

# North Yorkshire Council

## Corporate and Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Committee

2 December 2024

### Report on Notices of Motion from Full Council on 13 November 2024

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal & Democratic Services)

#### 1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present information in response to a number of Motions at Full Council in November 2024. This information has been provided to enable members to consider those Motions allocated to this Committee and agree an appropriate way forward to deliver a response on each for full Council's future consideration.

#### 2.0 Background

- 2.1 At Full Council on 13 November 2024, a number of Motions were received, and it was agreed they would be referred to the Scrutiny Board to consider and allocate to the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with the intention of recommendations being brought back to the next meeting of full Council in February 2025.
- 2.2 On 15 November 2024 the Scrutiny Board considered those Motions, and it was agreed the following two Motions should be considered by the Corporate & Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee, given the focus of both was on an issue of governance.

#### 3.0 Motion 1 - Youth Council Engagement

- 3.1 The Notice of Motion as proposed by Councillor Andrew Timothy (and seconded by Councillor Barbara Brodigan) stated:

*'Many British young people are very interested in how society should be run. In March this year, UK Youth reported, "88% of young people believe it is important to have a say in the decisions politicians make about public life"<sup>1</sup>. Despite this, according to an IPPR report, turnout in the 2024 general election was lowest in the constituencies with the lowest average age<sup>2</sup>.*

*It is clear that many young people feel that most politicians, regardless of political party or lack thereof, are not interested in supporting them with the issues they face. This adversely affects their engagement in elections and the democratic process as a whole.*

*Children and young people are our future. Engaging them in politics is crucial to ensure the survival of institutions of this country.'*

- 3.2 The Motion asked Council to agree to more fully involve young people in the democratic decision-making process by:

- Inviting the Youth Assembly of North Yorkshire to prepare a single motion each year to be submitted and considered at the Full Council meeting held before the 1st of September of that year.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ukyouth.org/2024/03/only-one-in-10-young-people-believe-politicians-prioritise-their-needs-as-childrens-election-launched/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ippr.org/articles/half-of-us>

- Amending the council constitution such that the motion may be proposed by the chair of the Youth Assembly.
- Genuinely debating and considering the motion in the same way as if a North Yorkshire Councillor had proposed it.

3.3 The relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) associated with this Motion were identified as being:

- Goal 4: Quality Education - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
- Goal 5: Gender Equality - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
- Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities - Reduce inequality within and among countries.
- Goal 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions - Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.
- Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals - Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

3.4 Information Gathered to Date

Scrutiny Board referred this matter to this Committee in recognition that this was a governance issue requiring a change to the council's Constitution. They also agreed it would be inequitable to only allow the Youth Assembly of North Yorkshire to submit a Notice of Motion and therefore agreed that any such amendment to the Constitution would need to apply to all external bodies, which could potentially result in a flood of Motions in the future.

3.5 It has been confirmed by Legal Services that there is no legal impediment to amending the Constitution to allow an external body to submit a Notice of Motion, or to have it be presented in person by that body's representative at a meeting of full Council. Any proposed amendments to the Constitution, however, require consideration by the cross-party Member Working Group on the Constitution. They will then make recommendations to the Executive, who in turn will then make a recommendation to Council.

3.6 It should also be noted that full Council is not meant to be a public engagement meeting. Full Council meetings are for determination of the budget, as defined in Article 4.01(b), the Policy Framework, as defined in Article 4.01(a), and for the constitutional and related functions set out in Article 4.02. Public participation at a Council meeting is therefore limited in comparison to other committee meetings and must relate to a specific agenda item. Council Procedure Rule 9 allows members of the public to ask questions or make statements at ordinary meetings of the Council, which would provide an alternative to submitting a Notice of Motion that would not limit the attendance of the Youth Assembly of North Yorkshire to once a year.

3.7 There are already a range of ways in which the Council currently engages with young people which includes:

- Councillor support for Youth Councils in their division.
- Youth Councils attending Area Constituency Committee meetings.
- Through the Young People's Champion
- Children and young people are supported to have their voices heard through [NY Voice](#) (Youth Voice and Creative Engagement Service)
- The Youth Cabinet - made up of leading members of all of NYC's voice groups, representing all of North Yorkshire's children and young people. The group meets regularly and has direct working links with Children and Young Peoples Service leaders. Amongst other things, the Youth Cabinet plans and runs projects and public campaigns on issues which are important to young people and is regularly consulted by the Authority and a range of its partner services when key decisions are being made.

- Young inspectors - inspecting services delivered to children and young people, providing advice and recommendations on how those services can improve.

