

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

17 MAY 2023

STATEMENT OF EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CULTURE, ARTS & HOUSING
including Culture, Arts, Libraries, Museums, Archives, Key venues, Leisure, and Housing

Leisure Services

Leisure Service teams from across the County are working together to deliver an ambitious programme to improve leisure facilities and deliver quality services for customers across the County.

Sports Villages (Northallerton and Sowerby)

The development of two sports villages in Northallerton and Sowerby are progressing well. A changing pavilion to service a new full size 3G pitch at Sowerby is nearing completion, including hard landscaping works around the facility including additional car parking and pathways. These works are due to be completed in May which will allow new groups and organisations to start accessing the facility. The first phase of the Northallerton scheme is due for completion by the end of May and includes over 4,000 metres of new trails and paths, and over 3,000 native trees planted. The project includes a 1km fitness track, 18 allotment gardens as well as a range of ecological improvements including bird and bat boxes, an otter holt, a wetland area and a wild food area.

Successful installation of a temporary gym at the Jack Laugher Leisure and Wellness Centre (Ripon)

A high quality temporary gym at the Brimhams Active Jack Laugher Leisure and Wellness Centre in Ripon has opened to ensure residents can keep active and healthy while ground stabilisation works take place. The stabilisation works arise following the discovery of a void underneath part of the original leisure centre, which is understood to have been present for a number of years and was only discovered following works to the foundation for the new swimming pool. The temporary gym will include the high-quality, state-of-the-art Technogym equipment currently available in the existing leisure and wellness centre. As well as expert advice and guidance from the Brimhams Active team, customers will still be able to use the changing and shower facilities in the new pool area, as well as the sauna and steam suite as they will remain open as normal. Group exercise classes will also continue to be provided at Hugh Ripley Hall. The new swimming pool will remain open as usual. The temporary gym will be used until the refurbishment project is completed by March 2024.

Launch of the North Yorkshire Family Weight Management Service

Brimhams Active has successfully launched the 18 month family weight management service pilot across North Yorkshire. This service has been commissioned by Public Health and will include a family weight management service remotely via telephone and video calls across the whole County. The service, known as healthy families, is a free, confidential 12-session programme that fits around family life. It supports children and young people aged 4 to 19 years old to achieve and maintain a healthy lifestyle. The service uses a flexible and compassionate approach that focuses on ensuring everyone has access to non-judgemental support. It makes every step of the journey achievable involving a trained health and wellbeing coach to guide families through a journey towards a more healthy lifestyle.

Pools receive Swim England's Water Wellbeing Accreditation.

Jack Laugher Leisure & Wellness Centre, Knaresborough Swimming Pool, Nidderdale Pool & Leisure Centre and Starbeck Baths have recently received Swim England's Water Wellbeing accreditation. Water Wellbeing was developed by Swim England, the national governing body for swimming, with an aim to transform existing community swimming pools into places for health, wellbeing and rehabilitation and to help improve outcomes for people with long-term health conditions. To achieve the Water Wellbeing accreditation, Brimhams Active have carried out changes to ensure all pools are accessible and inclusive; staff have received training to enable them to deliver group exercise for people living with long term health conditions and to deliver adult swimming lessons for people with health conditions. In addition all customer facing members of the team have had additional customer experience training, with a focus on inclusivity.

Decarbonising North Yorkshire Leisure Facilities

The leisure service and property service have collaborated to submit a joint bid to the government funded SALIX Low Carbon Skills Fund for decarbonisation plans at 21 Council owned leisure facilities. Harrogate, Craven and Hambleton leisure facilities have also recently benefited from SALIX funding and this is a further important step in our aim to decarbonise all of our leisure facilities, to support our 'net-zero' target.

Opening of newly refurbished Whitby Tennis Courts and MUGA at Whitby Leisure Centre

Local tennis courts re-opened after more than a decade following a restoration as part of a £730,000 investment project. The courts at Whitby Leisure Centre have been given a new lease of life with modern playing surfaces, nets, perimeter fencing and associated landscaping. New balls and rackets have also been purchased for the public to use. A surface replacement has also taken place at a nearby multi-use games area, which can now be used for tennis, basketball and five-a-side football. Children from West Cliff Primary School were the first to play a set on the refurbished courts

The tennis courts are part of Whitby Leisure Centre which is run in partnership with Everyone Active.

The regeneration was part of phase two of the former Scarborough Borough Council's public realm improvement scheme, 'Project Sunshine', which brought disused and dilapidated areas in the borough back into use.

Culture and Libraries

Teams are working together to deliver an exciting mix of innovative and inclusive cultural events across the County.

Photovoice Exhibition on Tour in North Yorkshire

The Exclusively Inclusive Photovoice Exhibition is now in Filey Library on its next stop on its North Yorkshire libraries tour. 'The world as we see it' exhibition gives visitors a window into the world as seen through the eyes of people who have a disability, lived experience of mental health and a variety of other life experiences.

