

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL
SCARBOROUGH AND WHITBY AREA CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE
22nd September 2023

Stronger Communities Update

1.0 Purpose of Report

To provide Members with an update on the Stronger Communities Programme and an overview of progress made in the Scarborough and Whitby Constituency area.

2.0 Background

2.1 Throughout a period of significant change for local government in North Yorkshire, the core work of the Stronger Communities team has continued, with the start of the developmental journey of the Community Anchor Organisation (CAO) model, exploring how locally rooted organisations can support the health, wellbeing and prevention agenda, and wider community resilience in localities.

2.2 A number of new countywide and national initiatives have been launched over the past 18 months; the latter particularly focussing on alleviating the cost-of-living pressures being felt by families and residents on low incomes. Stronger Communities are leading on a number of these programmes and work in partnership with others within the Council and externally.

3.0 Core Stronger Communities Programme Activity

3.1 Community Anchor Organisations

As previously reported to Committee, in February 2023 as part of its established 'Achieve Together' Investment Programme, Stronger Communities opened a new opportunity to establish a Community Anchor model for North Yorkshire. Grants of £15,000 a year (for up to 3 years) were made available from April 2023 for place rooted organisations, based in principal service towns or centres, who are able to serve a wider hinterland. This investment supports the core aims of the wider Stronger Communities Programme which include:

- Prevention and reducing health inequalities.
- Community resilience.
- Social regeneration.

3.2 Following a competitive application and evaluation process, 23 place-based organisations from across the County progressed to the next stage of development work, which encompassed a collective assessment workshop (July 2023), and the subsequent development of organisational action plans which is on-going. For the ten localities where a suitable CAO has not been initially identified, development work will continue to explore the potential for a local voluntary sector organisation to become a CAO, or to look at alternative models.

3.3 In our larger urban areas, characterised by distinctive neighbourhoods, it was recognised that the model of a single place-based community anchor may not work; we are therefore working with local partners in Harrogate and Scarborough to understand what the optimal options for investing in Community Anchors are in those areas.

3.4 The funding currently being used to support this work is non-recurring and as such, the challenge is to develop financially sustainable options for CAOs in order for them to become more financially independent and resilient - and therefore less dependent on public sector grants – by identifying and establishing diverse income streams – which could include earned income through contracts and charging.

3.5 Community Partnerships

In May 2023, the Executive agreed to develop the ambition of supporting local partnership and multi-agency working through the establishment of local Community Partnerships, focussing on principal towns and surrounding areas, and reflecting natural communities. This will take a phased approach, with the Stronger Communities team commencing work in five pilot areas: Easingwold, Leyburn and Middleham, Ripon, Sherburn and Thornton-le-Dale and rural hinterland.

3.6 Inspire Grants

Stronger Communities has awarded £34,911 through the small, grass roots Inspire Grants supporting 38 groups and / or projects to date in 2023/24. This investment has allowed communities and small grass roots groups and organisations to **develop and deliver local events and activities in their communities**. **A geographical breakdown of the grants awarded is outlined below.**

District	No. of Grants	Total Value	% of total number	% of total spend
Craven	1	£629	2.6	1.8
Hambleton	2	£2,000	5.3	5.7
Harrogate	9	£8,495	23.7	24.3
Richmondshire	3	£2,500	10.5	7.2
Ryedale	4	£3,690	10.5	10.6
Scarborough	12	£11,781	31.6	33.7
Selby	5	£4,816	13.2	13.8
Countywide	1	£1,000	2.6	2.9
Total	38	34,911	100	100

3.7 A breakdown of grants awarded in the Scarborough and Whitby Constituency area is attached at **Appendix A**.

4.0 Wider Stronger Communities Programme Work

4.1 In addition to the core work of the Stronger Communities team; it is also leading on a number of countywide and national programmes.

4.2 The range of activities the team are leading on, or are contributing to, is broad and varied:

- Holiday Activities and Food Programme for free school meal eligible children (Department of Education funded)
- Household Support Fund - awards to low-income households (Department of Work and Pensions funded)
- North Yorkshire Local Assistance Fund (NYLAF)
- Homes for Ukraine Programme (Home Office)
- Wellbeing and Prevention investment – Stay Healthy, Independent and Connected
- Digital Inclusion (Reboot North Yorkshire)
- Cost of living support
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund – Communities & Place (UKSPF)
- Mental health programmes (NHS)

4.3 Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF)

The HAF programme – FEAST - continues to develop and improve its reach in all areas of North Yorkshire. The Holiday Activities and Food Coordinator has been working with North Yorkshire Together (NYT) partners, and colleagues in Children and Young People's Service (CYPS), Stronger Communities and Public Health to develop the programme further with a particular emphasis on providing a wraparound service for families.

