

# North Yorkshire County Council

## Harrogate and Knaresborough Area Constituency Committee

Minutes of the meeting held remotely via MA Teams on Thursday 12 November 2020 at 9.30am

This meeting was live broadcast on the North Yorkshire County Council YouTube site and a recording is available using the following link - <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/live-meetings>

### **Present:-**

### **Members:-**

County Councillor John Mann (in the Chair); County Councillors Philip Broadbank, Jim Clark, Richard Cooper, John Ennis, David Goode, Michael Harrison, Paul Haslam, Don Mackenzie, Zoe Metcalfe, Cliff Trotter, Geoff Webber and Robert Windass

### **In Attendance:-**

County Councillor Carl Les (Leader of the County Council) and County Council David Chance (Executive Member for Stronger Communities)

County Council Officers:- Andrew Dixon (Strategic Planning Manager, Children and Young People's Service (CYPS)), Sally Dunn (Head of Finance – Schools and Early Years, CYPS), Carol-Ann Howe (Head of Inclusion, (CYPS), Emily Mellalieu (Development Management Team Leader, Business and Environmental Services), Julie Pattison (Principal Education Adviser (Interim), CYPS), Chris Reynolds (SEND Provision and Resources Manager, CYPS), Michael Rudd (Head of Housing Market Development, Health and Adult Services), Sue Turley (Strategic Planning Officer, CYPS) and Ruth Gladstone (Principal Democratic Services Officer)

Two members of the public

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**Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book**

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### **65. Minutes**

#### **Resolved –**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 January 2020, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### **66. Declarations of Interest**

County Councillor John Mann referred to the question to be asked at this meeting by Pannal and Burn Bridge Parish Council and advised that he was the Elected Member for the Pannal Ward on Harrogate Borough Council.

Note: A further declaration was made, for the sake of transparency, at a later stage in the meeting and is recorded at Minute 69.

## **67. Public Questions or Statements**

Two members of the public spoke at the meeting relating to their organisations' concerns which related primarily to new developments and the implications for the highway network in the western arc of Harrogate. They were:-

- Councillor Howard West (Chairman of Pannal and Burn Bridge Parish Council)
- Mr David Siddons of Harlow and Pannal Ash Residents' Association (HAPARA)

The text of what Councillor Howard West and Mr David Siddons each said is set out in the Appendix to these Minutes.

Emily Mellalieu (Development Management Team Leader, Business and Environmental Services) responded to the issues raised by both Councillor Howard West and Mr David Siddons. The text of what Emily Mellalieu said is set out in the Appendix to these Minutes.

County Councillor Don Mackenzie (Executive Member for Access) advised of his reaction to what Councillor Howard West and Mr David Siddons had said. The text of what County Councillor Don Mackenzie said is set out in the Appendix to these Minutes.

Councillor Howard West and Mr David Siddons were each invited to ask a supplemental question. The text of what each said is set out in the Appendix to these Minutes.

The response of County Councillor Don Mackenzie to the supplemental questions is set out in the Appendix to these Minutes.

## **68. Schools, Educational Achievements and Finance**

Considered -

The joint report of the Strategic Planning Manager, the Assistant Director - Strategic Resources, and the Assistant Director Inclusion (Children and Young People's Service Directorate) which informed Members of the local educational landscape, educational achievement and the financial challenges which affected schools in the Harrogate and Knaresborough area constituency area.

Andrew Dixon (Strategic Planning Manager, Children and Young People's Service (CYPS)) introduced the report and, together with Julie Pattison (Principal Education Adviser (Interim), Carol-Ann Howe (Head of Inclusion), Chris Reynolds (SEND Provisional and Resources Manager) and Sally Dunn (Head of Finance – Schools and Early Years), responded to Members' questions.

During discussion, the following issues were clarified:-

- There was potentially one school within this constituency area that was considering conversion to become an Academy.
- The 2024/25 shortfall in capacity in Knaresborough primary schools, as set out at Appendix 1, was based on existing capacity in local schools at the current time. In accordance with standard practice, it did not take account of the intended introduction of a new school in September 2022.
- Officers recognised that there was a relationship between social deprivation and exclusion. To address this, as part of the new SEND Hubs which came

into being in September 2020, exclusions were being analysed every week within a locality constituency area and work was being undertaken with colleagues in Early Help and the Children and Families Service to look at whether a more joined-up family-focussed response to that family was needed.

