

Selby and Ainsty Area Constituency Committee
Better Together Update
14th January 2022

1.0 Purpose of the Report

To update the Members of the Area Constituency Committee on progress in relation to the Better Together Programme.

2.0 Introduction and Background

Since 2013 North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) and Selby District Council (SDC) have worked together to establish greater collaboration in service delivery to the benefit of both the public and the two organisations. The Better Together Programme was established to enable shared expertise, intelligence and leadership between the two councils to maximise how assets are used to deliver savings whilst redesigning services to achieve the best possible outcomes to all customers in the locality.

The vision for the Programme remains: “To enable the most effective use of joint resources of the two organisations in providing services to our shared client base”.

3.0 Governance Framework

3.1 Better Together Steering Group and Joint Members Group

The Programme is governed by a Joint Members Group and an Officer Steering Group which includes the Chief Executives from both organisations. The governance model in existence ensures the right level of sponsorship and communication at the senior leadership level of both organisations to be able to resolve issues and accelerate progress. The governance arrangements have assisted in ensuring that the programme maintains momentum and has been supportive of the innovative approach to service delivery. It has also ensured that the principles of the collaboration are upheld and provides scrutiny to the projects being delivered.

3.2 Collaboration Agreement

In 2015 the two councils agreed to enter into a formal collaboration agreement to evidence the parties’ intentions, the principles of collaboration and the obligations in respect of the services to be provided. The initial term for the overarching Agreement was for 5 years and both the NYCC Executive and SDC Executive agreed at its respective meetings in February and March 2020 to extend the agreement for a further three years until June 2023.

The Collaboration includes the following services at present:

- VOIP Telephony System
- Registrar’s Service – Office Accommodation
- CRM System
- SDC Website/Intranet Hosting

- Shared IT Infrastructure Service
- Financial Service
- Legal Services
- HR Service
- Payroll Service
- Landscape Architectural Advice
- Specialist Archaeological Advisory Service
- Natural Environment & Advisory Service (Ecological Services)

NYCC also provide a Health and Safety Service to SDC, which is a separate agreement from the Better Together Collaboration agreement contracted directly between SDC and NYCC.

4.0 Updates from Key Areas of Better Together

Over the last year the two authorities have continued to work together to ensure excellent service delivery to our customers. The shared services have continued to work effectively to support the objectives of both organisations and the key focus areas for joint working initiatives have continued to be in the areas of Growth and Infrastructure and Health and Social Care. This section of the report provides an update against these three areas of the initiative.

4.1 Growth and Infrastructure

There are several significant work streams that require joint working between the District and County Council including:

- The new Local Plan;
- Regeneration and Development Projects.
- Key development sites - through major applications to the Local Planning Authority (LPA)

This reflects the strong joint team working ethos established under the Better Together arrangements. Significant progress has been made across these work areas since we last reported to the Selby and Ainsty Area Committee in September 2020. This puts us in a good position to deliver on a number of key priorities and to establish firm foundations for the joint priorities going forward beyond 2023 as part of the new North Yorkshire Council.

There are also some key challenges going forward around staffing and capacity which we will need to keep under review given the scale and ambition of this work we are jointly doing.

An update on each of these key work strands is given below.

4.1.1 The Local Plan

The Local Plan has made excellent progress since consultation took place on the Issues and Options for the Local Plan in early 2020, despite the significant

challenges posed by the pandemic and needing to change how we worked, collaborated and consulted on our plans.

There has been strong joint working between SDC and NYCC on a range of key work strands including transport and highways modelling, infrastructure planning and considering the implications of the three new settlement options. A full update on the transport modelling is included in Section 1.2 below.

Preferred Options consultation took place between 29 January and 6 March 2021. We received 1217 responses to the consultation comprising over individual 4700 comments.

Through the consultation exercise a further 44 additional or amended sites were also submitted to the Council for further consideration. Consultation on the 44 additional sites took place between 2 August and 13 September 2021 which received 92 individual responses.

