

# North Yorkshire Council

## Executive

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 20th August 2024 commencing at 11.00 am.

Councillor Carl Les in the Chair. plus Councillors Mark Crane, Gareth Dadd, Keane Duncan, Simon Myers, Heather Phillips, Janet Sanderson, Greg White and Annabel Wilkinson.

In attendance: Councillors Alyson Baker (from 12.20 pm), Barbara Brodigan, Caroline Dickinson, Kevin Foster (remote), Paul Haslam (remote), Peter Lacey, Andrew Lee, Cliff Lunn, Karin Sedgwick, Steve Shaw-Wright (remote), David Staveley, Malcolm Taylor, Arnold Warneken (remote) and Andrew Williams (remote).

Officers present: Karl Battersby, Stuart Carlton, Gary Fielding, Richard Flinton, Nic Harne, Richard Webb, Will Boardman, Catriona Gatrell, Lisa Greer, Elizabeth Jackson, Tony Law, Michael Leah, Emma Jesper (remote), Liz Small (remote)

Apologies: Michael Harrison.

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

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#### **511 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Michael Harrison.

#### **512 Minutes of the Meetings held on 9 July and 16 July 2024**

##### **Resolved –**

That the public Minutes of the meetings held on 9 July and 16 July 2024, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed by the Chairman as a correct record.

#### **513 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **514 Exclusion of the Public**

It was noted that there was an exempt appendix relating to Minute 516 – Quarterly Performance and Budget Monitoring report. As the contents of the appendix were not discussed there was no requirement to exclude the public from the meeting.

#### **515 Public Participation**

A public statement was received from the North Yorkshire Climate Coalition in relation to Minute 519 – North Yorkshire Council Climate Change Strategy Delivery Pathway. Bridget Holmstrom attended the meeting to read out the statement, as follows:

*I am speaking as a member of the Steering Group of the North Yorkshire Climate Coalition, which represents 25 local climate and environmental groups across the county. I'd like to make some observations about the report and the climate change delivery pathway being presented today for adoption.*

*Firstly, we'd like to welcome the renewed affirmation in this report of the Council's commitment to play a net zero leadership role in line with its adoption of the Yorkshire & Humber Climate Commission pledge. We fully agree with the report's emphasis on the co-benefits of climate action, e.g. in terms of health, skills development and energy and food security.*

*With regard to pathway actions, we remain most concerned by the lack of top-level, specific metrics against which progress will be measured and monitored, and therefore included in future quarterly performance reports to the Executive. We hope that this shortcoming can be speedily rectified. We are also concerned at the lack of progress on local climate resilience. We must quickly adapt to live with climate change.*

*Today's report includes a proposal in para 8.3 to involve NY Climate Coalition as an 'external reference body' in overseeing the delivery of the pathway. We welcome this proposal and can confirm that we are keen to partner with the Council in delivering the aim of being operational net zero by 2030. While we may not always agree on the best way of achieving this goal, we are committed to playing a constructive role. We hope that the Executive will endorse this proposal.*

*To this end, we will also engage with key members of the Council, including Councillor Greg White in his role as the relevant portfolio owner. We want to pay tribute to the committed efforts of Councillor Paul Haslam as the Council's former Climate Champion, and we look forward very much to working in as productive a manner with his successor, Councillor David Hugill.*

*At the same time, we will endeavour to bring local climate groups together, share good practice and help the community sector across the county to play a full part in the enormous task of decarbonisation by all households, businesses, and communities over the coming years.*

Councillor Greg White, Executive Member for Managing our Environment, thanked the Climate Coalition for their continued engagement, their support on actions on climate change, and also their statement to Executive. The Council is keen to continue working with all stakeholders in helping to tackle this important issue. Whilst I note and welcome the overall support nature of the statement; I do want to respond to a few points that you have raised. By doing so I can address the items you raised in your statement, and introduce this item for further consideration.

