate emergency and the resources and commitment that has gone into it.

Resolved – That the Executive:

- i) Note and welcome the report.
- ii) Declare a 'Climate Emergency' on behalf of North Yorkshire County Council
- iii) Pledge to play a full part in tackling climate change

36 Council Tax Discounts & Premiums Policy

Considered – Report of the Corporate Director – Strategic Resources

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County Councillor Gareth Dadd welcomed Kerry Metcalfe and Sherri Williamson from Scarborough Borough Council to the meeting to present the report. On Council Tax discounts and premiums, he explained the aim was to minimise the discounts on offer, so that at an Executive meeting at a later date when the Council Tax Reduction policy is considered by the Executive, the discounts accumulated through this policy can be applied to those who really need it.

On the second homes premium detailed in the report, the Deputy Leader asked that a decision on this (Report recommendation 9.1 (iv)) be deferred until further information and evidence is received of what the Government is planning to do in this area.

Kerry Metcalfe presented the report, but noted that the contents had been put together by all of the Revenues managers across the district and borough councils in North Yorkshire and all of the Section 151 officers have had input into the report and are in agreement with the proposals and recommendations.

As the council tax billing authority from 1 April 2023, the new North Yorkshire Council will need a policy for certain discretionary council tax discounts and premiums. Historically, this has been the responsibility of the district and borough councils in their role as billing authorities. Because each council has been able to set their own discretionary policy historically, not all of the policies are the same across the county. Therefore, a piece of work has been undertaken to try and align those policies and come up with proposals for the new North Yorkshire Council that can come into effect from 1 April 2023 following Local Government Reorganisation. If agreed by the Executive today, the policy would go on to the full County Council meeting later this month.

Setting the discounts and premiums levels in the proposals is important as it will affect the levels of council tax income generated by the new unitary council and the first year budget strategy. These decisions will also affect the tax base, in particular the major preceptors, as they will need to know the financial position of the new unitary authority as soon as possible.

The proposals to come into effect on 1 April 2023 are expected to generate an additional council tax income of circa £2 million. The Benefits Managers from across the county have been working up proposals for a Council Tax Reduction scheme for the new unitary council to come into effect from 1 April 2023, with the aim of offering 100% support to those on the lowest incomes. Taking this approach would mean that the proposed Council Tax Reduction Scheme for North Yorkshire Council will cost more than it currently does, which is why one of the recommendations in the report is to ringfence the additional council tax income to enhance the council tax reduction scheme.

Sherri Williamson explained that there was also Section 13A legislation introduced that allowed local authorities to award discounts in any circumstances, so if a person felt that as a result of the proposals they have been impacted unfairly, there is the discretion to look at those cases individually.

Premiums were introduced in 2013, with local authorities given the ability to charge dwellings up to 100% if empty and unfurnished for 2 years or more, up to 200% after 5 years or more and 300% after 10 years or more. It is recommended to implement the charges available in the North Yorkshire Council proposals.

County Councillor Greg White asked about the proposed exceptions and who would make those decisions. It was advised that an exceptions policy setting out the guidelines for officers and questions to be asked as part of the process would be brought to the Executive for approval at a later date.

County Councillor Yvonne Peacock was pleased about the proposed policy put forward, in

particular for properties in rural areas that fall into disrepair, and through the proposed premiums, this would encourage these properties to be brought back into use. County Councillor Keane Duncan also welcomed the premium on empty homes, citing an example of a property in Ryedale that had been empty and unfurnished for around 30 years, but had now been brought back into use.

In summary, County Councillor Gareth Dadd supported the proposals, highlighting the Section 13A legislation in the Local Government Finance Act to allow consideration of exceptional applications on a case by case basis.

