

## North Yorkshire County Council

### Richmond (Yorks) Area Constituency Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2020, commencing at 10am – held remotely via Microsoft Teams.

#### Present:-

Members: County Councillors Angus Thompson (Chairman), David Blades, Caroline Dickinson, Helen Grant, Bryn Griffiths, David Hugill, Carl Les, Heather Moorhouse, Yvonne Peacock, John Weighell OBE, Annabel Wilkinson, and co-opted member Malcolm Warne.

Other Cllrs Present: County Councillor Gareth Dadd

Apologies: County Councillor Karin Sedgewick

NYCC Officers: Pam Johnson (Technical Specialist, Development Management, Highways and Transportation); Victoria Ononeze (Public Health Consultant); Andrew Dixon (Strategic Planning Manager, Education and Skills); Julie Pattison (Principal Education Adviser); Nikki Joyce (Head of SEN and Disability Services); Howard Emmett (Assistant Director, Strategic Resources); Sally Dunn (Head of Finance – Schools and Early Years); David Edwardes (ICT Officer); Steve Loach and Melanie Carr (Democratic Services Officers)

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

#### 95. Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted a slight alteration to the agenda with the item on Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation being moved to the end of the meeting.

#### 96. Minutes

##### Resolved -

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2020, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

#### 97. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest to note.

#### 98. Public Questions and Statements

The Clerk stated that a statement had been submitted by Harriet Corner from Coverdale in relation to the erection of 5G Mobile Technology masts in that area. He noted that the statement, detailed below, had been submitted after the registration date, but had been accepted due to postal difficulties in the Coverdale which had led to Mrs Corner only just

being aware of the meeting, and she had stressed the need to outline this current issue now, as she had recently referred the matter to Rishi Sunak MP. In view of the late submission, Mrs Corner had been advised that she would receive a reply to her statement directly, with a copy of the reply sent to Members of the Committee. The Clerk read out the following statement from Mrs Corner:-

“Having been ambivalent before about 5G , and very much understanding the need to have far better connectivity in our part of the Dale, I have not felt the need to voice any concern about it. However, recently there have been some issues that have made me extremely concerned.

Last week I talked to Nicholas Soames (who is an old friend) and explained these problems to him and he urged me to write to you as he believes there has been a serious abuse of local democracy.

Let me explain the background. In recent weeks I have read in the Darlington and Stockton Times that Coverdale has been chosen to be the initial location for a 5G test bed and trial by MANY (Mobile Access North Yorkshire, which I understand to be a consortium led by Quickline Communications and North Yorkshire County Council). This was the first time I had seen or heard anything about this, so I contacted our local parish councillor James Harrison -Topham.

James told me that he had had no information regarding this, either by email or letter. This was also true for all the residents that I have spoken to in and around our area of Coverdale. There certainly has not been, contrary to the claim on the MANY website, any “door to door canvassing”.

There has been, I understand, some consultation with Carlton Parish Council and Melmerby with an employee of MANY informing them of the project.

I was shocked subsequently when researching the MANY website to discover there is a plan for three 15 metre 5G masts, one of which has already been erected at Braidley, again without any knowledge of residents at our end of the Dale. It seems, that having contacted the landowners and looking at the 5G map of masts on their website, that here and at Coverhead they have been designated as being “emergency masts” and there has been a change of use without the knowledge of the landowner.

I cannot understand how such a thing could happen without a full and detailed consultation, since as you know, we have incredibly tight controls in the National Park regarding even the choices of roof tiles and colours of windows etc. I firmly believe that this behaviour flies in the face of the National Park’s duties of “conserving and enhancing the natural environment”, and frankly it seems to reflect an underhand and potentially deceitful pattern of behaviour over a very contentious issue.

