

North Yorkshire County Council

Transition (LGR) Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 9th November, 2022 commencing at 10.00 am.

County Councillor Malcolm Taylor in the Chair, plus County Councillors Philip Broadbank, Nick Brown, Caroline Dickinson, Kevin Foster, Richard Foster, Bryn Griffiths, George Jabbour, John Mann, Heather Moorhouse, Stuart Parsons and Clive Pearson.

In attendance: County Councillor Carl Les.

Officers present: Justine Brooksbank, Neil Irving, Marie-Ann Jackson and Will Baines.

Apologies: County Councillors Melanie Davis, Andrew Lee, Kirsty Poskitt and John Ritchie (Substitute County Councillor Subash Sharma).

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

10 Welcome and Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors John Ritchie (substitute County Councillor Subash Sharma), Andrew Lee, Kirsty Poskitt and Melanie Davis.

11 Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 September 2022

Resolved –

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

12 Declarations of Interest

County Councillor Malcolm Taylor declared a personal interest in item 6 as his wife works in Customer Services at Hambleton District Council.

County Councillors George Jabbour, Philip Broadbank and Richard Foster declared personal interests in item 6 as members of the LGR HR & Workforce workstream working group.

13 Public Questions or Statements

There were no public questions or statements.

14 Community Networks

Considered – Report of Marie-Ann Jackson, Head of Stronger Communities and Neil Irving, Assistant Director - Policy, Partnerships & Communities on the development of Community Networks as part of the new North Yorkshire Council.

Some of the key points highlighted in the report are as summarised below:

- North Yorkshire County Council's submission to government for the establishment of a unitary council put forward a case for a locality based delivery model, including the creation of Community Networks as part of the 'Local Action' pillar of the delivery proposal.
- Work undertaken to date includes a series of workshops to establish some key principles and characteristics and roles for the operation of Community Networks, together with a task and finish group to capture the ambition in the unitary submission and agree a draft vision and high level terms of reference to give communities a stronger voice.
- Initial conversations have been held with some of the existing networks and partnerships set up across the county to learn best practice and what the challenges are.
- The target is for circa 25-30 place-based networks across the county with a preference for networks to be centred around principal towns and their rural hinterlands. Initial testing of proposed geographical areas has been undertaken as part of the Let's Talk Local engagement campaign that is ongoing.
- The flexibility of the Community Networks will be key, they will evolve at different speeds in different places. There is also not a desire to impose boundaries for the networks as these will change and evolve over time.
- It is not planned that the community networks will have devolved budgets, but they will be supported to explore funding opportunities to align partner investment in communities. Although financial resources will need to be in place to support the ongoing administration of the networks.
- The networks will be connected into the Council through the Area Committees, local members, senior level sponsorship, community officers and community anchors to assist in developing priorities and facilitate the work of the networks.
- A Community Anchor Organisation model will be developed, building on the successful Community Support Organisation (CSO) model adopted in the response to the pandemic, to undertake roles such as helping co-ordinate local VCS/grassroots involvement to provide resilience and supporting with wider community engagement activities.
- Network meetings are to be attended by a member of North Yorkshire Council staff from Assistant Director level or above to feed back the priorities or issues raised to the Management Team.
- Emerging issues flagged as part of the engagement consultation so far include the proposed Network boundaries feeling too big and too town dominated. There is also concern that the networks would duplicate the work of the Parish and Town Councils and are un-democratic.
- It is proposed to run a small number of pilot areas based around the existing partnerships to bring together some case studies and case studies ahead of Executive consideration. The implementation of the programme will not begin until after vesting day, as it will require the appropriate staff structures and other resources and relationships to be in place.

There followed a discussion, the key points of which are as summarised below:

- There was a concern that by implementing the Community Networks model, this would undermine the elected parish and town councillors and lead to a duplication of work and the potential for conflict between the various partners.
- Given the huge geographical area of North Yorkshire, Community Networks could have a key role to identify and fill any gaps in supporting communities where local action is missing.
- The potential lack of democratic representation and accountability as part of the Network members was flagged as an issue and the influence that those who join them may have as unelected representatives.

