

# North Yorkshire County Council

## Executive

15 October 2019

### Area Constituency Committee Feedback

#### 1.0 Purpose of the Report

To bring to the attention of the Executive key issues considered at the following recent Area Constituency Committee meetings:

- Harrogate & Knaresborough Area Constituency Committee – 19 September 2019
- Scarborough & Whitby Area Constituency Committee - 25 September 2019

1.1 The Selby & Ainsty Area Constituency Committee scheduled for 27 September 2019 was cancelled.

#### 2.0 Harrogate & Knaresborough Area Constituency Committee on 19 September 2019

2.1 **NYCC Digital Strategy.** The Committee decided to refer comments which Members made at its meeting to County Councillor Don Mackenzie (Executive Member for Access). The comments included the following:-

- Enquiries about links between the Digital Strategy and Green Strategies - It was noted that work was being undertaken to understand such links.
- The SMART Harrogate Programme – It was noted that infrastructure was required for this and a re-examination was being undertaken of initiatives within the programme. Whilst access to free Wi-Fi would be of huge social benefit, the benefits and costs to the County Council need to be understood.

2.2 **Superfast Broadband.** The Committee decided to refer comments which Members made at its meeting to County Councillor Don Mackenzie (Executive Member for Access). The comments included congratulating NYnet Ltd on its achievements to date and its further plans which will result in 97% of properties in the Harrogate and Knaresborough constituency area being covered by superfast broadband once Phase 3 has been completed.

2.3 **Changes to Mental Health Services in Harrogate and the Surrounding Area.** The Committee has previously expressed deep concern about Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust's announcement to not go ahead with a proposal to build a new, mental health in-patient unit at Cardale Park in Harrogate, together with the possible closure of mental health in-patient beds at Harrogate District Hospital.

At the Committee's most recent meeting, the initial findings from a community engagement were considered. The Committee decided to refer comments which Members made at its meeting to County Councillor Michael Harrison (Executive

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Member for Health and Adult Services), County Councillor John Ennis (Chairman of the Scrutiny of Health Committee) and Councillor John Mann (Chair of Harrogate Borough Council's Planning Committee). The comments included the following:-

- Huge support for the actions being taken by the Scrutiny of Health Committee.
- Serious concern that no, or insufficient, mental health in-patient beds will be available for residents from the greater Harrogate area who need them. Members questioned whether 72 mental health beds at the Foss Park hospital in York will be sufficient, bearing in mind the closures of the Briary Wing at Harrogate District Hospital and the 2 mental health in-patient wards at the Friarage Hospital, together with the decision not to build a new in-patient unit at Cardale Park.
- Concern about uncertainty regarding the use to which the Cardale Park site in Harrogate will be put. Several Members emphasised that Cardale Park must be used for some sort of health and social care development, to complement the uses to which nearby sites are put.
- Concerns about travel and accessibility for patients and their families between the greater Harrogate area and the new hospital at Foss Park in York, in particular because people having mental health difficulties often rely on family members to help with recovery.

**2.4 Committee Work Programme.** Reflecting the outcome of the recent public engagement on the Harrogate Congestion Study, the Committee wishes to encourage people to walk, cycle or take public transport, instead of taking private vehicles on short journeys, in order to decrease traffic congestion. The Committee therefore decided that it wishes to consider, at future meetings:

- The Cycle Path Network
- Urban Footpaths

At the Committee's request, an update about 'Open Harrogate' (a project to promote and support sustainable travel initiatives in Harrogate) was emailed to Committee Members after the Committee's meeting.

Other issues which the Committee decided that it wishes to consider at future meetings include:-

- The impact on air quality of highway works undertaken at Bond End in Knaresborough and the lessons learned.
- The updated position concerning The Grove Pupil Referral Unit and school exclusions.
- County Lines Gangs - to investigate what housing associations and private landlords should do to ensure that "cuckooing" is not taking place in their properties for drug dealing.

### **3.0 Scarborough & Whitby Area Constituency Committee on 25 September 2019**

**3.1 Attendance of the Rt Hon Robert Goodwill MP** - The MP sent his apologies as he was unable to attend the meeting due to parliament being recalled. The Committee therefore agreed to hold an additional meeting in November 2019 solely to meet with the MP. The Committee are keen to hear his views on all local issues, but in particular they are interested in his views on:

- Opportunity Area Funding
- Education Funding
- Future intentions for Scarborough Industrial Area
- A64
- Sirius Minerals

3.2 **NYCC Digital Strategy** - The Committee were pleased to note the Strategy was for the whole of North Yorkshire and would involve joint working with partners, as they agreed it was the best way to optimize outcomes for residents. They acknowledged the ways in which digital technology could be used to support communities and enable people to live independently in their own home, in particular, the work done in Sleights by Technology and Change, Health and Adult Services and the Stronger Communities Team, and agreed NYCC and its partners need to continue to enable people to exploit the opportunities that new digital technologies provided. Members also queried whether there was a future role for them in bringing together NYCC with community members to help drive schemes forward – for example, the Blue Badge scheme.