The Exclusively Inclusive group took part in 'photo walks' to explore their surroundings and to develop confidence in taking photographs. They looked at how images are used in the media to portray events and tell stories as well thinking about their own experiences of life and how to present them through photographs.

The exhibition launched at Skipton Town Hall last summer and following its success, has been touring North Yorkshire since November. It will be in Filey Library until mid-May, before it travels to the Globe Library in Stokesley, at the end of May.

Success for Soup & Singing Events

The Skipton-based team held their final Soup & Singing session last week. The community 'Warm Hub' events have been taking place in 12 community venues from Bentham and Ingleton down to Skipton and Glusburn since January. The free events were open to anyone, and attendees were treated to a warm lunch and enjoyed an uplifting sing-along with world class opera singer Nicola Mills. The sessions have had a fantastic turn out and audience members have been up on their feet dancing and brought to tears by Nicola's amazing rendition of Nessun Dorma.

Artist Rooms Martin Creed - 1 April to 2 July 2023

This major new exhibition at the Mercer Gallery in Harrogate is a collaboration with Tate and National Galleries of Scotland featuring artworks by Turner Prize winner, Martin Creed.

Creed was born in Yorkshire in 1968 and rose to international fame following his 2001 Turner Prize win, for art installations including the controversial Work No. 227 The lights going on and off 2000, an empty room in which the lights are switched on and off at 5-second intervals.

Creed's Work No. 370 Balls 2004 fill the entire Main Gallery at the Mercer. The vast installation features nearly 1000 balls of different scale, weight and texture. Visitors will also be able to see Creed's iconic neon Work No. 890: Don't Worry 2008 alongside Work No. 1340 2012, a large-scale wall painting of diagonal stripes.

It's the first time that the artworks, which are coming to the Mercer Gallery through Artist Rooms, will be exhibited in North Yorkshire – while Work No. 370 Balls 2004 has only previously been on display in London and Edinburgh. The unique exhibition space at the Mercer Gallery enables the artwork to be installed in Harrogate, for what is only its 3rd public exhibition to date.

Artist Rooms presents the work of international artists in solo exhibitions, drawn from a national touring collection jointly owned by Tate and the National Galleries of Scotland. The programme is shown across the UK with the support of Art Fund, Henry Moore Foundation, Arts Council England and Creative Scotland and includes more than 40 major artists. Admission is free.

Housing

A New Era

Members will be aware that a key function being inherited by the new Council from the 7 districts is the important role as 'Housing Authority'. This incorporates a very wide range of duties including the safe and effective management of over 8000 Council homes, statutory duties relating to homelessness and rough sleepers, duties regarding the way social rented homes are allocated, duties regarding the provision of adaptations in the homes of residents (Disabled Facilities Grants) to enable the elderly and disabled to live independently as well as legal duties around ensuring homes within the private rented sector are safe and well managed.

In addition to these duties, Members shall be aware that nationally there is a huge shortage of quality and affordable homes to meet need and North Yorkshire is not immune from these pressures. A key element of the new service is to maximise the development of affordable homes through the work we do with Registered Providers and I am also keen to pursue opportunities to grow and development Council housing where we are able. Other huge

challenges include the energy efficiency and the retrofitting of private homes as well as the challenge of improving energy efficiency amongst Council stock.

Some real challenges and opportunities going forward and I look forward to bringing various reports to Council over the copy months seeking decisions on some of these big issues.

Pathfinder Funding

One benefit that has already been realised via the creation of the new Authority is the extra weight a larger Council has when bidding for funding. In advance of vesting day officers had combined efforts to successfully bid for £1.4M in grant funding from the Governments Pathfinder Programme. These funds are being used to bolster housing enforcement activity across the county, enabling us to take a more proactive approach to tackling poor private landlords and to uplift standards. Funds are being used both to increase staffing capacity, particularly within the more rural localities and to undertake various other interventions including joint training and working with the National Residential Landlords Association. This work is already underway and training on how to manage and prevent toxic mould is already being rolled out across the county.

Home Upgrade Grant

I am also pleased to announce that the new Council has been successful in its bid for £14.5M from them for Homes Upgrade Grant (HUG). This funding is aimed at low income households, lifting in 'off gas' properties with an EPC of D-G. Funds are used to pay for improvement insulation and energy efficiency measures and it is estimated that around 700 homes countywide will be treated. The scheme will commence in the summer and further details on how residents can access these grants shall be announced soon.

Community Led Housing

One of the on-going priorities for the new LA is community led housing. This entails local communities coming together to develop the homes they need within their areas. This work is supported by the Council both through our enabling role and through capital funding support. In the Harrogate area we have provided Community Housing Fund monies to secure a key building in Masham which was falling into dis-repair. The Community Groups vision in Masham is to re-develop the building to provide a retail "no plastic" grocery shop with Post Office counter, tearoom and heritage centre. The upper two floors will be converted into 4no.one bedroom apartments, which will be allocated to local single people or couples at an affordable rent. This is just one of many Community Led projects being supported by the LA going forward with further schemes in the pipeline including development at Lealholm in the North York Moors National Park.

COUNCILLOR SIMON MYERS