

## North Yorkshire County Council

### Skipton and Ripon Area Constituency Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Skipton and Ripon Area Constituency Committee held on 6 September 2019, commencing at 11.00am, at Ripon Community House, Ripon.

#### Present:-

County Councillors Margaret Atkinson, Philip Barrett, Mike Chambers MBE, Michael Harrison, Robert Heseltine, David Ireton, Stanley Lumley, Stuart Martin MBE, Patrick Mulligan, Gill Quinn and Andy Solloway.

County Council Officers: Daniel Harry (Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager), Barrie Mason (Assistant Director Highways, Business and Environmental Services), David Kirkpatrick (Traffic Engineering, Business and Environmental Services), Robert Ling (Technology and Change Managing Assistant Director) and Richard Webb (Corporate Director of Health and Adult Social Services).

Attending: County Councillors Carl Les (Leader) and Don Mackenzie (Executive member for highways, road and rail transport, public transport; broadband, mobile phones; public rights of way).

Others present: James Somers (work experience student), a member of the press and three members of the public

County Councillor David Chance who is not a member of the committee but regularly attends as Executive member for Area Constituency Committees gave his apologies.

#### 41. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors Richard Welch.

#### 42. Minutes

Daniel Harry noted an outstanding action relating to the presentation on unpaid carers, specifically the request for committee members to consider whether there are any specific lines of enquiry that need to be included in the committee work programme that relate to unpaid carers and the support that is provided by North Yorkshire County Council.

#### Resolved -

- a. That the Minutes of the meeting of the Skipton and Ripon Area Constituency Committee held on 30 May 2019, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

#### 43. Any Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 44. Public Questions or Statements

There was a Public Statement made by Simon Peach on behalf of the Community Action Group, Clapham Primary School. The full text is as below:

Good morning.

I'm Simon Peach, and I'm part of the Community Action Group which has been supporting Clapham School governors in delivering a Recovery Plan for the School.

At your meeting in Settle on the 30 May you asked to be updated on progress with the delivery of the Recovery Plan for Clapham School in the future. I am pleased to report that tremendous strides have been made:

Firstly, the Community Action Group and Friends of Clapham School have started a very successful playgroup for pre-school children and their parents and carers. These are children whose parents we now hope will look at Clapham school as their first choice for early years education.

Secondly, thanks to the hard work of the Education team, we have a new Head of School, Adam Kay and an Executive Head, Mathew Atkinson, under an agreement the officers have brokered with the Priestley Academy Trust in Bradford.

The new leadership has been working very effectively with Governors over the summer break and has reached out to the Community Action Group for help in several areas. The leadership has a genuine, can-do attitude and this has reinvigorated support from the community. So, thank you to Judith Kirk and her officers for making this happen.

Thirdly, the Governing Body has been effectively reconstituted with the resignation of the former Chairman and four other governors. New, experienced governors have been found including members of the Community Action Group and, as with the leadership, a can-do attitude now exists. Again, the officers are thanked for finding a high-calibre governor from a Nursery school, who will be mentoring the Clapham Governing Body, and for commissioning a review of governance that will underpin its future effectiveness.

Fourthly, the school has new teachers for both classes and they too have been working over the summer holiday to refresh the classrooms and get ready for the new term.

Fifthly, an overhaul of the school perimeter and other actions have been carried out to improve the environment from a safeguarding perspective.

Finally, the community has pulled together to improve the appearance of the school so that years of poor maintenance have been partly addressed.

There is one matter where the support from the community group has slipped in terms of timing. The Governing Body has written to the Community Action Group and asked us to wait for a while before the wraparound care starts that we have committed to support. This before and after-school care, together with the early years provision, that we had hoped would start this month, would be risky whilst the new team is concentrating on improvements in teaching, behaviour and safeguarding. Nonetheless, the community is ready to help, as soon as the time is right, so that current families benefit, and potential families are not put off from applying to Clapham.

All the changes listed above have happened in the light of two events: the closure consultation and an Ofsted inspection that happened in June.

The history of the closure proposal is well known and does not need to be repeated here. The outcome of the Ofsted report is being communicated to parents today and the community will soon be able to read it for themselves on the Ofsted website.