We have been fortunate in consulting Mike Sparrow, who was recently a key speaker at the Planet in Crisis conference. He lives in Swaledale, the upper part of which the MANY website says is to be another area where 5G is to be trialled. Mike has been CEO of a worldwide utilities construction business and has a rational and objective approach to the issues raised by 5G. He has spent many years studying the science of cell phone/electromagnetic radiation (EMR), and has reached some disturbing conclusions based entirely on peer-reviewed science. He has no time for any conspiracy theories. He gave a local Webinar briefing about his grave concerns for the damage that this additional radiation will cause to our very precious ecology and wildlife here in the Coverdale. He believes the science showing this is conclusive and robust and I see no reason to disbelieve him. Indeed at least one of the mast sites is adjacent to an SSSI, where Hen Harriers nested this year. There must also be a real concern for the wellbeing of humans and livestock in our immediate area.

The urgency is that the residents of Coverdale remain unaware of these risks. The only information some of them may have seen or heard has come from MANY. They have had no consultation, and clearly have no control over what happens to the infrastructure that may be required. They have no information or detail regarding the nature of the trial. It seems to me that we are expected to trust MANY in telling the truth and given their underhand behaviour so far it seems a risky ask. To be frank this is a question of trust. We are also very concerned that the National Park, as the planning authority, has not given due consideration to the risks of 5G, and certainly has not fairly or properly alerted us to this serious development, or given us a chance to object to the planning applications.

We would be very grateful if you would kindly take an interest in this which is causing great anxiety locally. We would ask you kindly to insist that the National Park and MANY offer us and all other residents a full and detailed briefing and consultation in respect of this project. Of course we need to be connected to mobile telephony, but I understand that the safest and most secure and fastest route to achieve this is using fibre optic broadband (which you have already been so helpful in obtaining for us in Coverdale).

Once again I must apologise for raising this with you at such a fraught time, but I cannot over emphasise how disturbed we all are at this turn of events and the apparently disingenuous behaviour of the Authorities and MANY.

Since writing this, another planning application for a fourth mast has gone to the YDNP, again sold to the farmer as being an "emergency mast". I wonder how long it will be before it appears on the MANY 5G map?"

Members discussed the statement and the following issues were raised:-

- A Member consider that consultation in respect of the masts should be taking place involving the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and Parish Councils. She suggested that COVID may have affected the consultations but was aware that some Parish Councils had received presentations from MANY.
- It was noted that Rishi Sunak MP had received a copy of the statement and would be responding accordingly.
- A Member stated that, having spoken to Planning Officers at the North Yorks Moors Authority, he had been advised that the erection of the masts was permitted development.
- It was emphasised that only one side of this issue had been presented to the Committee and further details should be awaited before passing judgement on the matter. Members agreed with this and would await the response to be provided to the questioner.
- It was stated that the emergency masts referred to were provided for use by the emergency services, were funded by the Home Office, and were permanent.

The clerk advised that a response to the issues raised would be sent directly to Mrs Corner, and that response would be circulated to members of the Committee. Members noted the statement and how it would be responded to.

## **99. County Council's Petition Scheme – Gilling West footpath and cycleway**

The Clerk reported that a petition submitted in relation to this issue contained 500 signatures or more and was, therefore, scheduled for debate at this meeting of the area constituency committee.

The petition organiser, Janette Povey, who had also submitted a public question to the previous meeting on the same issue (Minute No. 87 2019/20) was given five minutes to present the petition and the petition was then discussed by County Councillors. It was explained how the Committee could decide how to respond to the petition at this meeting, including:

- to take the action the petition requests;
- not to take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate;
- to commission further investigation into the matter, for example by a relevant committee; or
- where the issue is one on which the county council executive are required to make the final decision, the county council will decide whether to make recommendations to inform that decision.

As the issue was raised as a public question at the previous meeting, information had been obtained in response to that and was provided within the papers for the meeting. (Page 12)

The petition organiser would receive written confirmation of the decision of the Committee and would be published on the website.

Janette Povey outlined the following:-

“Thank you for inviting me back to speak to you about the proposed cycle and footpath between Gilling West and Richmond.

I am very much encouraged by the public response to the petition, which has gathered 763 signatures. These are almost exclusively from local people, some of whom have for at least three decades been asking for something to be done to improve safety on this short but dangerous stretch of road.

There is overwhelming support too from local leaders, including several members of this committee, who are offering to help get this scheme approved.

