

# North Yorkshire Council

## Executive

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 18th July 2023 commencing at 11.00 am.

Councillor Carl Les in the Chair. plus Councillors Gareth Dadd, Michael Harrison, Simon Myers, Janet Sanderson, David Chance, Keane Duncan, Greg White and Annabel Wilkinson.

In attendance: Councillors Caroline Dickinson, Paul Haslam and George Jabbour.

Officers present: Karl Battersby, Stuart Carlton, Richard Flinton, Nic Harne, Barry Khan, Richard Webb, Melanie Carr, Daniel Harry, Michael Leah, Lisa Dixon, Jos Holmes and Andrew Rowe.

Apologies: Councillor Derek Bastiman, and Gary Fielding.

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**Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book**

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### **278 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillor Derek Bastiman.

### **279 Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 July 2023**

#### **Resolved –**

That the public Minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2023, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### **280 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **281 Public Participation**

There was one public submission in regard to Agenda item 7 – Climate Change Strategy, which the Chair agreed to consider as part of that agenda item.

### **282 Consider the adoption of the Parish Charter**

Considered – A report of the Assistant Chief Executive – Legal and Democratic Services presenting the outcome of consultation on the draft Parish Charter and seeking approval for adoption of the Charter.

Councillor David Chance introduced the report which reflected the findings from a joint piece of work with the Parish Sector. He confirmed the draft Charter sought to establish ways in which the Council would work in partnership with Parish Councils for the benefit of communities. He noted a comprehensive review had been undertaken, and that areas of good practice had been identified as part of the work done in support of LGR. He thanked

the Parish sector, the North Yorkshire branch of Local Councils Association and the Society of Local Council Clerks for their involvement and contributions to the drafting of the Charter.

Lisa Dixon, Assistant Director for Devolution confirmed that areas of good practice identified through the Local Government Reorganisation process had been used to support the drafting of the Charter, and that the Charter was a live document that would evolve as the new Council developed.

Gillian Ivey, a longstanding Smeaton with Hornby parish council member, thanked the Authority for involving her and other Parish Councillors in the drafting of the Charter, noting that Parish Councils were the first point of contact when there were issues concerning Council provided services such as street lighting, road sweeping, street lighting etc. She queried what would happen once the Charter was approved, how it would be communicated to Parish Councils, and how it would be monitored and reviewed.

In response, Councillor David Chance confirmed those issues were still under consideration, but the intention was that a six month review of its implementation would be carried out by the Transport, Economy, Environment & Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee, and an officer team would to be formed tasked with Parish Council liaison and support.

Having noted the value of Parish Councils and the value their volunteer members brought to their communities, it was

**Resolved** – That the Parish Charter attached as Appendix A to the report be recommended to North Yorkshire Council for adoption.

## 283 Recharging Parishes for By-Elections

Considered – A report of the Assistant Chief Executive – Legal and Democratic Services seeking approval that the Authority cover the cost of all parish by-elections for its initial year, and as from 1 April 2024 introduce recharging to parishes within North Yorkshire for all costs incurred for by-elections. The report all sought a decision on whether the cost of parish elections that took place as a result of the community governance reviews in the towns of Harrogate and Scarborough should be recharged.

Councillor David Chance introduced the report which provided an overview of the arrangements for both scheduled and unscheduled parish elections that had been in place since 2019, noting that some legacy council areas recharged for full cost recovery, some partial, and some did not recharge at all.

He confirmed the proposal was to re-charge only for unscheduled by-elections. He noted that a reduction in the number of by-elections was not expected as a result of introducing the proposed re-charge and acknowledged the impact would be felt in those areas where recharging had not previously happened. Finally, he drew attention to the financial implications associated with the proposal, as detailed in paragraphs 8.2 & 8.3 of the report.

Executive Members noted it was not expected that the number of by-elections would reduce as a result of introducing re-charging and agreed the report set out a pragmatic approach.

Noting that some Parishes may struggle to pay the re-charges in circumstances where a series of by-elections are required over a short period of time, Councillor Gareth Dacre suggested that some discretion should be applied to the repayment of re-charges in extreme examples, and it was therefore

Councillor Carl Les confirmed he was not minded to re-charge Harrogate Town Council at

Scarborough Town Council for their elections, given that they were outside of the electoral cycle.

