

North Yorkshire Council

Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee

3 March 2025

Localities Update Report

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive for Local Engagement

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The report will update Members on projects and programmes undertaken by the Localities service and Corporate Volunteering.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Council agreed as part of the arrangements for the establishment of a unitary council a locality-based delivery model with four strong and interconnected pillars:
- i. Local services and access – locally based and integrated council, partner and community services.
 - ii. Local accountability – six Area Committees, political accountability for the discharge of statutory functions and services at local level.
 - iii. Local action – local people, partners and communities coming together in new Community Networks to identify and deliver against priorities.
 - iv. Local empowerment – devolution of powers to community groups and town and parish councils who want to, to run assets and services.
- 2.2 The Localities team has been operational since 1 May 2024, it comprises a Communities team, a Parish Liaison & Local Devolution Team and a Migrant Programmes Team. The Communities team lead on the delivery of pillars one and three and the Parish Liaison & Local Devolution team lead on pillar 4 of the locality operating model.
- 2.3 A number of programmes and projects have been agreed as early priorities to help to establish and embed the locality operating model.

3.0 Communities Team – Updates

- 3.1 The Communities Team work collaboratively with other services; communities; public sector; and voluntary and community sector partners to deliver the following aims:
- i. Prevention - supporting communities to contribute to the Council and public health prevention priority to reduce, prevent or delay the point at which people need to access statutory health and social care services.
 - ii. Supporting people to live longer, healthier and independent lives within their community and contributing to broader public health priority to reduce health inequalities.
 - iii. Supporting communities to become more resilient to respond to local challenges.
 - iv. Social Regeneration - Ensuring that the places where people live, now and in the future, create new opportunities, promote well-being and reduce inequalities so that people have better lives, in stronger communities and achieve their potential.
- 3.2 The Communities Team is based on three area teams, each including two Area Committee localities: West (Skipton and Ripon; Richmond areas); Central (Harrogate and

Knarborough; Selby and Ainsty areas); and East (Scarborough and Whitby; Thirsk and Malton areas).

Prevention & reducing health inequalities

3.3 Stronger Communities Programme Inspire Fund

This fund supports community and voluntary groups to establish new services, events or activities that promote social action and improve the wellbeing of individuals and communities. At the end of December 2024 £106,355 had been awarded supporting 111 projects. This is higher than at the same point the previous financial year when £93,052 had been awarded to 97 projects.

3.4 Health Inequalities

The team is involved in a number of developing work areas that aim to support the reduction of health inequalities across the county. This includes:

- On-going support for the Transforming Community Mental Health Programme in Hambleton & Richmondshire, Harrogate, Scarborough, Whitby & Ryedale, and Vale of York. Following a number of successful pilots in 2023/24, a number of project extensions have been agreed to enable community led projects to support people experiencing mental illness in their communities. Discussions are taking place between the Intergrated Care Board (NHS) and North Yorkshire Council's Health & Adult Services (HAS) regarding the future of this programme. It is anticipated that to be sustainable over the longer term those pilots that have been successful may be further developed into a commissioned service model.
- In conjunction with colleagues from Health & Adult Services (HAS) an enhanced prevention pilot - 'the Nidderdale Service Navigator project' is underway in partnership with Nidderdale Plus, one of our Community Anchor Organisations. Other opportunities to involve Community Anchors in enhanced prevention are being explored.
- The 'Core 20 + 5' project in Skipton – this is part of a national, health funded programme which has been set up to improve health in the 20% of areas of England with the worst health outcomes and focuses on improving health in 5 key areas which are maternity care, severe mental illness, lung disease, early cancer diagnosis and high blood pressure. In Bradford District and Craven two further areas of focus have been added: Smoking Cessation and Prevention and early help for children and young people (CYP) to reduce Adverse Childhood Experiences. A Theory of Change has been developed and following community conversations a costed action plan for delivery over the next 13 months until March 26 has been developed. The Communities team continue to support the project across the two communities in Skipton which met the funding criteria: Greatwood & Horseclose, and Broughton Road.

Financial Inclusion

3.5 The team continue to lead and coordinate several work areas that are related to financial inclusion as detailed below.

3.6 Local Food Support

Following a partnership and engagement event to launch the findings of the collaborative food insecurity insight study undertaken in conjunction with City of York Council in September 2023 - four online Community of Practice sessions have now taken place with local free or low-cost food providers, and two place-based discussions took place with community food providers in Scarborough to explore opportunities to create a network and work more collaboratively. A number of dedicated key stakeholder conversations also continue to take place in relation to this work, including with colleagues in Public Health as they continue to develop the North Yorkshire Food Strategy. As part of the broader sixth phase of the

Household Support Fund, the team administered the Food Support Grants scheme, awarding 27 grants to free or low-cost community food providers across the county to support their winter provision in the current phase.