In order to develop strong local delivery providers across the county, NYT are developing their training offer to ensure that children and young people can be well supported emotionally, as well as access a diverse range of activities. Topics that have been identified by providers in previous phases of delivery as potential areas that they would welcome additional support with include trauma-based practice and supporting those with special educational needs and disability, autism and neurodiversity.

Our programme leaders have also been reinforcing the importance of FEAST activities to schools and encouraging them to explore how they could be involved in hosting sessions, as well as promoting activities to their children and young people. Through the work that has been done with the Active Leaders programme via secondary schools it is also hoped to develop a young leader's pathway.

Easter's data was positive with 2200 eligible children and young people enjoying 6887 free activity sessions. In addition, 1173 of their peers also took part in these activities where paid for opportunities were offered. The Summer FEAST programme is currently running; initial indications are good with an increased number of providers, locations, and places on offer from previous delivery periods. Once delivery is complete and

providers have submitted their monitoring, the FEAST team will assess the data and general feedback to help inform and guide future phases of delivery.

4.4 Household Support Fund

In the last 6 months, Stronger Communities has continued to lead the development and administration of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) funded Household Support Fund, which aims to support those most in need or crisis with significantly rising living costs in 2023/24.

In line with the expenditure guidelines and the agreed eligibility framework and delivery plan, c22,500 households across North Yorkshire will receive a direct award in the form of a shopping voucher to support them over the autumn and winter months. This will encompass eligible families, pensioners and working age adult households, as well as those who missed out on other forms of national Cost of Living support. In addition to this, funding has been awarded to:

- North Yorkshire Local Assistance Fund (NYLAF), enabling the maximum number of awards for emergency food and utilities to remain at four over a 12-month rolling period.
- The provision of Energy Support which will be available from 1 September 2023 via North Yorkshire Citizens Advice and Law Centre.
- Food Support: 18 grants have been awarded to locally based free or low cost providers across the County.
- An HSF Exceptional Circumstances Fund will be delivered, to support those who may have missed out on support due to circumstances beyond their control throughout the time period the direct award is live.

HSF will be transitioned to Customer, Revenues and Benefits in 2023/24.

4.5 North Yorkshire Local Assistance Fund (NYLAF)

Stronger Communities continue to administer NYLAF, an emergency fund that provides support for those deemed most vulnerable in the County, and who often, are in crisis.

Year to date, NYLAF has received 4,131 applications. 3,785 (92%) of which have been approved. Grant expenditure in total has been £503,559.27. (38% food / energy awards, 62% standard awards). 39% of applications this year have come from the Scarborough district, compared to 4% of applications received by the Richmondshire district. Historically, this trend has continued to highlight both Scarborough and Harrogate as the geographical areas with most demand on the scheme whilst Richmondshire and Craven place the least demand.

Mental health issues and homelessness account for the majority of reasons that people apply to the fund, accounting for 29% of all applications received. Last financial year, NYLAF received 13,229 applications. 91% of these applications were approved, with 20,032 individual items provided. Demand on the scheme in the last couple of years has been unprecedented and expenditure in 23/24 was over £1.4m.

NYLAF will be transitioned to Customer, Revenues and Benefits in 2023/24.

4.6 Homes for Ukraine Programme

Officers from the Stronger Communities team continue to coordinate and lead the Homes for Ukraine Programme, supported by a number of dedicated posts within specialist services such as Living Well, Early Help and Adult Learning, to ensure support is provided with language development, employability and integration.

Although guest arrivals have dropped significantly in recent months, we have seen a rise in the number of single arrivals joining family members already in North Yorkshire. Between the 1st April and the end of June 2023, 49 additional Ukrainian guests arrived in North Yorkshire

Due to a grant award through the Local Authority Housing Fund, the Council has worked with Broadacres to acquire additional houses that are being offered to Ukrainian families in North Yorkshire at affordable rents. Those at greatest risk of homelessness have been prioritised in the allocations process. This overall increase in housing stock means reduced pressure on the private rental market, as well as providing families with a sustainable housing option.

A range of partnerships have also been developed with a number of voluntary and community organisations, with investment provided to support with the provision social events, activities, conversational language classes and integration opportunities.

