

## North Yorkshire County Council

### Skipton and Ripon Area Constituency Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Skipton and Ripon Area Constituency Committee held on 13 January 2020, commencing at 2.00pm, at Ripon Community House, Ripon.

#### **Present:**

County Councillors Philip Barrett, Michael Harrison, David Ireton, Stanley Lumley, Patrick Mulligan and Gill Quinn.

County Council Officers: Daniel Harry (Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager) and Gary Fielding (Corporate Director, Strategic Resources).

Others present: Sgt Stuart Grainger (North Yorkshire Police), Trudy Balderson (Airedale NHS Foundation Trust), Michael Dyson (NHS Property Services), Lynne Scrutton (Airedale Wharfedale and Craven Clinical Commissioning Group).

#### **51. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors Margaret Atkinson, Mike Chambers MBE, Robert Heseltine, Stuart Martin MBE, Andy Solloway, Richard Welch and Robert Windass.

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

In the absence of County Councillor Mike Chambers MBE, County Councillor David Ireton chaired the meeting.

#### **52. Minutes**

Daniel Harry noted an outstanding action relating to the presentation on the North Yorkshire Digital Strategy at the September meeting of the committee, 'that the committee develop a more specific line of enquiry around how digital technologies can support the rural economy, specifically Small and Medium Enterprises'.

It was agreed that this matter would be discussed in greater depth under agenda item 8 – committee work programme.

#### **Resolved -**

- a. That the Minutes of the meeting of the Skipton and Ripon Area Constituency Committee held on 6 September 2019, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

#### **53. Any Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **54. Public Questions or Statements**

There were no public questions or statements.

## 55. Rural Crime Strategy

Considered -

A presentation by Sgt Stuart Grainger of the Rural Taskforce, North Yorkshire Police on rural crime, the impact that it has and what can be done to prevent it.

County Councillor David Ireton introduced the report, noting that committee members had previously expressed interest in understanding what was being done to tackle crime in rural areas.

The key points from the presentation are as summarised below:

- The NFU Mutual estimate that in 2019 rural crime cost the UK £49.9m. A copy of the 2019 NFU Mutual report is available here - <https://www.nfumutual.co.uk/farming/ruralcrime/>
- Rural crime can have a disproportionate impact upon victims and also can have a negative impact upon tourism and business
- There are 8,500 farms in North Yorkshire
- North Yorkshire Police work with five other Police Forces to tackle rural crime
- Much of the crime committed in rural areas of the county is believed to be committed by people coming into the county from other areas
- Often specific pieces of equipment are targeted, such as quad bikes
- There has been a rise in the number of animals being stolen and sold on
- The Police do a lot of work with farmers around prevention and target hardening, in an attempt to deter criminals
- The marking and tagging to key pieces of equipment also means that, when stolen, the equipment can be traced
- Rural Watch plays a key role in deterring crime in rural areas and also helping the Police respond effectively to incidences that have occurred
- There has been an increase in crimes against wildlife in North Yorkshire. This includes: hare coursing; deer poaching; badger baiting; and raptor persecution.
- Hare coursing often involves gangs from across the UK who trespass onto farmers' land. The trespass can result in a great deal of damage to fencing, hedges and fields as the gangs use 4x4 vehicles to access remote areas to undertake the hare coursing.

The Chairman, County Councillor David Ireton, thanked Sgt Stuart Grainger for the presentation and then invited committee members to comment.

County Councillor Michael Harrison asked for more information on livestock theft, how it happened and what was then done with the stolen animals.

In response, Sgt Stuart Grainger said that animals are often put to graze in remote fields and so were vulnerable to being stolen. A flock of sheep could easily be transported away in a van. Once stolen, they could be sold on to other farmers or to the illegal/unregulated meat trade. Both of these posed animal and public health risks as the animals would not go through the normal checks.

Sgt Stuart Grainger said that any sheep that were recovered were taken to a host farm where they could be cared for until the owner was found and all necessary health checks carried out.

A number of Councillors raised their concerns about the crimes committed against wildlife.

Sgt Stuart Grainger said that he did not understand why people would wish to persecute wild animals for what the perpetrators considered to be sport. He said that many of the gangs involved bet large sums of money on the outcome of hare coursing and badger baiting and could become aggressive and violent when challenged.

Sgt Stuart Grainger said that North Yorkshire Police had been involved in the national policing operation to protect raptors from persecution. Operation Owl aims to raise awareness amongst the public of what could be suspicious behaviour and then how to report anything that has been seen.

County Councillor David Ireton asked whether there was a role for Councillors as community leaders in helping to raise awareness of rural crime.