I note that the Richmond (Yorks) Area Constituency Committee aim to ‘improve the quality of life for people in their area by acting as a critical friend to policy makers and decision makers, enabling the voice and concerns of the public to be heard, and driving improvements in public services’.

This encourages me to think that we might find a way forward with this proposal. I certainly appreciate the opportunity to voice the concerns of Gilling West villagers and Richmond townsfolk, the people who would benefit the most.

I thought that Councillor Yvonne Peacock made a very sensible suggestion at the last meeting. She said that there should be a list of schemes already planned and prepared so that as government funding became available the council would be in a position to quickly respond with a bid for funding.

The local transport planning team was asked to give a detailed report to this committee. I read it with interest. I am just a member of the public. I had never heard of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) before reading the report. I requested sight of it as I am at a loss as to why the Gilling to Richmond route isn’t in such a document, considering how long the public have been asking for it. How can we be added to the plan?

In the Department of Transport’s technical guidance for local authorities it explains how local authorities should be assessing the number of cyclists and walkers they will need to cater for in the future. (Ref: 5.18) It says... ‘**Medium** flows of cyclists are forecast along desire lines that link to trip attractors such as schools, colleges and employment sites.’

Considering that **all** Richmonds schools are on Darlington Road, the nearest shop to Gilling West is on Gilling Road, and there are about 30 businesses along the B6274 that can **only** be accessed from that road, can you please change your assessment of potential usage from ‘very low’ to ‘medium’, in line with government guidance?

North Yorkshire County Council states that they intend to develop and adopt an LCWIP for each of the principal towns in the county. The aim of these is to identify the main cycle and walking improvements in a town to enable the county council to bid for government funding and/or to secure funding contributions from developers. This is **exactly** what we need!

I note that the only towns with plans so far are Harrogate area, Scarborough, Skipton area, Malton area, Northallerton, and Catterick. Dare I presume that Richmond will be included as a principle town? If so, when will the plan be drawn up, and how do we get this scheme onto it? The local support is evident, and it would be democracy in action.

How current is the data in the report? At the moment there is overwhelming public support for safe cycling and walking routes, and government incentives for encouraging walking and cycling.

No one can use this route safely at the moment, but many people want to be able to walk more and cycle more, and incorporate these activities into everyday short journeys. It is true that we are a rural location, but as Councillor Bryn Griffiths said at the last meeting, North Yorkshire is a rural county. Small rural road schemes need to be considered, -giving help to rural communities who need connectivity to nearby towns. I am taking this up with North Yorkshire Transport Planning Team, and I urge them not just to consider cycle paths in areas where they would be easy and cheap to construct, but to think about the more challenging, but more dangerous routes.

I urge you to please consult with the public. Find out what they want. Make it possible for cycling and walking to be an easy option for short journeys. It will get used!

It is worth highlighting that the transport planning team may be using old data. Councillor Stuart Parsons (Richmond) implores me to ask for strong and meaningful testing on road speeds, and I would add accident data and road usage data to this request. He says that the police rely on data collected in 2015. I appreciate that traffic flow is not normal during lockdown.

There are so many options for improving safety on this stretch of road, not all of them are expensive options. May I ask, did the planning transport team do a site visit? Did they walk along this road? Did they feel safe doing so?

Here's what we are asking for... a distinct cycle path and footpath that follows the road but keeps separation between motorised vehicles and other road users, much like the path at Longwood Bank in Richmond. A first step would be to be included in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans.

I would be happy to work directly with local councillors and highways agencies to plan options for a proposed route. Are there any members of this committee who would work with me, and others, to push this scheme forward?

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to reinforce the aims of our petition."

Members discussed the presentation and the following issues were highlighted:-

- County Councillors Yvonne Peacock, Helen Grant and Angus Thompson offered to assist Janette Povey with consideration of how to develop the project further, providing local knowledge and process information to ensure that a scheme was ready to be enabled should funding become available.
- Members welcomed the presentation and considered that the proposal would be of benefit to the local community.
- A Member highlighted the process for cycleway schemes and emphasised the need for the project to be fully scoped and planned, before being submitted for consideration.
- A note of caution was outlined by a Member in relation to the number of similar schemes competing for limited funding in North Yorkshire, and the length of time that it could take for the project to come to fruition. He suggested that alternative sources of funding be investigated for the project. In response Ms Povey stated that the project had been discussed for approximately 30 years, and considered that all funding possibilities had been explored, therefore, she was looking to the County Council for support for the project.

