

North Yorkshire County Council

Executive

Minutes of the remote meeting held on Tuesday, 7th December 2021 commencing at 11.00 am.

County Councillor Carl Les in the Chair. Plus County Councillors Gareth Dadd, Derek Bastiman, David Chance, Michael Harrison, Andrew Lee, Don Mackenzie, Patrick Mulligan, Janet Sanderson and Greg White.

In attendance: County Councillors .

Officers present: Karl Battersby, Gary Fielding, Richard Flinton, Barry Khan, Richard Webb, Justine Brooksbank, Louise Wallace, Martin Kelly, Amanda Newbold, Melanie Carr and Daniel Harry.

Other Attendees: County Councillors Stanley Lumley, John Ennis, Janet Jefferson, Andy Paraskos, Annabel Wilkinson, Caroline Dickinson and Paul Haslam Caroline Dickinson.

Apologies: Stuart Carlton.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

667 Introductions

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

668 Declarations of Interest

County Councillor Michael Harrison declared two personal non prejudicial interests in regard to Agenda Item 4 - Quarter 2 Performance Monitoring and Budget Report, both of which the Standards Committee had previously given him a dispensation for, enabling him to participate in, and vote at the meeting. The first that he had relatives that worked in Health & Adult Services and secondly, as an employee of a Bank named in the report.

669 Public Questions and Statements

There were no public questions or statements.

670 Q2 Performance Monitoring & Budget Report

Considered –

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

County Councillor David Chance introduced the section on Quarter 2 performance, which provided an in-depth focus on 'Every adult has a longer healthier and independent life'. He drew attention to the strong performance and leadership across a range of areas, as detailed in the report, and provided an overview of the strengths and challenges in

performance across all of the Council's ambitions. This highlighted:

- The establishment of an Executive Implementation Board and team to oversee local government re-organisation, together with a number of focussed work streams;
- Ofsted's endorsement of the Authority's Children's Social Care Services, noting their further development;
- A reduction in the number of children in care;
- The joint work with District Councils to re-house Afghan refugees;
- The continuing success of the YorBus pilot;
- The below national average number of schools in the County with good and outstanding Ofsted reports;
- An increase in volume of cyber attacks during the second quarter;
- An increase house prices in rural areas, with a possible adverse effect on certain areas of the workforce, particularly in the hospitality and care sectors;

Specifically in regard to the ambition of 'Every adult has a longer healthier and independent life', County Councillor Michael Harrison confirmed that HAS was still firmly in the midst of the pandemic. He also noted:

- A 42% rise in the County Council's assessment work as a result of the Government's revised pathway put in place to cope with hospital discharges during the pandemic;
- The fierce competition in the care labour market, resulting in high vacancy rates;
- The level of provider failure and a high number of unsourced domiciliary packages requiring the Authority to act as a provider of last resort, and its impact on wider service delivery, particularly the delivery of respite and reablement services;
- The requirement that care sector workers needed to be double vaccinated, resulting in the loss of 200 employees across the whole care sector in North Yorkshire (1% of the total);

Richard Webb, Corporate Director for Health & Adult Services noted there had a step change in adult social care since the re-opening of the economy in July 2021, with fierce competition in the labour market, in line with other areas of the country. He confirmed those awaiting care were being triaged and supported, and drew attention to the significant recruitment campaign underway. Finally, he recorded his thanks to colleagues across Adult Social Care and Public Health, NHS colleagues, the CSOs, and the voluntary sector, for their continued efforts to respond through the ongoing pandemic.

Following a number of questions on healthy and independent living from Scrutiny Board Members, Richard Webb confirmed:

- The current pathway for hospital discharges was introduced early in the first lockdown and for it to continue long term, it would require additional funding/resources in Adult Social Care;
- The funding for the Stronger Communities team and the Living Well Service had been ring-fenced to ensure the continued provision of prevention and early intervention work;
- In some localities, there had been a significant diversion of reablement resources to deliver routine planned homecare. There had also been some diversion of respite and day care resources;
- The risk associated with the use of short term placements to provide a safe place to stay whilst a care package was put in place, was a loss of independence and a reliance on living in a care setting;
- The additional pressure on the system because of Covid and staff shortages had pushed the Service to the limit in rural and coastal areas. County Councillor Michael Harrison drew attention to an addendum attached to the report, which focussed on the current social care pressures and a number of proposed actions designed to bolster

the care market and improve internal capacity within the Council. He also drew attention to the recruitment campaign website at www.makecarematter.co.uk

Members welcomed the Yorkshire Coast Opportunity Programme 'Glasses in Classes' initiative, and County Councillor Stanley Lumley was pleased to note the equality, diversity and inclusion work and its ongoing promotion across the Authority.

