North Yorkshire County Council

Transition (LGR) Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 19th January, 2023 commencing at 2.00 pm.

County Councillor Malcolm Taylor in the Chair plus County Councillors Nick Brown, Caroline Dickinson, Bryn Griffiths, George Jabbour, Nigel Knapton (substitute), John Mann, Bob Packham (substitute), Stuart Parsons and John Ritchie.

County Councillors Kevin Foster, Andrew Lee and Kirsty Poskitt joined the meeting virtually.

In attendance: County Councillor Carl Les

Officers present: Will Baines, Stuart Carlton, Dave Caulfield, Janet Deacon (SBC), Greg Harper (SBC), Jon Holden, Rachel Joyce (HBC), Jon Learoyd, Darren Maycock (CDC), Robert Ling, Jenny Pan (HDC), Ruth Sleaford, Graeme Thistlethwaite (RiDC) and Trevor Watson (HBC).

Apologies: County Councillors Philip Broadbank, Melanie Davis, Richard Foster, Heather Moorhouse and Clive Pearson.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

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26 Welcome and apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors Heather Moorhouse, Richard Foster (Nigel Knapton substituting) and Melanie Davis (Bob Packham substituting).

27 Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 December 2022

Resolved -

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2022, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed by the Chairman as a correct record.

28 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

29 Public Questions or Statements

There were no public questions or statements.

30 LGR Economic Development Transition

Considered – Presentation by Dave Caulfield – Assistant Director, Growth Planning and Trading Standards, NYCC, Trevor Watson – Director of Economy, Environment and Housing, Harrogate BC and Janet Deacon - Head of Tourism and Culture, Scarborough BC.

Some of the key points highlighted in the presentation are as summarised below:

- The aim of the transition period is to transfer eight Economic Development services into one whilst retaining business continuity. It is intended to 'lift and shift' staff, with a service restructure to follow later.

- Staff events have taken place and district council area visits carried out by County Councillor Derek Bastiman and Dave Caulfield.

- The development of an Economic Growth Strategy for North Yorkshire is underway, with Steer ED appointed as consultants and baseline evidence gathering underway, along with asset mapping and a strategy review.

- Test and challenge workshops have been held with officers representing each local authority, as well as the LEP, NYCC Executive members and Directors of Development for York, North Yorkshire, East Riding and Hull (YNYERH).

- The emerging pillars of the economic strategy include 'Enterprise, Innovation and Investment', with the importance of delivering 'Quality Infrastructure & Connectivity' and enabling 'Skilled & Prosperous Communities' in driving up economic growth and living standards.

- The delivery of Business Support provision across North Yorkshire is currently multi-layered, with geographic variations in the type of support and the businesses and organisations that are eligible to access it.

- Communication and engagement with businesses to re-assure and highlight new opportunities.

- There will be continued opportunities for accessing national funding. Recently, the county has been allocated £16.9m over 3 years from the Core UK Shared Prosperity Fund, as well as £5.4m over 2 years from the Rural England Prosperity Fund also confirmed by Government.

- Inward investment opportunities are possible, with sectors seeing investment and employment proposals including recycling, e-fuels and battery production.

- Tourism accounts for 11% of the overall economy of North Yorkshire, supporting 41,200 jobs or 14% of all employment across the county.

- An LGR task and finish group has been established to develop a way forward for tourism/visitor economy delivery, exploring all models to determine the most appropriate and sustainable model.

- A future tourism provision review will look to establish economies of scale for the county, whilst retaining and protecting established local brands. Any new structure would look to ensure that North Yorkshire variations in destination marketing are taken into account to maximise growth opportunities as much as possible.

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

- The inclusion of rural areas into future work to ensure that their needs are recognised.

- What the size of the new Economic Development team across North Yorkshire as part of the new unitary council will be.

- The overarching mantra of the carbon neutral agenda and how this links in to the Economic Development service transition.

- How the relationship with the York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership

will be affected by the formation of the new unitary council and whether joint working will continue.

Resolved – That the presentation be noted.

31   **IT & Digital Workstream Update - What Day 1 Looks Like**

Considered – A presentation from Stuart Carlton, the Workstream Sponsor for the ICT and Digital workstream, together with district and borough council colleagues, on the progress made in the run-up to the vesting day for the new unitary council on 1st April.

