

North Yorkshire Council

Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee

29 September 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 COMMUNITIES TEAM UPDATE

- 2.1 The Communities Team work collaboratively with other services; communities; public sector; and voluntary and community sector partners to deliver the following aims:

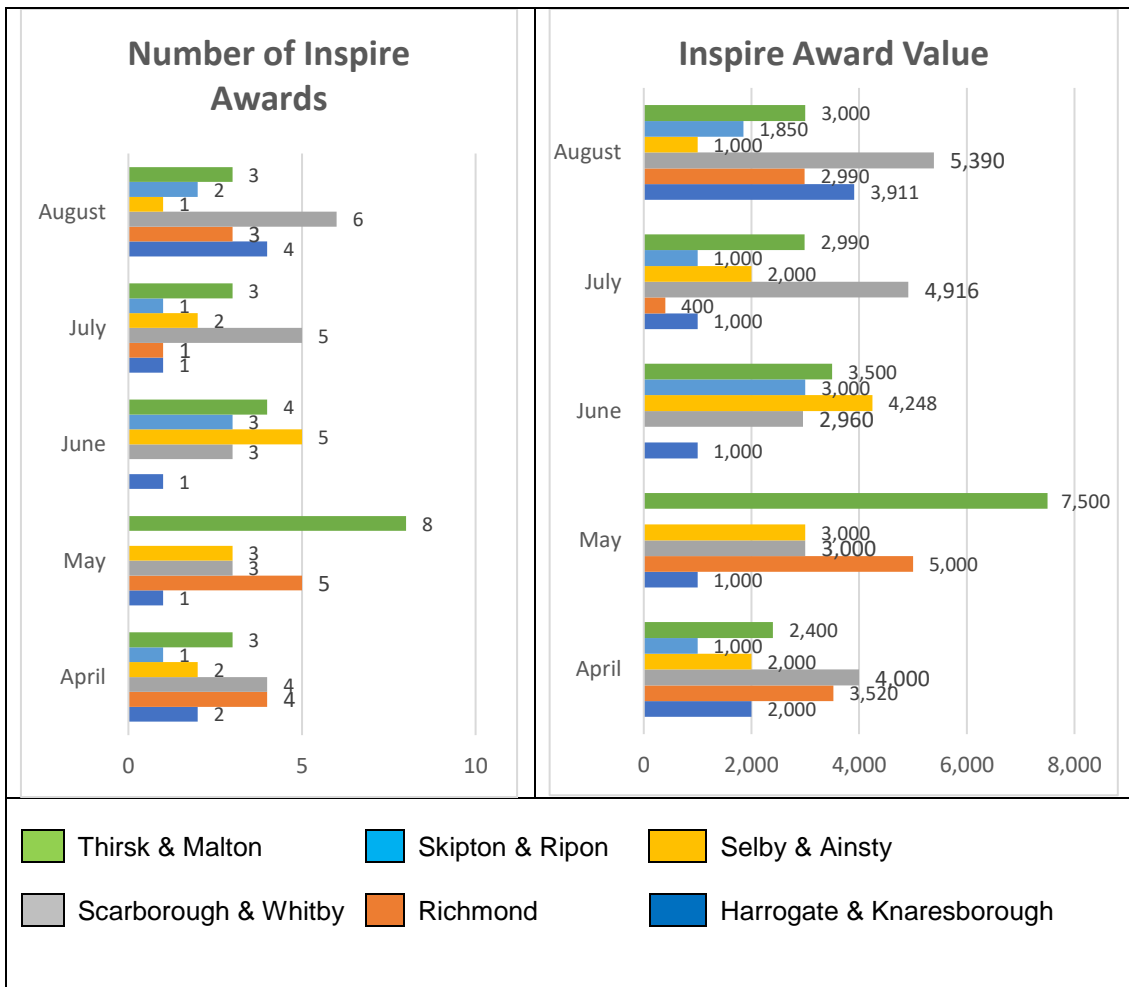
- i. Prevention – supporting communities to contribute to the Council and public health prevention priority to reduce, prevent or delay the point at which people need to access statutory health and social care services.
- ii. Supporting people to live longer, healthier and independent lives within their 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.

2.2 Prevention and Reducing Health Inequalities

2.3 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.

- 2.4 During the first five months of 2025/26 £79,574.96 had been awarded supporting 84 projects. This is higher than at the same point the previous financial year when £69,134.50 had been awarded to 73 projects.



2.5 Awards have been made to support projects all across the county. The maximum amount that is awarded is £1,000, between April and August 2025 the average award was £947.

2.6 Financial Inclusion

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

2.7 Local Food Support

In line with the recommendations of the Food Insecurity Research and Insight Report¹, place-based discussions continued with free or low-cost food providers in Scarborough and Whitby, Harrogate and Knaresborough, and Richmond, to explore opportunities to create local networks and work more collaboratively; this will continue throughout 2025/2026, linking with the Public Health led Food for the Future North Yorkshire framework.