Between 3 September and 15 October 2021 consultation took place on a number of technical evidence documents which will help to shape the Publication version of the Local Plan. Consultation took place on the Green Belt review, Greenspace Audit, Local Plan and CIL Viability report and the Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities Assessment. A total of 39 responses were received in response to these technical documents.

The next stage in progressing the Local Plan is the preparation of the Publication version, which is the pre-submission plan and must be prepared under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning Act 2004 (as amended). The Publication version of plan will be subject to consultation before it is submitted to the Secretary of State for examination. Officers are in the process of updating the Local Plan policies in response to the comments raised in relation to all three public consultations and the outcomes of additional evidence work.

In terms of the implications of Local Government reorganisation, Paragraph 74 of the National Planning Practice Guidance states that as set out in the Local Government (Structural Changes) (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2018, that existing plans will remain in place for the areas set out in the plan. Plans that are being prepared, but not yet adopted, can also carry over and continue through to adoption in the new authority. The regulations also state that new plans covering the whole of the new area must be adopted within 5 years of the reorganisation.

In terms of next steps, the current Local Development Scheme states that the Council will consult on the Publication version of the Local Plan in early 2022. However, the elections for the new Unitary Authority are due to take place on 5th May 2022 and because of Purdah the consultation would need to be completed by the mid-March.

There have been some delays to some key pieces of evidence such as the Highways Modelling Work and revised Level 2 Flood Risk Assessments, which will lead to a short delay in consulting on the Publication version of the Local Plan. This delay would mean that the consultation would be impacted by Purdah and therefore it is proposed to delay consultation on the Publication Local Plan until after the Local elections May 2022.

4.1.2 Local Plan – Transport Modelling

WSP is presently commissioned by NYCC working with SDC to build a new Selby District Model Strategic Transport (SDSTM) model covering Selby district. The main aim of the model is to model and identify the impacts of growth (emerging Local Plan) on the levels of traffic and congestion.

The transport model will be used to:

- establish the baseline position (2019) in relation to traffic movements
- Model future year (principally 2040) Do Minimum and Do-something scenarios

The SDSTM incorporates the following functionality based on guidance

- Detailed simulation representation of the highway network within Selby District;
- Buffer modelling of route choice options in surrounding areas of Selby District; and
- External area covering the rest of England and beyond.

Due to the challenges of covid, a 2019 base year model is being produced based on traffic data, mobile phone data and journey time data from Highway Analyst.

Present status:

All data analysis is now complete, except journey time where challenges were encountered. WSP is currently assessing and checking the updated journey time data pending which this will be used to inform the calibration/ validation of the base year.

Initial calibration / validation results look promising with the traffic flow validation/calibration results within the Webtag guidance, however these results will have be recalculated once the calibration/ validation is rerun using the new journey time data.

Next steps:

In the coming months, the project will focus on the following:

1. Complete the calibration / validation once the journey time data has been checked (early January 2022);

2. Complete the Variable demand elements for the model which will be used as input to create the forecast year model (2040) (January 2022);
3. Finalise the uncertainty log which provides information on the development and infrastructure based on the emerging Local Plan in the study area (January 2022);
4. Create 2040 Do-minimum and Do-something model (March 2022).

4.1.3 Regeneration & Development Projects

NYCC and SDC are jointly working on a number of key development and regeneration projects including:

- Transforming Cities Fund – Selby Station Gateway & One Public Estate
- Places & Movement Study

A brief summary of progress with each is given below.

4.1.4 Transforming Cities Fund – Selby Station Gateway Scheme

Following the successful bid for Transforming Cities Fund money as part of the Leeds City Region Programme Selby & NYCC have been working jointly to develop a genuinely transformational £20m package of improvements centred on the Rail and Bus Station Gateway incorporating a new station building, new cycleway links and enhanced public realm areas. This will also unlock new development sites.

