

North Yorkshire County Council**Executive****24 November 2020****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:

- Thirsk & Malton Area Constituency Committee on 16 September 2020
- Scarborough & Whitby Area Constituency Committee on 23 September 2020
- Skipton & Ripon Area Constituency Committee on 14 October 2020
- Richmond Area Constituency Committee on 14 October 2020
- Scarborough & Whitby Area Constituency Committee on 6 November 2020

2.0 Scarborough & Whitby Area Constituency Committee on 16 September 2020

2.1 This Committee received a presentation from North Yorkshire Police (NYP) on the work of the Rural Taskforce, which highlighted the current issues within the Scarborough and Whitby constituency area and provided a breakdown of the statistics for the different types of crime recorded. The Committee noted:

- The Scarborough & Whitby constituency area was at the lower end of rural crime figures compared to other areas across North Yorkshire;
- Poaching season had now started leading to an increase in the number of reports of damage to crops and gates, and harassment of landowners;
- Opportunistic crime was commonplace across the constituency area;
- Theft of power tools and quad bikes regularly reported;

2.2 The Committee also discussed:

- NYP's Rural Watch Scheme and the older Countryside Watch Scheme;
- NYP's civil action approach to poaching and the increasing number of incidences of raptor persecution, recognising it was particularly prevalent in the Scarborough & Whitby constituency area;
- Operation Seabird and the involvement of partner organisations working with the Police to protect seabird colonies and sea life;
- The policing of the use of jet skis;

2.3 The Committee also received a detailed presentation on the National Town Deal Project for Scarborough & Whitby, which provided an overview of the ambitions for both towns, the physical transformation schemes proposed as part of the bid for both towns, and the steps taken to date in the lead up to the bid submission.

- 2.4 Members were pleased to note the level of public engagement in the consultation, but expressed concern about the proposed pedestrianisation of Whitby Bridge because of its impact on increased traffic and impeded traffic flow in other areas of town. They also questioned whether it would improve the economy of the town.

3.0 Thirsk & Malton Area Constituency Committee on 23 September 2020

- 3.1 This Committee also received a presentation from North Yorkshire Police (NYP) on the work of the Rural Taskforce, highlighting the current issues within the Thirsk & Malton constituency area and providing a breakdown of the statistics for the different types of crime recorded. The Committee discussed:
- NYP's civil action approach to poaching i.e. the issuing of community protection warnings and Notices. Members questioned whether a change in legislation was required, and it was suggested that Members should encourage reporting as the more calls received, would lead to an increase in NYP resources being applied;
 - NYP's Rural Watch Scheme, facilitated through social media, allowing rural communities to contact and receive feedback from NYP to report suspicious behaviour in their communities;
 - How rural communities were often hard to reach communities and therefore welcomed the use of WhatsApp as a way of keeping in touch with the Police;
 - Hare coursing and how the geography of North Yorkshire made it more difficult to police this form of poaching – Members questioned what the local authority and individual Members could do to provide help and support;
- 3.2 The Committee received a presentation from Highways England providing an update on their ongoing works to the A64, A19 and A66. A number of issues were raised by the Committee:
- The lack of continuity of Highways England officers attending ACC meetings
 - The use of vehicle activation signs as a way of reducing speeds through villages
 - Safety concerns regarding the position of the bus stops at the top of Whitwell Hill and the bottom of Barton Hill
 - The need for a safety audit of the Scotchman Lane junction
 - Barton Hill junction realignment
- 3.3 The Committee also received their annual update on Schools, Educational Achievement & Finance. The wide-ranging report provided information on:
- The no of schools across the area and their status;
 - School standards and attainment;
 - Exclusions;
 - Special Education Needs;
 - Schools Finance;
 - Planning of school places;
- 3.4 The issue of attendance since schools reopened following the COVID lockdown was raised. The Committee were pleased to note that whilst attendance had been quite patchy in the first two weeks, it had settled down with averages for primary and secondary schools across the constituency area of 87% and 91% respectively, higher than in other areas across North Yorkshire.

- 3.5 Finally, the Committee raised concerns about those schools either with or forecast to have a budget deficit, recognising it was a factor alongside poor educational standards that would affect the long term viability of a school, and would likely affect an academy's decision not to sponsor a small/rural school.