- There was on-going capacity for excluded secondary pupils within Springwell Harrogate (formerly The Grove) and at Forest Moor School. Capacity to respond to any primary exclusions was available through an intensive support team which worked with the school to prevent a permanent exclusion but, if a permanent exclusion occurred, that team created “pop-up” short term provision in the locality until the child could be found another school.
- Generally, out of county placements were for children with EHCPs.
- A Locality Board was being formed within each locality and provided a forum for schools and educational services to discuss strategic issues. Additional finance had been allocated to the Boards so that pieces of work could be undertaken such as research/an action plan to address key issues.
- Chris Reynolds (SEND Provision and Resources Manager) undertook to refer, to the Locality Board for this area, a Member’s suggestion about the benefits of creating Breakfast Clubs to provide nutritious breakfasts in all schools to avoid exclusions and to bring about savings in later life eg for the Prison Service.
- Woodfield Community Primary School was the primary school judged by Ofsted to be “inadequate”, as mentioned in paragraph 3.1 of the report. County Councillor Geoff Webber questioned the officers about whether the County Council was putting extra resources into that school to correct what he described as a “very long-standing and extremely serious problem” and was also a community asset. The work which NYCC undertook, when a school went into special measures, was outlined. It was also reported that, in addition, NYCC had a separate budget which helped it to fund strategies and processes to make rapid improvements within schools in difficulty.
- Rumours that the Pupil Referral Service in Harrogate was closing at Christmas were incorrect. Wellspring Multi Academy Trust had taken over the provision in April and had changed the name of “The Grove” to “Springwell Harrogate”. It was understood that Wellspring Multi Academy Trust had consulted on a reorganisation and a restructure of Springwell Harrogate and, during the summer, had put a six figure capital investment into the provision to improve the facilities and the offer locally for children who would access the provision.
- Regarding schools in financial difficulty, County Councillor Geoff Webber expressed serious concern about the level of debts owed by primary and secondary schools, in particular primary schools. He highlighted that the situation had been getting worse for some time and showed no signs of improvement and, as such, schools were now starting the year with huge deficits without a way to rectify the situation. Sally Dunn (Head of Finance – Schools and Early Years) advised that the County Council was constrained in the amount of financial support it, as a local authority, was able to provide to schools because schools were funded based on a national funding formula which North Yorkshire County Council was required to operate. However, the County Council provided non-financial support to schools such as advice and support and continued to lobby, as a local authority, for additional funding. County Councillor Gareth Dadd advised that changes, which were too lengthy to go through at this meeting, were taking place and needed to be brought to Members’ attention outside this meeting.

- Boroughbridge High School continued to be a maintained school. Outline plans had been made for the expansion of Boroughbridge High School to accommodate more pupils as a consequence of new housing developments in the area. The plans would be reviewed once the volume and timing of the new housing developments were known.
- Children at Early Years stage, both within the Harrogate & Knaresborough constituency area and across North Yorkshire, continued to achieve a good level of development, and better than the national average. However, the figures had not increased over time. In response, Julie Pattison (Principal Education Adviser (Interim)) advised that, through actions arising from the School Improvement Strategy, schools, particularly those in difficulty, were supported to make rapid improvement and achieve better outcomes for pupils.
- Funds were made available to schools for children requiring SEN support but without an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The numbers of such children were monitored constantly. The funding was a delegated pot, called "Element 2" of the SEND funding formula. Schools had that amount to allocate to make provision for those children without EHCPs. The local authority also had other funds for which schools could apply when an emergency situation arose.
- With regard to schools in financial difficulties - Schools had delegated budgets and delegated responsibilities in terms of managing budgets. It was for the school's Governing Body and leadership to look at how they would be able to address budget deficits and to make decisions, in terms of the local context of their school, regarding what actions they needed to take and were able to take within the operating context of that school.
- With regard to pupil/teacher ratios, this was a decision for each individual school in the terms of the context of that school and how they deemed it appropriate for them to operate.