The Project has progressed to Preliminary design stage utilising WSP as Principal Designer and the latest of three separate rounds of consultation has recently been completed. Whilst results are still under analysis it is clear that significant public support continues for the proposals (84% of respondents felt either very positive, positive or neutral).

The Outline Business case is currently being appraised by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority where confirmation of approval is anticipated, this will allow the further drawdown of further funding to complete detailed design on the proposals – concurrently SDC are in negotiations to acquire a number of land parcels to facilitate the scheme. These are progressing well and it is anticipated that all required land will be under SDC ownership in Quarter one next year.

The scheme will be subject to a Full Environmental Impact Assessment planning application and it is anticipated this will be submitted in late December 2021.

In order to assure buildability of the design and early planning for the construction period, procurement of a delivery contractor has been undertaken on the basis of an early Contractor Involvement contract and Contract award has recently been made.

Following determination of the planning application and completion of detailed design it is anticipated that, subject to Executive and West Yorkshire Combined

Authority approvals, works can begin on the ground from summer 2022 with completion by September 2023. The new plaza to be funded by SDC would follow and be completed by April 2024.

We have also secured funding through One Public Estate to explore the redevelopment potential of key sites in SDC, NYCC and other public ownership to the east of Selby Station. This work is about to be commissioned and will need to be completed by March 2022. There is significant redevelopment potential and the transformative impact of the TCF scheme is likely to ensure there is significant developer interest in development around a new station quarter e.g. for housing and commercial uses. This is something that will need to be progressed in future years potentially through a JV with a development partner.

4.1.5 Places and Movement Study

The Selby District Places and Movement study was commissioned in summer 2020, covering the areas of Selby and Sherburn in Elmet town/village centres. Tadcaster is being looked at separately as part of the joint work with Sam Smiths Old Brewery on a heritage led regeneration masterplan for the town being developed as part of the new Local Plan (see section 4.1.7 below)

The aim of the study is to consider how congestion could be reduced, how air quality could be improved and how the highway network might be adapted to support improved movement for all modes. It also includes proposals to transform quality of place through a number of key public realm improvements.

Following a public consultation exercise, it was clear from the analysis undertaken, that at this stage no consensus has been reached on the options for either Selby or Sherburn in Elmet that could support the place and regeneration aspirations of both authorities. In addition to this, the number of responses received to the consultation was relatively low and could be considered unrepresentative.

Both authorities have agreed that additional development of options for Selby and Sherburn in Elmet is undertaken and will be funded jointly by NYCC and SDC. The Selby work will focus on further transport modelling and analysis, and will look at a variety of options intended to mitigate the impact of the 'do maximum' proposal. It will also look to set out more clearly the impact for active modes, and for large vehicles such as HGVs.

4.1.6 Revitalising Town Project – Selby Abbey Quarter

In 2019, consultant Chris Wade from The People and Places Partnership was commissioned by SDC to undertake research and surveys and produce Action Plans for each town with the aim of revitalising the 3 centres.

Since then SDC have allocated funding through the Programme for Growth to revitalise the three main town centres with a series of identified projects.

A multi-partner Towns Revitalisation Board acts as an advisory group and is attended by SDC councillors, Allan McVeigh from NYCC as well as the LEP, Selby College and the FSB. There is also a joint NYCC/SDC officer group that works together to ensure alignment of the various project ideas from a transport and highways perspective.

As part of the Revitalising Town Project SDC have allocated £500k to enhance Selby Market Place and £500k to enhance Selby Park. These two projects have been brought together as a Selby Abbey Quarter project.

There are close synergies with the TCF Selby Station Gateway project and together they will transform the quality of place and connectivity between the Station, Park, Abbey, market place and the high street.

The project aims to enhance the spaces as a visitor destination, provide infrastructure for events, include public artwork and improve lighting and wayfinding as well consider how spaces in the park can be activated. NYCC was asked to prioritise the project and to consider leading on the procurement process.

Following internal discussion between the NYCC Highways and Strategic Resources teams and given a recent tender exercise had commenced to identify a delivery partner for the Transforming Cities Fund, a potential opportunity existed to build the Revitalising Towns project into the TCF contract.