**Resolved** – That:

- i) NYC cover the cost of all parish by-elections for its initial financial year 2023-2024;
- ii) Recharges to parishes within North Yorkshire be introduced for all costs incurred by the Returning Officer for by-elections, from 1 April 2024;
- iii) In exceptional circumstances, it be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to agree the repayment terms;

## 284 North Yorkshire Climate Change Strategy

Considered – A report of the Corporate Director for Environment seeking adoption of the North Yorkshire Council Climate Change Strategy and consideration of the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Action Pledge for signature.

Councillor Greg White introduced the report confirming a few minor amendments had been made to the draft Strategy since it was last considered by the Executive, as highlighted in the report.

It was noted that a public submission had been received from Mr Tim Lerner - Vice Chair of Zero Carbon Harrogate, who was in attendance at the meeting to present his submission as follows:

*'In February 2023 you published your draft Climate Change Strategy for consultation. Whilst we welcomed the strategic approach, but we felt the strategy was weak and we identified key actions in our consultation response to strengthen it. You describe the adoption of the strategy today as "a defining moment" and we agree.*

*However, the strategy before you today, has stepped back from rather than stepping up to an ever-increasing challenge. In February, the draft strategy said (page 18) "we have also set a target for the North Yorkshire Council to be net zero in its operational emissions by 2030". We would urge you to reconsider the final green box of the strategy (Appendix A) in the context of this earlier commitment "As a Council we will: ... seek to become operationally net zero by 2030" (dot point 1). A "target" implies commitment backed up by delivery; "seek" implies only effort without any great expectation of success. We urge you to retain the previous wording, using this opportunity to reconfirm your commitment to the action needed to achieve it.*

*Unfortunately, one of the first actions in the strategy – the commitment to Departmental and Service action plans - has slipped by three months to March 2024 (dot point 5, same text box). This slippage is important, because it fails to meet the timescale required to influence the 2024-25 budget cycle, leading to financially dependent action being delayed until 2025-26. But the climate emergency is already here and cannot be delayed – we've just experienced [the hottest UK June on record](#) by 0.9°C, following on from the hottest year in 2022.*

*We would also urge you to reconsider your stance on Scope 3 emissions (dot point 4, same text box). Support and encouragement alone will not change the behaviour of suppliers. Suppliers should be required by goods and services specifications to deliver lower carbon solutions. Carbon emissions should be incorporated into the evaluation frameworks for tender comparison. We need to use our purchasing power to drive a low-carbon future.*

*In formal submissions to, and in informal conversations with, you we have argued for the*

*widespread use of independently verified Carbon Literacy Training. In our view, this possesses the potential to create a culture-changing approach to carbon reduction in North Yorkshire, but you commit only to “raise awareness” (dot point 5, same text box).*

*We would urge you to make modest but significant changes to the draft before you today. Ambition means nothing without a full commitment to meaningful action.*

*Annex to statement: Four suggested changes to the strategy - all references to final page of the strategy document (Appendix A of the report) with consequential changes to other parts of the text where necessary as follows:*

- *Replace: “we will seek to become operationally net zero by 2030” by “we commit to the actions necessary to achieve our target of becoming operationally net zero by 2030”.*
- *Supplement: “we will create property and fleet decarbonisation plans and a staff travel policy to reduce mileage by March 2024” with “ensuring that the drafts of these plans is reflected in 2024-25 budgets”.*
- *Supplement: “we will encourage our suppliers to take climate responsible actions”, with “through the use of stretching goods and service specifications, inviting bidders to minimise their carbon emissions”.*
- *Supplement: “we will raise awareness of the causes and impacts of climate change and climate responsible actions required with all Officers and Members” with “through widespread training using independently verified Climate Literacy Training.”*

Councillor Greg White thanked Mr Larner for his submission on behalf of Zero Carbon Harrogate and confirmed the Authority was extremely grateful for the activities of the many community based environmental groups in North Yorkshire.

In response he acknowledged that 40+ environmental groups had helped to shape the Strategy in the development phase and had provided very positive and helpful comments on the draft version.

He acknowledged the Authority had a leading role to play in tackling the causes and impacts of climate change as set out in the Strategy, but could not do this alone. This had been articulated in the Strategy which set out how the Authority would enable everyone to take climate responsible actions by decreasing greenhouse gas emissions, preparing for a changing climate and supporting nature to thrive. He noted that Community groups such as Zero Carbon Harrogate would continue to be instrumental in that.

He confirmed over 1700 responses to the draft Strategy had been received with many very positive comments from groups and organisations concerning the activities set out. He noted it was the Authority's job was to take a balanced view of the role it would take to tackle climate change and to bring residents and businesses along with it. Consequently, whilst the strategy might not go as far as Zero Carbon Harrogate would like, it was fully reflective of the evidence, both from the available data and from engagement with communities.

