

Minutes

Scrutiny Committee

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| Venue: | Council Chamber - Civic Centre, Doncaster Road, Selby, YO8 9FT |
| Date: | Thursday, 19 January 2023 |
| Time: | 5.00 pm |
| Present: | Councillors S Shaw-Wright (Chair), W Nichols (Vice-Chair), J Chilvers and K Ellis |
| Officers present: | Suzanne Sweeting, Partnerships Manager, Laura Cobb, Community Safety Officer, Keith Cadman, Head of Commissioning, Contracts and Procurement, Stuart Robinson, Head of Business Development and Improvement (via Teams); and Dawn Drury, Democratic Services Officer |
| Others present: | Louise Wallace, Director of Public Health for North Yorkshire, David Powell, Living Landscapes Officer, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust; and Martin Blakey and Craig Blakey of the Wildlife Habitat Protection Trust |

34 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors R Sweeting and A Lee.

35 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

36 MINUTES

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2022.

RESOLVED:

To approve the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 24 November 2022.

37 CHAIR'S ADDRESS TO THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There was no Chairs address.

38 YORKSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST - BARLOW COMMON ANNUAL REPORT 2022 AND THE WILDLIFE HABITAT PROTECTION TRUST - HAMBLETON HOUGH ANNUAL REPORT 2022 (S/22/12)

The Chair welcomed to the meeting David Powell from the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (YWT) and Martin and Craig Blakey from the Wildlife Habitat Protection Trust (WHPT). Members were asked to consider the content of the 2021-22 annual reports and make any recommendations.

The Committee noted that Barlow Common had been leased out to the YWT since 1 March 2013 on a 99-year peppercorn agreement, and as part of the lease requirements YWT had to provide a site-specific, ten-year Management Plan, which was due for renewal in 2023. The YWT reports annually to the Council on their activity.

Mr Powell advised Members that he had taken over the management of Barlow Common in April 2022, since that time he had been writing the new ten-year Management Plan, which would come into force from April 2023. Members heard that the new Plan had a more holistic approach to the management at the site in terms of the scrub control which aimed to support and boost some of the species that had been found to be present at Barlow Common.

Members noted that the site benefitted from a dedicated group of volunteers who had provided 449 hours of volunteer time in the past ten months, with the time focused on refreshing the picnic area tables and benches and path edges, litter picking, and repairs and widening to the footpaths across the site.

Members were informed that over the course of the next ten years the aim of the YWT was to positively manage the area of established and emerging woodland on the site, maintain the areas of integral open space as semi-natural, managed grassland and wildflower meadows, to create a mosaic effect; and maintain and enhance the open water habitats of the site, expanding them where possible.

In relation to the pond at the south end of Barlow Common, Members heard that this pond had been restored as it had a length of boardwalk along it, therefore it was important for educational purposes. Prior to the Covid pandemic local school children had attended the site; the YWT were working to promote and encourage the re-introduction of school visits.

Finally, the YWT were exploring different funding options to help make better, sustainable use of the visitor centre building, which was in a very good condition, for example, to use as a café to offer refreshments from.

The Chair stated that he visited Barlow Common regularly and he felt that the site had improved noticeably, there was very little litter present, and that there was quite a lot of wildlife to be observed. The Chair also requested that Mr Powell contact Members when promoting school trips as the Council may be able to help with the cost of the transport from the respective school to the site.

In terms of Hambleton Hough, the site had been leased out to the WHPT since 17 September 2012 on a 99-year peppercorn agreement lease; the WHPT also provided the Council with an annual report. An initial ten-year Woodland Management Plan had been put in place for the site, this plan had now expired and would be renewed by the WHPT.

The Committee were informed that over the past 12 months the WHPT had concentrated its efforts on planting 4000 new trees and putting measures in place to control bracken and undergrowth to allow the new trees to grow and mature unhindered. However, in April 2022, once all the site had finally been planted up to specification, a large section of Hambleton Hough had been destroyed by a fire.

Members were pleased to hear that the site had since been re-planted and re-staked and moving forward the WHPT would be monitoring the site, providing regular maintenance of the woodland to ensure all the paths were clear; and replacing any trees that did not survive the replanting.

Discussion took place regarding a number of complaints which the WHPT had received from local residents in Gateforth, Members heard that the complaints had been investigated but nothing had been substantiated.

Members felt that Hambleton Hough was a lovely place which local people could reach easily by bicycle, with their families, for a cost-free day out and to start learning about the environment and wildlife.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the annual reports.