County Councillor Paul Haslam advised that he had some further comments and questions which he would provide by email following this meeting.

A motion was proposed, discussed and amended. Members voted and it was thereby:-

**Resolved -**

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That the officers be thanked for providing the report and for attending this meeting.
- (c) That the comments expressed at this meeting be sent to the Children and Young People's Directorate.
- (d) That Members' concerns be noted regarding budgets for schools which are currently in a large amount of debt.
- (e) That a briefing about schools' financial difficulties be raised at a future Members' Seminar.

## **69. Updates from the Leader, the Deputy Leader and Executive Members**

Note: During consideration of this item of business, County Councillor David Goode advised that he was one of the Co-ordinating Group for Knaresborough Connectors.

Considered –

Oral updates presented by the Leader, the Deputy Leader and various Executive Members, as set out below.

- (a) County Council Finances – County Councillor Les and County Councillor Gareth Dadd
- (b) Stronger Communities – County Councillor David Chance
- (c) Access – County Councillor Don Mackenzie
- (d) Adult Services – County Councillor Michael Harrison

The Leader, Deputy Leader and Executive Members responded to Committee Members' questions.

### **Resolved –**

That the updates be noted.

## **70. Round Table**

Considered -

An opportunity for all Committee Members to raise any issues of local concern and strategic relevance to the County Council.

County Councillor Paul Haslam spoke about the award of funding to Woodfield School from the AJ1 Road Safety Fund to improve road safety outside the School.

County Councillor John Mann spoke about services currently being provided by Harrogate District Hospital.

### **Resolved –**

That the situations be noted.

## **71. North Yorkshire Healthy Child Programme - Public Consultation on Service Changes**

Considered -

A report inviting Members to comment on proposed services changes.

Michael Rudd (Head of Housing Market Development, Health and Adult Services Directorate) outlined the background of the Healthy Child Programme, the proposed changes, the rationale for those changes, and the public consultation work being undertaken.

Members made the following comments:-

- The officers are to be complimented on coming up with an imaginative re-scheduling of services given the reduction in funding. This is an extremely important service and Members are pleased to hear it will continue in a slightly modified way.

- This service is really helpful and this consultation is welcomed.
- There are concerns that:- those undertaking this consultation are working in silos, eg there is no context around the other services which the County Council runs; that there is no mention of nutrition and dietary help; and that there is no interaction with school meals.
- The report is very specific in terms of funding reduction for Health Child Services of £657k over 3 years. It also talks of Public Health grant of up to £4m over the next few years. Because there is no detailed breakdown, it is very difficult to judge whether £657k is a reasonable decision to take within the overall context of the grant reduction.
- With regard to the gap analysis, there is a specific list within the report of services that are being either reduced or discontinued. Clearly the mitigating argument is that anybody requiring the services that are discontinued will be signposted to other areas. The report does highlight some element of gap analysis but says that there is more work to be done. There is therefore concern in terms of decisions that have been taken to reduce services and the fact that those decisions have been made with clearly more work to be done in terms of gap analysis. Further information needs to be included.
- The need for a reduction in the Health Child Programme, following a cut in grant, is sadly acknowledged. If a reduction needs to be made, the sensible way to do so is to retain, as far as possible, the visits for 0-5 year olds because the earlier years are particularly important. If that means that a greater reduction has to be made in the provision for 5-19 year olds, then that, sadly, is correct and is the balance that needs to be struck.
- Other services eg the provision of advice by GPs/Health Visitors about diet, exercise, structured sleep, limits on screen time etc must continue.

#### **Resolved -**

That the comments which Members have made during consideration of this item of business be referred to the Scrutiny of Health Committee.

## **72. Committee Work Programme**

Considered -

The report of the Principal Democratic Services Officer which invited Members to consider, amend and add to the Committee's work programme.

Ruth Gladstone (Principal Democratic Services Officer), in introducing the report, advised that the dates of meetings to be held after March 2021 would be included, very shortly, within the Work Programme.

During discussion, no additional topics were suggested for inclusion in the Work Programme.