3.7 **Cost of Living Communications Campaign**

Led by Localities in conjunction with Communications, and Customer, Revenues and Benefits, the annual Cost-of-Living Communications campaign was launched in late 2024.

Digital Inclusion

3.8 **UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)**

The 2024/2025 UK Shared Prosperity Funded investment of £586,000 into Digital Inclusion programmes across North Yorkshire managed through the Localities team is now fully implemented with aligned wraparound training offer supporting the successful programme partners. This has already surpassed all targets with 234 new digital champions already supported through the programme so far (against a target of 150) through 41 successful grants across voluntary, health and care sectors through nearly 100 access points across the county. Work is now underway reviewing learning from the programme and exploring the opportunities to build on this beyond 2024/2025.

3.9 **Reboot North Yorkshire**

Established during the pandemic, this programme that refurbishes old and donated digital devices (Laptops, tablets, phones) has continued to support digital inclusion with regular referrals into the scheme from a broad range of organisations, including from health partners, and NYC services. An internal review of the project exploring opportunities in the future is currently underway.

Community Resilience

3.10 **Community Anchor Organisations (CAOs)**

The 25 place-based organisations from across the county continue to work with the Localities and other service teams to progress a Community Anchor model for North Yorkshire. This includes the progression of organisational development action plans and participating in the UKSPF funded collaborative support programme for CAOs, delivered by Community First Yorkshire (CFY) and Better Connect. It is tailored to meet the needs of each organisation and will broadly include the development and delivery of resources and training, one to one support meetings, partnership events and networking opportunities.

Collaborative work with our key voluntary sector partners in our larger urban areas of Harrogate and Scarborough concluded, a grant specification was developed and during Q3 we invited applications for two 'Community Anchor Collectives'. The team were looking for applications from single coordinating organisations on behalf of a 'collective' of locally empowered organisations who are proactive and who have a track record of anticipating and responding to the needs of their communities. The evaluation of these bids is on-going. For the eight localities where a suitable CAO has not been identified, development work continues to explore the potential for a local voluntary sector organisation to become a CAO.

3.11 **Local Assistance Centre - Storm Darragh**

In December 2024, Kirkbymoorside, Pickering and the surrounding villages experienced local flooding events alongside significant and prolonged power outages across a number of sites including Kirkby Mills, Nunnington, Sinnington, Marton, and Lealholm, as a result of Storm Darragh. The Communities Team worked in partnership with the Resilience and Emergencies Team, Kirkbymoorside Town Council, and a local Veterans Club to provide a Local Assistance Centre in the Moorside Rooms, and community-based support. The

Communities Team also led the development and delivery of the Storm Darragh Recovery Assistance Fund in conjunction with Two Ridings Community Foundation (TRCF).

- 3.12 To build on this model further and that of the community led response to the Knaresborough flooding event in May 2024, a range of VCSE organisations, local Flood Groups and Community Anchors are invited to planning events in March to look at the roles that they play in responding to emergency events in their area and the resources available for longer term support for communities as they recover.

Capacity Building

- 3.13 The Communities team continues 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. A competitive grant process for Infrastructure Support Grant was undertaken and the results of this process will be announced in Quarter 4.

Social regeneration

3.14 UKSPF (Communities & Place)

The Localities team continue to take on the lead role in the collection of monitoring and evaluation information from the projects which have been funded through the Communities strand of the Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) programme. This relationship has allowed the Central SPF management team to be supplied with up to date output and outcome figures as well as case studies of the positive impact the projects are having. This has resulted in a number of projects being invited to the end of year SPF Showcase event. Following the success of the UKSPF Village Hall and Community Building Fund, additional funds were secured through the Mayoral Investment Fund. A pipeline of 20 projects worth £600,000 are now able to go ahead thanks to the additional funding from the Mayor building upon the hard work and success of the original SPF programme. Discussions about future UKSPF monies are ongoing.