In response, Sgt Stuart Grainger said that it would be helpful if Councillors, when out and about in the local community, could make people aware of the support that the Police can provide. In particular, advice and support to farmers on target hardening.

County Councillor David Ireton asked whether the Police attended Parish Council meetings to raise awareness of the rural crime.

Sgt Grainger confirmed that he and his team went to see as many as they could.

Gary Fielding asked what members of the public should do if they see something odd or suspicious when in the countryside. He said that it was often difficult to know whether something was amiss or whether it was just local people going about their business.

Sgt Stuart Grainger said that there were a range of options, including the North Yorkshire Police 111 line and Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111. If it is believed that there is a crime underway and there are immediate concerns about safety, then people should always call 999.

#### **Resolved -**

- a. Thank Sgt Stuart Grainger for attending and presenting to the committee
- b. Daniel Harry to liaise with Sgt Stuart Grainger to see what sources of information are available for County Councillors, in their role as community leaders, so that they can effectively sign-post people and raise awareness about rural crime and how to prevent it and report it.

#### **56. Update on progress with the development of Castleberg Hospital, Giggleswick**

Considered -

The report of Lynne Scrutton (Airedale Wharfedale and Craven Clinical Commissioning Group), Trudy Balderson (Airedale NHS Foundation Trust) and Michael Dyson (NHS Property Services) regarding the operation of the newly refurbished Castleberg Hospital at Giggleswick.

The Chairman, County Councillor David Ireton, welcomed colleagues from the NHS to the meeting and introduced the item. He said how pleased he was that the hospital, which had been temporarily closed on 13 April 2017 due to significant problems with the building structure, had been extensively refurbished and then re-opened on 26 November 2019. County Councillor David Ireton said that most people in the area had expected the temporary closure to become a permanent closure.

The presentation was delivered by Lynne Scrutton (Airedale Wharfedale and Craven Clinical Commissioning Group), the key points of which are as summarised below:

- The committee had last been formally updated at the meeting in May 2019. Since then, a great deal of progress was made and the hospital was formally re-opened on 26 November 2019
- Prior to the formal opening, a public 'drop in' was held on 30 September 2019 and then the hospital opened for admissions from 7 October 2019
- The hospital has been fully refurbished and provides a setting in which the highest quality of care can be delivered
- There are 13 beds overall, allowing for the provision of single sex accommodation
- There are 10 beds dedicated to intermediate care, which can involve people being referred by their GP or people being transferred from hospital for a people of rehabilitation following surgery
- There is also the ability to provide end of life care
- In the past 3 months there have been a total of 39 admissions, with 11 direct from the community and 28 from hospital
- The average length of stay is 3 weeks and over 80% of people staying at the Castleberg then go home, having been assessed as to what level of support they will need there
- The Castleberg is a key part of the health and social care system in Craven, providing a 'set up step down' facility that enables focussed support and assessment
- The key to the success of the Castleberg has been the partnership approach undertaken by a range of agencies, organisations and community groups.

The Chairman, County Councillor David Ireton, then invited committee members to comment upon the presentation.

County Councillor Michael Harrison asked where referrals to the Castleberg that were from the community came from. Also, when people were discharged from the hospital, what social care support was put in place.

Trudy Balderson said that referrals could come direct from a GP or from a community health or social care team. She said that referrals from Airedale Hospital had to come through a single point and that the use of the 'step down' approach meant that long term, additional care was often not needed and that people could be supported in the community for longer.

Trudy Balderson said that the Airedale Hospital was working closely with social care teams to ensure that people did not stay in hospital any longer than they needed to and that people only received the appropriate level of care. She recognised that this often needed a change in approach from health and social care workers who at times and for the best of intentions continued to maintain intensive packages of care when they were not needed.

County Councillor David Ireton queried whether the funding for the lift to the first floor had been obtained.

Michael Dyson said that the potential use of the first floor without having a lift in place was currently under review. Without access via an external lift, the use would be limited to office-based work and could not be used as a community venue as previously envisaged. He said that discussions were underway with North Yorkshire County Council adult social care services to see whether the first floor could be used as a base for social care staff.

County Councillor David Ireton asked whether any lessons had been learned from the closure, refurbishment and re-opening of the Castleberg Hospital that could be shared with other health and social care commissioners and providers in the county.

Lynne Scrutton said that the Clinical Commissioning Group had learned a great deal about public engagement and public consultation.

Michael Dyson said that NHS Property Services had learned lessons about the maintenance of the properties, particularly older sites, which would be applied across the NHS property portfolio.

