

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

22 FEBRUARY 2023

STATEMENT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE & WORKING IN LOCALITIES*

PORTFOLIO HOLDER COUNTY COUNCILLOR GREG WHITE

*Including Stronger Communities, Area Constituency Committees, Broadband & Mobile Telephony (acting as the Councils Digital Champion), Working with Parish & Town Councils, Libraries and other Face to Face Contact Points (Records, Registrars and Coroners)

Climate Change

This quarter has seen the development of the North Yorkshire Council Climate Change Strategy draft to the point where it is ready for public consultation starting in February and to run until April. The Transport Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee enabled a detailed review of the working draft and thank you to all the Members that contributed their knowledge and questions to this debate. The Beyond Carbon Transformation Board and Community Environmental Groups across North Yorkshire were also invited to shape the draft Strategy and we look forward to further developing the dialogue with residents, communities, businesses, and visitors to our response to tackling the causes and impacts of climate change through the consultation. This will include 'Lets Talk Climate' to enable us to hear from as many residents as possible.

A response was made, together with regional partners, to the Governments' Net Zero Review – an independent review of the Government's approach to delivering net zero particularly with respect to business growth. This has now been published and many of our points have been included and a recognition of how net zero can drive economic growth in our region.

Officers – and Members - across the Council continue to develop their learning on this subject and a further 354 completions of the Climate Change Awareness Training have been undertaken. Other highlights this quarter include

- The Display Energy Certificate officers have completed 95 DEC's and associated recommendation reports in this quarter of schools and public buildings, the reports included site bespoke practical measures site need to do to reduce their carbon and bills going forward. The Schools Carbon Reduction officer has worked with 26 schools (over 2000 children) this quarter. For the same quarter last year it was 10 schools showing demand increase and higher service delivery
- Funding applications for Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Phase 3b – application for £0.4m for the installation of heat pumps and insulation in four council highway depots. Awaiting final decision on application, due January 2023
- Electric Vehicle Charging Study was published for consultation in the quarter. This sets out the County vision for a network of EV Charging Points across North Yorkshire. The £2million Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Grant was accepted in October. Delivery of the proposed EV Chargepoints will help to address issues of social isolation, poor digital connectivity and climate change in our rural communities
- In all cases, the schemes being developed should enhance people's ability to access travel options and opportunities, this includes people with reduced mobility
- A funding application for £14 million was made to the Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2, this would support energy efficiency measures and low carbon heating installations in

private sector homes which are off the gas network. An announcement is expected in February 2023

- A decision was made regarding the Electricity energy tariff for the new council for the period 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024, to use a bespoke fuel source 60% Zero Carbon for Business with 40% UK Renewable
- Beyond Carbon pump priming fund was allocated to the identification of carbon reduction opportunities from a review of NYCC land
- North Yorkshire Shared Prosperity funding was allocated to a 3-month programme of 'decarbonising community buildings' which will prepare energy efficiency plans for 50 venues. A detailed study of elderly people's residential flats was also commissioned as an 'exemplar' study into housing retrofit difficult properties. Other projects include support for housing decarbonisation through improving access to data and feasibility of establishing a 'one stop shop' for housing retrofit to provide advice and support to residents and landlords
- A bid was submitted to the Department for Transport for £220,780 'Capability and Ambition Funding' which will fund Brayton to Selby Local Cycling and Walking Plan This includes design of intelligent traffic sensors, data collection and behaviour change initiatives focussed on schools and workplaces in the locality.

Stronger Communities

Community Support - Covid19 Response to Recovery

Stronger Communities continued to work with the network of 23 Community Support Organisations through quarter three with a view to building on this model and evolving it to one of Community Anchor Organisations. A 'Learning and Co-Creation' day took place in early November attended by 69 delegates representing 47 organisations from across North Yorkshire. This included a range of partners from health, resilience and emergencies, social care alongside the voluntary and community sector. This has informed the next phase of the Community Anchor Organisation programme for 2023/24 which is being launched this quarter.

Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme

The HAF programme continues to develop and improve its reach in all areas of North Yorkshire. The final monitoring for Christmas provision is being carried out at present but indications are good compared to the previous year, with a significant rise in the number of providers delivering activities and consequently the number of free places available. There were 50 providers which ran 252 sessions with free places to FSM and other vulnerable children, but this allocation was increased with multiple providers wishing to extend their delivery offer due to demand. Several new providers joined the FEAST programme whilst also retaining existing providers.

