

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

22 JULY 2022

COUNTY COUNCILLOR GREG WHITE

Climate Change.

On the 5 July the Executive of the County Council formally declared a Climate Emergency.

The Council continues to make progress on its endeavour to become net zero by 2030 and to support the region to be carbon negative by 2040 through working with our partners on the Devolution agenda.

Thank you to all the Members that attended the Members' Seminar at the beginning of July which included climate change update. The comprehensive presentation provided us with the details of our current position, including the data for both North Yorkshire as a whole and for North Yorkshire County Council. It gave all the Members a greater understanding of the breadth of work that is being carried out to support our carbon neutral ambitions and a way forward for developing our approach through a new Climate Change Strategy for North Yorkshire Council.

The data shows a downward trend in carbon emissions across all sectors which reflects the activities and investments we have made to date to decarbonise our operational activities as well as to enable everyday low carbon choices for residents, businesses and visitors. Typical recent examples are the provision of plant based school meals, where our NYES catering service has won second place in the national Green School Menu League and the extension to the pilot YorBus scheme testing innovative approach to public transport provision in rural areas. We are also progressing the procurement £8million domestic housing retrofit project led by our public health team. (may be able to give the name of supplier before publication, they have not signed contract yet though.)

We have recognised that, although we are making progress, we do still have more to do in terms of decarbonising and we have a number of workstreams underway looking at both decarbonising our current services and at new ways of working as we transition to the new Unitary Authority. For example, we have commissioned the Energy Saving Trust to review our fleet to ascertain low carbon alternatives. This will enable us to bring all our commitments together to deliver implementation at a faster pace and larger scale and I will be meeting with the York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership in July to discuss the Routemap to Carbon Negative and to discuss our role in delivering this complex plan.

Covid19 Pandemic Response and Recovery

The network of 23 Community Support Organisations (CSOs) in conjunction with their volunteers, partners and networks continue to provide some support to our most vulnerable residents where required, with a renewed focus on recovery and supporting people to regain their independence and confidence.

Investment has been secured for the development of the model during 2022/23 which will be a transitional and evolutionary year, as we continue to recover from the pandemic. Work has commenced on investigating the potential development of Community Anchor Organisations (CAOs) and the role they can play in supporting their communities, as well as the on-going conversations that are taking place across the health and social care system about the potential role of CSOs in the future.

Stronger Communities will continue to work alongside the CSOs and their networks over the coming months to identify elements of the model that could be retained and developed to support the wider well-being and prevention agenda; this commenced with the 'Response to Recovery' event that took place in May 2022, with 80 individuals from 59 organisations attending.

Covid19 Related Work

Covid19 Community Grants Programme – April – June 2022

The Stronger Communities Covid19 Community Grants Programme remains in place to support communities as they start to recover from the pandemic. £26,949 in the form of 27 small grants has been allocated to community groups and / or projects so far this quarter that encourage the re-opening of activities and services that aim to support communities to re-build their levels of confidence and independence.

Sustainable Food Support

Work continues on the collaborative insight work with City of York Council to better understand the food and fuel insecurity landscape in the region. The work will evaluate the range of support services that were established during the pandemic and explore potential opportunities for future service provision. Initial findings are anticipated in September 2022.

Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme

The FEAST school summer holiday provision is now being promoted to children and families with activities being delivered by 63 different providers across the County with a capacity to provide 42,456 free places to those who are eligible for free school meals. In addition to places for children and young people who meet the Department of Education's eligibility criteria, work has also been taking place to ensure that others who would benefit from free places at these FEAST activities also have access by using a discretionary 15% allocation. These enriching activities are a mix of sports and arts based sessions and are accompanied by a locally sourced meal. This summer period, 12 providers will offer provision for SEND children and young people, which will amount to 6,868 places; whilst this is an improvement on previous holiday periods, work continues in order to strengthen and broaden the offer in this and other key areas, including looking at some additional targeted provision by the North Yorkshire Together partners to fill obvious gaps.

Stronger Communities Programme Work

In addition to the above, and supporting the delivery of the Homes for Ukraine and Household Support Fund Programmes, the Stronger Communities team are also leading on a number of county wide programmes that have developed over the last 6 months.

Community Mental Health Transformation

Stronger Communities are working in partnership with the NHS to transform mental health services for people with a serious mental illness through building capacity within communities and the voluntary sector. The approach includes financial investment, managed by Stronger Communities, for four place based multi-agency partnerships to both pilot new community based services and projects and also to provide small grants to grass roots community groups with the over-arching aim of enabling people with a serious mental illness to live well in their communities. This is part of a national strategy for the transformation of community mental health.