Expectations are realistic, after all the likelihood that the school would remain outstanding was unambiguously dismissed in the public document that accompanied

the closure consultation. The wholesale changes made over the summer have also, perhaps, influenced expectations as to what the inspection outcome will be. When next we update this meeting, we will know what impact the Ofsted report has had, given all the changes that have happened since the inspection was carried out, and how that affects the ongoing support from the Community Action Group.

Of course, we hope and expect that the hard work done by Judith and her team, the new leadership and staff together with a more effective Governing Body reassures parents and that the vigorous improvements we have seen to date are gathering pace.

Simon Peach Community Action Group, Clapham

The Chairman, County Councillor Mike Chambers MBE, thanked Mr Peach for his Statement and asked committee members for any comments.

County Councillor David Ireton thanked the Community Action Group for all of their work and said that he looked forward to the return of the school to being judged outstanding by OFSTED.

County Councillor Patrick Mulligan thanked Mr Peach for attending, noted the progress that had been made and the commitment of the local community to make the school a success. He said that there was still a long way to go but that he looked forward to the school being a success.

County Councillor Carl Les congratulated the Community Action Group on what they had achieved. He said that the Council never took a decision to close a school lightly and that they wanted to provide what help they could to make it a success.

#### **Resolved -**

- a. That an update on progress with the delivery of the Recovery Plan for Clapham School be brought to a future meeting of the committee.

#### **45. North Yorkshire Digital Strategy**

Considered -

A report by Robert Ling, Technology and Change Managing Assistant Director, North Yorkshire County Council regarding the North Yorkshire Digital Strategy.

The report was presented by Robert Ling and the key points are as summarised below:

- Digital technology can be used to support communities and enable people to live independently in their own home
- The work being done in Sleights by Technology and Change, Health and Adult Services and the Stronger Communities Team has demonstrated what can be achieved with the introduction of relatively cheap, simple and widely available technologies
- The Council and others need to enable people to exploit the opportunities that new digital technologies provide
- Investment in digital skills is low locally, regionally and nationally and could be addressed
- The third sector have a key role to play in driving innovation but this role needs to be recognised and the sector supported
- There are ethical issues relating to the management and use of data that need to be addressed
- There are great opportunities to use data to predict demand and target investment and activity

- More services are being provided digitally and in a way that makes previously bureaucratic administrative processes simpler and easier to access and use
- The emphasis is firmly upon human-centred design and enabling people. Digital by default does not mean digital only.
- There are opportunities to invest more time, money and effort in predictive technologies and also in research and innovation more generally.

Robert Ling then updated the committee on the work being done by NYnet to improve access to high speed and superfast broadband. The key elements of this update are as summarised below:

- By the end of Phase 3 of the roll out over 300,000 properties will have access to superfast broadband or more than 90 per cent of homes and businesses in the county
- The cost of connecting properties has risen over the course of the programme as the work has moved into more rural areas that are less and less commercially attractive and viable
- The cost in Phase 1 to connect 158,000 premises was £170 per premise. The cost in Phase 2 to connect 16,500 premises was £480 per premise. The cost in Phase 3 to connect 14,000 premises is going to be around £1,400 per premise.
- It is anticipated that there will be 87% coverage by the end of Phase 3.
- The technology is developing all the time and new ways of accessing superfast broadband in the more rural areas may become available.
- Broadband speed is important but equally important is how we use it and how we maximise its potential.

The Chairman, County Councillor Mike Chambers MBE, thanked Robert Ling for the presentation and then invited committee members to comment.

County Councillor Michael Harrison noted that the aim was for 87% superfast broadband coverage by the end of Phase 3. He asked what was being done to address the remaining 13% shortfall in coverage.

In response, Robert Ling said that developments in technology, changes in government policy and changing commercial opportunities would all help increase the coverage towards 95%.

County Councillor Don Mackenzie said that the Council was committed to achieving 100% coverage. He also noted that the 87% coverage by the end of Phase 3 was the correct figure. Previously, the figure of 90% had been quoted but it had since come to light that a significant number of new homes had been built without superfast connections.

There followed a discussion about the importance of 'smart' mobile phones in enabling people to access on-line services and information.

A query was raised about whether more use of Skype could be made by council officers and members to reduce travel costs and improve efficiency.

Daniel Harry noted that, formal meetings of the Council could not legally be conducted by Skype. In England, the law states that Councillors must be physically present at a meeting in order to be able to participate in it.