4.0 Skipton & Ripon Area Constituency Committee on 14 October 2020

- 4.1 The Rt Hon Julian Smith MP attended the meeting of the committee. The discussion with the MP covered the following:
- The need to respond to the increases in Covid-19 infection rates and the increasing burden upon the NHS, particularly hospital admissions during winter
 - Concerns about the long-term economic impact of Covid-19 and the support that could be put in to place to ensure economic recovery, particularly for the hospitality industry
 - How families could continue to visit and support loved ones in care homes
 - Whether more could be done to promote healthy lifestyles and so reduce the risk of serious health problems resulting from a Covid-19 infection.
- 4.2 There was a Public Statement from Mr Chris Nash, Chairman of the Dales and Bowland Community Interest Company, regarding financial support for Sunday and leisure bus services.
- 4.3 The committee received a presentation on tourism and economic recovery post pandemic. The key points from the discussion were as follows:
- Wedding venues and associated services, the arts, music and live performance venues all need specific tailored support due to the impact upon them of lockdown and social distancing
 - There are opportunities for North Yorkshire as the local tourist industry is based upon outdoor activities in large areas of open, green space
 - It may be possible to compete with overseas holidays and further promote a 'North Yorkshire staycation' as an alternative
 - Need to work with 'Welcome to Yorkshire' to capitalise upon our brand and assets.

5.0 Richmond Area Constituency Committee on 14 October 2020

- 5.1 The Committee received a petition on the lack of safe cycle and footpaths between Gilling and Richmond, and will consider a detailed response from Transport Planning at their next meeting. They also received a request from a member of the public in relation to the County Council's policy of not funding Sunday bus services, specifically concerning the Dales Bus 856. Six of the Committee members whose divisions the bus runs through, agreed they would be willing to support the request for funding to the end of the financial year, by allocating a one off payment of £500 each from their individual locality budgets.
- 5.2 The Committee received their regular update on highway issues affecting the constituency, alongside an update on the North Northallerton Infrastructure and Development Project Update. In regard to the project, they raised a number of issues about HGVs and the flooding on the 684 close to the roundabout.
- 5.3 The Committee were pleased to note the successfully re-opening of schools across the Constituency with good attendance rates above the North Yorkshire average. They were also reassured that appropriate support and guidance on managing COVID was being provided to schools, together with wellbeing support for pupils and staff.

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- 5.4 Finally the issue of Ambulance services in the Great Ayton area and other villages along the North Yorkshire border was raised, specifically the increased use of the air ambulance and concerns in the locality of a shortage of ambulance drivers. The Committee were therefore pleased to note that the Chair of the Scrutiny of Health Committee was scheduled to meet with the operational lead from the Yorkshire Ambulance Service.

6.0 Scarborough & Whitby Area Constituency Committee on 6 November 2020

- 6.1 The Committee received a presentation on the Environment Agency's Environmental Performance Assessment of Yorkshire Water for 2019, which confirmed an improving picture for Yorkshire Water, with them achieving a 'Good' three star rating for 2019 and ongoing performance improvements in 2020. The Committee acknowledged the improvements in the last two years but raised the issue of the quality of the bathing water in Scarborough and the major flooding problems in Stathes during periods of heavy rain. The agreed to receive an update on the ongoing bathing water improvement works at their meeting in March 2021.
- 6.2 The Committee also received a detailed report on the local educational landscape, educational achievement and the financial challenges affecting schools in the Scarborough & Whitby constituency committee area. Officers provided a detailed response to the Committee concerns about:
- The national funding formula and its detrimental effect on North Yorkshire, and the long-term viability of small schools and rural schools as a result.
 - The detrimental effect of rural school closures on rural communities.
 - The lack of enhanced mainstream provision in primary schools in Scarborough
 - The uncertainty around the provision of free school meals and the potential for an increasing number of vulnerable families in the constituency area because of COVID related unemployment.
 - Some delays because of COVID in the time it was taking from referral to an ECHP being in place.
- 6.3 The Committee agreed they would like to invite their local MP and Govt Minister Gavin Williamson to their next meeting in January 2021 to discuss with them the national funding formula and its detrimental effect on North Yorkshire, and the long-term viability of small schools and rural schools as a result.
- 6.4 In addition, the Committee agreed to invite Simon Cox from NHS Trust and other relevant Health Service representatives to their January meeting, to provide an update on the East Coast Review and a performance update on patient care and the quality of the existing services at Scarborough Hospital.

7.0 Other Area Constituency Committee Meetings

- 7.1 A report on the key issues arising at the following Area Constituency Committee meeting will be presented at the next meeting of the Executive:
- Harrogate & Knaresborough Area Constituency Committee – 12 November 2020

8.0 Recommendation

- 8.1 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.

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

13 November 2020

Background Documents: None
Appendices: None

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