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North Yorkshire County Council

Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the remote meeting held on Wednesday, 13th April, 2022 commencing at 10.00 am.

County Councillor Stanley Lumley in the Chair. Plus County Councillors Karl Arthur, Paul Haslam, David Jeffels, Don MacKay, Andy Paraskos, Clive Pearson, Matt Scott, David Staveley and Roberta Swiers.

In attendance: County Councillors Carl Les and Derek Bastiman.

Officers present: Daniel Harry, Will Baines, Michael Leah, Mark Kibblewhite and Liz Small.

Apologies: County Councillor Robert Heseltine.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

150 Introductions and apologies for absence

County Councillor Stanley Lumley welcomed everyone to the meeting and read out the following statement:

You will have seen the statement on the Agenda front sheet about current decision-making arrangements within the Council, following the expiry of the legislation permitting remote committee meetings. I just want to remind everyone, for absolute clarity, that this is an informal meeting of the Committee Members. Any formal decisions required will be taken by the Chief Executive Officer under his emergency delegated decision-making powers after taking into account any the views of the relevant Committee Members and all relevant information. This approach has been agreed by full Council and will be reviewed at its May 2022 meeting.

Members of the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee were also reminded of the ongoing pre-election period and not to publicise themselves, any candidates standing for election or any political party during the meeting.

Executive members County Councillor Carl Les and County Councillor Derek Bastiman were welcomed to the meeting.

As it was the final meeting of the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee in this Council term of office, County Councillor Stanley Lumley thanked committee members and officers for their support in scrutinising a range of topics over the last five years, such as: vehicle activated speed signs, 20mph speed limits, single use plastics, waste and recycling, rural bus services, broadband and mobile phone coverage, as well as flood prevention and management.

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor Robert Heseltine.

151 Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2022

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2022 were confirmed and signed by the

Chairman as a correct record.

152 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest to note.

153 Public Questions or Statements

No public questions or statements were received.

154 North Yorkshire County Council Plan for Economic Growth - Report of the NYCC Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services

Considered – A report by Mark Kibblewhite, Senior Policy Officer, Business and Environmental Services and Liz Small, Growth and Heritage Services Manager, Business and Environmental Services. The report outlined the delivery of the Council's Plan for Economic Growth achieved in 2021/22.

The key points are summarised below:

- The overall health of the economy in North Yorkshire is returning to pre-pandemic levels of productivity, with the hospitality sector proving to be resilient and recovering strongly.
- The rate of unemployment and claimant count in North Yorkshire remains significantly below regional and national averages. Richmondshire is currently the lowest in the county, with Scarborough showing the highest claimant count rate in North Yorkshire, but these are still below regional and national averages.
- At the height of the pandemic, the number of furloughed workers in the County was among the highest in the North of England. However, towards the end of the furlough scheme, this had reduced to below national averages.
- Constrained labour supply will be a limiting factor on future growth opportunities.
- There remains long standing wage discrepancies between different parts of the County and between the wages of residents and of workers within an area.
- The Government's business support programmes have so far been successful in protecting jobs and businesses through furlough support.
- An emerging effect of the pandemic is that of sharply rising inflation which, exacerbated by war in Ukraine, is forecast to reach up to 8%.

Activity over the last year in relation to the Economic Growth plan included:

- The development of the Harrogate 47 commercial units at the A1(M) junction in Flaxby, with NYCC supporting the transport infrastructure to enable the scheme to progress.
- £32 million secured for Harrogate, Selby and Skipton through the Transforming Cities Fund to improve the town centres.
- Support to Scarborough Borough Council to progress Towns Fund investment of £37.3m in Scarborough (£20.2m) and Whitby (£17.1m).
- Development of a Cultural Framework for North Yorkshire was recently agreed by the Executive, supporting economic growth, transformation and social cohesion.
- Transport maintenance is very important to keep everyone moving, for example Kex Gill A59 improvements.
- Development of cycling and walking infrastructure plans to support active travel
- Working with the LEP to help grow the skills agenda (17k supported over 7 years).
- Development of a Skills Strategy for North Yorkshire with City of York Council and

looking post-Covid at the future skills needs of the economy in North Yorkshire with the University of York.