A subsequent meeting with Selby DC officers confirmed that the ambitions of the Revitalising Towns project sat within the general scope of the TCF contract and colleagues from both councils will shortly be working together to integrate the respective programmes, in order to make both projects a reality. This is an excellent example of the benefits of our close working on TCF and the wider regeneration projects.

4.1.7 Joint work on key development sites

There is a good track record of joint working between SDC and NYCC on key development site, taking a Development Team approach and securing additional resources to deal with these projects from the scheme promoters through Planning Performance Agreements, where possible.

Selby District has a number of key development sites of strategic importance including:

- Former Kellingley Colliery
- Gascoigne Wood Rail-freight Interchange

- Church Fenton – Create Yorkshire
- Former Eggborough Power Station
- Sherburn 2

In addition there are a number of strategically important renewable energy projects being progressed either through the national planning regime (Nationally significant Infrastructure Projects) or through applications to the Local Planning Authority.

These include:

- Drax Power Station – Bio-economy Carbon Capture & Storage project (BECCS)
- National Grid – Humber Low Carbon Pipeline project
- Large scale Solar Farms at Camblesforth and Osgodby
- A number of large scale Battery Storage facilities e.g. around Monk Fryston sub-station and at Eggborough

However, the scale and number of these applications does pose a resource challenge. There is a challenging market in recruiting to key technical posts in planning, highways and transport as well as specialist officers such as landscape, conservation and urban design.

SDC have recently allocated additional funding for planning staffing to ensure these strategic projects can be progressed. Harworth, the developers of Kellingley Colliery, have recently agreed to fund the costs of planning officer to ensure their application could be accelerated to meet a tight timescale being set by an investor who wanted to purchase a significant part of the site. There have also been challenges in the past in filling posts within key teams at NYCC.

Against this backdrop is also the fact that overall numbers of planning applications are up across North Yorkshire with a 25% increase in Selby District in 2021/22 compared to the previous two years.

As Local Government Reorganisation progresses we need to work closely together across North Yorkshire to ensure our talent is retained, recruitment for key posts is proactive and staff see the career opportunities and benefits of working for the new Unitary authority.

4.2 Health and Social Care

4.2.1 Multi-Disciplinary-Team and Selby Health Matters Partnership Plan

Pre-Covid the H&SC workstream was focused on developing a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) approach for complex cases and delivering the SDC/NYCC Public Health led Selby Health Matters partnership plan; to reduce health inequalities and improve population health.

During the Covid response period SDC/NYCC activity was supported by developing those early relationships through the Selby Health Matters approach and improving engagement with the CCG and Primary Care Networks. Activity was focused on the following:

4.2.2 Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs)

Initially daily and now meeting three times per week, MDTs include representation from SDC Housing/Homelessness Services alongside NYCC Health and Adult Social Care and Mental Health colleagues as a minimum. They are linking well with Primary Care Networks and strengthening proactive engagement between services.

The approach works very well with information sharing and problem-solving to manage a range of high need or complex cases relating to issues such as mental health, discharge and reablement. The need for escalating cases for review has stopped over this period providing some real learning as to the impact of cross agency working improving outcomes for individuals, reducing duplication and reducing delays in service. Overall pressures on services have meant that the MDT's have frequently been used for negotiating competing demands. Remaining activity is to improve the MDT role in tracking and communicating risks where people are waiting, and services are unavailable.

Through the Selby Health Matters partnership we are also looking at task and finish groups to consider how the wider community network can support system pressures for health and social care and Primary Care Network colleagues that are prevalent at present due to winter pressures and the pandemic.

4.2.3 Community Support Organisations (CSOs)

NYCC and SDC worked closely to establish 3 CSOs in the district. Their function was to support those in the community who required care and support due to shielding/self-isolation. They also acted as the points of contact for local community networks. SDC supported the NYCC Service Level Agreements with a £25,000 flexible grants fund enabling the CSOs to offer grant funding to their community networks further supporting vulnerable residents and helping reopen activities in the community. To date a significantly high volume of support activity has been undertaken by the organisations from the start of the pandemic.