4.7 Well-being and Prevention – Stay Healthy, Independent & Connected

The Stay Healthy, Independent and Connected (SHIC) grants scheme was launched in late 2022, with new providers starting work in their localities on 1 April 2023. Stronger Communities continue to work with colleagues in Targeted Prevention (Health and Adult Services) to support the scheme and to explore synergies between SHIC and the various areas of work that Stronger Communities are involved in.

4.8 Digital Inclusion

The team continue to promote the digital inclusion agenda within the authority and with our wider community partners. This includes the continued development of digital champions through our partners Digital Unite, building on the work with Citizen's Online prior to the pandemic. Reboot North Yorkshire continues to thrive with requests for devices being fulfilled from all areas of the County. These devices are making a significant difference to the new owner's lives, allowing people to continue with education and training, to access services and information online, to keep in touch with family and friends and to improve their mental health.

Strategically the team are working with the Humber and North Yorkshire integrated Care System (ICS) Digital Inclusion Network and the UK Shared Prosperity Programme (UKSPF) team to ensure that the UKSPF investment planned for 2024/2025 is designed to best meet the needs of those most digitally excluded in North Yorkshire. A programme to support the development of community based digital access points will be launched as part of the UKSPF prospectus later this year with funding available from 1 April 2024.

4.9 Cost of living - Food Insecurity

Work on the collaborative insight work with City of York Council to better understand the regional food insecurity landscape is now complete, with the final report made available in spring 2023¹. The work evaluates the range of food support services that were established during the pandemic and explores potential opportunities for future service provision alongside a series of recommendations. Work has now commenced to start planning a partnership event to launch the findings/carry out some further engagement work in September 2023, and the findings are already being used to inform other related work areas both internally across the Council, and externally with partners.

The team continues to work closely with the Public Health Healthier Lives, Community and Economy team who are looking to bring together a range of organisations in the food sector to establish a food system framework and ultimately a food partnership to address the immediate to long term challenges presented. Joint work on exploring the impact of cost of living on health outcomes has continued with a multi-agency event taking place in September 2023.

As outlined in Section 4.4, a further 18 grants have been awarded through the current round of HSF to support free or low-cost food provision across the County over the winter period.

4.10 UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

There is a strong emphasis within the criteria for UKSPF on place shaping, community empowerment, engagement and strengthening the voluntary and community sector, and Stronger Communities are taking the lead role in the delivery of the Communities and Place strand. The following progress has been made in 2023/24:

- 11 feasibility studies have now been funded totalling £163,310. Feasibility study priorities include:
 - Building capacity in people & places.
 - Generating new ideas for community regeneration.
 - Promoting healthy & active communities.
 - Increasing levels of digitisation.
 - Celebrating distinctive and vibrant places.
 - Growing businesses.
 - Promoting innovation.
 - Attracting new investment through sector growth.
 - Promoting climate resilience and decarbonisation.
- Following an open bidding round, North Yorkshire Sport has been appointed to manage and administer the Active Travel and Sports grants programme, focussed on improving access to green space, new and improved sports facilities, active travel measures and promoting healthy lifestyle campaigns in North Yorkshire until 31 March 2025.

¹ The final report and associated assets can be viewed at [York and North Yorkshire Covid Recovery Insight Project: Food Insecurity – Just another WordPress site \(skyblue.org.uk\)](https://www.skyblue.org.uk/insight-project/food-insecurity-just-another-wordpress-site).

4.11 Mental health programmes

The Stronger Communities team have worked in partnership with colleagues in Public Health and the NHS to deliver a range of community led mental health projects since 2019. These include grass roots suicide prevention programmes and other specialist mental health services. As part of the national Community Mental Health Transformation programme, Stronger Communities continue to work in partnership with the NHS for a third year to transform community based mental health services for people with a serious mental illness through building capacity within communities and the voluntary sector. The approach includes NHS 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.

The team, in conjunction with Public Health are also refreshing Headfirst, North Yorkshire's Mental Health Training Hub, with the aim of relaunching the site and broadening its reach in autumn this year. This will provide free (funded) places for individuals living / working or volunteering across North Yorkshire in the areas of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA), Suicide First Aid (SFA), Mental Health Awareness and bespoke courses as required.

4.12 Children and Young People

As previously reported, the Stronger Communities team continues to work with the Early Help team from CYPS to deliver their Get Going grants scheme that seeks to grow community capacity by working alongside and with our communities to stimulate, support and develop activities that enable children, young people and their families to be happy, healthy and achieving.