A Member suggested that the Work Programme should be a 12 month rolling programme, ie the same period as applied to the Executive's Forward Plan, and to enable Members to see what business was scheduled for the forthcoming year. Ruth Gladstone undertook to organise this.

The next meeting was scheduled for Friday 8 January 2021 at 9.30am.

**Resolved –**

That the Work Programme be noted.

The meeting concluded at 12.10pm.

RAG/JR

## APPENDIX

### **Text of Public Questions and Statements, the Officer Reply, the Comments of County Councillor Don Mackenzie (Executive Member for Access), and the Supplemental Questions**

**(a) Councillor Howard West, Chairman of Pannal and Burn Bridge Parish Council asked the following question:-**

Why are we being ignored?

It is surprising that being such a critical issue, the Parameters Plan which is wholly within the Harrogate and Knaresborough constituency, doesn't feature on this agenda.

As specified by HM Inspector for the Local Plan, there is supposed to be a cooperation between NYCC and HBC regarding the infrastructure required to support the large-scale developments on Harrogate's Western Arc. The area is to be treated as a whole rather than in piecemeal planning applications. Lack of attention to the significant impact on the area in question is indicative of the laissez-faire attitude of both councils.

After we requested intervention from Andrew Jones MP, we have made some progress and have been grateful to traffic engineers from HBC and NYCC for the opportunity to discuss possible technical solutions. It was clear from our discussions that they're doing their best but working with their hands tied behind their backs.

NYCC recognised there was a traffic congestion problem throughout the Western Arc after its futile consultation focusing on the Nidd Gorge and launched an investigation into a link between the A61 to Leeds and Otley Road.

Unfortunately, this appeared to be set more in the tone of, "Do we need a Western Bypass?" which is not what was requested by constituents. The Cost Benefit Ratio was deemed to be inadequate to support such a project and we believe, deliberately consigned to failure. The imperative has always been on an East/West link – whether needed or not. The result is that any improvements to highway infrastructure on the Western Arc would be left to tinkering at the edges. Existing congestion has simply not been addressed.

We all know this is wholly unsatisfactory and our Cooperation Group believes it is a dereliction of duty on behalf of NYCC. If you have not yet received a copy of our Campaign for Sustainability of Development then you will shortly. This highlights three main issues which are constantly ignored –

1. The housing numbers are increasing beyond what was stipulated by the government inspector yet HBC still works to the same overall target that was slated by the inspector as being over-provision
2. Highway plans to overcome congestion and provide for the extra housing, employment and education has been largely ignored
3. There is a lack of direction with respect to energy-saving, carbon-reduction and planning for future renewable energy

What does it take for the concerns of residents of the Western Arc and nearby villages (about to suffer a quarter of the whole borough's local plan housing provision) to be treated as a new settlement rather than a piffling "urban expansion"? There's a comprehensive new plan for Cattal/Green Hammerton in the making but nothing for us in the Harlow, Pannal Ash, Beckwithshaw, North Rigton, Hampsthwaite or Pannal and Burn Bridge areas. Anything from the Parameters Plan will be far too late; houses are already here.

We expect answers and the opportunity to question councillors and officers who have neglected us.

**(b) Mr David Siddons of Harlow and Pannal Ash Residents' Association (HAPARA) made the following statement:-**

HAPARA is part of the Western Arc of Harrogate Cooperation Group, that will be most affected by the very large-scale development proposals within the Local Plan.

We have recently produced our report – Campaign for Sustainability of Development – and some of you may have already received a copy.

Whilst we accept that the principle of development has been established by the adoption of the Local Plan earlier this year, there still remains huge concerns on how exactly sustainability can be delivered to underpin such a large urban expansion in a part of Harrogate with an acknowledged weak infrastructure.

In brief these concerns relate to:

- 1) The scale of traffic generation relative to current levels.
- 2) The inadequacy of alternatives to car travel from developments where car dependency would naturally be high, because of the location.
- 3) The impact on local communities of generated traffic, and the lack of any real solutions being put forward.
- 4) A lack of ambition when it comes to green and low carbon issues both generally and transport-related.