We are now looking at what a longer-term community anchor organisation approach might look like to develop community responses to health and social care issues in line with Local Government Reorganisation workstreams.

4.2.4 Primary Care Network System Support

SDC Communities and NYCC Stronger Communities provided ongoing communication to the Vale of York CCG to ensure they had relevant community support information. SDC also facilitated the establishment of the vaccination centre at The Summit (currently until Mar 2022).

4.2.5 Current Focus

4.2.6 The Selby Health Matters partnership

This is now cofacilitated by SDC/NYCC Public Health and Vale of York CCG with representation from organisations across health, mental health, leisure, Voluntary and Community (VCSE), police and fire. A new 2yr plan has been established. It continues to focus on reducing inequalities, improving population health and finding ways to integrate and collaborate.

Types of activity include:

- Mental Health – establishing a local network of mental health support to GPs through VCSE. Use of the NHS Mental Health Transformation Plan Fund
- Obesity – Developing work on the Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives ‘Healthy School Zone’ project focused on developing Selby High School and Cluster primaries as healthy areas to reduce high sugar, salt foods and air pollution, provide alternative food options and increase active travel.
- Population Health Management - Analysis of ‘target populations’ who impact on health and social care systems (i.e. frailty, diabetes, respiratory). Development of co-designed Long-Term Condition review pilot to improve self-care management and patient connection to non-medical solutions
- Aging and Independence – developing pilots for physical and social activity in care homes
- VCSE Leadership Development – supported development of VCSE and health sectors to strengthen ability to deliver commissioned services in the district.

4.2.7 Place Based Planning

The Humber Coast and Vale Integrated Care System will be established in March 2022. This is the NHS delivery vehicle for place-based health at a sub-regional level and will see the dissolution of the CCGs. The timing of the change aligns with preparing for the Local Government Reorganisation, where we wish to understand the benefits of a larger scale authority but ensure that delivery at a local level is understood.

Angela Crossland, Head of Community, Partnerships and Customers at SDC has been seconded since November 2021 for two days per week to NYCC Public Health to develop and co-ordinate a plan for the next 5+ years which addresses key local health and social care priorities, and to develop a model for integrated services in Selby.

4.2.8 Selby District Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Similar information to the above was presented to the Selby District Council Oversight and Scrutiny Committee on 16th December 2021 alongside a presentation from the Director of Public Health. This includes some further information on how we work at district level and can be found here: [Agenda for Scrutiny Committee on Thursday, 16th December, 2021, 5.00 pm - Selby District Council](#)

4.3 Shared Services

Sharing of services under the Collaboration Agreement (resource and expertise) in an appropriate and sustainable manner continues to enable us to be much more customer focused. We have been able to achieve increased resilience in service delivery, increased level of skills from pooled resources, improved opportunities for staff career progression and succession planning. A more client focussed approach to service delivery and economies of scale have been realised.

As with all public sector service provision over the last 19 months, services have had to review and quickly deploy alternative delivery models to proactively and reactively respond to the challenges brought about by the Covid 19 Pandemic. For some of the shared services this has meant that previously planned improvement work has had to be re-prioritised to focus on joint delivery of critical services. The pandemic has also brought about opportunities for our councils to work even closer for the benefit of our customers.

The focus of the shared services up to 2023 will be to ensure that robust and effective services are in place and to support the LGR Programme for transition to the new council. The solid foundations of collaboration working already developed through the current Better Together arrangements will be invaluable in the planning and transition to the formation of the new council.

The sections below summarise the key updates from the services in the last 12 months and look ahead to the transition to the development of the new authority in 2023.

