

North Yorkshire County Council

Executive

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Northallerton on Tuesday, 25 September 2018 commencing at 11.00 am.

County Councillor Carl Les in the Chair. County Councillors David Chance, Gareth Dadd, Caroline Dickinson, Michael Harrison, Andrew Lee, Don Mackenzie, Patrick Mulligan, Janet Sanderson and Greg White.

Also in attendance: County Councillor Caroline Patmore

Officers present: Richard Flinton, Stuart Carlton, Melanie Carr, David Bowe, Gary Fielding, Daniel Harry, Barry Khan, Vicky Metheringham and Richard Webb.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

206. Minutes

Resolved –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2018, having been printed and circulated, are taken as read and are confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

207. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest to note.

208. Exclusion of the Public

Resolved –

That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Minute No. 217 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local government (Access to Information)(Variation) Order 2006 as defined in column 2.

209. Questions and Statements from members of the public

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

210. Annual Report on Compliments and Complaints

Considered –

A report of the Chief Executive providing information on compliments and complaints received by the Council during 2017/18, including complaints received from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

The report was introduced by County Councillor Greg White who highlighted the much improved performance in relation to answering LGSCO enquiries, as a result of the new procedures that had been introduced and the filling of vacancies in the HAS complaints team.

County Councillor Michael Harrison drew attention to the improved working relationship with the Ombudsman and the lessons learnt from the three public reports issued since the last annual report.

In regard to the number of compliments received County Councillor David Chance noted the spike in the previous year's figures, and that this year's figures were more in line with those from 2015/16.

County Councillor Carl Les confirmed that the Executive consider complaints and compliments received on a quarterly basis as part of their performance monitoring and acknowledged they provided a good learning opportunity for the County Council and informed service improvements.

Resolved –

That the report be noted.

211. Amendments to the NYCC Fostering Framework

Considered –

A report of the Corporate Director - Children and Young People's Service amending the NYCC Fostering Framework following the required two yearly review and consultation with foster carers and all other stakeholders.

County Councillor Janet Sanderson introduced the item, and made a number of key points as follows:

- Foster Carers should be seen as an extremely valuable asset to the Authority
- The change in the name of the Framework to 'NYCC Foster Carers' Framework' to reduce the confusion about its purpose
- The need for more equitable financial support to Foster Carers during the process of an allegation investigation

County councillor Janet Sanderson also confirmed that detailed consultation had taken place in support of the review of NYCC's Fostering Framework, and the number of responses had been good. Also, there had been a successful annual Foster Carers Conference at which Foster Carers had passed on their thanks for the proposed amendments to the Framework.

Stuart Carlton, Corporate Director for Children & Young People's Service said that it was right that the Authority listened to its foster Carers and that a review of the Framework had been undertaken, and expressed his thanks for their performance.

County Councillor Gareth Dadd reiterated those thanks.

Resolved –

That the amendments to the NYCC Fostering Framework as outlined in sections 3.0 and 5.0 of the report be agreed.

212. Looked after Children Strategy We care because you Matter: 2018-2021

Considered –

A report of the Corporate Director - Children and Young People's Service sharing the revised and refreshed Looked after Children's Strategy 2018-2021 entitled "We care because you matter". The document sets out the Local Authorities Strategy as to how it will support and care for looked after children and care leavers and how we will know how well we are doing. The ethos at the centre of this strategy is that as corporate parents we are aspirational for our looked after children and care leavers. The Looked after Children's Strategy and the "promise" to young people were attached to the report.

The item was introduced by County Councillor Janet Sanderson, who summarised the review process and the consultation that had taken place with Looked after Children to inform the review. She confirmed that the children had expressed their preference that they be able to access the relevant services electronically.

County Councillor Janet Sanderson went on to express frustration at the financial implications associated with supporting the new duties, and highlighted the need for better co-operation with the seven district councils in order to ensure improved access to housing and leisure opportunities for Looked after Children. She confirmed that this work was ongoing.

Finally County Councillor Janet Sanderson drew Members attention to:

- The inclusion of pictures of Looked after Children in the new Strategy, which in her view helped bring it to life. The Corporate Director, Stuart Carlton confirmed that formal consent had been given for their use.
- The views of the Young Peoples Overview & Scrutiny Committee tabled at the meeting which commended both the LAC Strategy and the Local Offer for Care Leavers considered at agenda item 8.

County Councillor agreed the revised Strategy was a positive step forward.

Resolved –

That subject to the minor amendments identified, a revised and refreshed Looked after Children Strategy be progressed to full County Council for approval on 14 November 2018.

213. Introduction of the Local Offer for Care Leavers

Considered –

A report of the Corporate Director - Children and Young People's Service informing that Section 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 requires each local authority to consult on and publish a local offer for its carer leavers. The report outlines the process of the development of the Local Offer and requests approval to launch the document attached to the report as North Yorkshire's Local Offer.

