

North Yorkshire County Council

Executive

15 March 2022

Area Constituency Committee Feedback

1.0 Purpose of the Report

To bring to the attention of the Executive key issues considered at recent meetings of the Area Constituency Committees.

2.0 Richmond (Yorks) Area Constituency Committee – 6 January 2022

2.1 Council Budget proposals for 2022/23

A Special Meeting of the Committee considered the Council Budget proposals for 2022/23, with a particular focus upon the area covered by the Committee. The following issues were discussed:

- The funding challenges faced by adult social care, proposed national reform of adult social care funding and the options for an adult social care precept on Council Tax
- The long term impact of the pandemic upon the demand for services and how they operate, with particular reference to pent-up demand for adult social care
- The role that the Council has to play in intervening in the social care market to help ensure that adequate supply is in place
- The impact of rising inflation, increased National Insurance contributions and possible pay claims upon the Council's operating costs
- The national funding formula for schools and how this did not take into account the particular needs of small, rural schools and some rural secondary schools with large catchment areas
- The development and implementation of the new unitary authority and what this would mean financially
- The sensible use of the general working balance, within Reserves, for emergencies eg dealing with Covid, and finding capacity to deal with local government reorganisation, whilst recognising that the Council must be mindful, when setting its precept, of the ability of people to pay.
- The position regarding the funding of schools that become Academies.
- Concerns regarding the deficit position for a Special Needs School in 2023/24
- The challenging budget position - the impact on cost of living issues versus an appropriate budget being set to maintain essential services and ensure that the vulnerable in society were adequately protected.
- The tremendous job done by the County Council in terms of maintaining the budget over the previous 10 to 12 years, and being able to provide a good level of reserves

3.0 Selby and Ainsty Area Constituency Committee – 14 January 2022

3.1 "Better Together" initiative – update

An update on the "Better Together" initiative was provided, highlighting the following:-

- The excellent collaboration work undertaken by Selby DC and NYCC

- Details of the 8 year programme undertaken to date, the initiatives that have been developed and prospered, the effective use of knowledge and resources and the impact this has had on service delivery in the area.

Members highlighted the following in relation to the report:-

- The allocation policy in terms elderly persons' bungalows in the Selby District.
- The availability of COVID vaccinations at the week-end in Selby.
- The development of Social Services and support for vulnerable persons.
- Support for the LGR process.
- The development of the Olympia Park proposals and other employment sites.

3.2 COVID 19 and LGR - Executive Update

COVID 19 and LGR – Executive updates were provided on these issues by the Leader of the Council. The following issues were highlighted:-

- Current COVID levels were higher than the English average in the Selby District and efforts to bring that down continued
- The “Make Care Matter” initiative
- Good progress was being made on the implementation of LGR
- Current COVID figures , hospitalisations, deaths and vaccination rates were detailed
- The details of the continued response of the Community Support Officers to the pandemic were provided, including how their roles had evolved.

Members highlighted the following in relation to the update:-

- The development of devolution for the region
- The issue of pay impacting recruitment to the care sector and how that was being addressed
- The protection of vulnerable people from getting COVID from NHS and care settings.
- The establishment of ward boundaries in respect of LGR

3.3 Schools, Educational Achievement and Finance

The committee considered the Annual Schools, Education Achievement and Finance Report. The following issues were highlighted:-

- The impact on schools and their finance of fluctuating roll numbers.
- Strategies to further decrease the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions and whether being out of school for a long period of time due to COVID had affected this.
- The number of 'good' rated schools in the area in comparison to those rated 'outstanding'.
- Elective Home Education – had this increased following the COVID pandemic resulting in schools closing for long periods.
- The rationale applied for amalgamating schools.

3.4 Council Budget proposals for 2022/23

The committee also considered the Council Budget Proposals for 2022/23, with a particular focus upon the area covered by the committee. The following issues were discussed:

- The funding challenges faced by adult social care, proposed national reform of adult social care funding and the options for an adult social care precept on Council Tax

- The long term impact of the pandemic upon the demand for services and how they operate, with particular reference to pent-up demand for adult social care
- The role that the Council has to play in intervening in the social care market to help ensure that adequate supply is in place
- The impact of rising inflation, increased National Insurance contributions and possible pay claims upon the Council's operating costs
- The national funding formula for schools and how this did not take into account the particular needs of small, rural schools and some rural secondary schools with large catchment areas
- The development and implementation of the new unitary authority and what this would mean financially

Members highlighted the following in relation to the report:-

- The potential increase in Council Tax for local residents and the impact this would have on cost of living matters.
- The potential effect on Council Tax rates from LGR
- Arrangements for DCs outstanding debts following LGR.
- The impact on the budget of rising interest rates.
- Ventilation in schools in response to COVID while replacing windows in relation to energy efficiency.
- The provision of free WiFi in local town centres when some outlying areas are still not receiving appropriate broadband connections.

4.0 Recommendation

- 4.1 That the Executive notes the report and considers any matters arising from the work of the Area Constituency Committees detailed above, that merit further scrutiny, review or investigation at a county-level.

Barry Khan
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4 March 2022