Given the overall challenge in bringing together the Unitary Council, there are competing calls on council resources and that climate change necessarily has to form part of that. I am pleased with the progress Officers have made to date although we all recognise there is a lot more to do. We need additional progress on several points. Firstly, we need stronger data and emission reporting – we cannot claim to be tackling an issue if we cannot track progress; secondly, the actions in the Delivery Pathway do need more precision and focus. I've been speaking with relevant Officers, there is agreement on these two points and I am assured that we will see progress in future update reports.

As for your point on local climate resilience, this is an issue that affects all residents in North Yorkshire cutting across all aspects of life from extreme weather events to helping restore nature. In addition to the obvious proactive initiatives, like facilitating the rollout of battery powered cars, by investing in a network of public charging points, the Council can also help play a part in tackling the impact of climate change when they happen, and anticipating them happening, by investing in infrastructure projects. I can draw attention to

two current examples – the A59 Kex Gill Realignment, costing around £68.5m and Filey Coastal Defence repair scheme which is underway, costing around £3m. These are just some examples that sit amongst many – hopefully it reassures that again, we recognise the issue and the need to take action.

## **516 Quarterly Performance and Budget Monitoring Report**

Considered – A joint report of the Chief Executive and Corporate Director Resources bringing together key aspects of the Council's performance on a quarterly basis.

The Executive Member for Corporate Services, Councillor Heather Phillips, introduced the report which covered the period 1 April 2024 to 30 June 2024. The Executive Member drew Member's attention to the following:

- Spend on agency staff had reduced over the last quarter
- Hospital discharges and children's social care were causes of concern
- The North Yorkshire Local Assistance Fund supporting the most vulnerable was going well with an 89% approval rate
- The Homes for Ukraine Scheme and the UK Resettlement Scheme continued to support new arrivals

The Leader welcomed members of the Scrutiny Board to the meeting. In response to questions to Executive Members from Scrutiny Chairs and Member Champions the following was confirmed:

- The Council was working more closely with the Police to identify families needing social care support, and this was feeding through into an increase in referrals.
- The targeted reading project was improving attainment within schools, and the gap from the national average was closing. If successful it was hoping the project could be replicated for maths.
- Work was underway to move the eight legacy authorities onto a single planning software system, which should improve the time it was taking to process planning applications.
- North Yorkshire Highways were developing a carbon capture tool which would enable improved reporting on carbon emissions.
- A refuse collection vehicle strategy was being implemented to resolve issues around vehicle breakdowns. 18 new vehicles were on order and the ability to move vehicles around the county would provide improved resilience.
- Work was underway to improve how missed bin collections were defined, recorded and dealt with to facilitate comparisons and benchmarking.
- Figures on vacant shops were not collected routinely with the exception of Scarborough; Ripon BID was working towards this. The Council was looking to support Scarborough to obtain footfall figures; Whitby had been collecting footfall figures which showed an improvement.
- The contract with Allerton Park Waste Recovery Centre required 70% of waste to be diverted away from landfill. However, this did not apply when it was closed. As tax was paid on waste to landfill the decision to send material to landfill was a commercial one for the operator.
- Local authorities had no statutory duties to monitor home education, or powers to bring home educated children back into mainstream education. The King's Speech contained measures to introduce a register of home educated children, however the Council already maintained a list.

- Work was underway to prevent people going into hospital where they could be treated in the community. However a key element for this (and reducing demand on social care) would be for more national investment in community health services such as increasing the numbers of nurses and therapists as this would impact positively.
- Proactive maintenance was undertaken to ensure housing void times were reduced and this year they had reduced from 198 in January to 89 at present. Some void times were inevitable whilst homes were being upgraded. 178 projects costing £2.3m had been completed under the Home Upgrade Grant 2 (HUG2). The Department of Energy Security and Net Zero had singled out the Council as a model of best practice in programme delivery, and NYC was the only Council to apply for further funding.
- The Council was working to fill in the gaps in electrical certificates as they hadn't always been documented when they had taken place in the past.
- The Corporate Director Health and Adult Services agreed to provide written responses in relation to the numbers of children admitted to hospital with mental health conditions, the reasons for people not completing courses of treatment for alcohol issues and the reasons for below average levels of STI diagnoses.