County Councillor Janet Sanderson introduced the item, and again highlighted the detailed consultation that had taken place with care leavers to inform the development of the Local Offer, and its priorities and principles.

Attention was drawn to the work planned for 2019 to review the financial framework to ensure it properly reflects NYCC's ambition for care leavers. In particular the proposals for supporting them whilst they their claim for Universal Credit is being processed.

Resolved –

- (a) That the attached draft Local Offer be endorsed.
- (b) That the proposal outlined in the report regarding attachments to support care leavers accessing universal credit payments for the first time be agreed.

214. Report of the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on its Vehicle Activated Signs Review

Considered –

A report of the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee asking Executive to consider the final report and recommendations of the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) Review.

As chair of the Task Group that undertook the review, County Councillor Caroline Patmore introduced the final report and drew the Executive's attention to the consultation with Parish Council's, the review findings and the arising recommendations. She also confirmed that many Parish Council's would be willing to fund the introduction of a VAS and its ongoing maintenance from their precept or reserves, where they felt there was a need for one.

County Councillor Don Mackenzie thanked the Chair of the Working Group for the work on the review and acknowledged the two recommendations arising from the review. He stated that North Yorkshire was one of the safest counties and that evidence showed that the number of road traffic accidents as a result of speeding was low. He accepted that often people's perception of speeding traffic was not in line with that evidence and confirmed that Parish Council's had a mechanism for reporting their concerns and requesting that speeds be checked in their area.

County Councillor Don Mackenzie also suggested that a list of conditions needed to be agreed before allowing Parish Council's to purchase and install their own VAS to ensure the long term financial implications associated with the maintenance of a VAS did not later fall to the County Council.

With all of that in mind, County Councillor Don Mackenzie proposed that work be undertaken to consider the most appropriate way forward and that a report be brought back to a future meeting of the Executive to consider any appropriate changes to NYCC's current policy.

David Bowe, Corporate Director Business & Environmental Services referenced a recent news article containing an inaccuracy regarding the approach taken by Durham County Council to VAS. He confirmed that Durham do have an appropriate policy and controls in place.

County Councillor Janet Sanderson suggested that not all Parish Councils would be in a position to fund the purchase, installation and maintenance of a VAS, which therefore put some at a disadvantage.

County Councillor Greg White proposed that only where there was hard evidence of speeding should permission be given to a Parish Council to install a VAS and County Councillor David Chance concurred with that view.

Whilst County Councillor Michael Harrison expressed his support for the review recommendations he was not confident that it would give Parish Councils the results they were after. He proposed that 6 months after installation of a VAS, evidence should be gathered to assess if the VAS has achieved the desired reductions in speed.

County Councillor David Jeffels highlighted the findings from a previous review he had been involved in which identified that movable VAS did not necessarily work and that flashing signs seemed to have a greater impact.

County Councillor Mike Jordan, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, suggested there were lots of unreported problems on the roads and provided an example of a recent incident at Camblesforth.

County Councillor expressed reservations about the knock on effects of introducing a proliferation of VAS across the county and felt it would undermine the effect of those that were really needed. In response, David Bowe, Corporate Director Business & Environmental Services suggested it was a matter of scale and that based on the research undertaken by Scrutiny it was likely the number of Parish Councils that would come forward would be minimal.

County Councillor Gareth Dadd agreed in principle with the review recommendations on the basis that they empowered Parish Councils and local communities to debate and decide for themselves whether they wished to risk spending their monies on something that may or may not have the desired effect they sought. However he sought reassurance that the rotational approach being piloted through the current policy would continue regardless of any future introduction of Parish Council owned VAS across the County.

County Councillor Carl Les thanked members for their views and confirmed that this was just the start of the work required to fully investigate the way forward and asked that the Executive Member for Access work with officers to progress the consideration of all the associated issues before a further report was brought back to the Executive.

Resolved –

- (a) That the final report and recommendations of the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Vehicle Activated Signs Review be noted, and used to inform an officer review.
- (b) That a future report be brought to the Executive proposing appropriate changes to the current policy.

215. Appointments to Committees and Other Bodies

Considered –

A report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) enabling the appointment of a substitute for the Transport of the North Scrutiny Committee.

County Councillor Carl Les introduced the report and confirmed that County Councillor Paul Haslam had volunteered to take up the appointment as substitute on the Transport of the North Scrutiny Committee.

Resolved –

That County Councillor Paul Haslam be nominated as substitute for the Transport for the North Scrutiny Committee to hold office until May 2021.

216. Forward Work Programme

The Forward Plan for period 14 September 2018 to 30 September 2018 was presented.

Resolved –

The forward work programme be noted.

Minute No. 217 was considered in private and the public has no right of access to this section of the Minutes

217. Private Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 September 2018

Resolved -

That the Private Minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2018, having been printed and circulated, are taken as read and are confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The meeting concluded at 11:53am

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