

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

16th May 2018

**STATEMENT FROM PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR STRONGER COMMUNITIES,
LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES, CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT,
SCRUTINY, AREA COMMITTEES, PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND
LOCALITY BUDGETS**

COUNTY COUNCILLOR DAVID CHANCE

STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Community Showcase

In my last statement I updated Members on the 'Community Showcase', a series of visits organised by the Stronger Communities Programme to community projects across the county that have received support from the Programme.

The last of these visits concluded in April and I hope that those Members who had the opportunity to attend any of the visits will agree that it has been a pleasure and a privilege to see first-hand a little of the great work being done by these projects, and so many others in North Yorkshire. It is important that as a County Council we continue to work with, support, and thank those volunteers who deliver essential services and continue to add to the richness of local life.

It is hoped that another 'Community Showcase' or similar event will be held in the future.

Stronger Communities Evaluation

The Contract for the evaluation of the Stronger Communities Programme went live this month. Through a procurement exercise, Stronger Communities will seek an independent evaluation partner to work with the Programme and its VCSE investment collaborators on a long term and ongoing basis to 2022. The evaluation will assess the Programme's investment, support and activities against five key evaluation questions to help understand and evaluate its impact and effectiveness towards achieving its ambition and outcomes for the Council and communities across North Yorkshire.

Strong and Steady

I had the pleasure, alongside Councillor Dickinson the Executive Member for Public Health, of attending the official launch of the new county wide physical activity service for older people at the end of April. The service is called Strong and Steady and has been funded for three years by Public Health and Stronger Communities and is being delivered by North Yorkshire Sport. The main aim is to increase physical activity among older people to reduce falls, with sessions also expected to help reduce loneliness and improve mental wellbeing. It was clear speaking to

participants at the launch the power that sport and physical activity has to improve health and well-being, and I hope that as more sessions roll out this year, as many people as possible will take the opportunity to participate.

Essential Life Skills Fund

Members will be aware from my last update that Stronger Communities were asked to support the Essential Life Skills Fund, an element of the Scarborough Opportunity Area funded by the Department for Education. The Fund received 30 applications in the first round with requests totalling £1.5m, almost double the entire grant budget. Six applications were approved with many more invited to re-submit in the second round, which opened this month.

LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

I am hopeful that Council will agree to the implementation of the 6 Area Constituency Committees. These committees will be supported in their work by Democratic Services and there will be much stronger links the five thematic overview and scrutiny committees that work at the county level. This will create opportunities for more in-depth scrutiny of local issues and also enable more local views, information and data to be channelled into county level scrutiny.

The School Admissions Appeals Team in Democratic Services continues to provide an independent and well respected service to parents and carers of children who have not been successful in gaining the school placement of their choice. It is a legal requirement that an appeals service is provided by the local authority.

Members will be aware that Democratic Services and Overview and Scrutiny provide services, advice and guidance that help ensure that important checks and balances are in place and that the Council continues to maintain high standards of governance.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Overview and scrutiny continues to review service planning, commissioning and delivery both within the Council and also across a range of external partners and stakeholders. Recently, this has included a review of work that is underway to reduce adult reoffending and an ongoing review of mental health services in the county. Scrutiny Board continues to play a key role in co-ordinating scrutiny activity and prioritising work, at a time of increasingly complex service reconfiguration across the Council and the public sector as a whole.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR LOCALITY BUDGETS

400 recommendations from Members were approved during 2017/18, totalling £356,305 (99% of total budget). 2017/18 was the first year of operation of the online Flexi-Grant system and system has worked well, speeded up the processing of recommendations, and provides a single management system for all documentation and decision making.

During 2018/19 recommendations will be accepted from 14 May 2018 to 28 February 2019. Members will be required to use the Flexi-Grant system for all recommendations, paper submissions will no longer be accepted. A briefing on the scheme will be part of the Members Seminar on 6 June 2018 and a full report on the scheme during 2017/18 will be presented to the Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 18 June 2018.

DAVID CHANCE