County Councillor Derek Bastiman confirmed the County Council was working closely with the LEP and other agencies to address vacancies across all sectors, and Trading Standards were working hard to prosecute rogue traders.

County Councillor Don Mackenzie highlighted a small delay in the completion of the Junction 47 A1M improvement works. He also drew attention to the YorBus project, which if successful could lead to improved bus services in other parts of the county. Finally, he drew attention to a typo in the Transforming Cities Fund section of the performance update. He noted the investment figure of £3.1m for sustainable travel and public transport should have read £31.1m, and confirmed that if all three schemes went ahead, that figure would rise to £42m.

Members of the Scrutiny Board went on to ask questions on the Council's other ambitions, and in response, it was confirmed:

- The increase in the take-up of drug and alcohol treatment was in part due to enhanced pathways but also an increase in demand. It was noted there was a comprehensive set of services available in the County. Attention was also drawn to the newly published national drug strategy, which highlighted the need for further work to get more people into treatment and successfully completing treatment.
- Concern around the decline in NHS health checks and routine screening as they were key to prevention and early intervention. Work was ongoing to address it. It was noted that pre-pandemic the County was performing above the national average
- Work was ongoing with the voluntary sector to see how they might maintain and manage the demand for support once the Community Support Organisations ended in March 2022;
- Education Psychology was a national issue for the DfE in part due to the substantial increase in EHCPs over recent years. The County Council was in a similar position to other Authorities, and was currently using agency staff to address the backlog.
- There was some concern about the number of maintained schools across the County that had an out of date Ofsted rating. It was confirmed those schools had been categorised based on the level of risk of them not being judged as good or outstanding in a future inspection, and allocated an appropriate number of days of advisor support and challenge. Of the 235 maintained schools, over 100 of them would receive 8 days of support.
- Whilst school attendance in North Yorkshire remained above the national average, there had been a drop in attendance rates across the County thought to be due to the high number of COVID cases and suspected cases in schools. The Public Health team continued to work with schools when cases were identified, and education plans for children not in school was being prioritised;
- The slower pace of parents choosing Elected Home Education was thought to be due to the new process in place to encourage them away from that option.
- The number of professional calls abandoned was considered reasonable as they were less likely to stay online when the lines were busy, and would prefer to call back at a different time when they were less busy too;
- Bus services had suffered because of Covid and passenger numbers remained well below pre-Covid levels, leaving the commercial viability of some rural services under great pressure. The Bus Service Improvement Plan was aimed at improving

patronage so that more rural services could pay for themselves;

Revenue Budget, Treasury Management & Capital Plan

County Councillor Gareth Dadd introduced each section of the report. In regard to Revenue, he confirmed there was minimal change from the previous quarter, and drew attention to the projected underspend of £4m (1% of budget), noting that it included £3.1m of reserves. He also noted the circa £15m in Covid grant funding received this year and the use of the Better Care Fund. He suggested that the cost to the Council of the recent storms, and any as yet unknown costs associated with the coming winter period would likely see the underspend in that area disappear. He highlighted the ongoing pressures in social care for young people and the £1m grant for Domestic Abuse.

Gary Fielding, Corporate Director – Strategic Resources gave a health warning in regard to the projections, particularly due to the uncertainties around Covid, and confirmed the current position was masked by one-off grants. He also drew attention again to the circulated addendum which reflected the uncertainty and the proposal to deploy £6m to bolster the Adult Social Care workforce and support the providers network.

County Councillor Gareth Dadd confirmed the recent Local Government spending Review had proved more positive than expected, and that the Authority was in one of the best positions to deal with the challenges ahead through the actions it had taken to control its budget.

In regard to Treasury Management, Gary Field noted the Authority had very low / negative interest rates and welcomed any returns received. He also confirmed the loan to Welcome to Yorkshire had now been fully repaid. Finally, it was noted that the Authority's commercial investments remained at the right side of the line.

In regard to the Capital Plan, attention was drawn to the £400K for the Outdoor Learning feasibility and first stage of development.

