

Report to Children, Education & Communities Policy & Scrutiny Committee

Cllr Keith Aspden, Executive Member for Economic Development and Community Engagement

Communities and Ward Committees

A new system for Ward Committees, with an increased local budget, was introduced in July 2015. Budgets devolved to wards were:

- The general ward budget of £150k
- A “Pride in York Fund” consisting of:
 - £200k recurring, allocated on a per capita basis
 - £250k one-off, allocated based on current grounds maintenance spend in the ward
- A “Community Care Fund” of £75k per annum

These funding streams are added together to give wards a single, flexible budget to be spent as ward members see fit, within Council policies and procedures, whether by giving grants or buying services. In addition, a Ward Highways Capital Programme of £250k p.a. was created. Wards were invited to propose additional schemes that did not meet the threshold for inclusion in the main programme but which were identified as important by local residents.

A wide variety of ward schemes have been agreed having a positive impact on communities across the city. For example:

- Active and resilient communities:
Fishergate, Micklegate and Huntington and New Earswick wards have funded York CVS to support local “Ready for Action” projects to respond to future adverse events such as flooding. Hull Road ward has funded local residents to plan and deliver the Tang Hall Festival.
- Addressing social isolation and improving well-being:
Heworth ward has funded HomeStart to train volunteers to support vulnerable families, whilst Heworth Without is funding art sessions for elderly residents. Rawcliffe and Clifton Without ward has funded coach trips for elderly residents. Holgate and Westfield wards have

funded Chill in the Community Café in Acomb to purchase kitchen equipment to enable them to extend their activities with vulnerable local residents.

- Community involvement in a cleaner, greener environment:
Dringhouses and Woodthorpe ward has funded Mayfields Community Trust to purchase additional tools to enable them to support more volunteers to maintain the open space, trees and plants. Grant funding by Acomb ward has facilitated planters on Acomb Green. Bishopthorpe ward funded Brunswick Organic Nursery to replant trees and plants. Osbaldwick and Derwent ward is funding measures to protect grass verges through the use of bollards.
- Community Safety:
Copmanthorpe ward is funding Cold Calling Zones. Guildhall ward has funded a taxi rank marshal trial to manage and ensure orderly late night queuing in the City Centre.
- Facilities and activities for children and young people:
Examples include Clifton and Strensall wards funding of York City Football Foundation to provide sporting and activities. Fulford and Heslington and Fishergate jointly funded York Knights to deliver outreach sporting activity with young people. Dringhouses and Woodthorpe ward has funded a local Scout and Beaver group to purchase additional camping equipment. Wheldrake ward provided a grant as a contribution to enable to local Scout and Beaver group to purchase a minibus. York Rural West ward provided grant funding to repair and update the playground in Poppleton with the involvement of local children and young people.

Despite the extent of the change in this area, 86% of the ward budget was spent in 16/17, whilst in 17/18 the annual budget has been fully committed. Only around £134k remained uncommitted at the end of the last financial year. I would like to thank the Communities and Equalities Team for their ongoing work; a new Schemes Co-ordinator role has now helped to move schemes forward more smoothly, and we will continue to make improvements to ensure that the process matches the expectations of councillors and communities.

Human Rights Board

The city's new human rights board is now up and running. A key purpose of this new board is to bring action to bear on the priorities identified in the Human Rights Indicator Report. At the planning stage, board members

identified that they would like to turn their attention in the first instance to addressing the issue of young people not in education or training (NEET). In deciding this they took the view that this is an important issue and one that, whilst very complex in its nature, should nonetheless be susceptible to action at whole city level in a city of York's scale.

At the board's first formal meeting, held last month, members heard evidence from a number of informed practitioners. The board noted the wide range of provision and initiatives that exist. They concluded that their potential contribution will lie not in adding further to that provision but rather in:

- Looking at NEET from a whole system perspective, considering the potential to bring coherence where currently there is fragmentation,
- Looking at the young person's journey and the critical decision and risk points for them,
- Looking at the issue through the specific lens of human rights including
- Commissioning some work to hear the voice of young people about being NEET

The starting point for this approach is likely to lie in commissioning the voice work and, at the same time, looking at the situation more closely in a particular area or community in order to gain a robust understanding of how things work on the ground. It is encouraging that board members are willing to put their and time energy into better understanding and addressing this important issue for the city.

Support for refugees

A great deal of work has continued to be undertaken with those individuals and families resettled in York under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme and the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme. I have personally thanked those groups and individuals who were involved in the Refugee Support Forum and supported our efforts. City of York Council has taken its full 'quota' from the initial programme, plus one person who has transferred from out of area. We have now accommodated a total of 64 people, 32 adults and 32 children.

A more detailed update that I circulated to voluntary sector and community groups covering housing, donations, funding and benefits, ESOL, employment and children is available.

Armed Forces Community Covenant

I am pleased that York will once again be hosting our annual Armed Forces Day event in the city centre, on Parliament Street. Through these events we seek to thank our armed forces personnel and their families for all that they do, and have done, and to bring them together with the citizens of York and our visitors in a fun and celebratory way. Our participation in Armed Forces Day is just one part of our commitment as a city to the Armed Forces Community Covenant. This covenant aims to:

- Encourage local communities to support the Armed Forces Community in their areas
- Nurture public understanding and awareness of issues affecting the Armed Forces Community
- Recognise and remember the sacrifices faced by the Armed Forces Community
- Encourage activities which help to integrate the Armed Forces Community into local life
- Encourage the Armed Forces Community to help and support the wider community

The Community Covenant was launched in York December 2011 with representatives of City of York Council, The Army, Navy, Royal Air Force, veterans, charities and other key figureheads joining together to sign a scroll to mark the launch. It was renewed with a fresh action plan that I approved in June 2016. I am pleased to see practical benefits flowing out from the Covenant and the work of Forum that is responsible for driving forward the action. This includes new services such as Citizens Advice York hosting a Royal British Legion monthly drop in and advice service in West Offices, as well as a major initiative to deliver awareness training to local authority staff across the Council. The project is also delivering important work that is now under way to increase our knowledge about our Armed Forces Community across York and North Yorkshire and to ensure that the services we provide meet their needs.