- NYCC have spent £215m with local businesses in the county on goods and services. Preston is an example of a local authority that has made a commitment to buy local. It is felt there will be a bigger opportunity to buy local more as part of the new unitary council.
- Supporting Government plans around ELMS (Environmental Land Management Scheme) to help reduce carbon emissions and help the development of an environmentally friendly future.
- Enhanced broadband connections for residents, with town centre Wi-Fi now up and running across the county (21 in total), plus developing 5G plans.

As part of Local Government Reorganisation, an Economic Development Strategy workstream is set up and led by Trevor Watson from Harrogate Borough Council to review existing economic data, looking at plans and policies and to commission work on a new Economic Growth strategy. There will be opportunities to access funding from the Shared Prosperity Fund, Towns Deals and the Transforming Cities fund.

Members discussed the report and made the following comments:

County Councillor Paul Haslam felt a more joined up approach with the LEP was needed, particularly around the pillars of environment, social, governance. He also noted that there was no mention of the Circular Economy in the report, and suggested NYCC support local businesses as much as possible, for example buying from local farmers as part of school dinner ingredients.

County Councillor David Staveley noted that the existing District and Borough Councils already have established economic growth plans in place for their areas, and whether there would be a process of bringing them all together as part of the new authority, given that each area has its own individual issues.

In response, Liz Small commented that all councils area are represented on the workstream group set up and that the best practices of the districts and boroughs should be reflected in any plans put forward.

County Councillor Paul Haslam reiterated this, feeling that the new authority should ensure the best of everything is kept and councillors are involved in steering this work. He also felt a commercial approach will be required and this may take time to get right.

County Councillor Stanley Lumley asked about the bounce back of the North Yorkshire economy in the year ahead. Liz Small responded that a strong summer for domestic accommodation and hospitality is expected, however there could be difficulties for the farming sector as part of the introduction of the ELMS. This had also been considered as part of the work of the Rural Commission.

Mark Kibblewhite added that nationally GDP is almost back to pre-pandemic levels, but the recovery has reached a shelf, with the rise in National Insurance and household bills kicking in. He also noted that following Covid, a trend has developed of people retiring earlier and reassessing their work/life balance, therefore the labour market is shrinking. County Councillor David Staveley added that retaining staff is a real issue for businesses to continue providing services, as this will hold back the recovery of the economy.

County Councillor Karl Arthur made a comment about finding a balance between raising interest rates to combat rising inflation and not going too far and causing a financial crash.

County Councillor Stanley Lumley asked about the town centres in North Yorkshire with less people working in offices regularly and the knock on effect this has on local

businesses. Liz Small responded that this is an issue that Directors of Development have been discussing, to repurpose town centres to become more leisure based in the future.

County Councillor Stanley Lumley summed up and thanked the officers for attending the meeting.

Resolved:

- 1) That the report is noted.
- 2) That an update report on the North Yorkshire County Council Plan for Economic Growth be brought back to the committee in 12 months.

155 Waste Collection and Treatment in North Yorkshire - Report of the NYCC Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services

Considered – A report by Michael Leah, Assistant Director, Travel, Environment and Countryside Services at the County Council regarding the waste collection and treatment in North Yorkshire.

It was noted that the Government is still in the process of responding to consultations in this area, so the plans are not fully finalised at the moment.

The key points from the presentation of the report are as summarised below:

- There are three main ways of collecting waste from the kerbside in North Yorkshire: co-mingled, twin stream and multi-stream. The borough and district councils each use one or a combination of these methods, there is no uniformity currently.
- At a national level no method is seen as the best way to collect waste. The existing methods used are based on the challenges for particular locations, with lots of variety across North Yorkshire between rural and urban areas.
- The Resources and Waste Strategy for England will be enacted as part of the Environment Act. The Government undertook three consultations last summer, on extending producer responsibility, introducing a deposit return scheme and consistency in collection.
- As part of the Environment Act, core recycling materials will be defined for local authorities to collect for recycling or composting, and these must be collected separately, taking into account the economic and environmental implications.
- It is expected that there will be a mandate for food waste to be collected separately.
- As part of the Local Government Reorganisation process, officers are working towards a single, uniform service solution for North Yorkshire, which will aid clear communications to residents across the county and expected to lead to waste minimisation.
- There should be benefits of this through economies of scale in terms of vehicles and bins, route optimisation and consolidation of the processing of collected material. With a consistent approach, this should lead to savings with reduced support required from the back office.
- There is expected to be significant environmental benefits to implementing a consistent collection service across the county.
- There remains a lack of clarity around the Resources and Waste Strategy, therefore officers are working with district and borough council colleagues to progress options quickly ahead of any Government announcements.
- On waste treatment, there are three approaches to consider: Reconfigure the existing mechanical treatment at Allerton Waste Recycling Plant, looking at merchant facilities such as an Anaerobic Digester, or procuring new facilities to carry out the changes.
- The Government response to the Extended Producer Responsibility (ERP)

consultation to transfer the cost of packaging material to the manufacturer is awaited. Therefore, when designing those products the manufacturers design it with less waste, but delayed 12 months until 2024.

- It is expected that the proposals set out in the Deposit Return Scheme and the Consistency of Collections consultations will be going ahead, which means a mandatory weekly food waste collection. It is anticipated that the money raised from the ERP will go towards funding the food waste collections.
- Other changes include mandatory introduction of an in-store take back of disposable cups and mandatory recycling labels from the end of March 2026

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

- County Councillor Andy Paraskos queried the rate of recycling shown in the presentation for Harrogate and how the cost of the introduction of a separate food waste collection would be funded. Michael Leah responded that the Government have indicated that the ERP scheme would go towards funding the mandatory food waste collection.
- County Councillor Paul Haslam asked about the scope for efficiencies and the time it would take to work through this, in line with policy changes from Government. A 'waste dating' service was suggested, to try and reuse waste wherever possible. Michael Leah responded by highlighting that it was key for households to reduce waste initially, ahead of any reuse or recycle. The opportunity to work together with district and borough colleagues as part of Local Government Reorganisation will make it easier to advance ideas such as a potential 'waste dating' service in the future.
- County Councillor David Staveley suggested a European-style waste collection service with waste disposal via communal skips. Michael Leah responded that whilst communal waste collection may work in an urban setting with lots of households in close proximity, in rural locations this could be difficult in terms of the location of the skips. There was also the reaction of residents to such a change to consider, moving away from the wheeled bins for each property they have become used to.
- County Councillor David Staveley responded that the construction of new builds are an opportunity to think differently, noting the introduction of solar panels and EV chargers into more new properties. Planning policy could be revised to promote these options to property developers.

In summing up the discussion, County Councillor Stanley Lumley thanked Michael Leah for attending and felt there was a big challenge ahead for waste collection and treatment as part of the new unitary authority. It was important that there is no service interruption to residents, with continuity needed initially before any remodelling of services takes place.

It was felt appropriate for a report to return towards the end of 2022 to update Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny committee members on progress.

Resolved:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That a report come back to the committee towards the end of 2022 to provide a further update.

156 Committee Work Programme

Considered -

Daniel Harry introduced the report. Committee members reviewed the work programme and commented upon it to hand over to the new committee members and see if any issues

need to come back.

A standard report will be going to the next Transport, Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July following the elections to set out the initial work programme for the Committee.

Resolved:

- 1) That the work programme be noted.

157 Any Other Business

At the invitation of the Chairman, County Councillor Carl Les addressed the meeting, expressing his thanks to County Councillor Stanley Lumley for chairing the committee and the Scrutiny Board. It is hoped the new members of the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee will continue the good scrutiny work of the current committee members.

County Councillor Derek Bastiman agreed with the comments from the Leader and thanked the Democratic Services officers involved in the scrutiny committees.

In closing the meeting, County Councillor Stanley Lumley thanked all officers and committee members for their contributions to the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The meeting concluded at 11.40 am.