4.3.1 VOIP Telephony System

NYCC have provided SDC with a hosted telephony system since 2013. The platform is shared with NYCC and three other District Councils ensuring that economies of scale on both software licencing and support is realised. Over the last 12 months the telephony service has been robust and a number of changes were made to ensure that critical first line staff could work from home under the pandemic.

Looking ahead the focus will be to ensure that the telephony platform remains robust and that agreements are made in the interim to support the transition to the new authority. Whilst the current SLA ends on 31 March 2022, both parties are committed to ensuring the arrangement is in place for a further 12 months. Under the LGR Programme the ICT and Digital and the Customer Workstreams are defining the requirements and plans for the new council telephony strategy.

4.3.2 CRM System

NYCC and SDC have shared the same Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platform since 2015 ensuring that economies of scale on both software licencing and support is realised and that the experience for our joint customers is good.

NYCC are currently in the procurement process to extend the current agreement length of the joint licences to ensure that the solution remains supported until the transition to the new authority. The Customer Workstream under the LGR Programme will be working across the programme to set out the requirements and plans for CRM solutions for the future authority.

4.3.3 Hosted Website and Intranet

NYCC have provided SDC with a hosted Internet and Intranet solution since 2015. A robust and easy to navigate website has been a really important tool to support residents during the pandemic. Key areas of joint working over the last few months have been to increase the online service offer, for example in taxation and benefits, and to jointly develop the SDC website to ensure compliance with government Accessibility Standards.

Work to further improve SDCs online service offer, particularly around housing and online payments, will take place in the next couple of months. The current SLA is in place until March 2022 and both councils are now in discussion around the agreement to be in place leading up to the formation of the new authority, considering the support available for the current platform from the development community and when transition to website solutions for the new authority will likely commence. Key Workstreams under the LGR Programme will be working jointly across the programme to set out the requirements and plans for website and online channels for the future authority.

4.3.4 ICT Infrastructure

The shared ICT Infrastructure agreement was review last year and is in place until June 2023. The arrangement continues to be successful which has been demonstrated brilliantly over the previous 18 months in response to the changes in ways of working brought about by the pandemic. We have jointly supported the quick transition to a remote working model at the start of the pandemic; ensuring that our staff could still collaborate and remain accessible for our customers, supported the changes in office accommodation and introduced new digital products to enhance the way that we work.

The key focus for the service leading up to the formation of the new council will be to; replace the current critically important security solution, ensure that SDC remains connected to the Public Services Network, support the imminent implementation of new Income Management System and ongoing development of the new Housing Management System.

4.3.5 HR, Payroll & Learning Zone

The new HR arrangement commenced formally in April 2020 and immediately demonstrated the added value as SDC benefitted from the depth and breadth of the NYCC HR service in responding to the almost daily changes needed to support

managers and staff through the pandemic and early lockdowns. In addition to providing day to day HR delivery and updating several key HR policies, the arrangement is currently supporting delivery of SDCs revised People Plan with a heavy focus on supporting staff through change, strengthening staff engagement and ensuring all staff are developed to make the most of the opportunities arising from LGR. This includes delivering a management development programme to around 40 middle and senior managers, an aspiring managers' programme and there are plans for a focus on a bespoke senior leadership development programme.

Whilst no longer a formal SLA, **Learning Zone** has been instrumental in supporting delivery of this work whilst continuing to ensure all staff have access to a wide range of development opportunities and resources including Skills Booster videos and a range of online packages such as safeguarding, cyber awareness and mental health.

Payroll continues to be delivered in a timely and accurate way. The Zellis Myview self-service HR system has been added to the SLA in the last couple of years and has streamlined a number of processes, such as leave booking, expense claims and absence management, removing manual, paper-based processes (and enabling them to be done at home). During the Covid response, SDC benefitted from a number of NYCC e-forms which supported activity such as; assessing/recording risk to vulnerable staff and headline monitoring of vaccination status – including the recent addition of a form to record and report on uptake of the Booster jab.

NYCC HR staff are taking a leading role on the HR LGR Workstream on behalf of SDC.

