

North Yorkshire County Council

Executive

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Northallerton on Tuesday, 28 March 2017 commencing at 11.00 am.

County Councillor Carl Les in the Chair. County Councillors Arthur Barker, Gareth Dadd, Don Mackenzie, Chris Metcalfe, Janet Sanderson and Clare Wood.

Also in attendance: one media representative.

Officers present: Richard Flinton, David Bowe, Pete Dwyer, Gary Fielding, Barry Khan, Josie O'Dowd and Richard Webb.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

213. Minutes

Resolved –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2017, having been printed and circulated, are taken as read and are confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

214. Any Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

215. Questions and Statements from members of the public

There were no questions or statements from members of the public.

216. Voluntary Aided Schools Capital Programme 2017/18

Considered –

A report of the Corporate Director - Children and Young People's Service advising of the Department for Education's (DfE's) indicative allocation to North Yorkshire for 2017/18 for the Voluntary Aided Capital Maintenance Programme and to consider requests for inclusion in the programme.

County Councillor Arthur Barker advised that the annual report, which sets out the proposed programme of Capital Works for Voluntary Aided Schools for 2017/18, is presented for consideration and approval. He noted that confirmation is still awaited regarding the funding allocation, stating that the programme needs to be approved in advance of this to ensure that the money can be spent during financial year 2017/18. He highlighted the proviso at paragraph 2.4 of the report regarding the funding estimate which

is based on the 2016/17 figure less 10%, which is the approximate percentage of pupils from VA schools which have gained academy status in the last 12 months.

Pete Dwyer, Corporate Director - Children and Young People's Service, commented that the Diocesan Directors work very well together, advising that they have been fully involved in the preparation of the programme and support the recommendations.

Resolved –

- (a) That the projects to be carried out from the VA programme as set out in Annex A to the report, subject to the funding announced, is approved.
- (b) That the arrangements, as detailed in paragraphs 5.2 to 5.4, for dealing with the 2017/18 programme during the year to ensure that funding is fully utilised, is approved.

217. A Response to the Government's Industrial Strategy

Considered –

A report of the Corporate Director - Business and Environmental Services outlining the Council's draft response to the Government's Industrial Strategy Consultation.

County Councillor Carl Les enquired why the report was before the Executive as opposed to being considered at a BES Executive Member meeting. Barry Khan, Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) advised that it was not a formal requirement for this report to come to the Executive, however the subject matter was felt to be of sufficient importance to merit this.

County Councillor Chris Metcalfe, introducing the report, stated that the issue is very timely given the backdrop of Brexit. He felt that the response to the Government's Industrial Strategy reflected in the report, is very much informed by the following item on the agenda regarding the Plan for Economic Growth.

David Bowe, Corporate Director - Business and Environmental Services, stated that the Government's Industrial Strategy will become a very significant issue going forward as it will drive economic development for the country.

County Councillor Clare Wood commented upon the difficulties experienced regarding the recruitment and retention of staff with suitable skills in health and adult social care sector. She felt that this response provides an opportunity to address the issue of deficiencies in North Yorkshire's skills base. David Bowe accepted this point and agreed to raise it an appropriate point.

County Councillor Carl Les acknowledged the strength of the Local Enterprise Partnership stating that this reflects the benefit of being led by business working alongside public bodies, a view supported by County Councillor Chris Metcalfe.

Resolved –

That the document attached to the report as a basis for a response to the Government's Green Paper, Building our Industrial Strategy is endorsed and delegation is given for minor revisions of detail to the Corporate Director - Business and Environmental Services.

218. A Plan for Economic Growth

Considered –

A report of the Corporate Director - Business and Environmental Services outlining a new Plan for Economic Growth for North Yorkshire County Council.

County Councillor Chris Metcalfe stated that the Plan for Economic Growth is an exciting document reflecting the aspirations for growth, and describing how this might look. He highlighted the underlying aim to improve the social and economic wellbeing of all, and he acknowledged the challenges presented by an aging population as a result of increasing demands being placed on adult social care. He explained that the document takes a holistic view, reflecting a vision developed through consultation with the District Councils - it seeks to reflect their aspirations along with those of the Local Enterprise Partnership. He advised that the approach adopted is one which looks at North Yorkshire without boundaries - reflecting the role of the area in the sub-region and across the North of the country. He felt that the Plan also helps promote the Northern Powerhouse model. It is a strong document which is the product of engagement at all levels.

David Bowe, Corporate Director - Business and Environmental Services, said that it is an interesting document in that it seeks to influence as well as react to various strategies and policies, both internal to the County Council and external to it - such as Transport for the North. The Plan seeks to provide a strategic vision which spans the North, whilst reflecting the priorities of District Council partners, it seeks both to understand and encourage. He stressed that the Plan is doing much more than simply responding to pressures on the infrastructure that the County Council is responsible for, it actively seeks to challenge and influence. As an example of this he quoted the challenge issued to County Council colleagues to deliver services differently to achieve greater benefit. He also advised of the close liaison with Directors of Development at District Council level, as the Local Enterprise Partnership need to understand respective roles and potential contributions. He also highlighted linkage with the Spatial Framework. Finally he reiterated that the Plan seeks to influence both at the strategic political level and at officer level.

