

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
15 February 2012**

**TRANSPORT, ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Chairman's Statement

The Committee met on 25 January 2012 and the following items were considered:

1. Update from Corporate Director Business and Environmental Services

The Committee welcomed the regular report from Dave Bowe who reported that the Business and Environmental Services Directorate is in a positive position with regards to the savings plan for this year. It is encouraging to see that the Directorate do not sit back and think they have done enough but continue to look for other opportunities for further efficiencies.

A local Member raised an issue around the Hopgrove Roundabout on the A64 following the receipt of a letter from the Highways Agency. The Committee are keen to keep a monitoring eye on the investigation work that the Highways Agency is undertaking with regard to the Hopgrove Roundabout. It is important that the data the Highways Agency bases any future decision on the roundabout truly reflects the problems being experienced within the area. We stressed the need to look at traffic habits within the summer months when tourist traffic is at its greatest. A request for a report back to the Committee from the Highways Authority has been directed through the Corporate Director.

2. Irton Tree – Lessons Learned

We were pleased to welcome six members of the public as well as a representative of the press to our meeting for the report on the Irton Tree. This was a reminder to us of the feeling of local people about the felling of the tree in Irton. It was important for the Committee to understand the events surrounding the felling of the tree from a County Council perspective to ensure that everything had been done to learn from it for the future. It was therefore reassuring that the investigation work was reported in an open and honest way with this public report.

Barrie Mason gave a comprehensive overview of the report and outlined the 8 point action plan that had been developed as a result of the investigation work undertaken.

Highways and Transportation Service Specific	
1.	The new protocol for tree removal in Scarborough should be monitored and then rolled out across the county.
2.	It is recommended that in order to strengthen the approach to responding to TPO consultations and to ensure a consistent approach across the county a procedure note is issued to local area highways managers detailing the TPO process and how and when to respond to TPO consultations.
BES Service Specific	
3.	It is recommended that the status of insurance claims on the large loss report is discussed at a service unit management team level on a quarterly basis and at a directorate management team level every six months to coincide with the review

	of the directorate risk register. (*)
Joined Up Discussion with I&RM team at the request of BES	
4.	All services should review their nominated recipients of large loss reports to ensure that the reports are going to the most appropriate officers in each directorate, and then advise the Insurance and Risk Management team of the outcome. (*)
5.	Representatives from the Insurance and Risk Management team will attend highways and transportation management team meetings at their request on a regular basis, probably at quarterly intervals which would provide a further opportunity for discussion and challenge around the claims information already provided and the progress of on-going claims. Discussions will be held with other service units to ascertain the frequency of attendance at their meetings. (*)
Insurance Technical Input	
6.	It is considered that the current £50,000 threshold for claims contained in the quarterly large loss reports is appropriate and should remain unaltered.
7.	Work on the development of a new web based claims management system should continue as this will potentially provide the relevant officers with the latest information on claims.
8.	It is considered that the frequency of reviewing claims on a quarterly basis is correct and that the practice of reviewing the reserve whenever "the file is picked up" should be positively encouraged to ensure that reserve values are accurate and up to date.

3. Road Casualties North Yorkshire

It was encouraging to see that there had been 11% fewer collisions and 11% fewer casualties than in 2009. A closer analysis of the data shows that the overall trend is quite strongly downward but that there are two exceptions; namely a small (7%) increase in the number of fatal collisions and a 15% rise in the number of older people (50+) hurt in collisions compared to 2009. The over fifties form approximately 41% of the resident population but comprise 48% of those killed on the roads in North Yorkshire. We agree that it is so important to work with older drivers to enable them to stay safe on the road. So we were pleased to see actions to address this are being planned within both the Road Safety education programme and also in the emerging public health remit in conjunction with Health and Adult Services. We also noted the work that has recently commenced to develop a Temporary Vehicle Activated Sign Protocol.

4. Residents Parking Scheme Policy

The discussion on the residents parking policy focussed mainly on the introduction of a local champion and the proposal to reduce the threshold of those residents in favour for taking a scheme forward. We learnt that the champion could be a resident, the local County Councillor or a member of the District, Parish or Town Council.

The proposal to reduce the threshold for support of a scheme from 55% to 51% was also discussed. This would mean that 51% of the owners/occupiers within the proposed zone would have to be in favour of the scheme for it to go forward. We debated the reduction in the threshold and agreed that although it is often difficult to secure a majority of residents in favour of the scheme it was right that it should be a 51% threshold as it reflects the democratic majority.

A Member asked whether it would be possible to have the scheme run on a seasonal basis as parking in some tourist areas may be worse in the summer months. It was suggested that this could be considered depending on local circumstances and reference would be made to the issue of seasonal tourism within the policy.

5. Review of the criteria for Highway Maintenance (carriageway) Scheme Identification, Assessment and Prioritisation.

As the Chairman of the Scrutiny Task Group I introduced this report however the credit for all the technical information within it should go to Doug Huzzard (Highways Asset Manager Business and Environmental Services) and my own thanks and that of the other Task Group Members go to him.

The Committee welcomed the report and felt it offered an excellent explanation and aide memoire for Members regarding the process and criteria. We recognised that the process is based on officers' objective assessment of the criteria.

We went on to discuss the length of Unsurfaced Unclassified Roads (UUR) in the County and the lack of funding from central Government towards their maintenance. Work is ongoing on developing a policy on UUR and this will be going out for consultation in the near future. A report is scheduled to come back to the Committee on this later in the year.

The Members of the Task Group identified an area of further work looking at a 'value added' scheme assessment process which is currently being explored as a replacement for Detailed Visual Inspections and we look forward to returning to this piece of work later in the year.

County Councillor David Jeffels
January 2012