### **Resolved –**

That the Members identified provide further assistance to Janette Povey in respect of the project outlined.



## 100. North Northallerton Infrastructure and Development Project – Bridge Update

Members considered the written update provided by NYCCs Project Manager for the site, Pam Johnson, which gave details of the development of the bridge over the railway line.

The following issues were raised by Members:-

- A Member welcomed the report and the progress being made on the development of the bridge. Following on from the report to the previous meeting he asked that it be ensured that the following issues be addressed, if they had not already been:

The flooding on the A684 Stokesley Road;

The signage at the roundabout by the garage on the A684 advising the contractors of the correct route into the site;

Warning signs relating to the potential for ice along the A684, particularly between the stretch likely to flood and the new roundabout.

- A Member sought clarification in respect of the expected completion date for the bridge. In response it was stated that the current completion was expected in Autumn 2021, but regular work was taking place on the project delivery programme and this could be revised. It was noted that work on the structure of the bridge would not take place until Easter 2021, with the approach embankment work taking place in the meantime. The contractors and Network Rail continued to work closely together to ensure targets were being met. The Member noted that there had been some complications with the bridge development and sought to allay local fears that the project would not be completed, suggesting that providing a completion date may not be helpful to the situation. It was emphasised that the bridge would be completed and would ensure that the available funding was utilised within the timeframe identified. When the bridge is completed the route would need to be thoroughly tested before it can be used by traffic, being the first of its type to be developed, therefore, there will be a time lapse between the completion of the bridge and the route opening. The importance of the route was acknowledged with the opportunity provided to divert traffic away from Northallerton Town Centre. The Member welcome the reassurances regarding the completion of the project. He noted that signs near to the site provided details of a website relating to the project and wondered whether this covered the whole project or just the bridge. He also suggested that further communication should be provided in respect of the signs as these had been erected during the current lockdown and were unlikely to have been seen by many people. The position re publicising the website was acknowledged and further efforts would be made to enhance this. It was noted that the website related specifically to the bridge aspect of the project.

### **Resolved –**

That the report, and updates provide, be noted with the action outlined undertaken accordingly.

## 101. Healthy Child Programme – Consultation

North Yorkshire County Council, in partnership with Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust, was proposing a new model for Health Visiting and School Nursing Services (the Healthy Child Programme) in the County. In respect of this a consultation document was attached as an Appendix to the report provided, together with a survey which posing various questions on which views/comments were sought as part of the consultation.

Public Health consultant, Victoria Ononeze, from the County Council's Health and Adult Services Directorate introduced the report and respond to any questions from Members.

She provided a presentation detailing the following:-

- The Healthy Child Programme
- Current Service – 0-6 years Health Visiting – 5 Mandated Contracts
- Current Service – 5-19 years Nursing - Health Reviews
- Funding context
- Proposed changes – 0-5
- Proposed changes – 5-19
- Service Timeline
- Consultation
- Consultation questions

The public consultation was taking place between 26 October 2020 to 4 January 2021 with a series of online events planned. In addition, the Healthy Child Programme Team was welcoming the opportunity to speak to any existing meetings or groups which would add value to the consultation process. There was also an online survey.

Any comments which the Committee wished to make could be fed into the meeting of the Scrutiny of Health Committee on 18 December 2020.