The new Holiday Activities and Food Coordinator is in place and is working with North Yorkshire Together partners, and colleagues in CYPS, Stronger Communities and Public Health to develop the programme further with a particular emphasis on providing a wraparound service for families, its nutrition and healthy food offer, building stronger relationships with schools and increasing the number of teenagers engaging with the programme.

Health and Wellbeing

Stronger Communities continue to work 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, working with four place based multi-agency partnerships to develop and/or pilot new community -based services and projects through grant funding to voluntary organisations

and community groups with the over-arching aim of enabling people with a serious mental illness to live well in their communities.

Local 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 Q4 with the next Steering Group meeting taking place to discuss in February 2023.

In addition to the Food for the Future programme launched in Autumn 2021, additional grants have also awarded to food banks and / or organisations that supply food to those in need through both rounds of Household Support Fund (October 2021 – September 2022). The third round of Household Support Fund (October 2022 – March 2023) saw 16 awards made in order to bolster the capacity of the free food infrastructure over the winter period.

Reboot North Yorkshire

Work on Reboot North Yorkshire continued to progress in Q3 with an increase in awareness around the programme. Once again, the number of organisations and services referring their clients into the scheme has increased with 68 devices and 3 SIM cards being gifted to socially isolated individuals or those in need of a device to access training or continuing education. Our community partner Craven Reboot have also been very active in gifting devices, supporting people with IT needs, and encouraging donations within their communities.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Stronger Communities are taking the lead role in the delivery of the Communities and Place strand of the Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund programme. An advisory group is in place made up of public and voluntary sector partners and the year one allocations have been signed off with contracts being prepared. Awards in year one have been made to support the development of Community Anchors, support for Cost of Living through the Two Ridings Foundation and a transition grant for the Community Led Local Development programme in Scarborough. The full prospectus for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural Fund (capital) is being launched this quarter and will open for applications in April 2023.

Libraries

I would like to start with advising Members that use of libraries continues to grow particularly by our younger constituents. Since my last report in November, overall active users have increased by 10% and it is especially pleasing to report that use by Under 5s has increased by 20% over the same period. A combination of extending the membership project with registrars plus activities such as the Christmas Reading Challenge has seen around 1,000 new members in the last few months.

Libraries continue to support many of the council programmes. The last few months have also seen our libraries supporting over 3,000 people to access their food vouchers as well as 63 IT devices distributed to vulnerable, elderly and refugees via [ReBoot](#). All of our libraries are preparing to offer a warm space this winter and at least two community managed libraries are offering extra opening sessions. In addition, libraries have also supported the Let's Talk and other public consultations.

January saw a soft launch of the OneBanx kiosk as part of the Newcastle Building society offer from Knaresborough Library. This is a first for NBS and received national media coverage. It has been well received although still early days.

I was pleased to attend the Library Service conference last November – as the first since the pandemic it was rewarding to see staff and community library volunteers come together in person to work together on developing our library service. Delegates gave an overall rating of 98% satisfaction with many comments being on having a combined event; one volunteer delegate commented during the plenary session that it demonstrated the ‘maturing’ of the relationship between the service and its volunteer partners.

Improvement works

The coming months do see the temporary closure of two of our larger libraries, Scarborough and Malton.

As I have stated in previous updates, **Scarborough** library will be given an improved service through a revamp costing £450,000 to modernise facilities. The improvements have been informed by hundreds of comments and suggestions for the new layout and services from local people and partner organisations.

The library secured £200,000 from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sports/Arts Council England Libraries Improvement Fund. This, backed by a further £250,000 investment from North Yorkshire County Council, will fund the reconfiguration of the ground floor to create a brighter, more attractive space. By creating more flexible areas, we can look forward to working more closely with a range of partners to deliver activities to benefit local people. Scarborough library currently attracts more than 10,000 visits every month and I am confident that the improvements will result in it welcoming many more people. Funding has also been set aside for new books ready for the reopening of the library.

The library will close on Saturday, February 18, and is scheduled to reopen on Monday, May 22. Customers will be able to borrow additional books to cover the closure period and arrangements have been made to cover home library service deliveries.