4.3.6 Integrated Finance Service

The Better Together Finance arrangements have been operating effectively from 1 April 2016. In February 2020 members considered a report recommending renewal of the service level agreement. The report concluded that the arrangement demonstrated a sustainable solution and provided resilience, and flexible resources. It enabled access to the broader skills mix within the wider team and allowed tasks to be matched with the right skills sets, which in turn leads to more efficient and effective delivery of services and improved outcomes for SDC.

The integration of SDC staff into the wider NYCC team has provided exposure to a more varied mix of work which has helped to build the necessary skills and experience to add further value to both organisations. A larger team also provides career progression and assists succession planning. Integration has allowed the re-profiling of skills employed on SDC's financial management service – changing the emphasis and resources towards higher level accountant skills and away from transactional work.

For NYCC the arrangement has delivered cashable savings and broadened the Finance Team's experience into district council services and fostered a more

commercial client centred approach to service delivery - an approach which has been replicated and successfully rolled out to two further clients.

Overall, the arrangement has achieved the desired service outcomes to date and when bringing into account the additional income generated through treasury investments for Selby, has exceeded the original savings target that was set.

However, the report acknowledged that going forward growing service demand from both SDC and NYCC was challenging team capacity and the need to appropriately resource major projects work and prioritise service delivery to achieve further efficiency would be crucial to continued success. The report noted that further embedding of financial management within the role of budget managers would release team capacity for redirection to other value adding work.

In March 2020 the Covid pandemic took hold and the first national local down began. The Finance team like many other teams moved to home working and have for the most part been working from home ever since.

The service lends itself to remote working and whilst there has been some necessary reprioritisation of resources, this has been due to increased demands (largely covid related) rather than any reduction in productivity. The Finance team worked alongside colleagues in Revenues and Benefits, Economic Development, ICT and Business Support to ensure timely and accurate delivery of a range of Covid related grants to businesses and individuals.

All key statutory targets have been met, despite the challenges, and where necessary this has been with the support of the wider finance team – the ability to flex resources across a broader client base and within a larger team has really demonstrated its worth over the last 2 years.

Looking ahead to LGR and the preparations necessary to support a smooth transition to the new Council - the trusted working relationships that have been developed over the last 7-8 years provide a strong platform on which to build a successful unitary council for the future.

4.3.7 Health and Safety Service

Selby DC continues to develop and improve its arrangements for managing health and safety issues and this can be evidenced with the provision of technical support by NYCC through the SLA, which continues to prove successful. Within the “Corporate Health and Safety Work Plan” key areas of work are identified for the working year and these will be updated, if necessary, to reflect priorities and obligations under H&S legislation and best practice.

The impact of COVID-19 has limited a lot of the planned work in the last 12-18 months with the focus on identifying and continuing to review the measures to be taken to ensure staff, visitors and contractors are safe as well as the need to comply

with Health and Safety law. It required Selby DC to continue to adapt working practices and put in place the necessary Covid controls and precautions to help maintain safe working practices both inside our own buildings and outside in the community.

The Corporate Work Plan for 2021-22 and then moving forward to 2022-23 and the transition to the new authority will look to consolidate the work previously undertaken, whilst anticipating the lifting of restrictions that should offer greater opportunities to provide more pro-active interventions and beneficial training for employees to develop knowledge and increased awareness of health and safety.

4.3.8 Registrars Accommodation at SDC Civic Centre

The agreement between SDC and the NYCC Registration Service has been a great success. Customers have not reported on any issues, quite the contrary. The service was able to open up the building in June 2020 when birth registrations, which have to be by face to face interviews, resumed.

The Registration Service would now like to explore the possibility of a second interview room being made available which has been added to the renewed agreement in 2020. It was identified pre-Covid that the office needed an additional member of staff (potentially part time) and thus an extra interview room to facilitate increased demand from Selby area residents to register births at Selby rather than face the journey into the centre of York. This increased demand has resulted in restrictions on availability of appointments during Covid. Beyond the impact of COVID the Registrars Service and the SDC Reception Team have worked together really well to overcome any difficulties, with the current process working for over a year now.