Members highlighted the following issues:-

- A Member raised concerns that under the revised proposals mothers with new born children would not be seen at home until between 10 and 14 days after the birth, and, potentially, then not until between 8 and 10 weeks after that. She considered that this was a vital time for new mothers, and been seen as soon and as often as possible after the birth was vital to their wellbeing. She noted that this could be particularly important for new mothers from service families, whose partners often worked away for long periods. In response it was noted that the proposals were based on national guidelines, however, new mothers would be monitored by Health Visitors prior to them leaving hospital, and should there be any concerns, additional monitoring would be put in place. There was also an awareness of the specific needs of service families. The member emphasised the vulnerability of new mothers in the initial two weeks.
- It was asked what feedback had been provided by schools in respect of the removal of a number of services currently provided such as sexual health advice, counselling, etc. In response it was stated that there had been little response to the consultation from schools as yet, however, there was some anxiety in terms of the provision of these services, and alternative providers were being considered to deliver these services at places where young people gather. Work was being undertaken alongside youth services to explore how services can be delivered appropriately.
- A Member raised concerns regarding the extra burden that may be placed on GPs through the cuts to services currently provided to schools and asked whether they had been targeted as part of the consultation. He also considered that Parish and Town Councils should be directly consulted, together with older children, as they would be most directly affected by the changes. In response it was stated that talks were being held with GPs who had raised concerns regarding the additional impact on them that could result from the proposals. Consideration would be given to specific consultation with parish and Town Councils. Work was taking place alongside youth services to obtain the views of older children
- Concern was raised that consultations with parents of the 0-5 years age range appeared to be moving more towards on-line or telephone, and it was emphasised that often face to face contact was the most effective method of communication with the parents of younger children. In response it was emphasised that the services were aware of the risks and carried out risk assessments to determine how specific parents should be contacted, with face to face engagement undertaken where appropriate, as it was recognised that this was important.
- It was suggested that a nominated single telephone number should be identified that parents could contact whenever they needed advice however old their child was, to provide peace of mind, and to make it simpler for advice to be provided. In response it was noted that all the services identified were available to parents, however, it was emphasised that this should be

a single point of contact rather different telephone numbers. In response it was stated that Compass Reach provide a one contact point, wrap around service for young people and their parents, although their services related mainly to older children. A system was being developed that would ensure that finding assistance, for parents and children, would be easier, with no gaps in service provision. As there would be no School Nurse provision in the proposed programme a framework of support and assistance would be provided.

- A Member raised concerns regarding the onus of identifying children's issues becoming the responsibility of teachers under the proposed programme. In response it was stated that it was recognised that removing School Nurses would be a difficult issue and schools would be provided with an information resource pack to assist them with addressing this.
- It was asked how vulnerable parents were assisted with access to services. In response it was stated that within the 0-5 age group Health Visitors would continue to identify needs and make referrals to the appropriate services, and would ensure that early intervention remained in place. Schools would assist with identifying appropriate services for older children through the information resource packs.
- It was acknowledged that no alternative resource was planned to replace School Nurses other than the information packs. It was emphasised that savings in the region of £750k were required and these had resulted in alternative service provision being suggested for the 5-19 age group to protect early intervention. It was asked that further details be provided to the Committee in respect of how much would be saved by the removal of School Nurses and it was stated that consideration would be given to this.
- A Member welcomed the comprehensive presentation provided on this issue. She encouraged Members to ensure that all those that would be affected by the proposals took part in the consultation, and to share the consultation details on social media. Victoria Oneneze thanked Members for their responses and feedback.

#### **Resolved –**

That Victoria Oneneze be thanked for her presentation, the contents of which be noted, and Members encourage those affected to take part in the consultation taking place in respect of the proposed Healthy Child Programme.

#### **102. Schools educational achievement and finance (including update on Northallerton College)**

Considered –

The report of the Corporate Director Children and Young People's Services updating Members on the local educational landscape, educational achievement and the financial challenges which affect schools in the Richmond Constituency Committee area. Andrew Dixon (Strategic Planning Manager, Education and Skills); ; Julie Pattison (Principal Education Adviser); Nikki Joyce (Head of SEN and Disability Services); Howard Emmett (Assistant Director, Strategic Resources); and Sally Dunn (Head of Finance – Schools and Early Years) attended the Meeting to assist Members with their consideration of this item. The report detailed the following:-