39 NORTH YORKSHIRE SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD ANNUAL REPORTS 2021-2022 AND NORTH YORKSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIPS INDEPENDENT SCRUTINEERS ANNUAL REPORTS 2021-2022 (S/22/13)

The Committee received the report of the Partnerships Manager which asked Members to note the content of the Annual Report for the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Adults Board (NYSAB), and the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NYSCP) Independent Scrutineers Annual Report 2021-2022.

The Committee were reminded that the strategic priorities highlighted in the NYSAB Annual Report in 2020-2021 had been re-connecting

communities, best practice, working together and adapting and responding. Looking forward to 2021-23, the NYSAB had agreed to reinforce the message that keeping people safe in our communities during a pandemic was everyone's business, with a particular look at some of the impacts felt from Covid-19.

Members noted that other priorities for the NYSAB included homelessness, preparing for the introduction of the Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS), changes in the Integrated Care Systems (ICS), the Local Government Re-organisation (LGR); and creating a culture of shared learning in an open manner to enable partner agencies to continue to work together to keep adults in North Yorkshire safe from harm, abuse and neglect.

In respect of the NYSCP Annual Report, the Committee heard that in 2021 the Partnership had launched the NYSCP "Being Young in North Yorkshire" (BYINY) Strategy 2021-2024. The strategy set out the vision which had been shaped by the feedback from children and young people living in North Yorkshire, and had four key themes; a safe life, a happy family life, a healthy life: and achieving in life.

The Committee were informed that the priorities moving forward were focussed on the development of the NYSCP website to support the broader focus on the BYINY priorities, access to the information, and seeking to develop the way feedback from frontline practice shaped the work of the group.

Members noted that Selby District Council were a member of the Selby Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSP), a review of the priorities across the multi-agency partnership had taken place and it had been agreed that the local priorities for further development would be domestic abuse and both child and adult exploitation, predominantly around online safety.

It was highlighted that work was ongoing through the LSP around what issues should be reported, and how and to whom safeguarding concerns should be reported; and also, on communications and information sharing, getting messages out into the communities and being as visible as possible.

Members asked a number of questions in relation to the signposting and cascading of safeguarding information, people's ability to know where to go for assistance, the role of the General Practitioner (GP) in safeguarding, and whether Council officers took referrals from GP practices.

The Officer confirmed that GP's and other practitioners reported safeguarding issues directly to North Yorkshire County Council in the same way as the Council, however Council officers did work closely with local GP's to have an awareness of community issues. It was further confirmed that this was part of the work currently being investigated by the LSP as to how partner organisations could support the individual and

consider their wellbeing, to ensure that people felt included within the community.

A Member commented on the actual format of the paper copy of the Annual Reports as the colours and font size used within the report made some excerpts difficult to read. The Director of Public Health thanked the Member for her feedback on the report, it was explained that the intent behind the document was to make it visually pleasing, however the comments were appreciated and would be taken into consideration for the future.

RESOLVED:

To note the content of the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Adults Board and North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Independent Scrutineers Annual Reports 2020-2021.

40 DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22 (S/22/14)

The Committee welcomed North Yorkshire's Director of Public Health, Louise Wallace to the meeting.

The Director of Public Health presented her report which asked the Committee to consider and note the content of the 2021-22 Director of Public Health Annual Report: lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Members were informed that the 2021-22 report focused on the broader experiences of what individuals and communities across North Yorkshire had lived through during the Covid-19 pandemic, the wider impacts felt by communities; and the lessons to be learned from these for the future.

The Committee noted that a large amount of rich qualitative feedback and creative work had been gathered, with contributions coming from a number of different sources over the North Yorkshire area, these had been woven into the report. Many of the messages had been heartfelt and helped to provide learning and priorities for the future.

The Director of Public Health praised among others the care workers within care settings who had put into practice the changing guidance on health protection methods to ensure the vulnerable people in their care were kept safe, while still delivering day on day care.

Members noted that communications and cascading the messages out to the public had played a key part, and that the mantra had been hands, face, space.

The Committee heard that the vaccination programme had also played a critical part in moving forward and allowing the freedoms that the public enjoyed today, and that it was not only about protecting communities but

also about improving health, the quality of life and having a healthy life expectancy.

And finally, Members were asked to be mindful of indoor air quality and ventilation, and to remember that having windows open to let fresh air circulate was effective and really did make a difference.