We welcome the development of a Parameters Plan looking at the western arc as a whole, and whilst useful discussions have taken place between Cooperation Group organisations and both HBC and NYCC, we remain unconvinced that what is being planned can be made fully sustainable. Whilst COVID-19 has rightly been at the forefront of our minds in recent months, the big issue that remains with us is climate change and the sustainability of future travel patterns.

Many of the principles contained within the Local Plan are sound, but we believe that the demands of 3500-4000 additional dwellings, plus further expansion for business, requires an infrastructure that can not only cope with the extra demand, but do so in a way which brings relief to local communities from current problems of congestion and road safety.

**(c) Emily Mellalieu (Development Management Team Leader, Business and Environmental Services) responded, as follows, to the issues raised by both Councillor Howard West (Chairman of Pannal and Burn Bridge Parish Council) and Mr David Siddons (Harlow and Pannal Ash Residents' Association):-**

Thank you, to both of you, for your continued engagement in this process. You have both had time with my Team and Engineers from our Team to discuss these issues. Answering both statements in the whole, I will start by explaining the roles as they relate to the development of the Parameters Plan given that there is a question raised over why this isn't on the agenda for this meeting.

Harrogate Borough Council is the local planning authority responsible for the delivery of the parameters plan. North Yorkshire County Council, in its capacity as local highway authority, is a statutory consultee to the planning process. Responses are,

however, technical nature and politically impartial so work towards the delivery of the Parameters Plan is being undertaken by the appropriate officers. It is also inevitably delivered within the constraints of the national planning policy framework.

This work is on-going in partnership with Harrogate Borough Council in its role as local planning authority. It is not therefore an appropriate item for consideration by an NYCC constituency committee. Any concerns regarding the parameters of delivery of the Parameters Plan is better addressed through Harrogate Borough Council's political processes. Notwithstanding that, the Parameters Plan is the opportunity to deliver the distinct sites cohesively and to set the expectation across development in the location. North Yorkshire County Council and Harrogate Borough Council are working closely on this from a highways perspective, with weekly meetings held, and almost daily communications, between officers.

The development of this Parameters Plan includes engagement with a number of key stakeholders including the parish councils and residents' associations. The first round of stakeholder meetings took place in October and a further round of meetings are to be arranged in due course following an independent Design Review Meeting that occurred at the beginning of November.

Additionally, representatives from Harrogate Borough Council and North Yorkshire County Council Highways have also held meetings with a number of Parish Council representatives, and the Residents' Association, enabling dialogue on transportation matters. It is proposed that further meetings will be arranged to discuss the outcomes from on-going strategic modelling and transport assessment work which will cumulate into the development of a Highways Infrastructure Development Plan that will ultimately form an appendix document within the Parameters Plan.

Alongside the planning process, the public statements raise questions about the North Yorkshire County Council Congestion Study. North Yorkshire County Council is due to report on the outcomes of the Harrogate Transport Improvements Programme (HTIP). This follows on from the earlier congestion study and linked engagement. This will be reported to the project Steering Group shortly. At that meeting the findings of the work that WSP, as our consultants, have undertaken, looking at possible ways to reduce congestion across Harrogate and Knaresborough, will be presented.

Further to the steering group meeting, outcomes and possible next steps, based on discussion with Members, will be presented to the Area Constituency Committee in January and that will be the opportunity to discuss those outcomes.

The Parish Council Chair, in his statement, raises three direct concerns and these were echoed in the statement from the Residents' Association. These are as follows:-

1. *"The housing numbers are increasing beyond what was stipulated by the government inspector yet HBC still works to the same overall target that was slated by the inspector as being over-provision"*

This is something that would require response by Harrogate Borough Council relating to the rationale behind that. Ultimately, North Yorkshire County Council, in its capacity as local highways authority, would need to see that the local highway can accommodate the volume of housing or that its impacts can be mitigated, in order to recommend approval of the specific application.

2. *"Highway plans to overcome congestion and provide for the extra housing, employment and education has been largely ignored"*

This is on-going through the planning process and a lot of meetings are taking place with Harrogate Borough Council where these things are being discussed.

That is part of the Parameters Plan work and is an on-going process through planning and opportunities are being given for the communities to engage in the stakeholder process.