##### **Local educational landscape**

Summary of schools' status – October 2020

School standards

School Ofsted judgements

##### **Attainment overall**

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile



Key Stage 2

Key Stage 4

Key Stage 5

Not in education, employment or training

### **Fixed-term and Permanent Exclusions**

Fixed-term exclusion incidents

Permanent exclusions

### **Special Education Needs and Disabilities**

Reshaping of SEN Provision in Richmond over the 2019/20 Academic Year

Targeted Mainstream Provision

SEN Statistics for Constituency Area

### **School Finance**

Schools in Financial Difficulty – the countywide position

School Projections - Based on May 2020/21 Start budgets

Funding

Schools in Financial Difficulty – Richmond

### **Planning school places**

School sustainability

Collaborative working

Pupil rolls – current and future

Planning Areas and forecast surplus/shortfall school places

The following issues and points were raised during a discussion of the report:-

- It was asked whether there had been delays to the work required to re-open the School site for Northallerton School and Sixth Form College in the currently unused school facilities and what had caused these. In response it was stated that the project was funded through the Education and Skills Funding Agency, as an Academy Trust, and although there was an awareness of a delay, the reasons for that were not clear. Another Member stated that she had been contacted by the Trust's Chief Operating Officer and had been advised that there had been initial issues but the contractors were now on site and the school was expected to transfer sites in September 2021.
- It was clarified that the OFSTED judgements referred to in the report included all the schools for the Richmond Constituency. A Member raised concerns regarding the current position in respect of the judgements for Secondary schools in the area. In response it was stated that the concerns were shared by officers and work was taking place behind the scenes to try and improve that position. It was noted that further work was being undertaken within schools in relation to this, however, it had

been difficult of late due to the closure of schools because of the pandemic. It was noted that it was a mixture of maintained schools and Academies that were affecting these figures.

- It was asked whether the facilities within the new North Northallerton Primary School would be made available to the public. In response it was noted that the specification for applications for a Multi Academy Trust had recently been published, and clear intention is that the school's facilities would be made available to the public through the chosen Trust.
- A Member referred to the closure of Arkengathdale School due to low numbers of pupils and emphasised the need to work alongside the National Park Authorities to ensure appropriate homes were being built and provided in rural and deeply rural areas to ensure schools remained viable. It was emphasised that the development of affordable housing in all areas was also required to ensure that younger families moved into areas, keeping the numbers of children using local schools at a sustainable level.
- A Member asked whether the school places detailed within the report related to actual figures.. In response it was stated that the numbers were a mixture of actuals and forecasts, and included an allowance where planning permission had been granted for residential development, but not for as yet unapproved Local Plan proposals.

#### **Resolved –**

That the officers be thanked for their report, the content of which be noted, together with the issues raised during the discussion.

#### **103. Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation – Implications for ACC**

The Leader of the Council provided a verbal update in respect of proposals for Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation in North Yorkshire, highlighting the following:-

- An outline submission for a single unitary Local Authority in North Yorkshire had been developed, and the final submission would be sent to Central Government on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2020.
- Since the debate, and agreement to submit this proposal, at the November County Council meeting, a number of issues had been developed as part of the bid including the Planning Function, the constitution of overview and scrutiny and housing.
- The principle of “double devolution” was embedded into the bid, with the possibility of enhanced an role and powers for Parish and Town Councils, Neighbourhood Forums and the Area Constituency Committees.
- Whereas there had been some doubt expressed regarding the experience and competency of Parish Councils to undertake an enhanced role, the Leader emphasised the vast amount of experience operating at that level, and the benefits that could be brought to the local community, citing Bedale Town Council as an excellent example of this in operation. It was emphasised that there was no compulsion for extra duties to be taken on by Parish Councils if they did not want these.
- Neighbourhood Forums were important as they brought all services together to be held to account by the public.
- In respect of the Area Constituency Committees, consideration would be given to how they would be utilised within the local democratic process, with an opportunity provided to enhance powers and decision-making. Members will be invited to provide details of how these could be developed before the final submission of the proposal.

