



**Report Reference Number: E/20/27**

---

**To: Executive**  
**Date: 3 December 2020**  
**Status: Non key decision**  
**Ward(s) Affected: All**  
**Author: Angela Crossland, Head of Communities, Partnerships and Customers**  
**Lead Executive Member: Cllr David Buckle, Lead Executive Member for Communities and Economic Development**  
**Lead Officer: Dave Caulfield, Director of Economic Regeneration and Place**

---

**Title: Groundwork Merger**

**Summary:**

This report outlines details of the proposed merger between Groundwork North Yorkshire, Groundwork Wakefield and Groundwork Leeds. Selby District Council is a Member of Groundwork North Yorkshire, along with Selby Town Council and Groundwork UK.

Selby District Council will, through its nominated proxy, be invited to vote on a poll on the Resolutions as outlined in the Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) Notice of 23 October 2020. The EGM was scheduled to take place on 13 November, but has been adjourned to take place on 9 December 2020, so that Selby District Council's Executive can review the proposal and decide whether to support it.

The intention is to get all the necessary permissions in place in order to execute the Transfer Agreements on 31 December 2020.

**Recommendations:**

- i) To support the merger between Groundwork North Yorkshire, Groundwork Wakefield and Groundwork Leeds.**
- ii) To nominate Councillor Chris Pearson as the voting member for Selby District Council at the forthcoming EGM with Councillor Paul Welch as the substitute member.**

## **Reasons for recommendation**

To do so in line with the Council Plan 2020-30 priority to make the district a great place to enjoy. To do so in line with the Plan priorities to work collaboratively and in a community centred way

### **1. Introduction and background**

- 1.1 Selby District Council is a Member of Groundwork North Yorkshire, along with Selby Town Council and Groundwork UK.
- 1.2 It is being proposed that Groundwork North Yorkshire merge with Groundwork Wakefield and Leeds and Selby District Council, in its capacity as a member of Groundwork North Yorkshire, is being asked for its approval of the merger.

### **2. The Report**

- 2.1 For a number of years Groundwork has been looking at ways to better deliver services throughout Yorkshire. Since 2015/16 they have been working together ever more closely and for each partner trust – Leeds, North Yorkshire and Wakefield – the importance of maximising benefit and the sustainability of local Groundwork activity has been at the heart of the discussion.
- 2.2 Financial performance has been improving over the past three years even though there have been unprecedented reductions in the resources of their major funding partners. All Trust charitable activity now makes a positive financial contribution.
- 2.3 By working more closely together Groundwork have stated that they have collectively saved over £500,000 of costs without impacting on the quality and quantity of their project activities. In some cases the quality and quantity of their work has actually improved. Further savings will be realised by the completion of the merger which will also allow Groundwork to operate more effectively within the Federation of Groundwork Trusts.
- 2.4 An independent report by BHP (published in March 2019) provided an options analysis of six potential ways forward in relation to the merger. Options 1-4 assumed that a merger would take place, Option 5 related to maintaining the status quo, and Option 6 related to de-merging.
- 2.5 BHP concluded that the option being proposed (Option 1), to merge Groundwork Leeds and Groundwork North Yorkshire into Groundwork Wakefield (which would then become Groundwork Yorkshire) was a better solution than Options 2 and 3 (which related to different forms of merging the current stakeholders).
- 2.6 They noted that Option 4, which outlined the potential to merge on a wider scale (for example, merging the Yorkshire Groundwork Trusts with

Groundwork North East & Cumbria) was not something that could be realistically achieved within a reasonable timescale.

2.7 The report concluded that Groundwork Leeds, Wakefield and North Yorkshire have already benefited from substantial synergies and breaking the Trusts apart would only load costs, which would likely be unaffordable. It was BHP's view that there was no reason for any of the participating trusts not to merge, and that the most viable option was Option 1 – that is to merge Groundwork North Yorkshire and Groundwork Leeds into Groundwork Wakefield, to form Groundwork Yorkshire.

2.7 Groundwork is currently working on the following projects in Selby:

- Brayton Barff
- Bondgate Community Woodland, Selby
- Central CEF Administration (finished Oct 2020)
- Charles Street Play Area, Selby
- Grange Road Play Area, Tadcaster
- Higher York – Selby High School and development of the programme
- Riverside Gardens, Selby
- Selby Garden Enterprise
- Selby Town Hall Planting Scheme
- Sherburn in Elmet Library Garden
- Sherburn In Elmet Village Centre Landscape Designs
- St James's Community Garden, Selby
- Supported Internships, Selby
- Thorpe Willoughby Play Improvements

2.8 Groundwork have stated that it is their hope that this relationship with the Council will continue, once the merger is complete. They have stated that they will continue to deliver Selby Garden Enterprises, the Alternative Curriculum and Supported Internship programmes and will support the local Town and Parish Councils to improve open spaces, the public realm and the natural environment. They will also continue our work with the Council to improve local play areas, by providing community consultation and engagement, and design and contract management for the schemes.

### **3. Alternative Options Considered**

Other merger options considered by Groundwork but not proposed.

### **4. Implications**

#### **4.1 Legal Implications**

4.1.1 The legal process to give effect to the merger requires SDC to confirm agreement in its capacity as a member of Groundwork North Yorkshire.

#### **4.2 Financial Implications**

4.2.1 The merger has no cost implications to the Council. Selby District Council currently provides £26,000 pa in core funding to support operations in Selby through a Grant Agreement between Groundwork North Yorkshire and the Council. This Agreement sets out how Groundwork supports the Council and works with local communities to improve local community spaces, supports community groups to be well governed, and works with community groups to access funding, improve their viability, self-sufficiency and sustainability, and garner local community interest to improve local spaces.

#### **4.3 Policy and Risk Implications**

None

#### **4.4 Corporate Plan Implications**

None

#### **4.5 Resource Implications**

None

#### **4.6 Other Implications**

None

#### **4.7 Equalities Impact Assessment**

None

### **5. Conclusion**

5.1 The Executive is asked to recommend approval of the merger between Groundwork North Yorkshire, Groundwork Wakefield and Groundwork Leeds.

### **6. Background Documents**

None

### **7. Appendices**

Appendix A – Due Diligence Report

#### ***Contact Officer:***

Angela Crossland  
Head of Communities, Partnerships and Customers  
[acrossland@selby.gov.uk](mailto:acrossland@selby.gov.uk)  
01757 292312