### **Revenue Budget, Treasury Management and Capital Plan**

Councillor Gareth Dadd, Executive Member for Finance and Resources, introduced each section of the report. Whilst expenditure was 0.1% or £800k below that expected, this masked pressures of £8.5m in Health and Adult Services and Childrens and Young People's Services, which were currently offset by savings in corporate budgets such as utilities where the authority had bigger buying power since local government reorganisation.

The Corporate Director Resources reported that the current finance system was now at the end of life and a new system was required to support the organisation in managing its finances for the next 10 years. In response to a question the Corporate Director confirmed that one-off savings were not built into the budget for future years.

Members welcomed the proposals to undertake a feasibility study into the proposed redevelopment of the Brunswick Centre in Scarborough. If progressed redevelopment could provide an opportunity to improve facilities for local residents and encourage more people to visit the town.

Having considered the report and the information provided at the meeting, Executive Members were referred to the recommendations in the report and it was

#### **Resolved (unanimously) – that:**

- i) the forecast outturn position against the 2024/25 Revenue Budget, as summarised in paragraph 2.2.1 be noted.
- ii) a £1,060k reduction to the HRA rental income budget in 24/25 be approved, and the resulting impact on the HRA business plan which will be reflected in the next refresh of the business plan as set out in paragraph 2.3.1.
- iii) authority be delegated to the Corporate Director of Resources in consultation with the Chief Executive, Deputy Leader and Leader to award the contract and approve funds from the LGR Reserve for one-off external and internal implementation and associated costs of the new finance system, following conclusion of the procurement process at the end of August 2024 (paragraph 2.5.2).
- iv) the position on the Council's Treasury Management activities during the first quarter

of 2024/25 be noted.

- v) this report be referred to the Audit Committee for their consideration as part of the overall monitoring arrangements for Treasury Management.
- vi) the refreshed Capital Plan summarised at paragraph 4.2.3 be approved.
- vii) authority be delegated to Corporate Director Resources, in consultation with the Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Democratic Services and the Executive Member, Finance to draw down on the totality of the Capital Supply Chain Reserve to fund some potential cost overruns on existing capital schemes with the detail included in confidential Appendix E (paragraph 4.3.2).
- viii) the addition of £350k to undertake a feasibility study into the proposed redevelopment of the Brunswick Centre in Scarborough from retail to leisure be approved, led with a drawdown of up to £350k from the Strategic Capacity Reserve. (paragraph 4.4.1).

## **517 Housing Standards Enforcement Policy**

Considered – A report of the Corporate Director Community Development presenting the Housing Standards Enforcement Policy for adoption, which included a number of further policies at appendices B to F. This suite of enforcement policies would ensure that all private housing standards were dealt with consistently and that the Housing standards team could utilise all of the relevant statutory duties and powers.

The Executive Member for Culture, Arts and Housing introduced the report and advised that the new policy brought together best practice from across the county to ensure that the Council fulfilled its duties as statutory housing authority and enforced housing standards in the private rental sector.

**Resolved (unanimously) – that:**

1. in order to improve housing standards across all housing tenures, but in particular ensuring all privately rented accommodation is well managed, properly maintained, safe and habitable, and relevant enforcement action can be taken, the following are adopted and approved for use across the county:
  - (i) the Housing Standards Enforcement policy, included at Appendix A.
  - (ii) the Electrical Safety Regulations Financial Penalties policy, as detailed in Appendix B of the Housing Standards enforcement policy.
  - (iii) the Civil Penalties policy, as detailed in Appendix C of the Housing Standards enforcement policy.
  - (iv) the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards policy, as detailed in Appendix D of the Housing Standards enforcement policy.
  - (v) the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm Regulations policy, as detailed in Appendix E of the Housing Standards enforcement policy.
  - (vi) the Rent Repayments Orders policy, as detailed in Appendix F of the Housing Standards enforcement policy.
  - (vii) the approach to fees and charges and penalties where enforcement action is needed, as detailed in Appendix G of the Housing Standards enforcement policy.

2. delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director of Housing in consultation with the portfolio holder to make minor alterations to the Housing Standards Enforcement Policy.

## **518 Local Authority Housing Fund**

Considered – A report of the Corporate Director Community Development providing information on the third round of Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) funding from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government for specific needs. Approval was sought for the Council to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the MHCLG for up to £1,795,591 of funding from the LAHF for the acquisition of 13 affordable homes to provide accommodation for 11 households from the Afghan settlement and relocation schemes and 2 homes to provide temporary accommodation for homeless households.

The Executive Member for Culture, Arts and Housing, Councillor Simon Myers, introduced the report and advised that the homes would sit in the Housing Revenue Account and would remain as housing stock for Council tenants once the original tenants moved on.

Councillor Kevin Foster addressed the Executive and advised that the Afghans in the scheme were entitled personnel who were vetted before arrival in this country and Executive welcomed the opportunity to support those who risked their lives to help British troops in Afghanistan.

**Resolved (unanimously)** – that:

- i) Approval be given to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to accept grant funding of £1,795,591 from the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF). This funding shall help pay for the acquisition of additional accommodation for 11 households from the Afghan resettlement and relocation schemes, and 2 homeless households requiring temporary accommodation.
- ii) delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director of Housing in conjunction with the Assistant Director of Resources for the acquisition of individual properties for the scheme.

## **519 North Yorkshire Council Climate Change Strategy Delivery Pathway**

Considered – A report of the Corporate Director Environment presenting the North Yorkshire Council Climate Change Delivery Pathway for approval.

A public statement had been received from the North Yorkshire Climate Coalition which was read out by Bridget Holmstrom, and a response provided by the Executive Member for Managing our Environment, Councillor Greg White, as detailed at Minute 515

A written question had been submitted before the meeting by Councillor Arnold Warneken, who spoke at the meeting. Councillor White responded by thanking Councillor Warneken for his questions on the report and his continued support and engagement on the subject. The Council was keen to improve both the data and have clear targets which could be measured. The integration of climate change and the corporate quarterly performance report had started, and it was fully the intention to provide emissions reporting within this report in future. Councillor White was arranging a meeting with Councillor Warneken to go through his questions in more detail and would be happy to produce a report of that meeting.

Councillor Paul Haslam addressed the Executive and spoke of the important role the Council had in bringing parties together for discussions and in enabling people to take different choices, and the Leader noted his contribution.

The Executive Member emphasised the importance of strong, measurable targets. It was noted that the ambition to reduce emissions had to be balanced with the requirements to deliver services to those most in need.

**Resolved –**

That the North Yorkshire Council Climate Change Delivery Pathway be approved.

**520 Joint Delivery of Government Funding with the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority**

Considered – A report of the Corporate Director of Community Development which outlined joint working arrangements between North Yorkshire Council and York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (YNYCA) in respect of the delivery of UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund in North Yorkshire. Approval was sought for the Director of Community Development to enter into a Service Agreement between the Council and the YNYCA in respect of the delivery of funds. Approval was also sought for delegated authority to be given to the Corporate Director of Resources to enter into any contracts or grant agreements which may be required as a result of former functions of the Council transferring to YNYCA.

The Executive Member for Corporate Services, Councillor Heather Phillips, introduced the report, which would ensure monies and powers were transferred correctly to the Combined Authority.

**Resolved (unanimously) – that:**

- i) That contractual arrangements in the form of a Service Agreement are entered into between the Council and the Combined Authority to enable delivery of the UKSPF / REPF in the amount of £2,466,802 in North Yorkshire.
- ii) That delegated Authority is given to the Director of Community Development to approve the Service Agreement.
- iii) That delegated authority is given to the Corporate Director Resources, to enter into any contracts or grant agreements which may be required as a result of former functions of the Council transferring to YNYCA.

**521 Forward Plan**

Considered –

The Forward Plan for the period 12 August 2024 to 31 August 2025 was presented.

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

**522 Date of Next Meeting - 17 September 2024 at the Civic Centre, Selby**

The meeting concluded at 12.40 pm.