He went on to address the specific points raised by Mr Larner. In regard to the timescale of departmental action plans he confirmed officers had proposed that the timescale for approving and adopting the final version be delayed by a few weeks in order to properly review the breadth and depth of responses to the draft Strategy. Consequently the activities proposed would also need to be moved forward by a corresponding period. He suggested this would not impact on the Authority's ability to achieve the desired outcomes. He also noted the Strategy referenced the existing climate action plans from the 8 predecessor authorities which were still current and being enacted, with very proactive projects across all three key pillars of the new Strategy.

In regard to Scope 3 Emissions, he confirmed the Authority needed to enable and support local businesses and its suppliers to take their own decarbonisation journey and that this

was being done through many business focussed initiatives such as the Shared Prosperity Fund business support in North Yorkshire, and Circular Economy work, in partnership with local authorities across the Yorkshire and the Humber region. As outlined in the Climate Change Strategy, he suggested the Authority's approach to procurement was also a key tool to achieve it. He highlighted the inclusion of 'social value' in the tender documents which would enable the Authority to ask its suppliers to evidence how they were supporting its net zero ambitions. As an example, he drew attention to the significant carbon savings the Authority had recently achieved on its ambient food contract.

In regard to training for Members and Officers, Councillor Greg White highlighted the ongoing promotion of the Climate Change Awareness training programme available to all staff and Members. He noted this had been created with the support of a Carbon Literacy Trust delivery partner and that the module would be refreshed to reflect the new Climate Change Strategy. He confirmed the Strategy made it clear that climate change would be embedded into 'business as usual' decision making across the Council and that training for any member of staff was available to support that. He noted that officers could choose to undertake specific carbon literacy training or to focus on more practical skills to support our ambitions such as Electric Vehicle Maintenance or heat pump installation.

Finally he reiterated his thanks to Zero Carbon Harrogate for their valuable contribution throughout the Strategy development process and confirmed he look forward to a close working relationship with them and our other community based environment groups as delivery progressed.

In response to a supplementary question from Mr Lerner concerning the change to the wording of the Authority's commitment, Councillor Greg White confirmed he was comfortable with the wording as written in the draft Strategy document, as the Authority was not in control of the actions of others and therefore could not 100% guarantee full delivery of the Strategy by 2030. Whilst he confirmed the Authority's determination to address carbon emissions in North Yorkshire, he stressed it would require a whole county effort not just a Council effort.

Councillor Gareth Dadd stated that elected Councillors had a whole range of competing responsibilities and challenges of equal priority, and residents needed to properly understand the financial costs associated with delivering the Strategy alongside other crucial services.

Councillor Simon Myers drew attention to the government funding required to deliver many of the Authority's services and suggested that without knowing the exact contributions to be received, it was often difficult to fully assess what would be possible in terms of delivery.

Councillor Paul Haslam - Climate Change Member Champion, welcomed the strategy as a positive way forward. He noted each Directorate would have an Action Plan and welcomed the planned 6-monthly reviews by Overview & Scrutiny. He acknowledged the Authority had come a long way since 2017, but recognised it was a continuing battle requiring the ongoing petitioning of Government and the continued engagement and education of residents.

All Executive members voted in favour of the recommendations in the report, and it was

**Resolved – That:**

- i) The North Yorkshire Council Climate Change Strategy be approved
- ii) North Yorkshire Council sign up to the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission's Climate Action Pledge

## **285 North Yorkshire Council Statement of Community involvement: Consultation Draft**

Considered – A report of the Corporate Director for Community Development seeking approval of the draft Statement of Community Involvement for the purpose of public consultation.

In the absence of the Executive Member for Open to Business, Nic Harne – Corporate Director for Community Development introduced the report and provided a brief overview of the requirement for setting out the Authority’s policies to facilitate the involvement of those persons and organisations who have an interest in the preparation of a local plan (and other planning policy documents), neighbourhood plans and the consideration of planning applications.

He also noted the planning position’s inherited from the District and Borough Councils and confirmed that weight would continue to be attached to their Local Development Plans up until a new Plan for the whole of North Yorkshire being sufficiently developed to shift that focus.

He noted that building regulations set nationally were improving all the time, and as an example, confirmed that as of 2025 new properties could no longer be fitted with gas central heating.

Councillor Simon Myers acknowledged that all residents would welcome progression of the statement, and thanked the officers involved.

