

# North Yorkshire County Council

## Executive

26 January 2021

### Area Constituency Committee Feedback

#### 1.0 Purpose of the Report

To bring to the attention of the Executive key issues considered at recent meetings of the Area Constituency Committees.

#### 2.0 Skipton and Ripon Area Constituency Committee on 7 January 2021

- 2.1 The Rt Hon Julian Smith MP attended the meeting and provided updates on: the Government response to the pandemic, in particular the support that is being put in place for businesses; progress with the national vaccination programme; and details of the long-term financial support that the Government is providing to the economy.
- 2.2 There was one Public Statement at the meeting, submitted by the Chair of the Zero Carbon Harrogate Transport Working Group regarding the item on the Harrogate Transport Improvement Programme. A formal response to the Statement was given at the meeting, and will be included in the minutes of the meeting.
- 2.3 The committee considered the proposal outlined in the Harrogate Transport Improvement Programme and made the following comments:
- There was strong support for proposals that promote active travel, healthy lifestyles, help reduce air pollution and support the Council response to climate change
  - Some members expressed the view that there was a need to be pragmatic and balance the drive for active travel and modal shift with the reality of vehicles needing to move around as efficiently as possible.
  - There was interest in seeing how disused rail lines could be used to provide safe walking and cycling routes that would then link up communities
  - There was support for an Outline Strategic Business Case for a bypass around Killinghall being developed. It was noted that there was a strong social and economic argument in favour of a bypass and also that people living in Killinghall and the immediate area were supportive.
- 2.4 The committee also considered the Council Budget Proposals for 2021/22, with a particular focus upon the area covered by the committee. The following issues were discussed:
- Adult social care precept options and the concerns that a national problem with the funding of social care was being tackled through local taxation
  - The national funding formula for schools and how this did not take into account the particular needs of small, rural schools
  - The potential for a significant increase in the demand for social care services as the vaccination programme rolls out and people are more confident about accessing services. Also, that people may present with more complex needs

- The provision of residential and nursing care and the role that the Council could have to play in intervening in the market to help ensure that adequate supply is in place.

2.5 County Councillor Carl Les provided an update on the work being done by the Council in response to the pandemic, in particular the new variant of the virus. He highlighted concerns about the impact of prolonged periods of social isolation, economic disruption and uncertainty upon people's mental wellbeing.

2.6 The next committee meeting will be at 10am on 11 March 2021 and will be a remote meeting held using MS Teams. The agenda has yet to be finalised but is likely to include:

- A discussion with the Rt Hon Julian Smith MP
- A final update on the re-provision and use of the Castleberg Community Hospital, Giggleswick
- An update on the impact of the pandemic on local businesses and the support that is being put in place
- The recent increase in home schooling and the role of the Council.

### **3.0 Harrogate and Knaresborough Area Constituency Committee on 8 January 2021**

3.1 The Committee considered the Council Budget Proposals for 2021/22, with a particular focus upon the area covered by the Committee. Members asked questions about the following issues and the Corporate Director – Strategic Resources provided responses:-

- Adult social care precept options.
- The need to strike the correct balance between providing Services and not raising Council Tax more than necessary.
- The suggestion of lobbying to ensure that the Council is not penalised for its level of Reserves and good financial management.
- Services available for residents who fall into financial difficulty, to help them retain their independence and receive help with welfare.
- The reasons why the cost of providing Domiciliary Care in the Harrogate and Knaresborough Constituency is higher than in other constituency areas in the county.

3.2 County Councillor Carl Les provided an update on the work being done by the Council in response to the pandemic, in particular the new variant of the virus. He highlighted:- concerns associated with the age of volunteers; general fatigue amongst volunteers and staff in councils and emergency services in responding to the pandemic; the impact of prolonged periods of social isolation; and the need for the Council, during the pandemic, to continue to provide other services, eg winter gritting, and continue to make service improvements eg Harrogate transport improvements.