I am delighted that CMT has committed the council to apply for the MoD Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award. This is a challenging step. But it is absolutely right that we set ourselves this target and deadline. Making the commitment is already improving our practice not only as an employer but also in relation to those areas set out in the national Armed Forces Covenant Implementation Framework, principally: Health, Housing, Education, Employment and Welfare as they affect our Armed Forces Communities.

In May 2018 I wrote to Tobias Ellwood MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, following correspondence to him from Cllr Waller, confirming our

commitment to early discussions with the MOD and partners, partly to ensure that York's association with the Army, including with the retention and expansion of civilian roles, continues.

In addition at the start of June 2018, I wrote to all council leaders in York and North Yorkshire encouraging them, and fellow elected members, to attend local training which is now available. Full day, half-day and 1 hour training options are available. Any councillor who would like to attend training to provide a real insight into the Armed Forces Community should contact the Communities Team (these are available before December 2018).

Community Consultation: My York Central

The feedback from My York Central feedback has been positive and a large number of people have engaged with the consultation process, including: 3500 Post-its, over 46 events, workshops, walks, rides, talks, film screenings and Q&A events. The feedback provides a qualitative analysis of the feedback on a wide-range of subjects. The My York Central process also summarises the key principles that emerged from discussions, which should underpin future engagement as the scheme develops out.

I hope that the community engagement methods used during the My York Central process will now be used more broadly for ongoing community engagement from the council on major projects.

4Community Growth Project (4CGY)

The two year 4CGY project was started in April 2018. The aim of the project was to run a multi-agency financial inclusion project in communities in York currently or recently in the bottom 20% nationally as ranked against the indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) including areas in the following wards: Westfield (all), Clifton (part), Guildhall (part), Heworth (part) and Hull Road (part).

The budget for the project over two years was £250,000. Building on experience from earlier projects, the project has adopted an approach of multi-agency working, with the focus being on facilitating communities to design and implement local solutions. Priority considerations when designing or funding interventions were:

- Small steps to build a community's confidence and trust
- Hyper local and bespoke interventions which used familiar venues and appropriate approaches for the local community

Outcomes in year one

Three hubs have been established in the first year of the project at:

- Sanderson House, Chapelfields, Westfield Ward
- Foxwood Community Centre, Westfield Ward
- Bell Farm Community Centre, Heworth Ward

Focus for the second year

During the second year of the project the focus will be on the following four areas:

- Promoting the sustainability of the community hub model
- Delivery of the grant funds
- Further delivery of local Job Fairs
- Evaluation and Development of the Social Return on Investment Tool

Local Area Teams: Engagement with Young People

The Voice and Involvement Group brings together a wide range of multi-agency partners from across the city. The purpose of the group is to support the delivery of the Voice and Involvement Strategy and to drive good quality involvement opportunities for children and young people. The group has recently taken on a focus of ensuring children and young people's views in relation to mental health and well-being are better understood.

Representation has now joined the group from local CAMHS providers and key voluntary and community sector partners working in this arena. The Voice and Involvement Group will link directly with the Strategic Partnership for Emotional and Mental Health to strengthen arrangements for hearing and responding to the views of young people on this important matter.

In 2017 Local Area Teams worked closely with Clifton Green Primary School and the Communities and Equalities Team to deliver two new city wide participation events for children and young people. A primary and a secondary school voice event took place at West Offices. Over 70 children with staff from 18 Primary in York attended the first event in June 2017. At the secondary event in November 70 young people from 11 schools took part. They took part in workshops the opportunity to giving them speak directly to local councillors from each of the main parities, explore how ward funding is spent and how campaigns are run. The event focused on listening to the views of the children whilst giving them an insight into the way in which the local authority works. Young people provided their feedback and ideas on:

- Living in York
- Their local area
- York Central
- The school nursing service
- Youth Council campaigns
- Community activities

Participation opportunities for young people in care and care leavers continue to be delivered via the Children in Care Council (CiCC). This is delivered through the monthly Show Me That I Matter panel meetings (13-18 yrs), monthly I Still Matter meetings (16-21 yrs) and fortnightly Speak Up Youth sessions (11-16yrs). Activity so far in 2018 has included meeting with social workers from the Permanence Team to discuss communication between social workers and young people, meeting with council officers to discuss apprenticeships and what can be done to ensure that young people are aware of the opportunities available, and consultation on a new leaflet providing information to children and young people in care about health assessments.

Advocacy provision for children and young people has recently been extended to cover a wider range of young people. Previously advocacy could be accessed by children and young people who are in care, going through the child protection process or wanting to make a complaint. In addition to this the service has been able to extend it's advocacy offer to care leavers up until the age of 21. During the final quarter of 2017/18 the Speak Up Service has received 15 advocacy referrals; 12 of which were in relation to children and young people in care and 3 in relation to care leavers. The Speak Up Service has recently completed the Care Story project. This has resulted in the production of the You Are Not Alone resource for young people in care, highlighting key messages from young people regarding mental health and signposting to support services. The aim of the resource is to help remove any stigma around mental health and help them to access support. The You Are Not Alone resource will be shared with all children and young people in care and be provided to those coming into care.

June 2018.