Members acknowledged that the pandemic had brought out the best qualities in people and that the local community had come together to support each other during the pandemic. It was remarked that local authorities had worked incredibly hard to ensure peoples safety; and that the role that Public Health played had been highlighted with the general public.

The Committee thanked the Director of Public Health for attending the meeting.

RESOLVED:

To note the update and information from the Director of Public Health for North Yorkshire

41 UPDATE ON LEISURE SERVICES PROVISION (S/22/15)

The Head of Commissioning, Contracts and Procurement gave the quarterly update on the provision of leisure services, mainly covering the period April to December 2022.

The Committee were informed that there had been a positive trend in terms of gym membership and attendance at the leisure centre but that the year on year performance figures did indicate utilisation of the facilities still remained below pre pandemic levels. The figures were attributed to a number of factors to include levels of inflation, utility costs, and households with less disposable money to spend on leisure activities, which all impacted on the service.

Members heard that the leisure centre had suffered a small number of critical maintenance issues in the final quarter of 2022 that included a severe water leak under the children's swimming pool which required closure whilst repairs were undertaken. In addition, the boilers had failed requiring closure of the main swimming pool whilst repairs were undertaken, and the all-weather pitch was closed in December 2022 due to flooding.

The Committee noted that discussions with the senior management at Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles (IHL) were ongoing to assess and agree the level of Covid 19 subsidy required from the Council for the financial year 2023-2024, to maintain leisure provision within the Selby District.

The Officer explained that the decline in attendance combined with increases in energy costs had impacted the financial position of leisure services, and informed Members that the estimate for utility costs was

predicted to increase by a further £400k in 2023-2024.

Members appreciated the difficulties being felt, the Chair stated that the issue of low attendance figures was County wide, and not just at leisure facilities but also at theatres and other facilities where people were in close proximity to other users; customer confidence remained low due to the pandemic and would need to be rebuilt.

The Committee had noted that staff recruitment and retention remained an issue in Selby, and in the leisure sector as a whole, and queried if there was anything that the Council could do to try and help IHL with recruitment.

It was confirmed that the current contract with IHL would expire in August 2024, at which time the North Yorkshire Council would procure a strategic review of leisure facilities for the whole of the North Yorkshire area; this would inform the future of all leisure facilities.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the update.

**42 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 2, 2022-23
(S/22/16)**

The Committee received the report of the Head of Business Development and Improvement which asked Members to consider and comment on the performance information presented to them for Quarter 2, 2022-23.

Members noted that the report provided a progress update on delivery of the Council Plan 2020-2030, as measured by a combination of: progress against priority projects/high level actions; and performance against KPIs.

Officers summarised progress in Quarter 2, with 61% of KPIs reported showing improvement over the longer term, and 78% of KPIs reported were on target.

A query was raised in relation to the Council's housing revenue account and the additional funding requirements which had been presented to full Council at the meeting held on Tuesday 17 January 2023, the Member commented that they had not been present at Council but that they had heard a news bulletin run by Radio York earlier in the afternoon of the meeting. The Member was concerned that the reporting by Radio York was inaccurate, a view that was supported by the Committee. The officer agreed to liaise with the Communications team and raise the matter with Radio York and, if relevant, seek a correction.

RESOLVED:

The Committee considered and noted the content of the report.

43 FINANCIAL RESULTS AND BUDGET EXCEPTIONS - QUARTER 2, 2022-23 (S/22/17)

Due to there being no officer in attendance at the meeting, the Chair requested that the item be deferred to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the item be deferred to Scrutiny Committee on the 16 February 2023.

44 TREASURY MANAGEMENT - MONITORING REPORT - QUARTER 2, 2022-23 (S/22/18)

Due to there being no officer in attendance at the meeting, the Chair requested that the item be deferred to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the item be deferred to Scrutiny Committee on the 16 February 2023.

45 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the 2022-23 work programme as presented in the agenda.

Members were reminded that the next date in the Committee Calendar for Scrutiny Committee was Thursday 16 February 2023, however this was being held provisionally and it was queried if the date should be taken out of the calendar.

The Committee agreed that the provisional meeting on the 16 February 2023 be confirmed in the Committee calendar.

RESOLVED:

- i. Members noted the Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2022-23.**
- ii. Members requested that the Democratic Services Officer confirm the provisional date of 16 February 2023 for the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee in the Committee Calendar**

The meeting closed at 6.02 pm.