

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**19<sup>th</sup> July 2017**STATEMENT FROM PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR STRONGER COMMUNITIES,  
LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND THE ROLE OF AREA  
COMMITTEES****COUNTY COUNCILLOR DAVID CHANCE****STRONGER COMMUNITIES**

Now at the end of two full years of operation, the Stronger Communities Programme has worked with communities in North Yorkshire on excess of 250 projects, activities and services across all four priority services areas: community transport, children, young people and families, libraries, and adults and older people.

As well as projects designed to improve the health and well-being of people of all ages, the Programme has also supported communities to continue to provide services and activities that are important to them; services that the County Council has traditionally provided that are no longer available or are being delivered in a different way. In many places the ambitions of communities have surpassed those of traditional local authority service models, with communities better able to respond to local need.

To further enable the ambition of communities, significant work has been undertaken with stakeholders to refine and review internal processes and programme resources, to build on the learning and experience from two years of operation, and on the feedback from the LGA to “achieve even more” (2016 peer review). Moving forward this will enable the programme to focus on what works, target investment to areas of greatest impact and to improve the way that investment is evaluated.

There is a new ambition for the Programme and a new offer for communities over the coming years which we hope will be an opportunity for impact at scale, alongside those smaller but vital grass roots projects, by creating the conditions for people to come together to help improve their lives and solve problems that are important in their communities; to really underpin widespread social action.

**Inspire, Achieve, Innovate**

Throughout July 2017 Stronger Communities will be launching our new investment prospectus: Inspire, Achieve, Innovate - which will set out the offer available from Stronger Communities, examples of best practice projects, and how we plan to work collaboratively with communities moving forward.

There will be three new investment schemes that will contribute to this aim:

- **Inspire Fund** – open to communities; the Inspire Fund is primarily about supporting local social action. We want to encourage people to get involved in

their local community by offering small grants to help establish new services, events or activities that help to increase social interaction, encourage neighbourliness and improve the well-being of individuals and communities. This could be a community festival, a good neighbour's scheme or a lunch club to name a few.

- **Achieve Together** – our main investment programme; we would like to build longer term strategic partnerships with communities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises who share our priorities. We are interested in designing, with partners a range of social action projects and services that meet clearly evidenced need, are sustainable and where required, are capable of delivering at scale.
- **Time to Innovate** – to keep pace with both changing needs and an ever changing social and economic environment; we are also keen to invest in creative new ideas that contribute to our priorities. This will be an annual competition for one off investment and each year the theme will be different.

### **Go Local**

In February 2017 Members were updated about an ongoing project led by an independent specialist, working with community transport operators, to create an overarching community transport brand to increase the public's awareness, perceptions and usage of community transport. The brand is 'go local – connecting people and places'.



Stage two of the project - the production of a promotional film and associated marketing materials, has now concluded and in July 2017 community transport operators were invited to a workshop to reflect on the project to date, review the final products and consider how the brand can be consolidated and developed moving forward in partnership with the County Council.

A number of providers agreed to be on a joint steering group to help coordinate the launch of the brand and ongoing marketing activity.

### **County Councillor Locality Budgets**

The new online system went live on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> July. All County Councillors must now make their recommendations online using FlexiGrant. If the member wants to support a project or activity, they must complete the online recommendation form

and declare all pecuniary and personal interests. All recommendations for funding must come from the County Councillor and not the organisation.

Organisations must accept or refuse a grant offer within three months of the date of the grant offer letter and projects that receive funding are required to have completed all Locality Budget expenditure within 12 months of the grant offer being accepted.

## **LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

### **Area Committees**

The County Council has a long history of operating area committees. The Leader has asked for a review of area committees to see how the arrangements can be strengthened and adapted to ensure they provide a strong basis of local governance and challenge. I am therefore working with the Deputy Leader to review the existing responsibilities and operation of area committees to see how they can be improved and ensure they are fit for purpose for the future.

### **Joint Legal Work with Selby**

Under the Better Together programme, the County Council and Selby District Council have been working together to improve efficiencies and make improvements to services where possible. From May of this year, the Legal team of Selby have been seconded to the County Council with Selby's Monitoring Officer acting as the intelligent client for the new service on behalf of the district. The model is working well and has provided benefits for both organisations. In addition the County Council has received confirmation from the Solicitors Regulation Authority that the Council's Company, First North Law, will be able to operate in providing legal advice to clients across the country.

DAVID CHANCE