The nearest facilities for people wanting to visit a library during the closure are Newby and Scalby, More Than Books at Eastfield and Derwent Valley Bridge in Ayton. Details of opening times can be found at www.northyorks.gov.uk/libraries The mobile library will also visit Aberdeen Walk on Mondays, excluding bank holidays, during the closure period. Library staff will also be on hand at the Customer First service centre where there are public computers for access to essential services. Whilst currently closed for heating installation, from March 6 library staff will also be in place at Castle House in Scarborough where customers will be able to book one hour slots for PCs on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday afternoons. We are also delighted that the Stephen Joseph Theatre and The Hub@The Summit are helping us out by providing free space for under 5 sessions and our ever-popular Conversation Café where those whose first language is not English are able to meet others and develop their language skills.

Malton library has already benefited from Government public sector decarbonisation funding with the replacement of its windows and the latest work will involve the replacement of an unreliable and inefficient heating system. The improvements, which will see the library temporarily close, will provide an estimated annual saving of 5,039 kilogrammes of carbon dioxide emissions by replacing gas fired heating with electric air source heat pumps within the building. Although we appreciate that this further closure will be an inconvenience to some, this is essential work, and all schemes must be delivered by March 31, 2023.

The library will be closed from Monday, February 13, for six weeks. Loan periods have been adjusted so that no borrowed items will be due for return during the closure, and arrangements have been made to cover home library service deliveries.

Ey Up!

An innovative project led by North Yorkshire's library service has culminated in creative exhibitions celebrating Yorkshire's rich dialects. As I have reported previously, the library service secured funding from the Arts Council and the Dialect and Heritage Project to run a series of workshops with hard to reach residents. With added funding from the county council, it totalled £12,000.

The Ey Up! Project involved young people, military veterans and those with mental health issues. Library staff worked with one of these audiences and a single artist over four weekly workshops. I would encourage you to visit the exhibitions in Bentham, Catterick, Knaresborough, Scarborough and Selby libraries to view the works created at the these workshops.

Scarborough library shows the art work created with participants from the Mencap charity led by print artist Dawn Brooks. Creative writing workshops were hosted by artist Andy Craven-Griffiths, in partnership with Pioneer Projects, at Bentham library and Orb mental health charity at Knaresborough library. The library service worked alongside artist Suzie Devey and ex-service personnel in Catterick library and Horton Housing in Selby library, and rap artist James Koppert worked with young people in the Scarborough area.

We have received great feedback from those who took part in the sessions as well as the artists. It offered a chance to celebrate Yorkshire's rich dialects and increase awareness of local history with the added bonus of encouraging new visitors through the doors.

The exhibitions will be on display until the end of February. For details of opening hours and library contacts, visit www.northyorks.gov.uk/local-libraries

Self-Care Toolkits are award winning!

In November 2022 the Self Care Toolkits for young people developed by North Yorkshire Libraries with funding from Libraries Connected Yorkshire & Humber were shortlisted in the Top 8 projects recognised by the Self Care Forum for a Self Care Innovation award. The judges particularly recognised the clear objective to this project, targeting of an important and difficult to reach group and willingness to co-design the project and to continue to learn and develop the toolkit in response to feedback.

Following on from the successful introduction of our Self Care toolkits in January 2022, we are reviewing the contents of our Wellbeing Bags for adults first introduced in November 2018 – portable collections of items, books and activities to encourage people to practice self-care and enhance mental wellbeing. It is some time since the contents have been reviewed and with the cost of living crisis and other worries impacting on people's mental health now is a good time to renew and relaunch this valuable resource.

Holocaust Memorial Day

Holocaust Memorial Day took place on January 27 each year and is a time to remember the millions of people murdered during the Holocaust, under Nazi persecution and in the genocides which followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. This year's theme, 'ordinary people', puts a spotlight on those who let genocide happen, who actively perpetrated genocide and who were persecuted. It also encourages people to challenge prejudice in the present day.

A special collection of e-books and e-audiobooks to commemorate the Holocaust is available from the county council's digital library providers, Borrowbox. Library members can download them for free using the Borrowbox app or at www.northyorks.gov.uk/download-e-books-e-magazines-and-digital-audiobooks. In addition the last week in January saw displays of

posters, educational materials and books in Harrogate, Stokesley, Ripon, Northallerton, Selby, Skipton and Scarborough libraries, as well as the Supermobile library.