Executive Members voted unanimously in favour of all of the recommendations within the report, and it was

Resolved –

Executive Members agreed to note:

- The latest position for the County Council's 2021/22 Revenue Budget, as summarised in **paragraph 2.1.2**.
- The position on the GWB (**paragraphs 2.4.1 to 2.4.3**)
- The position on the 'Strategic Capacity – Unallocated' reserve (**paragraphs 2.4.4 to 2.4.7**)
- The funding set aside to explore the implications of the Resources and Waste Strategy as detailed in **paragraph 2.2.14** above
- The position on the County Council's Treasury Management activities during the second quarter of 2021/22

Executive Members also agreed to refer the Q2 Performance Monitoring & Budget report to the Audit Committee for their consideration as part of the overall monitoring arrangements for Treasury Management.

Finally, Executive Members agreed to recommend to the Chief Executive Officer that using his delegated powers, he:

- Approve the refreshed Capital Plan summarised at **paragraph 4.2.3**; and
- Agree that no action be taken at this stage to allocate any additional capital resources (**paragraph 4.5.7**)

671 Director of Public Health Annual Report

Considered:

County Councillor Andrew Lee introduced the Annual Report for 2020 and provided a brief overview on:

- Progress on past recommendations and priorities
- Health inequalities in North Yorkshire
- North Yorkshire's COVID-19 response
- Protecting and Improving the health and wellbeing of the residents of North Yorkshire
- North Yorkshire Public Health priorities for 2021- 2025

He also paid tribute to the previous Director of Public Health, Lincoln Sergeant and the previous Executive Member for Public Health, Prevention and Supported Housing, including sustainability and transformation plans - County Councillor Caroline Dickinson, who had both contributed to the report

Louise Wallace, Director of Public Health confirmed the report was cross-cutting to reflect the response to Covid and its wider effect on the whole County, and the depth and breadth of the work undertaken. She also drew attention to the video linked to the report, and confirmed the next report would likely focus on the consequences of Covid.

County Councillor John Ennis suggested the move to a unitary would be a positive step for Public Health, through the bringing together of all the wider determinants on health under one roof.

County Councillor Caroline Dickinson commended the work on the report by all those involved and for the work of officers throughout the pandemic.

County Councillor Paul Haslam queried the governance measures around the priorities in the report, and it was confirmed there were a range of metrics on the population, which would be used to measure and constantly review progress on the objectives, alongside feedback from the public. In regard to smoking and other health-related activities, it was suggested that the provision of clear information and advice on the associated risks was the best way to achieve behavioural change and improve lifestyles.

The Leader thanked Louise Wallace for the report and it was

Resolved –

That the Public Health Annual Report for 2020 be noted.

672 Outbreak Management Peer Challenge

Considered: A report of the Corporate Director – Health and Adult Services, presenting the outcomes of the LGA Peer Challenge carried out in September 2021 and setting out a number of recommendation for Executive Members' consideration.

County Councillor Michael Harrison introduced the report, confirming that the recommendations arising from the Peer Challenges would be worked through.

The Leader welcomed the opportunity the County Council had been given to participate in the peer challenge, and Richard Flinton thanked staff for their contributions.

On behalf of the County Council, Executive Members expressed their condolences to the

families of friends of all of the North Yorkshire residents who had lost their lives to Covid-19. They also recorded their thanks to all North Yorkshire residents, including community, public and private sector partners and volunteers for all of their hard work over the past 22 months.

Resolved – That:

- i. The feedback report following the Peer Challenge, at Appendix 1 be noted;
- ii. The development of an action plan be noted – to be monitored through Management Board and reported to Executive as required;
- iii. The County Council's condolences to the families and friends of all the North Yorkshire residents who had lost their lives to Covid-19 be noted;
- iv. The thanks expressed to all North Yorkshire residents, including community, public and private sector partners and volunteers, for their hard work over the past 22 months be noted;

673 Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation - Draft Strategy

Considered: A report of the Chief Executive Officer outlining the work undertaken so far to ensure North Yorkshire County Council complies with the new statutory obligations set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, and its planned approach for a strategy on safe accommodation for domestic abuse victims, survivors and their families across North Yorkshire (and York).

Resolved –

Executive Members agreed to note the contents of the report, and to recommend to the Chief Executive Officer that using his emergency delegated powers, he:

- i. Approve the proposed partnership arrangements and approaches to deliver the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy
- ii. Delegate to the Leader (as portfolio holder for safer communities) the authority to agree the Domestic Abuse Safer Accommodation Strategy

674 Forward Plan

Considered –

The Forward Plan for the period from 29 November 2020 to 30 November 2021 was presented, and it was noted that an additional Executive meeting had been added to the schedule for 8 March 2022.

Resolved - That the Forward Plan be noted.

The meeting concluded at 12.35 pm.