The Chairman, County Councillor Mike Chambers MBE, queried whether the use of technology to help people live independently in their homes for longer had the unintended consequence of isolating people and depriving them of human contact.

In response, Robert Ling said that technology was only part of the answer. The work in Sleights had shown that there was a need to apply human-centred design principles and look at how technology could help reduce isolation.

County Councillor Patrick Mulligan said that a Rural Commission was being established that would bring a wide range of agencies and organisations together to look at what could be done to support the long term sustainability of rural communities.

#### **Resolved -**

- a. That the committee develop a more specific line of enquiry around how digital technologies can support the rural economy, specifically Small and Medium enterprises.

#### **46. Harrogate Congestion Study**

Considered -

The report of David Bowe, Corporate Director of Business and Environmental Services at North Yorkshire County Council regarding the Results of the Harrogate Congestion Study Public Engagement.

The Chairman, County Councillor Mike Chambers MBE, reminded committee members that they were being asked to comment upon the report as individual councillors and that there was no expectation that the committee would come to a consensus. The comment from committee members would then be recorded in the minutes and included in the report that is due to go to the Executive.

The report was presented by Barrie Mason, Assistant Director Highways, Business and Environmental Services at North Yorkshire County Council, as summarised below:

- The same report was taken to the Harrogate and Knaresborough Area Constituency Committee at their meeting on 28 August 2019
- The engagement exercise ran from 15 April 2019 for 12 weeks, in line with national best practice
- The engagement was looking at identifying ways in which the flow of traffic could be better managed to reduce congestion in and around Harrogate. The suggestions put forward as part of the engagement were looking to the medium and long term
- Work is already underway to improve the flow of traffic, with examples including: the Bond End Junction Improvement; the Harrogate Sustainable Transport Project; work on Starbeck Crossing; AppyParking and others
- The engagement used public meetings, leaflets, posters, highways signs, online materials, printed materials and media coverage
- A total of 15,510 surveys were completed and returned, which is a high number and very welcome. There were also 4,718 automated email responses from the from the Woodland Trust
- There had been some suggestion from some members of the public that road works had been timed to coincide with the consultation but this was not deliberate
- There had also been the suggestion from some members of the public that a relief road was going to be built as an alternative to the M62, which was never the case.

Barrie Mason then referred committee members to the Recommendations in the report.

The Chairman, County Councillor Mike Chambers MBE, then invited committee members to comment upon the report.

County Councillor Andy Solloway said that the engagement exercise had been comprehensive and resulted in a high level of response and comment. The engagement had clearly been about a suite of different options and had not been about the promotion of a relief road. He said that there was a broader issue of connectivity for people living in Craven and the southern Dales and the need to support the development of east-west strategic links.

County Councillor Stanley Lumley noted that work had been underway in and around Harrogate for a number of years to improve traffic flows. A recent example being the work at Bond End. He said that traffic congestion is not easy to solve as an improvement in one area can often have a knock on effect in another.

The Chairman invited County Councillor Don Mackenzie, Executive Member for highways and transport, to speak.

County Councillor Don Mackenzie said that the Council had never set out to build a relief road and the intention was always to present the public with a range of measures that would help improve traffic flow and access and then listen to what they said. He said that there would be no relief road at this time. County Councillor Don Mackenzie explained that nobody wanted to fetter the hands of future Councils as circumstances may change.

County Councillor Don Mackenzie said that he recognised the concerns around east-west connectivity and the need to support economic growth and development in the committee area.

County Councillor Don Mackenzie said that there were a range of environmentally sustainable transport measures that could be implemented and which were supported by Harrogate Borough Council. There would have to be, however, sufficient funding in place to ensure that they could be financially sustainable in the long term.

County Councillor David Ireton proposed the recommendations in section 11 of the report. This was seconded. There was a show of hands and there was unanimous support.

**Resolved -**

- a. That the results of the Harrogate and Knaresborough Congestion Study engagement be noted
- b. That comments of the committee members are incorporated into a future report to the Executive.

**47. Briefing on key strategic highways issues**

A629 Kildwick Roundabout

David Kirkpatrick, Traffic Engineering, Business and Environmental Services, North Yorkshire County Council gave a summary of what work had been undertaken to investigate traffic flows around the A629 Kildwick Roundabout. He said that he recognised that the interim findings did not necessarily concur with local views. As such, more investigatory work would be undertaken.