Photo exhibition at Pickering Library

The World As We See It was developed as a partnership between Exclusively Inclusive, Craven District Council and North Yorkshire County Council, using potent images to explore the issues faced by those with disabilities and mental health issues. An initial show at Skipton Town Hall, called Photo Voice, proved so successful the decision was made to repeat it at libraries across the county and it has now opened at Pickering and is available to view until 17 February after which it will move to Selby Library.

Exclusively Inclusive was established several years ago in an attempt to tackle the issue of loneliness among some sections of the community and Photo Voice was a project to tell the story of the discrimination, isolation and other issues those involved had faced. The objective was to use images rather than words to tell their stories. One of the photographs is by Christopher Porter who used the catchphrase 'labels are for jars, not people' which appears on the jar he is holding in the photograph. Exclusively Inclusive evolved from the idea that loneliness was the only barrier which prevented those with disabilities from enjoying an 'ordinary' lifestyle.

Christmas Reading Challenge

This year's Christmas Reading Challenge saw **2431** children across North Yorkshire taking part (that's 700 more than last year!), with **1432** children completing the challenge. During the promotion, across the county, **40,468** junior items were borrowed and **169** children aged 0-11 joined the library across North Yorkshire. One of the most popular books was *The Night AFTER Christmas!*

2022 will be the last year that we run a county-wide Christmas Reading Challenge. Although successful the overwhelming thought is that it would be better putting the energy into delivering local activities and events. The service runs an extensive events programme throughout the year which can be overwhelming. Christmas and the lead up to it is already a busy time of year without adding to it. Despite feeling some disappointment that the Christmas Reading Challenge must come to an end, we are incredibly proud of all we have achieved with it over the last 4 years, and we are pleased to be going out on a high. Big thanks to the staff, volunteers, and the Literacy & Learning team, who made the challenge the success it was. Well done!

Find My Past

This online resource has seen a surge in use since the release of the 1921 census. In November we saw 8179 views, the highest monthly total yet and in December 6517 views, the second highest monthly total (and we were closed from the 24th). The 1921 census currently accounts for over 40% of usage. If you haven't delved into FMP before it is easy to use and quite addictive. One member of staff found an ancestor with the listed profession, 'horse slaughterer'!

So what happens next....

The imminent refurbishment of Scarborough Library and finalising plans for 2023-24 are taking priority at the moment. I am sure, you like me, are eagerly awaiting to hear about the innovative events and activities in store. This is especially as Libraries 'move' to a new directorate and will be working directly alongside the wider cultural offer in the new Council.

To finish I would like to remind fellow members that all our libraries are open and provide a space to sit, maybe read a book, chat or join an activity – there is always a **warm** welcome in your local library whatever the weather.

Registration Service

The service continues to register an above average number of deaths every month, with no sign of an early return to the expected levels. Members may recollect that the ability to register a death by telephone ceased at the end of March 2022. The provision (Bill) that would allow this has been delayed in Parliament and the change is now not expected to become law until sometime in 2024.

The age at which people can get married or enter a civil partnership will be raised from 16 years of age to 18 years of age. This change will come into effect on the 27th of February 2023.

Coroners

On 9th February, the coroners service welcomed the Chief Coroner, HHJ Teague, to Northallerton. This is the first time any Chief Coroner has visited the service. The Chief Coroner was paying a welfare visit to the coroners, but the opportunity was taken to discuss matters of mutual interest

Mobile Telephony

Officers are continuing to work with the teams that are delivering the initiatives to improve mobile phone coverage in rural areas. Planning applications and pre-app advice for the Shared Rural Network and New Emergency Services network is key to the successful deployment of infrastructure to support these projects. There are over 40 new sites for these two projects across the county currently being planned, which should give around 90% geographic coverage. It is anticipated that these sites will begin to become active during this year with the program due to be completed by 2025.

Officers are currently trialling a new service which may provide coverage for areas that do not fall within their plans.

County Records Service

Over four million records detailing baptisms, marriages and burials in North Yorkshire from the sixteenth century onwards have been released online as part of a new partnership between the County Record Office and Ancestry.

Parish registers held by the office, dating from 1538 to 1995, have been newly digitised in colour in a meticulous process which took a year to complete. Fully searchable transcripts are now available on the Ancestry website alongside the captivating, scanned images of the original registers, opening up these fascinating documents to genealogists and researchers wherever they are in the world.

The Ancestry website is free to access at the County Records Office and at North Yorkshire libraries across the county. Remote access can be obtained via subscription. Income generated by the partnership will be used to support the work of the Records Office.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR GREG WHITE