Resolved –

The Executive consider the contents of this report and recommend that Full Council approve:

- i. the following policies for the North Yorkshire Council's Council Tax discounts from 1 April 2023:
 - 0% Council Tax discount on Class A second homes;
 - 0% Council Tax discount on Class B second homes;
 - 0% Council Tax discount on Class C properties which are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished;
 - 0% Council Tax discount on Class D properties which are undergoing major repair or structural alteration;
- ii. the following policies for the North Yorkshire Council's Council Tax premiums from 1 April 2023:
 - 100% Council Tax premium for properties which have been empty and unfurnished for more than 2 years;
 - 200% Council Tax premium for properties which have been empty and unfurnished for more than 5 years;
 - 300% Council Tax premium for properties which have been empty and unfurnished for more than 10 years;
 - To enable some variation in exceptional circumstances it is proposed that the Council's powers under Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act be used to reduce liability in such cases where appropriate.
- iii. that the additional revenue generated from the changes to premiums and discounts in 2023/24 be ring-fenced to support the Council Tax Reduction scheme;

37 Non Domestic Rating Discretionary Rate Reliefs & Hardship Policies

Considered – Report of the Corporate Director – Strategic Resources

Kerry Metcalfe introduced the report, setting out the policies and delegations for approval on Non Domestic Rating Discretionary Rate Relief and Hardship to come into effect from 1 April 2023. All Revenues Managers and Section 151 officers are in agreement with the proposals.

Sherri Williamson spoke about the discretionary rate relief and the need for a policy to be in place. The main relief looked at as part of the report is the top ups made available for groups such as charities and non-profit organisations. Following discussion between the Revenues Managers across North Yorkshire, a points system is proposed, as it provides a comprehensive, easy to use system for use in all discretionary areas where S31 Grant funding is not provided by Government. It was noted that all ratepayers wishing to apply for relief will be required to make a full application prior to the commencement of the 2023/24 financial year. It is also recommended for the granting of future reliefs under the

localism provision (post 1 April 2023), which is outlined in Appendix B. The Hardship Relief policy invites applications from businesses struggling financially, and sets out the criteria for hardship relief post 1 April 2023 to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

County Councillor Yvonne Peacock noted the need for businesses to make a fresh application for future rate reliefs under the new unitary council will be a difficult piece of work.

County Councillor Gareth Dadd praised the work of district and borough council colleagues for the work undertaken in producing this report. He proposed a minor amendment to the recommendations, adding in reference to the Executive Member for Finance as part of the approval of the scoring mechanism.

Resolved -

Executive Members are asked to consider the contents of this report and recommend that Full Council approve the following:

(i) Discretionary relief which is defined by legislation and borne by the Council and Government under the Business Rates Retention provision:

- that all businesses and organisations who apply for discretionary relief with effect from 1 April 2023 be assessed for eligibility in accordance with the legislation, and that relief be awarded in line with the key criteria and points based scheme detailed in paragraphs 3.4 to 3.11;
- that the approval of the scoring mechanism to be used within the assessment of the reliefs be delegated to the Council's designated S151 Officer in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance, having full regard to individual cases and the corporate aims and objectives of the Council;
- that the authority to grant the relief be delegated to designated Revenues Managers under a scheme of delegation.

(ii) Localism relief

- that the Council adopts the policy attached at Appendix B and awards Localism reliefs in accordance with that policy.
- that the authority to grant relief under the localism provisions be delegated to the Council's S151 Officer.

(iii) Discretionary reliefs wholly defined by the Government and reimbursed by the Government under a S31 Grant

- that the Council adopts all S31 Government funded discretionary reliefs in accordance with any guidance issued.
- that the Council's S151 Officer be delegated the authority to amend any such approach to ensure that any relief granted is in line with the intentions of the Government and is compatible with the Council's objectives.

(iv) Hardship relief

- that the Council adopts the Hardship Relief policy attached at Appendix C and considers reducing or remitting any non-domestic rate in accordance with that policy.

- that the authority to grant relief under the hardship provisions be delegated to the Council's S151 Officer.

38 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 the recent meetings of the Area Constituency Committees.

County Councillor David Chance commented that the Area Constituency Committees should liaise with the Overview and Scrutiny Committees over potential areas for scrutiny to avoid duplicating work.

Resolved - That the report be noted.

39 Forward Plan

Considered –

The Forward Plan for the period 27 June 2022 to 30 June 2023 was presented.

County Councillor David Chance noted that there were two items listed on the Forward Plan for the meeting today that were not on the agenda. This was noted.

Resolved - That the Forward Plan be noted.

The meeting concluded at 12.25 pm.