### 3.8 Way Forward

Councillor Andrew Timothy (proposer of the Motion) has been invited to attend this meeting to present his views on why the annual submission of a Notice of Motion by the Youth Assembly of North Yorkshire would better enable them 'to have a say in the decisions politicians make about public life' rather than via any of the other routes available to young people that are currently available.

- 3.9 Members are asked to consider if the information provided above is sufficient to determine whether the Authority is already engaging appropriately with young people through a variety of other routes (listed above) to ensure they are supported with the issues they face and can inform the decisions politicians make about public life. If not, Members are asked to consider what further information / lines of enquiry are required to make that determination.

## 4.0 **Motion 2 - Community Impact**

- 4.1 The Notice of Motion as proposed by Councillor Peter Lacey (and seconded by Councillor Chris Aldred) stated:

*'Reflecting the declared intent of North Yorkshire Council to become the most local large Unitary in England, and in light of this Council adopting the United Nations Sustainability and Development Goals (SDGs) as the basis for policy development, implementation and monitoring, there is a need to ensure that any decisions made by the Council are properly weighed in the light of their potential impact on local communities (SDG goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities).*

*Whilst it is acknowledged that financial, legal, equalities and climate change implications of policy changes are already a requirement in the development of policy, Council accepts that decisions should also be taken in the full knowledge of any impact on local economies and the health and wellbeing of local communities (SDG goal 3: Good Health and Well-being), either in specific geographical locations or more generally.'*

- 4.2 The Motion asked Council to:

- i. Note that:
  - By focusing on the local impact of decisions, the motion will support the creation of inclusive, safe, and resilient communities. It ensures that development is sustainable and beneficial to residents.
  - The motion aligns with the goal of taking urgent action to combat climate.
- ii. Resolve that by December 2025 it will explore and adopt appropriate means to ensure that policies and decisions made by Council are properly informed by their potential impact on local communities (SDG goal 17: Partnerships to deliver the Goals).

### 4.3 Information Gathered to Date

The Authority currently has no reliable measures of community impact. It has been suggested that a number of other Authorities are attempting to provide this type of information to better inform their decision-making, but that information comes with a series of caveats suggesting it cannot be relied upon.

- 4.4 It is likely that adding an additional requirement to the decision-making process will lengthen the time required in the lead up to a decision being taken. So for its provision to be worthwhile, there would have to be a degree of confidence in the resulting information provided.
- 4.5 Work is now underway to examine the complexities of delivering an analysis of community impact, but it has not been possible to do this ahead of this meeting and therefore

additional time will be required before the Committee can fully consider the proposal put forward in this Notice of Motion.

## **5.0 DBS Checks**

- 5.1 In addition to allocating the above two Motions to this Committee, the Scrutiny Board also asked that this committee consider the issue raised by Councillor Kevin Foster asking whether all Councillors should be DBS checked.
- 5.2 The Scrutiny Board suggested this be considered at this Committee's next Mid-Cycle Briefing on 13 January 2025, with supporting guidance provided by HR/relevant officers, and that a response be subsequently provided direct to Councillor Kevin Foster.

## **6.0 Way Forward**

- 6.1 Having considered the report, Members are asked to agree whether sufficient information has been provided to determine a response to either of the Notices of Motion detailed in sections 3 & 4 of this report.
- 6.2 If not, the Committee has a number of options:
- i. Agree to hold an additional meeting of this Committee between 6 January - 11 February 2025 to consider a further report on the proposals and associated options and implications, in order to inform this Committee's feedback report to Full Council on 25 February 2025.
  - ii. Acknowledge that Members and officers' availability may be limited between early December and end of January given the Christmas/New Year period and other ongoing work commitments, limiting their availability and/or the time available to fully explore the proposals/options/implications associated with the Motions, and therefore agree that all the relevant information should be provided for the Committee's consideration at its next formal meeting in March 2025, with the intention of reporting back to full Council in May 2025.
  - iii. Agree an alternative way forward.
  - iv) Agree what additional information is required to support your considerations.

## **7.0 Risks & Implications**

- 7.1 Any risks and implications associated with implementing the proposals within the two Notice of Motion will be fully explored as part of the reports brought to a later meeting of this Committee.

## **8.0 Recommendation**

- 8.1 Members are asked to consider the information contained within this report and agree a way forward.

BARRY KHAN  
Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services)  
County Hall  
NORTHALLERTON

21 November 2024

Report Author & Presenter of Report – Melanie Carr, Senior Scrutiny Officer

**Background Papers:** None  
**Appendices:** None

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.