3.3 The Committee considered the outcomes of the Harrogate Transport Improvement Programme study. The study assessed the feasibility of options, arising from the Harrogate Congestion Study, for potential implementation. A summary of Members' comments is below:

- Faster progress needs to be made in reducing traffic congestion in Harrogate and Knaresborough.
- The lack of recommendations relating specifically to Knaresborough was criticised by a Member.
- The creation of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods is welcomed by various Members. There were requests for maximum transparency in taking this work forward, and for the Council to identify, and make public as soon as possible, the names of roads being considered for inclusion in a possible Bilton Low Traffic Neighbourhood.

- Park & Ride - A Member expressed the view that having only one P&R site would be incorrect. The Member suggested that more than one P&R site would be required as otherwise the majority of Harrogate residents would be detrimentally impacted by the measures necessary to get P&R to work i.e. fewer parking spaces in the town centre and higher parking charges.
- Environmental Impact Assessment – A Member felt such an Assessment needed to be carried out, in particular to assess the impact that fewer parking spaces in the town centre, and higher parking charges, would have on people with disabilities, people in rural areas who came into town, and people on low incomes.
- Killinghall bypass - County Councillor Michael Harrison (local Member) expressed support for adding Killinghall bypass to the Council's major schemes portfolio on the grounds that the business case had been shown to stack-up.
- The view was expressed by some Members that traffic congestion was not cured by building more roads.
- The importance of reducing carbon, and the Council's previous approval of a carbon reduction programme, was highlighted by some Members.
- Members commented that it needed to be made clear to the public that sustainable transport, and its implications, would necessitate difficult/uncomfortable decisions.
- A request for a train station at Claro Road was made on behalf of County Councillor Paul Haslam.

In relation to the Harrogate Transport Improvement Programme, statements were read out at the meeting by/on behalf of representatives of six local organisations, namely, Harrogate Borough Council, Pannal and Burn Bridge Parish Council, Harlow and Pannal Ash Residents' Association, Harrogate and District Cycle Action, Harrogate and District Green Party, and Zero Carbon Harrogate Transport Working Group. The formal responses to the statements were given at the meeting and will be included in the minutes of the meeting.

#### **4.0 Richmond Area Constituency Committee on 8 January 2021**

4.1 The committee considered a briefing provided in relation to recent meetings that had been held in Melsonby to discuss flooding and drainage involving local community leaders, representatives of the local community and the relevant agencies.

- Issues around the responsibility of land owners to address flooding issues, how this was addressed when action was not taken, the work being undertaken to address the concerns, the adequacy of the existing drainage system and the impact of new development were highlighted.
- Members highlighted the effectiveness of developing a local flood group to co-ordinate a response to the issues raised.
- Members emphasised that, unfortunately, a level of flooding was now the norm in some areas and mitigation was the only solution. It was unlikely that local solutions alone could address these issues.
- The situation would continue to be monitored and suitable solutions sought. Updates would be provided to future meetings of the Committee.

4.2 Members were asked to provide comments on proposed alterations to Hambleton District Council's Off-Street Parking arrangements as part of the consultation that was taking place in relation to those. Issues raised included:-

- Ensuring that all ways of making a payment to park, including cash, were provided in the new arrangements.
- Where extra space was provided through a permit for oversized vehicles ensure that these did not encroach onto the highway.

- Ensuring that the Electric Vehicle Charging points were the most efficient and effective so as not to require vehicles to remain there for a significant period of time.

4.3 The committee also considered the Council Budget Proposals for 2021/22, with a particular focus upon the area covered by the committee. The following issues were discussed:

- The potential budgetary impact on schools beyond 2023.
- The particular difficulties faced by smaller schools – Primaries trying to provide wrap-around facilities and Secondary Schools delivering a full curriculum.
- The impact of COVID on the Social Care provision and how delays in the take up of care services could impact on future finances.
- The potential for a significant increase in the demand for social care services as the vaccination programme rolls out and people are more confident about accessing services. Also, that people may present with more complex needs

## **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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15 January 2021

Background Documents: None  
Appendices: None