3.15 Community Partnerships

The team continues 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 is taking a phased approach, with the team working in five pilot areas: Easingwold, Leyburn and Middleham, Ripon, Sherburn in Elmet and Forest and Dale (Thornton-le-Dale and rural hinterland). An update on Community Partnerships was included in the report taken to the Council Executive on 17th September. Members agreed that there was no longer the requirement for community partnerships to be informal partnerships given two (Uredale and Sherburn are being delivered via a Community Interest Company model). The Scope and Terms of Reference for the operation of Community Partnerships has now been amended to remove the requirement for Community Partnerships to operate only as informal groups. It was also agreed to open up the Community Partnerships programme to all Members who wish to bring forward the development of a partnership in their area to get in touch with Area Managers/Locality Leads from the Communities team.

3.16 Town Investment Funds

The team has been supporting colleagues from Regeneration on developing the Town Investment Fund programme, a co-ordinated approach to regeneration and investment across the county. The plans will align with the 'Local Action Plans' being developed through the Community Partnerships programme and could act as a catalyst to the formation of partnerships where they don't currently operate. They will be created with significant engagement with local stakeholders, community groups and business networks to ensure a

collaborative approach to identifying the investment needs of each town. Proposed implementation plans for each area are currently being developed and will be presented to Area Constituency Committees shortly.

4.0 Parish Liaison and Local Devolution Update

- 4.1 Working closely with Legal and Democratic Services, the Parish Liaison and Local Devolution Team works alongside the county's 664 Parish Councils offering a range of support including the development and implementation of the Parish Charter; arrangements for effective consultation and parish liaison; and providing a single 'front' door interface for town and parish councils through the development of a single 'portal'.
- 4.2 They are also responsible for managing the Council's corporate arrangements for the devolution of council assets and services to town and parish councils and community groups; our statutory responsibilities in relation to Assets of Community Value and Community Right to Challenge.
- 4.3 **Parish Charter**
The review of the Parish Charter is progressing, and a meeting of the Working Group took place on 11 November 2024. The working group supported the work to date and the action plan. The main work will be to confirm and embed the commitments in the Charter within NYC and the establishment of baseline information for performance and service monitoring.
- 4.4 **Parish Liaison**
The work to develop Parish Liaison has included the establishment of a programme of area-based Parish Liaison meetings. The Parish Liaison drop-in and formal meetings have taken place in Harrogate and Knaresborough Area, Richmond Area, and Scarborough and Whitby Area. Highways and Planning teams have supported the Parish Liaison and Localities team and they have been well attended with representation, in person, from over 74 Parish Councils. Meetings for the three remaining Area Committee areas will be completed at the end of March after which there will be a review of format and content, and a regular programme of further meetings will be organised commencing in the summer.
- 4.5 A Regular update to all Parish Council started in August. This is now monthly and brings together all information relevant to Parish Councils from across NYC. The single Parish Liaison contact e-mail address for Parish liaison and Democratic services introduced in August has been extremely successful with over 400 e-mail enquiries dealt with to date by the Parish Team. The single e-mail contact also provides a consistent point of contact for Parish Councils for services to have a consistent consultation/contact with Parish Councils with support from the Parish Liaison Team.
- 4.6 **Parish Consultation Panel**
The representative group of Parish/Town/City Councils and Parish Meetings that has been established provides regular informal dialogue with the Parish Sector. This panel has been consulted regularly on a range of issues with the latest being content and format for a dedicated Parish Council web site web pages etc. as well as broader Parish Liaison activities.
- 4.7 **Local Devolution**
The work to progress local devolution has focused on the agreed double devolution pilot proposals. Progress on these has been dependent on the availability of information due to restructures and the capacity of Parish Councils to develop and submit full business cases. Following more detailed operational discussions between services and Parishes, revised and in some cases reduced proposals are emerging. The larger proposals may include elements

of asset transfers with smaller service-based proposals and there are double devolution proposals at varying stages of development. A review of the approved Expressions of Interest by the Assistant Director for Local Engagement will be undertaken in February with a further report to the Executive.

4.8 Community Rights

Transitional arrangements to fulfil the council's Statutory responsibilities for Community rights were put in place from April 2023. Support for community rights within the team is now in place and work to develop new structures, policies, procedures and changes to delegation has commenced. The transfer of responsibility and information from the previous area-based representatives has already taken place and the introduction of a single NYC area e-mail and contact form has been introduced.

5.0 Migrant Programmes Update

5.1 The Migrant Programmes Team brought together a number of existing refugee and asylum seeker programmes alongside the Home for Ukraine programme to form a single integrated service and is positioned in the Localities Service.