A discussion of the matters was undertaken by Members and the following issues and points were raised:-

- It was noted that some of the District Councils had substantial reserves and it was asked how these would be allocated should the proposals be accepted, as it was felt unfair that these should be utilised in another area. In response the Leader stated that the reserves held by the District Councils would be allocated to the new Authority under the proposals, however, he considered it appropriate that these would be allocated in the area where they were accrued. A Shadow Board and Governance arrangements would be in place and it was expected that major projects, such as the Hambleton Crematorium, would be able to utilise this funding through those arrangements. County Councillor Dadd, Executive Member for Finance, and present at the meeting, emphasised that this was not an opportunity for the County Council to obtain additional reserves, as some were intimating, as the total level of reserves held would only allow the new Authority to operate for two days. He stated that the new Authority would look to provide a fair allocation of resources to all local communities but geographically areas would still be separated, with resources allocated accordingly.
- A Member stated that it would be beneficial for Members to take account of other local authorities that had become unitary authorities to benefit from their experiences. In response the Leader stated that there had been close links with both Cornwall and Buckinghamshire unitary authorities in respect of this, which had been extremely helpful in the process to date.
- The Leader highlighted the timeline for the process from this point, noting that the Government would provide a decision on whether the two proposals were valid (2 unitary authorities with an east/west split or a single unitary authority) early in the new year, with a consultation process then following to determine the way forward.
- A Member raised concerns that the Neighbourhood Forums may be disbanded in their current format under the new proposals. The Leader provided reassurance that it was intended that these carry on should the single countywide proposal be accepted.
- It was noted that within the “double devolution” proposals, Parish Councils would be able to take control of vehicle parking processes within their local areas.
- It was stated that documents were being produced to show how functions would be transferred from District Councils to the new Authority, including the Planning function and Council Housing. In terms of housing it was noted that unless the District Council had previously transferred their stock to a Housing Association, this would transfer directly to the new Authority. The management of the housing stock, in the future, would subsequently be determined by the Members of the new Authority. A Member stated that some housing tenants had raised concerns that the transfer may adversely affect them. Reassurances were provided that there would be no adverse effects for tenants resulting from this process. A Member recalled concerns being expressed by tenants in relation to the transfer of local authority housing stock to a Housing Association, but the transfer had resulted in improved housing, services and facilities.
- A Member noted that Local Plans were currently developed and produced at District Council level and wondered how the new arrangements would take account of these and whether they would be amalgamated into a single Plan. In response it was stated that Local Plans would continue to be developed on a geographical basis the boundaries of which would be determined by the new Authority before eventually being amalgamated into a single Plan. In the interim reliance would be placed on the existing Local Plans developed by District Councils. It was noted that there was likely to be a lengthy period before a single Plan could be developed. Area Constituency Committees would be at the forefront of the Local Plan process.
- The Leader expressed his disappointment in recent press coverage of the reorganisation process, whereby a recent press release had indicated that there was 92% support for the East/West split Authorities in Richmondshire, with similar figures outlined for Harrogate and Scarborough. However, he had subsequently discovered that the published results had been based on a very small survey

(between 29 and 31 response in total for each area) and considered the press statements to be misleading. He emphasised that the issue was not for the public to be directed by politicians, but for them to be given the facts and make informed decisions based on those.

**Resolved –**

That the issues raised be noted.

**104. Work Programme**

Considered -

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) providing a Work Programme for Members to consider, develop and adapt.

Information regarding the current Scrutiny Work Programme was also provided for Members to consider in terms of developing the Committee's Work Programme overall.

It was noted that Members were invited to identify issues for inclusion in the Work Programme outside of the meeting and inform the Clerk accordingly.

It was noted that Members had also been invited to undertake an additional meeting to consider the proposals for the County Council Budget 2020/21, with Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 2pm suggested.

**Resolved -**

- (i) That the Work Programme be updated to reflect the following additional items for the next meeting:

Further data on the removal of School Nurses  
Flooding leading to raw sewage on the streets – Melsonby

- (ii) That Members be contacted to determine whether an additional meeting to consider the proposals for the County Council Budget 2020/21, on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 2pm, be arranged.

**105. Next Meeting**

**Resolved -**

That the next scheduled meeting of the Area Constituency Committee would take place on Wednesday 24 March 2021 at 10am – to be held remotely via Microsoft TEAMS, subject to the outcome of minute no 104 (ii), above.

The meeting concluded at 12:25pm.  
SML