Registration Service

The registration service continues to be under pressure with high demand for appointments. Ceremony bookings are especially high and the indications are that the ceremony figures will exceed last year which itself was a record year. This is because couples who were postponed during the Covid lockdowns are now renewing their plans. The increase in bookings is especially noticeable at the many excellent venues we offer in the county.

The service will start planning shortly for the 7 September 2022 – Tour of Britain day - when it visits North Yorkshire. This will include the need to maintain as near a normal service as possible especially for those families registering a death but also for any couples committed to having their ceremony on that date.

Members have previously expressed support for the return of the ability to register deaths by telephone. This requires primary legislation and I regret that no date has been announced for it to happen.

County Records Service

Following a successful series of online reminiscence sessions held last year, the Record Office is continuing to work in partnership with Dementia Forward and its early onset dementia groups. A new series of fun, interactive sessions will aim to stimulate engagement, connection and enjoyment by encouraging the sharing of conversation and memories inspired by images and documents from the archives, but this time the sessions will be face to face. Some sessions will be held at external venues whilst others will be others hosted at the Record Office where participants will have the opportunity to view original archive material and have a 'behind-the-scenes' tour.

I would like to start with recommending Members note the Library Service Annual Review recently circulated, available on YouTube if missed. The review highlights the work of the service to support recovery post-pandemic with some impressive statistics for the past year with over 1 million visits. Particularly notable is the number of events/promotions the service undertook together with 23,000 new members – over 8,000 of which were under 16.

Library Service

Our libraries have been busy again this past few months so to provide an update from my last report.

Reports for a couple of the core promotions – Local and Community History Month and Mental Health Awareness Week have been sent to all Members so just in case you have not yet had time to read.

Mental Health Awareness Week

Mental Health Awareness Week, an annual event coordinated by the Mental Health Foundation, took place from 9-15 May 2022 and the theme this year was loneliness. Libraries across North Yorkshire took the opportunity to showcase what they could do to help improve the mental health of their communities.

Working with partners including MIND, Age UK, Dementia Forward and Carers Resource, libraries held drop-in coffee mornings including a Deaf Café in Harrogate, Playlist for Life events, Movie nights and a range of drop-in activities from board games to craft groups. There was also a Falling Stars Theatre immersive production in Skipton with 43 children

present and some wonderful feedback. Overall over 350 people attended 25 events across the county, bringing together communities in an informal and fun way.

Social media was used to promote the library's wellbeing offer throughout the course of the week, including Reading Well collections and Self-Care toolkits, with the seven largest libraries generating a reach of almost 2,000 from around 60 posts and volunteer run libraries reaching out to their communities through their own Facebook pages.

Local and Community History month

North Yorkshire libraries joined forces with two county museums to encourage residents to discover and enjoy their community heritage during Local & Community History Month in May to celebrate dialect, the nationwide project is being led by the University of Leeds [About the Dialect and Heritage project | Dialect and Heritage | Library | University of Leeds](#) . Over 500 completed dialect questionnaires were handed in at libraries, with still plenty of time for more to be returned before the closing date of 7 July. Libraries also arranged a programme of talks with the Yorkshire Dialect Society with almost 650 people attending a total of 43 events. These also included Dialect and Heritage Project drop-ins, and pop-up archive events with the County Record Office. Local and Community History Month also proved popular on social media, with over 500 posts across the libraries' Facebook pages, giving an engagement of 16,753 and a reach of 163,381. Following on from Local & Community History month and our partnership with the University of Leeds, we are delighted to have been awarded funding from the Arts Council for a legacy project 'Ey Up!.' Running through until February 2023, we will be working with hard-to-reach groups at libraries across the county, discovering dialect words that they use and then creating new works of art including poems, prints and songs based on those words. The work will be exhibited or performed in libraries and on social media.

Other significant activities undertaken since we last met include:

Jubilee Celebrations/Volunteers Week

A fantastic programme of events took place across libraries in celebration of the Platinum Jubilee, most prominent was a series of afternoon tea parties at 36 libraries which were attended by a just over 1700 people in total. As the Jubilee coincided with **Volunteers Week** many made the tea parties a shared celebration. There were also lots of activities for children including book trails and a prize giveaway for children who borrowed two books from our libraries over a two week period across the Jubilee.