- A fear was expressed that the Community Networks boundaries are too big and they will become unfocused and not take meaningful action and outcomes if they are not properly set up and supported.
- It was noted that there is already a chance for local residents to get involved via question time at Parish Council meetings.
- It is pleasing to see that the Community Anchor Organisations will be utilised as 'system partners' to co-ordinate local action and use the knowledge and experience built up during the pandemic response.
- The lack of devolved funding was raised and the impact this would have on the networks having autonomy and being able to quickly drive improvements. Match funding of the councillors locality budgets was put forward as a suggestion.
- Numerous members endorsed the approach of a small number of pilots to further develop the concept.
- It is pleasing to see the recognition that one size doesn't fit all and that networks in one part of the county will evolve at different speeds to those in other areas.

Resolved – That the report and comments received be noted on the progress made in relation to the development of a framework for the development of Community Networks.

15 HR and Workforce Workstream Update

Considered – Presentation by Justine Brooksbank, Assistant Chief Executive (HR and Business Support) to update the committee on the progress made as part of the HR and Workforce workstream.

Some of the key points highlighted in the presentation are as summarised below:

- There has been continued collaborative working across all 8 councils, with specific HR workstream staff sessions held in July and more planned for November and December.
- Work with other workstreams on job descriptions for roles in North Yorkshire Council that need recruiting to, with a focus on volume and high priority posts.
- TUPE consultation is underway, with over 45 sessions held, including 5am starts and weekend sessions to engage with as many staff as possible.
- Consultation with Districts and Boroughs, NYCC and Unison on terms and conditions and pay and grading has been completed.
- A collective approach has been taken on recruitment and retention across all of the councils.
- The NYCC staff benefits package will be adopted and has been made available immediately to district councils where possible.
- Officers continue to work closely with the trade unions, concluding agreements on trade union recognition, collective agreement and trade union facilities time.
- Work is underway so that all managers understand the expectations from Day 1.
- There is a desire to develop talent within the organisation to help retain and grow own talent, particularly given the difficulties to recruit in certain sectors. This is to be done through the Graduate Training Programme and by creating a new and expanded apprenticeship programme.
- All members of staff at the new council will have to do an induction package, but it will be short and sharp.
- Access to employee led support groups is now open to all councils, and a new 'Looking After You' intranet page for North Yorkshire Council will be implemented ahead of vesting day.
- Work is ongoing to move all District and Borough Council payrolls moved over to NYCC prior to vesting day, with an on-boarding plan developed and on site and virtual training sessions arranged for each council. This will allow managers and

- staff the opportunity to get familiar with the new system.
- A policy and approach for the thousands of volunteers across the county has been developed and migration plan in progress.

The key messages are that:

- There are no redundancies prior to vesting day and none expected thereafter
- The priority is to retain staff, our big risk is attrition.
- The new council will provide staff with many opportunities for development and progression which will be a real focus.

There followed a discussion, the key points of which are as summarised below:

- It is important that the payroll on-boarding process works well, so that there are no gaps come vesting day and non-payment of wages.
- Whilst very pleasing and reassuring to hear about the plans for apprentices as part of North Yorkshire Council, these will need to be monitored closely and mentoring arrangements put in place.
- Concerns were raised about staff turnover and how this will be affected by the creation of the unitary council.
- The integration of technology systems will be key to ensuring a smooth transfer process for District and Borough Council staff.

Resolved – That the presentation be noted.

16 Work Programme

Considered – The work programme for future meetings of the committee was presented.

Resolved – That the work programme be noted.

17 Other business which the Chair agrees should be considered as a matter of urgency because of special circumstances

None to report.

The meeting concluded at 12.15 pm.