County Councillor Philip Barrett said that he and other members of the Council's Scrutiny of Health Committee had not expected the Castleberg to re-open. It was widely assumed that the temporary closure would inevitably become a permanent closure, much as had been the case with the Lambert Community Hospital in Thirsk. He said that the efforts of the commissioners and providers to engage with people locally and to then come up with a practical and sustainable solution were noted and he congratulated them on what they had achieved.

County Councillor Philip Barrett proposed that a final update be provided to the committee in 12 months' time on use of the hospital and patient outcomes. There unanimous support for this.

Daniel Harry said that a short update would be provided for the meeting of the Council's Scrutiny of Health Committee on 13 March 2020. He said that the scrutiny of the Castleberg Hospital had been delegated down to the Area Constituency Committee 18 months ago.

Gary Fielding suggested that the update in 12 months' time could also include a review of the local public estate, in particular the future use of the former Settle Middle School site.

#### **Resolved -**

- a. Thank Lynne Scrutton and her colleagues for all of the work that they had done to refurbish and re-open the Castleberg Hospital
- b. Lynne Scrutton to bring a final update to the committee meeting on 17 December 2020, which looks at: volume of use; patient outcomes; any developments in service delivery; and links with social care
- c. Gary Fielding or Jon Holden to bring a report on the one-public estate in the Skipton and Ripon ACC area to the committee meeting on 17 December 2020, with a particular focus on plans for Settle Middle School
- d. Daniel Harry to send a briefing note to the Scrutiny of Health Committee updating them on the excellent progress that has been made with the development and re-opening of the hospital.

#### **57. Council Annual Budget briefing**

Considered -

The presentation of Gary Fielding (Corporate Director, Strategic Resources) on the Council's annual budget, with a focus on financial pressures in the area covered by the committee.

Gary Fielding delivered the presentation, with key points as summarised below:

- The Council has been through 10 years of austerity and seen a 40% cut in the overall budget over the period
- The Council has worked hard to increase efficiency, reduce waste and adopt new ways of working making savings of £172 million
- The focus throughout has been upon protecting the front line

- The central government settlement is made on an annual basis, which can make it difficult to plan ahead over a meaningful time period
- Central government is providing an increasing amount of 'one-off' funding, which for 2020/21 amounts to £61.8m. The 'one-off' funding is welcomed but each year it is uncertain as to how much will be awarded to North Yorkshire. This then creates a difficult position where in any given year there may be a budgetary shortfall of approximately £60m.
- During the period of austerity, there has been a growth in demand for services and increasing costs, particularly in the areas of adult social care and SEND. This amounted to approximately £14m in 2019/20
- Council Tax increases are welcome but do not provide the scale of funding needed to fill the gap. An increase of 4.99% in 2019/20 led to an increase in revenue to the Council of £1.3m.
- Compliance with Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations may have a negative impact upon those high schools that provide their own transport for pupils, such as Nidderdale, Upper Wharfedale and Ermysteds
- LEA maintained schools continue to face significant financial pressure in the area. This tends to affect the smaller secondary schools.
- At present, 71% of schools in the area projecting to be in deficit by March 2022. The financial position of academies is not always known.
- It is increasingly challenging to find providers of residential and nursing care in the area. Where there is provision, then it is often above the Council's approved rates, which creates an additional cost pressure
- A local contribution of £4.95 million is to be made to the development of the Kex Gill re-alignment.

The Chairman, County Councillor David Ireton, then invited committee members to comment upon the presentation.

County Councillor Philip Barrett asked whether a mild winter would yield significant one-off savings in the winter maintenance budget.

Gary Fielding said that if the relatively mild weather continued, then the Council would expect savings of about £1 million.

County Councillor Michael Harrison queried whether the UK exit from the EU combined with the introduction of a new living wage would have a negative impact upon the social care workforce.

Gary Fielding said that the social care workforce in the area was not made up of a large proportion of EU citizens. The real challenge is likely to be around the increase in the living wage, which may make it more difficult for some private sector providers to keep running as a going concern as it significantly increases costs. There is also an ongoing issue as pay in social care is relatively low and people can earn higher wages elsewhere in a less demanding (albeit rewarding) job, such as in a supermarket.

#### **Resolved -**

- a. Thank Gary Fielding for attending the meeting and presenting on the Council's annual budget.
- b. Note the key issues identified, particularly the demand-led financial pressures in the area.

## **58. 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:

- Discuss with the Clapham School Action Group an appropriate time for the item updating on progress with the delivery of the Recovery Plan for Clapham School to be scheduled
- Move the item on the role that digital technology has to play in economic development in rural communities to the agenda for the meeting on 28 May 2020.

**Resolved -**

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

**59. 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 4:05pm.

DH