2.8 The team has also continued to manage the Household Support Fund Food Support Grants Programme, with 27 organisations supported through Phase six (1 October 2024 - 31 March 2025), and 29 organisations awarded funding in Phase seven (1 April 2025 - 31 March 2026).

2.9 North Yorkshire Local Assistance Fund (NYLAF)

The on-going management and development of NYLAF has now been transferred back to Localities from Welfare and Benefits. In coming months, there will be a renewed focus on training and refreshing our authorised agents and delivery partners to ensure that the customer journey is as seamless and supportive as possible. Annual stakeholder events

¹ [G5813-Food-Insecurity-Report-090523.pdf](https://www.northyorkshire.gov.uk/media/10000/G5813-Food-Insecurity-Report-090523.pdf)

will also be reinvigorated to enhance feedback mechanisms – both from agents and directly from individuals.

- 2.10 NYLAF approved 11,442 applications in 2024/25, resulting in 18,120 items or vouchers being awarded. Additionally, 1,053 food parcels were distributed via the Rainbow Centre on our behalf.
- 2.11 Cost of Living Communications Campaign
Led by Localities in conjunction with Communications and Customer, Revenues & Benefits, work has now commenced in planning the annual Cost-of-Living Communications campaign for winter 2025/26. In the meantime, the reconfigured cost-of-living web page (www.northyorks.gov.uk/costofliving), will remain live, offering a one stop shop of information about a wide range of local schemes and organisations offering support.
- 2.12 **Digital Inclusion**
- 2.13 UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)
The Localities service is leading £500,000 investment of UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF) focussing on digital inclusion on behalf of the York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority (CA) across North Yorkshire and York in 2025/2026. This follows the successful programme that took place in the previous financial year. Facilitating a decision-making panel in August alongside partners from the CA, City of York Council, Community First Yorkshire, York Centre for Voluntary Service (CVS), and the Integrated Care Board, capital and revenue grant funding has been allocated to 32 successful applicants. The oversight team are now working with applicants on the training of their digital champions and development of diverse cross-sector digital inclusion projects across the region.
- 2.14 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.
- 2.15 **Social Regeneration**
- 2.16 The 2025/2026 Government UKSPF allocation has been awarded to the CA who are coordinating the various investment themes. Localities has been contracted to manage a capital fund for Village Halls and Community Buildings (£1.3m) and a revenue fund to support Community Wealth Building (£200k) which includes a small grants fund for local social and generative economy projects, support and training for social businesses and research to understand the contribution of social businesses to the North Yorkshire and York economy. The Village Halls fund has closed, and applications are being evaluated. All funds must be spent, and all projects completed by 31 March 2026.
- 2.17 **Trailblazer Programme Funding**
- 2.18 Localities are a delivery partner for the national 'Get Britain Working' local Trailblazer programme which is supporting economically inactive adults to access employment, training or volunteering. The overall programme is co-ordinated by the CA in partnership with both North Yorkshire Council (NYC), City of York Council and partners from the NHS. Localities are managing a range of projects being delivered by the voluntary sector including support for veterans; young people at the risk of being NEET (not in education, employment or training); supported volunteering and community and voluntary sector projects to support people to improve their employability skills. The programmes will run until 31 March 2026.

2.19 **Community Partnerships**

2.20 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. As requested by some of the Members involved in the pilots, a Community Partnership network is being put in place creating opportunities for established and developing Partnerships to meet, share learning and good practice. The first network meeting is taking place in November.

2.21 **Town Investment Plans (TIP)**

2.22 The team has been supporting colleagues from Regeneration on developing the TIP programme, a co-ordinated approach to regeneration and investment across the county. In Quarter two, Localities will be leading the development of TIP in Hawes, Bentham, Masham and Pateley Bridge. The team will also continue supporting the development of Regeneration team led TIPs in Richmond, Ripon, Skipton, Scarborough, Selby and Harrogate.

3.0 **PARISH LIAISON, LOCAL DEVOLUTION AND COMMUNITY RIGHTS (PLDCR) UPDATE**

3.1 The PLDCR Team works alongside the county's 572 Parish Councils offering a range of support. They also support NYC services to engage with all Parish Sector Organisations (PSO's). The team is also responsible for managing the Council's corporate arrangements for the devolution of Council assets and services to PSOs and community groups and also the Council's statutory responsibilities in relation to Community Rights Legislation.

3.2 Parish Liaison

In 2024/25 there were seven Parish Liaison Drop-in Surgeries and six formal Parish Liaison Meetings with attendance by the team at 15 other Parish Council events/meetings. The drop-in sessions and formal meetings for 2025/26 will commence again from 10 September until March 2026. A new initiative will be introduced from 17 September where Parish Clerks/Councillors will be able to book a Teams appointment with a member of the PLDCR team.