County Councillor Patrick Mulligan said that the problem was the length of time that the rail crossing was closed and that this needed to be raised again with Network Rail.

David Kirkpatrick confirmed that work was being done with Network Rail to see how the closure of the barriers could be managed in a way that enable a smoother flow of traffic over the rail level crossing.

County Councillor Philip Barrett said that any gains from reduced down time would be minimal as the rail line in question is going to be used with greater frequency as part of changes to the rail network locally.

The Chairman, County Councillor Mike Chambers MBE, noted that there was general agreement amongst committee members that widening of the road was not supported but that there were other interventions that could be made to improve traffic flow.

#### Kex Gill Diversion and A65 Coniston Aire Causeway

The Chairman, County Councillor Mike Chambers MBE, noted the reports and asked for any comments or queries from committee members. There were none.

#### **Resolved -**

- a. That a further update on work being done to improve traffic flow at the A629 Kildwick Roundabout be brought to a future meeting of the committee
- b. That the briefings on Kex Gill Diversion and A65 Coniston Aire Causeway be noted.

#### **48. Committee discussion with Rt Hon Julian Smith MP**

The local MP, the Rt Hon Julian Smith MP, had been invited to attend the committee meeting to enable a discussion about the constituency area and what more could be done to address pressing local issues, such as: the long term sustainability of rural communities; adult social care funding and the Green Paper; local government funding and the Fairer Funding Review. Unfortunately, urgent ministerial business in Northern Ireland meant that he was unable to attend.

Richard Webb, Corporate Director of Health and Adult Social Services, was in attendance to provide an update for members on adult social care funding and the long awaited Government Green Paper. The key elements of this update are as summarised below:

- It was noted that the government review of adult social care funding and the development of a Green Paper to stimulate discussion has not progressed. It was unlikely that any further progress would be made on this in the near future. As such, local authorities were left to do what they could locally to provide the highest quality care and support the market for residential care.
- The Spending Review would be key, in the short term, in ensuring that local authorities had sufficient funding to be able to deliver high quality social care services
- The key issue for the county is the relatively small number of care providers and the difficulties that are experienced in providing care packages in rural and sparsely populated areas
- The cost of residential care and nursing care placements is high and the market for home care is fragile
- The development of extra care schemes will help
- There is closer working with the NHS locally, both primary and secondary care, which will help meet need.

County Councillor David Ireton asked whether there was an update on the planned use of the former Ingleton school site.

In response, Richard Webb said that he would find out and contact County Councillor David Ireton directly.

**Resolved -**

- a. Thank Richard Webb for attending and providing an update on the issues associated with the delivery of adult social care services in the Skipton and Ripon Constituency area
- b. Daniel Harry to liaise with the MP Constituency Office to find another date that is convenient for the local MP to attend a meeting of the committee.

**49. Committee Work Programme**

Considered -

A report by Daniel Harry, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager, outlining the committee work programme.

Daniel Harry introduced the report and asked that Members review the Committee's work programme, taking into account the outcome of discussions on previous agenda items and any other developments taking place across the area.

There were a number of additions and amendments to the work programme agreed as below:

- Move the item on tourism and the links with economic development, which had been scheduled for 12 December 2019, to the meeting on 28 May 2020
- Add an item on the role that digital technology has to play in economic development in rural communities to the agenda for the meeting on 12 March 2020

The agenda for the next meeting of the committee on 12 December 2019 to be as follows:

- Progress with the delivery of the Recovery Plan for Clapham School - Clapham School Community Action Group
- Factors affecting the long term sustainability of schools in the Skipton and Ripon constituency
- The Rural Crime Strategy
- Update on progress with the re-opening of the Castleberg Community Hospital at Giggleswick
- Current coverage of the cycle network in North Yorkshire and plans for its development and expansion.

The committee agreed that the meeting at 10am on 12 December 2019 would be held in Ingleton, possibly at the community centre.

**Resolved -**

- a. That the committee work programme updated as outlined above.

**50. Other business which the Chairman agrees should be considered as a matter of urgency because of special circumstances.**

There was none.

The meeting concluded at 1:00pm.  
DH