It is our wish that the arrangements currently in place to use this building, continue during and after the transition to the new authority.

4.3.9 Natural Environment & Advisory Service (Ecological Services)/Specialist Archaeological Advisory Service/Landscape Architectural Advice

The Archaeological and Ecological SLA services are working well and Selby planning officers are receiving specialist advice to underpin planning decisions. The Landscape Architectural advice has regularly exceeded the one day a week arrangement due to Selby's requirements for this specialism. Additional Landscape resource has been sought by SDC to address this in the future however, this remains a pressure point.

4.3.10 Legal Service

The shared legal service has been in place since 2018 and both parties have agreed to extend the arrangement to 31st March 2023 (SDC Executive 2/12/2021).

The purpose of the collaboration is to provide the District Council with a broader range of available in-house legal specialism, to provide flexibility, resilience and continued value for money, particularly where specialisms are common to both, such as commercial property, procurement and employment law. The arrangement has achieved this.

The Town and Country Planning discipline provision is now with a very experienced specialist SDC lawyer in house and this is also the legal specialism of the SDC Solicitor to the Council. This has better met the needs of the SDC planning clients. This also enables better use of the NYCC SLA hours on other legal disciplines.

Close working between the NYCC Legal Services Manager and the current SDC Solicitor to the Council has added further value by driving a culture shift of the service to mirror that of in house, rather than the arms length arrangement that can be a disadvantage with external legal contractors. This culture shift seeks to maintain the added value of an in house legal service where a holistic approach to advice for the organisation is provided.

With the advent of LGR, it also means that we are well placed to transition to the new Authority. The SDC Lead is now working with the NYCC Lead to shape the new legal service through the LGR Legal and Governance Workstream.

4.3.11 Informal Arrangements

As we get closer to the Vesting Date for the new North Yorkshire Council, current councils are responding to resource challenges, including around recruitment and retention and addressing capacity and skills gaps. The examples outlined below could be replicated across councils in North Yorkshire.

4.3.12 Communications & Marketing

There is no formal Better Together SLA for Communications & Marketing. However, following the recent departure of the Communications & Marketing Manager, SDC approached NYCC for support. NYCC are now providing SDC with communications and marketing support including management support to the SDC communications officers from NYCCs Head of Communications and additional capacity around internal communications, press and PR and marketing campaigns. The arrangement is currently working well and is enabling SDC officers to play a full role in the LGR Communications & Engagement Workstream.

4.3.13 Policy & Performance

Following the secondment of SDCs Senior Policy & Performance Officer to NYCC, initial discussions have taken place between the relevant Heads of Service around a potentially similar model to the one for Communications. However, subsequently both parties have agreed on a looser, less formal arrangement which will be kept under review. The focus will be on identifying critical peaks of work at SDC and

opportunities to work more closely on shared agendas – an example of this *could* be the low carbon/climate change agenda. This approach is supported by both relevant Heads of Service working together as joint leads on the LGR sub-workstream on Policy & Performance.

5.0 Summary

The Better Together Programme continues to deliver benefits to SDC, NYCC and the public whilst also providing a joint platform to identify and deliver new initiatives for improvement. In the earlier stages of the Programme there was a key focus on achieving savings through joint working often in back office support areas, this remains a key objective for the programme however in recent times the Programme has had a major focus on jointly delivering on key outcomes for our respective customers. The Better Together Collaboration Agreement continues to ensure that joint principles, governance and a legal framework are in place to deliver services and joint projects.

The solid foundations of collaboration working already developed through the current Better Together arrangements will be invaluable in the planning and transition to the formation of the new council. The focus of the joint working arrangement going forwards will be to ensure that robust and effective services are in place and to support the LGR Programme for transition to the new council.

6.0 Recommendations

It is recommended that Members of the Area Constituency Committee note the progress made and the ongoing work of the Better Together Programme.