3.3 The team supports a representative Parish Consultation/Engagement Panel that is consulted on a regular basis on PSO matters of interest. In 2024/25 there were five surveys undertaken and from Quarter three, it is anticipated that they will be undertaken monthly.

3.4 Responding to one of the priorities raised by PSOs – for access to relevant information and consultations being more streamlined – a dedicated Parish Council website will be launched in Autumn 2025. This will bring all key information for Parish Councils together in one place to make access simpler for them. It will also provide dedicated information and support to all PSOs on a regular basis.

3.5 Local Devolution

The work to progress local devolution has focused on the agreed 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. A review of the double devolution process is being undertaken, to enable a coordinated devolution framework to be established that will incorporate both asset and service transfers. This will also include a review of devolution opportunities across the council to provide consistency and simplification of processes.

3.6 Community Rights

Transitional arrangements to fulfil the Council's statutory responsibilities for Community Rights has been in place since April 2023. New structures, policies, procedures and changes to delegation have been completed, however, final agreement/changes will depend on the Community Rights implications of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill². The team has been in discussions with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and 'We're Right Here' to help develop proposals and guidance. The main Community Rights implications are summarised below:

- Assets of Community Value to be called **Community Right to Buy** – significant changes in procedures and processes with implications for Owners, PSOs/Community Groups and NYC
- **Right to Shape Public Services** – potentially being introduced to replace the existing Community Right to Challenge
- *Neighbourhood Governance Structures* – the implications of potential neighbourhood governance structures

3.7 The timescale for the implementation of the legislation is still to be agreed however discussions about the Community Right to Buy indicate that it may be in place for April 2026.

4.0 **MIGRANT PROGRAMMES UPDATE**

4.1 The work of the Migrant Programme is reported in a separate detailed annual North Yorkshire Resettlement update to Corporate & Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the last report was considered on 10 June 2025.

5.0 **FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS**

5.1 Over the next six months key areas of work for the Localities team include the designing and embedding across the Council a comprehensive 'deal' for Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector. This will be known as the VCSE Offer. The offer will provide clarity on how the Council will work and do business with the sector, ensuring consistency across the Council. It will bring together a range of existing legacy arrangements from across the Council into one place with a set of common principles and processes. There will be a variety of projects that will contribute to the development of the deal including a review of the North Yorkshire Compact in line with the new Civil Society Covenant³, a review of the grant funding programme governance including a review of the grant funding platform the Council uses.

5.2 We are again celebrating the incredible contributions made by individuals and groups across our county in the Community Awards. This year, there are three award categories:

- Community Impact – recognising grass roots community groups who have made a positive difference in their community
- Collaborative Spirit – recognising collaborations that have brought together groups to collaborate and build strong relationships to make a lasting impact
- Commitment to the Community – recognising individual volunteers who have demonstrated unwavering dedication and exceptional service to our community for a period of 10 years or more

5.3 The nomination phase of the awards closed on 3 August 2025. We received 116 nominations of 68 groups/individuals from across the county. Removing duplicates, we have received eight for Harrogate and Knaresborough, 12 for Richmond, 16 for

² [English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill](#)

³ [Civil Society Covenant - GOV.UK](#)

Scarborough and Whitby, three for Selby and Ainsty, 12 for Skipton & Ripon, 10 for Thirsk and Malton and seven for multiple areas.

- 5.4 The Community Awards will be presented at the annual Wider Partnership Conference which will take place on 21 November 2025 in Harrogate. The theme of the conference is 'Collaboration for Change: Unlocking Local Potential'. The conference will bring together partners from across the public and voluntary sectors and will explore place-based approaches that enable collaboration and create strong, healthy, creative, active communities. It will showcase best practice examples and consider the skills and knowledge required to deliver an effective local place-based approach.

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 NYC 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 – Human Resources, 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 Teams and lead officers from the services that manage volunteers.
- 6.4 Volunteer Numbers
The number of registered volunteers in June 2025 stood at approximately 4305. 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**.
- 6.5 Highlights
National Volunteers Week was held during June. NYC organised an online networking event for volunteers to come together, these were open to all NYC volunteers from all services countywide to attend. Chair of the Council, George Jabbour attended to meet with volunteers and thank them for their contribution.

7.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 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 on.

Rachel Joyce
Assistant Chief Executive – Local Engagement

16 September 2025

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Summary of Corporate Volunteering Levels

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

York and North Yorkshire Covid Recovery Insight Project – [Food Insecurity Research 2023](#)

[English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill](#)

[Civil Society Covenant](#)

[North Yorkshire Refugee Resettlement Update](#) - Corporate & Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee (10 June 2025)