5.2 Economic Migrants

In partnership with a range of voluntary sector organisations, work has continued around the Swift initiative, built on the successful Pomoc programme that operated in the former Scarborough and Ryedale areas, which aims to welcome and empower migrant communities across North Yorkshire. By enabling equitable access to services and encouraging wider social connections, individuals and families will be supported to positively re-build their lives. Lottery Funding has now been secured and place-based partnerships are underway in Scarborough, Selby and Harrogate/Knaresborough, in preparation for a launch next financial year.

5.3 The work of the Migrant Programme is subject to a detailed annual update to Corporate & Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with a report due to be considered on 9 June 2025.

6.0 Corporate Volunteering Update

6.1 The Corporate Volunteer Project relates to all volunteering activity that takes place by members of the community to support North Yorkshire Council services. This includes volunteers who help across many different services from the Skipton Museum, Youth Justice Service, Libraries, Major Incident Response, Countryside Service and Waste reduction education.

6.2 Sponsored by Localities, the corporate Volunteer Project is delivered by the Resourcing Solutions Team – HR, recognising the synergies between the volunteer journey and employee journey, whilst acknowledging that there are key differences between the two. The focus for this project is to maximise and optimise the use of volunteers across all council services, creating consistencies in marketing, recruitment, induction, expenses, training, ongoing support and efficient volunteer processes.

6.3 A Volunteer Sub-Group meets regularly to provide a steer for the project, discussing challenges and priorities and inputting into areas of work as they progress. This group comprises of representatives from Localities and the Resourcing Solutions Team and lead officers from the services that manage volunteers.

6.4 New Volunteers

In September 2024 when the Selby and Tadcaster Leisure Service Tupe transferred into NYC, the authority inherited an established group of volunteers who are Walk Leaders. The volunteers lead walks that members of the community are referred to for health and social reasons. There are 27 volunteer walk leaders.

6.5 **Volunteer Numbers**

The number of registered volunteers in December 2024 stood at approximately 4208. This includes people who volunteer their time to support wider council services such as community libraries and as School Governors. Detail of all the services who engage volunteers support, is provided in **appendix 1**.

7.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.1 Members are requested to note the contents of the report and advise officers regarding any areas of the work that they may wish to see more detailed information.

Rachel Joyce
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Date - 19 February 2025
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Summary of Corporate Volunteering Levels

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

North Yorkshire Refugee Resettlement Update to Corporate & Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee (10 June 2024) -

<https://edemocracy.northyorks.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1170&MIId=7824&Ver=4>

Appendix 1 - Summary of Corporate Volunteering Levels

Service	Approx. number of registered volunteers (Q1)	Role(s)
Countryside Volunteers	118	Checking paths, low-level maintenance and conservation tasks
Rotters	44	Events/shows, schools workshops and talks to groups all promoting reduction of food waste, home composting, recycling and reuse
Libraries	1,549	Help customers in library, help with shelving and stock, deliver books for home library service, help with children's activities and IT
Records and archives	0	Digitising records, cataloguing, organising materials
Democratic Services	36	Volunteers serve as appeals panel members for exclusion or admissions appeals
Major Incident Response Team (MIRT)	18	Supporting people affected by an incident
Ready for Anything	370	Database of community volunteers to be called on in an emergency
Adult learning	14	Volunteer teaching assistants (Syrian Refugee project and English classes)
Community Connectors (previously Children's Centres)	7	Supporting new parents, signposting them to information and resources.
Youth Justice Service	26	Panel members, appropriate adult, mentor, reparation supervisor
Flying High	0	A youth voice project for young people with special educational and/or additional needs
Young People's Council	5	A youth voice project for young people who have experienced Care Services
Youth Voice Executive	12	A youth voice committee representing young people's view across North Yorkshire
SENDIASS	2	Independent support for parents of children or young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), or for young people (16 -25 years) with SEND to ensure their education, learning or training needs are supported
School governors	1775	Serve as governors and trustees on school boards (estimate based on 330 establishments x average 10 per board)

Chaperones	<i>10</i>	Chaperones who accompany children who have a licence to act or perform, to auditions/performances
Gardeners	0	Supporting service users with gardening and conservation activities
Craven Museum (Skipton Town Hall)	23	Giving visitor information and helping in the shop
Craven Tourist Information	<i>13</i>	To provide information services to the public
Harrogate Museum	6	Cataloguing artifacts
Mercer Art Gallery	5	
Local Access Forum	5	Office holders assisting with issues in regard to countryside access
Community Volunteers	143	Providing conservation services, including In Bloom and Friends Of groups
Walk Leaders	27	Take out groups of walkers on planned routes.
Total	4,208	

* Figures in italics are estimated from previous quarterly reports.