Some of the key points highlighted in the presentation are as summarised below:
- There are circa 550 systems (business and corporate applications) across the eight separate councils, with 51 projects/pieces of work required to deliver the IT requirements of the new Council for day 1.

- There is an emphasis in the short term on delivering an ICT foundation that enables the new council to look, feel and operate as a single council for day 1, along with single versions of applications where there is an agreed day 1 need to do so, such as a single email system, single website, single front door etc)

- The IT Foundation projects to deliver day 1 were explained by the officers involved. Examples of these included Microsoft 365, secure email solution, cyber security, online forms, IT support, data governance and data & intelligence.

- The high risks for the workstream were discussed, such as the increased threat of cyber attacks, inability to deliver the Microsoft 365 migration project, that IT resource is not available in early April or the risk of increased staff turnover during transition. Mitigations for these are in place.

- Assurance work has been undertaken to make sure the new organisation can deliver the day 1 needs. For example, delivering early where possible to spread the risk away from day 1, conducting regular health checks and securing additional funding and contingency resource where required.

Following this, questions raised by the committee included:

- With the focus on delivering for day 1 and implementing the IT Foundation projects outlined in the presentation, is there a timeline in place for the embedding of infrastructure and technology within the new council?

- Whether the workstream have the sufficient resource and budget to fulfil the tasks set out?

- The Public Services Network (PSN) legacy of the district and borough councils

- What measures are taken to protect against the threat of cyber attacks?

- How the retention of data will be organised under the new authority given the different policies that will exist amongst the district and borough councils?

Resolved – That the presentation be noted.

32   **Day 1 Delivery and Continuity of Service**

Considered – A presentation on 'Our journey to one Council' from Robert Ling, LGR Programme Director and Rachel Joyce, Director of Corporate Affairs at Harrogate Borough Council on the progress with Local Government Reorganisation.

Some of the key points highlighted in the presentation are as summarised below:

- A plan is in place for the vesting day weekend, with a team set to work to co-ordinate the transfer of systems and processes across to North Yorkshire Council.
- The projects concerning financial systems and Microsoft 365 migration are currently showing as a red project status, but this is to be expected at this stage.
- The risk of workforce and staffing moving on and difficulties in recruiting is a risk to the LGR Programme. There is a big effort to make sure that staff are well supported in the lead up to, during and after vesting day.
- Consultation has been held with other councils that have been through LGR, such as local authorities in Northamptonshire, Dorset, Somerset and Cumbria to seek advice.
- Beyond day 1, after an initial consolidation period, the focus will move to transformation and continuous improvement, moving at the right pace at achieve the desired outcomes.

Resolved – That the presentation be noted.

33   **Property Assets**

Considered – A presentation by Jon Holden, NYCC Head of Property Service, on Property Assets ahead of vesting day.

Some of the key points highlighted in the presentation are as summarised below:
- The objective for the workstream is 'safe and legal' on day 1, with transformation work to be implemented at a later date.
- Asset information has been gathered from all of the district and borough councils to form a comprehensive picture across the county.
- The objective is for the production of a comprehensive Asset Management / Property Strategy that identifies all issues, risks and opportunities.
- The new unitary council is committed to continuing to provide 'hubs' in key locations and the 'workplace' will form an important part of the new Asset Management Strategy to ensure customer access to services, and that staff are able to work efficiently.
- The Council will continue to review 'New Ways of Working' and will configure offices and workplaces to meet these requirements.
- It is likely that approximately 30 projects will be in the construction phase on 1 April 2023.
- There are risks to the asset portfolio around adapting to the increasing cost of energy, achieving the carbon reduction targets set and taking account of rising inflation in financial estimates and contingencies.

Following this, questions raised by the committee included:

- How will the future hybrid working policy tie in with the assets held by the county council and making full use of them as possible?
- The breadth of the estate held by the County Council and the different types of buildings that make it up.
- The status of the 'hubs' and whether these will change in the future. Could dual-use hubs be considered?

Resolved – That the presentation be noted.

34   Work Programme

Considered –

The report of the Principal Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer asking the Committee to confirm, amend or add to the areas of work listed in the Work Programme.

Resolved –

That the work programme be noted.

35   Other business which the Chair agrees should be considered as a matter of urgency because of special circumstances

None.

The meeting concluded at 5.10 pm.

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