Harrogate library was delighted to host Twixt t'covers a Yorkshire and Humber Regional panel event exploring books chosen as part of the Big Jubilee Read; the event was live-streamed and is available on our Your Tube channel to view: [Twixt t' Covers at Harrogate Library - YouTube](#)

Children's library refurbishment

Ripon is the latest library to benefit from a makeover in the children's section. The area has been completely revamped with new shelving and furniture as well as an investment of £3,000 in new books. Responding to feedback from parents, carers, staff and volunteers, the library now includes hideaways for children to read and comfortable seating for adults as well as tables for crafts or study and a flexible space for class visits and storytimes.

Knaresborough Library and Newcastle Building Society

Work is nearly complete on the Newcastle Building Society branch which will be opening in Knaresborough Library during July as a new community partnership. This will eventually include a OneBanks unit to allow deposits and withdrawals for local businesses and individuals, offering vital financial services in the town centre. A community launch event is anticipated to take place in the autumn.

Colburn Library re-launch

I must give a big thank you to CRACCL and the volunteers at Colburn Library for their hard work in refurbishing the childrens area of the library. This was officially 'opened' last month by Rishi Sunak MP.

10th Celebrations

As my final round up of the last couple of months I want to say well done and thank you to all those libraries celebrating their 10th or 5th birthdays. I am only sorry that I could not attend all of them – a special mention for Barlby where they also celebrated the work of our late colleague, Brian Marshall, unveiling a plaque in memory of the support he gave for the community library.

And so to what libraries are currently up to:

Sanctuary seekers

North Yorkshire Libraries are committed to supporting people arriving in the County in search of sanctuary. In order to raise awareness of the services we offer, a welcome leaflet has been produced and translated into a number of languages including Ukrainian, Pashto and Dari. Our outreach teams have visited families temporarily located in hotels and are working with other agencies to engage with displaced people, encouraging them to visit the library. We have bought books in other languages, including dual language books for children, most recently in Ukrainian. We are delighted that a number of sanctuary seekers are visiting and joining the library and we are encouraging them to participate in the range of inclusive activities library hold to support their settlement.

Beyond Carbon: Green Libraries

Our libraries provide access to climate related books and our extensive range of online reference resources provide a wealth of reliable information to support research and awareness. We have been awarded Beyond Carbon funding to hold a series of climate awareness raising activities and events, which will be starting this summer, and to put our 'champions' through climate literacy training. We have created 3 handy packs of information from the Encyclopedia Britannica, aimed at different age groups, to help people learn about Green matters with a focus on climate change and energy as part of our Beyond Carbon project. We believe that libraries have the potential to make people stop and think, start conversations, and hope that we can support them making the changes that will improve our communities.

Summer Reading Challenge 2022

Libraries across North Yorkshire will once again be running this popular scheme with young readers (aged 4 to 11) invited to discover the amazing science & innovation behind the world around them as part of this year's Summer Reading Challenge with the theme Gadgeteers. Signing children up to the Summer Reading Challenge is a great way for

parents and carers to help them to maintain their reading levels. To take part children need to sign up at their nearest library and read six books over the summer. As usual there will be stickers (some scratch and sniff!) and other incentives to collect along the way and those who complete the Challenge will receive a medal and a certificate to celebrate their achievement.

A programme of events for families will also support the Challenge, including junk modelling, Lego sessions, science workshops, art and craft sessions, storytelling and theatre performances to name but a few! Look out for more details in libraries, on local library Facebook pages and on flyers coming home via schools.

And last but not least

Work continues planning the ground floor refurbishment at **Scarborough Library**. Following online and other consultation, including at venues across the town centre, the draft plans were on show at the library during June as well as shared with community organisations and groups. It is hoped that the plans will be agreed and that work will begin in the spring of 2023.

Mobile Telephony

The Mobile Access North Yorkshire (MANY) project is coming to an end, a full report on the findings of the testbed and trials project will follow.

The Shared Rural Network (SRN) is £1bn project between government and the mobile network operators (MNO) to improve rural mobile phone coverage. We currently have fourteen applications for new sites across the county linked with this project, and officers are working with the applicants to ensure the locations are acceptable with the planning authorities. It is expected that the first sites will be live in 2023.

Then new Emergency Services Network (ESN), which is to replace to existing Tetra network, will see 24 new sites built across north Yorkshire. Ten of these sites are currently built and we have been lobbying to get these commissioned early to provide local coverage to areas. This has been successful with five of the sites having their commissioned dates brought forward by between three and nine months. The earliest of these being Q4 2022.