

**Notes from the Rural Services Network  
Yorkshire Regional Seminar/Meeting  
Kindly hosted by Harrogate Borough Council  
10<sup>th</sup> December 2018**

**Present**

Cllr Robert Heseltine – North Yorkshire County Council  
Cllr Philip Broadbank – North Yorkshire & Harrogate Councils  
Cllr David Jeffels – Scarborough Borough Council  
Cllr Yvonne Peacock – Richmondshire District Council  
Dave Melling – Bradford Metropolitan District Council  
Jo-Anne Simpson – Richmondshire District Council  
Nigel Williams – Pub is the Hub  
Jan Thornton – Community First Yorkshire  
Jenny Laycock – Community First Yorkshire  
Sian Lockwood – Community Catalysts  
Ivan Annibal – Rose Regeneration  
Andy Dean – RSN

**1. Introduction**

Cllr Heseltine welcomed everyone, setting out the context for the meeting. Due to ill health, Councillor Heseltine then handed the chairmanship of the meeting to Andy Dean. Each attendee then introduced themselves and outlined their key rural service concerns.

Andy set out the background to the operation of RSN and the purpose of the regional meetings.

**2. Seminar session: Health & Wellbeing**

**2a. Jenny Laycock (Community First Yorkshire)**

Community First Yorkshire (CFY) is a Rural Community Council undertaking a wide range of activities to support rural communities. Current projects include a community-led housing initiative, the North Yorkshire Parent & Carer Forum and Community Connect. Jenny then outlined two specific projects directly related to Health & Wellbeing:

***Ex Forces Support North Yorkshire***

This project is funded by the Ministry of Defence Aged Veterans Fund and has a target to reach 1000 veterans over the age of 65. The project has been developed to provide flexibility, providing wider support than the narrower focus of military based charities.

CFY lead the project with 14 other partners. A single point of contact is provided to allow access to practical and customised support for veterans. Additional providers beyond the core project partners are also utilised to help meet individual needs as necessary.

The project works closely with the local authorities of North Yorkshire, Richmondshire and Scarborough.

A range of activities and services are provided including: trips/days out, friendship lunches, Christmas party, Men's sheds, gardening, befriending, home visits, activity groups and financial support.

A number of challenges have been encountered in delivering the project including: the geography of the project coverage; administration with respect to the number and diversity of partners involved; the level of support required for the targeted cohort; low engagement from veterans (especially those who did national service).

Significant outcomes have been achieved including: reduced loneliness; veterans enabled to live independently for longer; greater awareness of support services available; a strong delivery partnership has been built; partners have successfully accessed a new cohort of older people.

Funding ends in 2020 and the project is currently looking at legacy and how some specific activities and services can continue. For example, Men's Sheds have been very successful and could be sustained through a membership fee and opening up the project to those over the age of 50.

#### ***Warm & Well North Yorkshire***

This project is funded by British Gas Energy Trust and aims to help people to stay warm. The project provides a range of services including a single point of contact and a Hardship Fund. A 'Cold Comic' is currently being developed for children as a route to get additional information to parents.

A copy of Jenny's presentation is available alongside these meeting notes.

#### **2b. Sian Lockwood (Community Catalysts)**

Community Catalysts is a national Community Interest Company (CIC) set up in 2010. The CIC works through local partners (including Parish Councils) and is principally funded through local authorities at present.

Since 2010 Community Catalysts has worked in 60 areas across the country supporting the development of community micro enterprise development to help tackle health and wellbeing needs.

Community Catalysts provide capacity building through a local organisation. Many local authorities can have systems and processes which can get in the way of local community enterprise development and often call on Community Catalysts to help overcome these hurdles in developing localised and innovative approaches to meeting need.

All community entrepreneurs supported through the work of Community Catalysts are self-employed and set their own charges.

Sian outlined an example of their work in Somerset where Community Catalysts have helped find ways for local people to respond to the care needs of local people. The local authority gave every person in need a direct budget to pay for the bespoke services they require. This has resulted in the creation of 274 brand new service providers after 4 years with 302 jobs created.

#### **3. Issues raised through discussion:**

Specific points raised included the following:

- 'More of the same' won't address the problems facing adult social. Local authorities are managing decline and going backwards due to the lack of resources and lack of a national approach. A radical approach is needed to address the situation.
- The ageing population and increasing life expectancy are the fundamental cause of the issues faced there are now more older people and more people living longer. This trend is not forecast to change.

- A balance is needed between central facilities provided directly through local authorities / other mainstream service providers and dispersed solutions such as that supported by Community Catalysts.
- Additional resources are needed as part of a national solution.
- The current position is not a surprise – the census has told us for years that the population is ageing and living longer. The issue is that nobody has been planning services against this demographic shift and this is still remains the case.
- There is a lack of a joined-up view to how these issues should be tackled. This is a key challenge.
- Local authorities were never set up to cope with the costs of long-term care that they now face. There must be radical system change.
- It was agreed that the equivalent of an ‘industrial revolution’ is currently taking place. A vision is needed for the new world rather than a reactive approach to what has happened. We need to take back some control and have a game plan. We need to approach investors with an innovative vision.
- The **Airedale NHS Trust** digital health initiatives were noted as excellent examples of innovation leading to improved service delivery which should be promoted widely.
- It was agreed that RSN needed to continue to strive to ensure that all rural areas achieve next stage broadband as a key mechanism to deliver new approaches to service delivery.
- In relation to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund it was agreed that the case should be made to demonstrate the savings which could be achieved by investing in the rural economy. Local Enterprise Partnerships, in particular, need to recognise the opportunities available across the rural economy and avoid the sole pursuit of large-scale projects alone.
- It was agreed that Local authorities need to shout louder with regard to the value of the services they deliver.

Harrogate Borough Council were thanked for hosting the meeting and all members for their attendance and positive contributions.