County Councillor Clare Wood commented that she felt the document is very significant recognising achievements to date, but also the highlighting the need for further economic development and growth to sustain the locality. She queried the commitment made regarding mobile coverage and broadband, seeking clarification of this. David Bowe explained that the reference to 'latest broadband' is more about latest communications overall. In terms of mobile communications, he spoke of the 4/5G proposals from Government and suggested that a 100% 4G coverage should be achieved first, prior to pursuing 5G for urban areas. He accepted that this is a national issue but felt it was appropriate for the locality to optimise 4G coverage first, noting that this ambition is reflected in the report. County Councillor Clare Wood commented that she also wished to see the best possible broadband delivered throughout the county area.

County Councillor Don Mackenzie commended the comprehensive document before Members and he advised that Harrogate Borough Council had issued their Plan for Economic Growth the previous week, and he was pleased to note some similarities. He recorded thanks to Mark Kibblethwaite and Matt O'Neill for the work being undertaken regarding communications. He stated that the work in progress was not simply a theoretical exercise, he assured Members of the practical steps being taken citing recent meetings with the four main mobile companies regarding the delivery of 4G countywide in due course. He also spoke to assistance being offered by the County Council, potentially including access to land for the siting of additional masts. Regarding broadband, he

advised that under Phase 3 of the Superfast Project many more homes and businesses would soon have minimum download speeds of 24mb. Coverage to date is in the region of 89-90% and by the end of Phase 3 this should increase to 95%. He hoped that the overage payments from BT from Phases 1 and 2 would continue to be used to achieve coverage in the more challenging locations. He accepted that the solutions become more expensive for the remaining properties.

County Councillor Gareth Dadd concurred with the comments made by all regarding the Plan and he acknowledged that only so much can be undertaken by the County Council itself. He spoke of his fear of the risk of the county becoming a geographic island if the question of devolution is not addressed - he felt that it is devolution that will bring the real opportunities for economic growth. David Bowe commented that alignment of authorities is crucial to gain the greatest and best outcomes, and how this is achieved is the true challenge - whether via devolution, partnership working or become a unitary authority.

County Councillor Chris Metcalfe accepted that devolution could bring the greatest opportunities but he disagreed with County Councillor Gareth Dadd stating that North Yorkshire would never be an island as it is a big geographic area with a population of 600,000. He also commented that the GVA of North Yorkshire is greater than that of many partners in West Yorkshire and Lancashire. Regarding educational attainment, he felt that this is second to none in North Yorkshire, similarly regarding the development of skills. He also noted the very high performing college in Selby which has a national reputation. He urged Members not to sell North Yorkshire short and he asked that instead, all should promote the vision. He spoke of the leadership shown in the aspirations of the Plan, whether from the County Council or partners; the Plan seeks to facilitate the delivery of aspirations at all levels. He commented that the diverse nature of the economy has helped the area to survive and recover from recession in the past. He felt that the Plan brings all these factors into one place and demonstrates that North Yorkshire is not an island.

County Councillor Gareth Dadd expressed his hope for devolution and the chance to deliver the infrastructure projects which are available. He felt that this would open up more untapped potential and that it would be beneficial not to be bounded by a geographic definition, noting that economic growth does not respect such boundaries.

County Councillor Carl Les welcomed the work undertaken and again acknowledged the benefit of having a strong Local Enterprise Partnership. He was pleased that the Plan had been developed working with District Councils, partners and the National Parks - highlighting the importance of the previous decision enabling potash mining to be developed. He too felt it was important not to be distracted by boundaries and hoped that devolution may eventually come to pass on the basis of Greater Yorkshire.

Resolved –

That the North Yorkshire County Council Plan for Economic Growth as appended to the report is endorsed.

219. Review of Contract Procedure Rules

Considered –

A report of the Corporate Director - Strategic Resources informing Members on the latest thinking relating to potential changes to the Contract Procedure Rules.

County Councillor Gareth Dadd commended the proposals for changes to the Contract Procedure Rules to Members, noting that this will support the achievement of better procurement outcomes.

Gary Fielding, Corporate Director - Strategic Resources, recorded thanks to Members of the Audit Committee who had reviewed the proposals in great deal prior to the report coming to the Executive.

Resolved –

That the report is noted and the changes proposed will be recommended to County Council 17 May for approval.

220. Forward Work Programme

The Forward Plan for period 1 March 2016 to 31 March 2017 was presented.

Resolved –

The forward work programme is noted.

The meeting concluded at 11.35 am.

JOD/JR