

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

NOTICE OF URGENT ITEM

**Access to Information Procedure Rule 16
Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16**

Libraries Improvement Fund grant acceptance for a new mobile library

**To the Chair of the Transition (LGR) Overview and Scrutiny Committee
and
the Chairman of North Yorkshire Council**

The Council's Constitution provides that if a matter which is likely to be a key decision has not been included on the Council's Forward Plan for the requisite period, the decision may still be taken if an urgency procedure is followed.

Under Access to Information Procedure Rule 16:

16.1 Where the date by which a decision must be made makes compliance with Rule 15 (general exception) impracticable, then the decision can only be made if the decision maker (if an individual) or the Chairman of the body making the decision, obtains the written agreement of the Chairman of a relevant overview and scrutiny committee that the making of the decision is urgent and cannot reasonably be deferred. If there is no Chairman of a relevant overview and scrutiny committee, or if the Chairman of the relevant overview and scrutiny committee is unable to act, then the agreement of the Chairman of the Council, or in his/her absence the Vice-Chairman will suffice.

16.2 As soon as reasonably practicable after the decision maker has obtained agreement under Rule 16.1 above, s/he must make available at the Council's offices a notice setting out the reasons why the meeting is urgent and cannot reasonably be deferred and publish the notice on the Council's website.

The Council's Constitution further provides that where the call-in procedure would otherwise apply to an executive decision, it shall not apply where the decision being taken is urgent if an urgency procedure is followed.

Under Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16:

(h) The call-in procedure set out above shall not apply where the decision being taken by the Executive is urgent. A decision will be urgent if any delay likely to be caused by the call in process would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public interest. The Chairman of the council must agree both that the decision proposed is reasonable in all the circumstances and to it being treated as a matter of urgency. In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman's consent shall be required. In the absence of both, the Head of Paid Service or his/her nominee's consent shall be required. Decisions taken as a matter of urgency must be reported to the next available meeting of the Council, together with the reasons for urgency.

On 27 February 2024 the Council was advised by Arts Council England that the Libraries Service had been successful in its application to the Libraries Improvement Fund for a grant totalling £150,000 for a new mobile library.

The funding will be used to replace the existing mobile library, which is approaching end of life, with a smaller (7.5t), more versatile vehicle that will increase opportunities to provide

books, digital resources and educational support to predominantly rural communities and to further increase access to wider Council services, offering a broader range of benefits to more residents. These include:

- Promoting Literacy: We will enhance literacy rates by providing access to a wide range of books, educational materials, and resources. We will encourage reading among children and adults alike, fostering a culture of learning within the community.
- Bridging the Digital Divide: In rural areas, internet access and digital resources are limited. We will help bridge the digital divide by enabling access to eBooks and digital resources, provide Wi-Fi printing facilities and support digital skills development.
- Supporting Education: We will collaborate with local schools, promoting reading for pleasure and informal learning with relevant books, reference materials and study aids. We will act as a learning environment outside the classroom and facilitate a programme of engagement.
- School Readiness: We will contribute to school readiness initiatives and speech and language development through working with early years partners and supporting parents with younger children to embrace reading and story-sharing. 90% of primary school teachers agree that visiting a public library regularly can help young children prepare for starting school.
- Community Engagement: The mobile library will serve as a hub for community engagement, bringing people together, encouraging social interaction, reducing isolation and fostering a sense of belonging within the community.
- Access to Services: We will work in partnership with other services using our mobile as a community hub, offering outreach and specialised services such as health road shows and information on local services. We will seek to address specific community needs, using the mobile to contribute to the overall well-being and empowerment of the communities they serve.

Accepting this award would contribute to meeting the following Council priorities:

- Place and Environment: Communities are supported and work together to improve their local area
- Economy: Culture, heritage, arts and sustainable tourism all play their part in the economic growth of the county
- Health and wellbeing: People are supported to have a good quality of life and enjoy active and healthy lifestyles
- People: People can achieve their full potential through lifelong education and learning

The delivery of the mobile library service supports the Target Operating Model of the Council and specifically supports the delivery of locality-based services within the context of a large rural county.

At the end of March Arts Council England will make a national announcement about the recipients of the latest round of LIF funding, therefore North Yorkshire Council needs to make an urgent decision to accept the grant funding ahead of the national publicity.

According to the Council's Financial Procedure Rules, the Assistant Director Resources, Paul Foster has delegated authority to accept this grant funding from Arts Council England and is expected to do so on 28 March 2024. Given this late notice, the intention to make this key decision has not been published on the Forward Plan for the requisite 28 clear day period.

As a consequence of the urgency of the timescales, the matter cannot be subject to the call in period. Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16 enables matters to be determined on an urgency basis and be exempt from call-in, where any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public interest.

To the Chair of the Transition (LGR) Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

In accordance with the provisions in the Access to Information Procedure Rules, I am, therefore, informing you as the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee, that it is intended that this matter be considered by the Assistant Director Resources, Paul Foster on 28 March 2024, and I am seeking your agreement that the meeting and the making of the decision is urgent and cannot reasonably be deferred beyond this timeframe. If you agree that the meeting and the making of the decision is urgent and cannot reasonably be deferred and that this item should be considered on 28 March 2024, will you please confirm by email as soon as possible.

To the Chairman of North Yorkshire Council:

In accordance with the provisions in Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16(h), I am seeking your agreement that the decision proposed is reasonable in all the circumstances and to it being treated as a matter of urgency (where any delay likely to be caused by the call in process would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public interest) and that the call-in procedure should therefore not apply to the decision. If you agree that the decision proposed is reasonable in all the circumstances and to it being treated as a matter of urgency and the call-in process not applying, and that this item should be considered on 28 March 2024, will you please confirm by email as soon as possible.

BARRY KHAN

Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services)

Dated: 25 March 2024

I agree, for the reasons stated in this notice, that the meeting and the making of this decision is urgent and cannot reasonably be deferred and that this item should be considered on 28 March 2024.

Signed Cllr Malcolm Taylor

Date 26 March 2024

Chair of the Transition (LGR) Overview and Scrutiny Committee

I agree, for the reasons stated in this notice, that the decision proposed is reasonable in all the circumstances, to it being treated as a matter of urgency and exempt from call-in and that this item should be considered on 28 March 2024.

Signed Cllr David Ireton

Date 25 March 2024

Chairman of North Yorkshire Council