4.13 Capacity Building

Stronger Communities Programme has continued to strengthen local community assets and infrastructure; this has included encouraging relationships and collaborations between voluntary and community sector organisations as well as stabilising, and / or building capacity within them if required. The impact of the pandemic on income and capacity within the sector, together with concerns in relation to rising fuel costs is resulting in concerns about their long-term viability and sustainability. Stronger Communities continues to work with colleagues such as Community First Yorkshire, The Two Ridings Foundation, the Lottery and other partners to identify issues and concerns and develop joint responses.

4.14 Local Government Reorganisation

The work of the Stronger Communities team is now positioned within the Localities Team, in Local Engagement. With the Head of Service now in post, work is currently on-going to develop and structure this new service area, bringing together the functions and work programmes of the Stronger Communities team and former District and Borough Council Communities teams to ensure continuity is achieved, but also accommodating development and growth of key work areas. It is anticipated that this will be complete by December 2023.

5.0 Local Area Information

5.1 Community Anchor Organisations

Strand one – Grants for place based Community Anchor Organisations (CAO)

- Whitby CAO was awarded to Flash Company Arts
- Esk Valley CAO was awarded to Revival North Yorkshire

Strand two – Co-design Grants (Harrogate & Scarborough Urban areas)

- SeeCHANGE was awarded this grant to support their involvement in the co - design process for the urban Community Anchors Model for Scarborough.

Strand three – Development grants

These are for places where no grants have been awarded through ‘Investment strand One’. Funding will be made available to explore options and support the development of anchors in those places.

- These include Eastfield, Filey as well as the potential for a couple of self-identified places.

5.2 Wellbeing and Prevention – Stay Healthy, Independent & Connected

As referenced in Section 4.7, the new SHIC grants will be delivered in the Scarborough and Whitby constituency area through three new partnership models involving a combination of place-based organisations. Through this model all communities will have access to specialist advice and guidance as well as an opportunity to make local social connections.

These are:

- Whitby and Villages - Carers Plus Yorkshire in partnership with Whitby Caring Together and Flash Company Arts
- Scarborough Town and Rural - Carers Plus Yorkshire (in partnership with Scarborough, Whitby and Ryedale MIND and Coast and Vale Community Action
- Esk Valley and Coast - Revival North Yorkshire

5.3 Mental Health Support

The Community Mental Health Transformation programme for this area, is being managed by the Scarborough, Whitby, Ryedale Mental Health Task and Finish Group. The group see it as an opportunity to try to improve the quality of life for people with, or at risk of developing a serious mental illness, in Scarborough, Whitby and Ryedale through access to early support from a variety of services. Two key areas of the programme are the Access and Connect Grant Fund 2022/23 which has a total budget of £200,000 and its work on how to streamline clients’ experience of accessing mental health support, ensuring co-production underpins the transformative approach. A number of Access and Connect grant funded projects are currently being delivered.

5.4 Work with local Organisations

SeeCHANGE, the innovative cross sector partnership funded for three years by the National Lottery Community Fund, is progressing on each of its three thematic areas.

- Giving a voice to the local Voluntary and Community Sector with the health service through a vibrant and responsive Community Collective for Scarborough
- Working with businesses and other employers to work across sectors to improve workforce wellbeing, look at business led initiatives too address health inequalities and explore the potential of joint working between sectors.
- Pilot new ways of working from small community groups and groups of people in the town to achieve change using participatory grants.

The first grant panel took place in early August with 3 grants awarded and a number of small groups getting additional supported to strengthen their supplication.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 It is recommended that Members note the content of this report.

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11th September 2023

Appendix A – Breakdown of Community Grants Awarded since 1st April 2023

District	Organisation Name	Project	Value
Scarborough	Dementia Forward	Whitby Wellbeing Café	986
Scarborough	Feeding and Sling Support	Birth Preparation Workshops	1000
Scarborough	Sound of Summer	Community Summer Event	1000
Scarborough	Whitby Rugby Club	Whitby Community Day	995
Scarborough	Newholm Cum Dunsley Village Hall	Activity equipment	1000
Scarborough	Age UK North Yorkshire Coast and Moors	Filey sewing Bee	940
Scarborough	Art Therapy Yorkshire	ATY Womens Group	1000
Scarborough	Little Rainbows at Church House	Little Rainbows at Stakesby	1000
Scarborough	Scarborough U3A	Increasing U3A Indoor Sports Offer	1000
Scarborough	North Yorkshire Youth	Eastfield Youth Club	860
Scarborough	North Yorkshire Citizen Advice and Law Centre	Pomoc Project End of Summer Event	1000
Scarborough	Gatecrasher Productions CIC	Stagecraft	1000