In consideration of those residents living in more rural areas where there is no broadband and therefore no digital access to services, the Committee were keen that they not be forgotten, and queried how much of the ambitions were predicated on 5G.

They were reassured that developments in technology, changes in government policy and changing commercial opportunities would all help increase the coverage towards 95%. They also accepted there was a balance to be achieved in the cost of provision, against the benefits to service delivery, and agreed there was a need to look at alternative ways of delivering access that was not dependent on 5G.

3.3 **Scarborough Junctions Upgrade** - At the meeting it was confirmed by members that some residents had little or no understanding of the projected growth that the upgrade works were predicated on and asked that officer provide a clearer narrative on that as part of the ongoing/planned consultations. It was agreed that traffic flow data from 2017 and expected traffic flow data for 2032 should be provided to help residents visualise the expected growth.

The Committee noted that the funding for the works was based on improving through traffic to support future growth, not to aid pedestrian traffic. However, they agreed safety was still paramount and queried a number of the plan layouts provided, the use of traffic signals, the positioning of bus stops etc, and pointed out a number of examples of where a pedestrian crossing might be better placed to achieve safer crossing routes, particularly near schools, without affecting the overall schemes.

In regard to the schemes, the Committee made a number of suggestions which included:

- Appropriate replacement of the trees removed to enable the junction improvements – it was suggested that the National Tree Planting Champion who is based in North Yorkshire, may be able to supply some additional trees free of charge
- Any new traffic lights installed should be integrated properly with other sets of traffic lights in the vicinity – members gave a number of examples where this did not appear to be working effectively at present across Scarborough
- An additional crossing and bus layby at the junction near the 6<sup>th</sup> Form, and/or the possibility of an additional bus stop at the other side of the junction to reduce the number of crossings required by students.

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The Committee also took the opportunity to raise a number of traffic related issues affecting Scarborough town centre. For example, the number of traffic lights across the town centre which in their view had been added ad-hoc over the years, and the need for a holistic review of whether all those sets of lights were necessary. Also that in various places the lights did not appear to work together and therefore were preventing an appropriate flow of traffic.

Officers provided feedback on all the issues raised, and the Committee were pleased to note:

- The only trees to be removed as part of the junction improvement works were those that fell within sight lines or were damaging the infrastructure. For every one removed, two would be planted, and additional trees could be looked at.
- The issues raised around street lighting would be passed to street lighting colleagues.
- Traffic light signal heads would be added to the drawings and explained at the consultation events to give clarity on where they were to be installed as part of the junction improvement works.
- The suggestion of additional crossings and a bus layby could be priced up but there was a limit to the funding available for the works.
- It would be possible to talk to schools and bus operators to check the appropriateness of stopping points.
- Traffic lights by their nature made junctions more efficient and where a fault occurs the system alerts the traffic signals team. However, the issues raised around traffic signals would be passed to the traffic signals team for their consideration.

### 3.4 Work Programme

Members noted their invite to attend a meeting of the Scrutiny of Health Committee on 13 December 2019 at which Simon Cox from North Yorkshire CCG would provide a comprehensive update on the East Coast Review, including key milestones and timelines; access to capital funding; and any specific proposals for changes to services.

A number of members confirmed their intention to attend the Scrutiny of Health meeting and with that in mind, they agreed that for their next meeting, to limit their requested update to an update on Whitby Hospital only.

The Committee also agreed to receive:

- An update on Life Expectancy across the constituency area.
- Attendance of a representative of Yorkshire Water to provide an update on their environmental performance, following the findings of the Environment Agency published July 2019
- An update on cybercrime and scams, and the actions taken by Trading Standards to address them.

### 5.0 Recommendation

- 5.1 That the Executive notes the report and considers any matters arising from the work of the Area Constituency Committees detailed above, that merits further scrutiny, review or investigation at a county-level.

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Barry Khan  
Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services)  
County Hall  
Northallerton

3 October 2019

Background Documents: None

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