Having noted the report, it was

**Resolved** – That:

- i. For the purpose of public consultation, the draft Statement of Community Involvement at Appendix 1 of the report, be agreed;
- ii) Subject to consultation and any subsequent amendments, authority be delegated to the Executive Member for Open to Business to approve the Statement of Community Involvement for adoption and any future amendments or replacements to that document.

## **286 Local Authority Housing Fund**

Considered – A report of the Corporate Director Community Development seeking approval to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) for £1.34M from the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF). This funding will contribute towards the acquisition of an additional 11 affordable homes to provide accommodation for 11 households from the Afghan resettlement and relocation schemes.

Councillor Simon Myers introduced the report and provided an overview of the need for the additional homes proposed for acquisition. He confirmed the Authority had a moral and social obligation to provide suitable housing the Afghan resettlement and relocation schemes, whilst at the same time increasing the Authority’s housing stock. He noted that the properties would be retro-fitted to make them as carbon neutral as possible.

Councillor Janet Sanderson suggested the needs of families with young children needed taking account of when procuring additional Local Authority housing stock.

Councillor Carl Les welcomed the £1.34M Local Authority Housing funding and noted that the Authority’s financial contribution to the purchase of the properties would be greater.

Andrew Rowe, Assistant Director for Housing assured the Executive that the proposal was deliverable and it was

**Resolved** – That:

A Memorandum of Understanding be entered in to with Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to accept grant funding of £1.34M from the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF), to help pay for the acquisition of additional accommodation for 11 households from the Afghan resettlement and relocation schemes.

## **287 Handyperson Service - Future Delivery of Minor Adaptation Service**

Considered – A joint report of the Corporate Director for Health and Adult Services and the Corporate Director for Community Development, setting set out proposals for changes to the delivery model of Minor Adaptations Services from a mix of commissioned and in-house provision to a solely in-house model supported by DFG funding. The proposal included:

- Cessation of the Council's commissioned Minor Adaptations service and an expansion of the existing in-house provision to cover the whole of North Yorkshire from April 2024.
- Use of the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funding to deliver the materials and labour costs of the service where funding permits, alongside Council funding, noting that a full review of how DFG is deployed would be carried out which in an effort to further maximise the grant and reduce the pressure on the revenue budget.

Councillor Simon Myers introduced the report and confirmed that Scarborough District Council and Ryedale District Council had for some time both successfully delivered their own in-house service and noted that rolling out the proposed changes in service delivery would save money and deliver a better service.

Executive Members welcomed the proposal recognising it was the first transformational activity to show economies of scale and the benefits of being a unitary authority. They also noted the further work planned to maximise the grant as detailed in section 8.9 of the report.

Having considered the report, the Executive

**Resolved** – That:

- i) The provision of a commissioned Minor Adaptations Service be ceased as from April 2024
- ii) Community Development begin detailed work to mobilise a Countywide Minor Adaptations service from April 2024
- iii) The use of DFG funding to support the service be continued.

## **288 Adult learning and Skills Service Accountability Statement 2023/24**

Considered – A report of the Corporate Director Children & Young People's Service seeking approval to submit the final version of the accountability statement, relating to Adult learning grant spend, to the Department for Education by the 31 July 2023 deadline.

Councillor Annabel Wilkinson introduced the report and provided an overview of the Authority's requirement to submit its final Accountability Statement by the deadline and subsequently publish it on the Authority's website.

Having considered the report, it was

**Resolved** – That:

- i. Submission of the final accountability agreement to the DfE be approved
- ii. The final agreement be published on the Authority's website

## **289 Member Champions Update**

Considered – a report of the Assistant Chief Executive – Legal & Democratic Services providing an opportunity for the Executive to comment on the proposed appointments to the Member Champion roles, appointed by the Leader.

Councillor Carl Les introduced the report and drew attention to the roles he could appoint to, as shown at paragraph 2.4 of the report. He confirmed his intention to appoint Councillor Kevin Foster as the Member Champion for the Armed Forces, and Councillor John Cattanach as the Member Champion for Flooding.

He also noted his intention to subject the Member Champion roles to an annual review to ensure they remained appropriate and in line with the Council's priorities/challenges.

**Resolved** - That the proposed appointments be noted.

## **290 Forward Plan**

Considered –

The Forward Plan for the period 10 July 2023 to 31 July 2024 was presented.

**Resolved** - That the Forward Plan be noted.

## **291 Date of Next Meeting - 22 August 2023**

The meeting concluded at 12.07 pm.