3. *“There is a lack of direction with respect to energy-saving, carbon-reduction and planning for future renewable energy”*

Options to support west Harrogate are still being discussed. This does inevitably have to be balanced by what the local highway authority considers the future typical car use to be and that provision is made for the likely future use as projected through transport models to avoid additional congestion. This will ultimately be included in the infrastructure delivery plan and the eventual outputs from the Parameters Plan and the agreements that that brings.

**(d) County Councillor Don Mackenzie (Executive Member for Access) advised of his reaction, as set out below, to the statements from both Councillor Howard West and Mr David Siddons**

I know both Howard and David both very well. We've met often in the past and discussed these sorts of subjects. Just to confirm what Emily has said – I chair the Steering Group that's going to be looking, in the next couple of weeks, at further options available to us in the light of the Harrogate Congestion Study.

The Harrogate Congestion Study, just to remind everyone, was a very successful public engagement. There were over 15,000 replies, which is a very high number, and 78% of those people who replied told us that they want to see sustainable transport measures and they don't want to see new roads. That is advice that the general public have given me and it's a piece of advice that I'm not particularly keen to depart from.

David and Howard both mentioned their leaflet “Campaign for Sustainability of Development”. I have that leaflet here which, thank you, you sent me earlier this week. I had actually already picked it up on social media even before then.

I have to say to both David and Howard, and this is something you and I are going to have to discuss outside the boundaries of this meeting today, because I am totally unclear as to exactly what you want us to do. The aims of your campaign are unclear. On the one hand, in this eight paged leaflet, you are calling for new roads to alleviate congestion. Yet, in another section, a section 3 entitled “Green and Low Carbon Issues”, clearly written by one of your partners who considers green options to be over-ridingly important, you there call for more green measures, more cycling paths, and no through roads. So I'm totally confused as to what you want us to do.

We have developed a proposal, as you know, for a cycle path up Otley Road, from Beech Grove, and a cycle path at Beech Grove. Both will start shortly. Yet many of your residents, especially residents of Otley Road, are totally opposed to the cycle path. These are people that you represent.

I can see that you also have difficulty with this dichotomy because the Western Arc Coordination Group, and your leaflet “Campaign for Sustainability of Development”, is itself a contradiction. I don't know what you're calling on us to do, whether you want more sustainable measures or you want more roads. Certainly, if I look at the section entitled “Traffic Issues”, here you say you continue to press for further significant improvements to the road infrastructure and you say that cycling is not going to overcome these problems. So there's confusion here. I'm keen to help. North Yorkshire County Council is keen to help. However, we need a clear message from yourselves and that is something I'd like to take up with you after this meeting.

**(e) Supplemental Question from Councillor Howard West, Chairman of Pannal and Burn Bridge Parish Council:-**

It's not so much of a question but more of a statement. County Councillor Mackenzie said he wasn't sure what was requested. When one considers the traffic being generated from the western arc, some of it will go towards Harrogate. There is where we wish to have sustainable transport with buses, cycle paths, footpaths etc. However, that will do nothing to alleviate any of the traffic problems and the congestion of those wishing to get to and from the A61 and on to Leeds and Bradford. Therein lies the dichotomy. Yes we need measures which will improve carbon usage towards Harrogate, but you still have a problem with some 3,000-5,000 cars, additional to that which we have at the moment, trying to get to the A61 and to the areas around Cardale Park.

**(f) Supplemental Question from David Siddons of Harlow and Pannal Ash Residents' Association:-**

Thank you County Councillor Mackenzie for offering to continue this dialogue. I think that will be extremely useful and we look forward to that. Secondly, we very much like a lot of the stuff in the Local Plan and just I'd like to draw attention to the vision statement at the beginning which says - This is the vision for 2035 – "There are now greater opportunities to make journeys safely on foot or by bike. Whilst these improvements have reduced the need to travel by car, investment has also been made in the road network that has achieved reduced levels of congestion and improved air quality". That the vision of the Local Plan and is something we very much endorse that we're looking at, not just one bullet to solve this problem, but a combination of bullets to solve the problem and I hope we can explore that in further discussions. Thank you.

**(g) Response from County Councillor Don Mackenzie to the Supplemental Questions:-**

I have nothing further to add and look forward to meeting David and Howard again in the near future.