

North Yorkshire County Council

Thirsk and Malton Area Constituency Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at Ryedale Indoor Bowls Club, Scarborough Road, Norton on Wednesday 13 March 2019 at 10.00 am.

Present:-

County Councillors Val Arnold, Lindsay Burr MBE, Gareth Dadd, Keane Duncan, Caroline Goodrick, Janet Sanderson, Peter Sowray and Greg White.

Officers in attendance: Tim Coyne (Improvement Manager, Highways and Transportation, BES), Gail Chester (SEND Transport Manager), Paddy Chandler & Adele Wilson-Hope (Stronger Communities Delivery Managers), Melanie Carr, (Principal Democratic Services & Scrutiny Officer) & Hannah Bowls (Business Support Officer).

Apologies: County Councillors Robert Baker, Caroline Patmore, Helen Swiers and Roberta Swiers.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

24. Minutes of the meeting held 28 November 2018

Resolved –

That the Minutes of the previous meeting of the Thirsk & Malton Area Constituency Committee held on 28 November 2018, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

25. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of Interest at the meeting.

26. Public Questions or Statements

The Committee received one written public question from Mr Simon Thackray. In his absence, his question in relation to Agenda item 4, the Update on the Experimental 7.5T Weight Restriction at Norton Level Crossing, was read out at the meeting as follows:

In the minutes of the meeting of the Ryedale District Council Air Quality Steering Group, held on 16 January 2012 (in the presence of Richard Marr, North Yorkshire County Council's Area Highways Manager and others), Ryedale District Council's former Head of Housing and Economic Development, Julian Rudd's comments are recorded as follows:

"The improvements in Brambling Fields doesn't sort out the access issues at Musley Bank or Broughton Road... If HDV's [HGVs] are directed from the town centre there may need to be a restriction on HDV's [HGVs] on Highfield Road / Pasture Lane."

It is clear that Ryedale District Council and North Yorkshire County Council knew, at the design stage of the Brambling Fields junction upgrade scheme, that if the scheme was carried out in isolation, it was flawed. The architects of the project knew, as sure as night follows day, that the upgraded junction, together with its package of complementary measures (deemed 'critical' in order to facilitate the development aspirations of the Ryedale

Plan) would cause HGV traffic to re-route along Highfield Road and Pasture Lane, past two primary schools.

It should, therefore, come as no surprise to Councillor Duncan, or anyone else, that the safety of small children and other pedestrians is now being put at risk. Senior officers of both councils knew, at the outset, that HGV traffic would be forced to reroute onto these entirely unsuitable roads.

Nevertheless, the headline grabbing figures were the main prize! Both councils promised us a 33% reduction in traffic passing through Butcher Corner and improved pedestrian safety as a direct result of the £6 million pounds of our money that was spent on the Brambling Fields scheme. Neither of the so-called "required benefits of the scheme" has been delivered.

My question to members of the Thirsk and Malton Area Constituency Committee is as follows: Please will you, as our elected representatives, both as individuals and as a committee, call upon Ryedale District Council and North Yorkshire County Council to immediately plan, commence and complete the construction of new roundabouts onto the A64 at Musley Bank and Broughton Road, Malton. The safety and wellbeing of the residents of Ryedale, including the economic viability of many businesses in Ryedale, is now at risk as a direct result of the failure of both councils to carry out this essential work.

27. Update on the Experimental 7.5T Weight Restriction

Considered -

The report of NYCC's Area Highways Manager providing an update on the consultation responses post introduction of the experimental 7.5T weight restriction at Norton level crossing.

Tim Coyne, NYCC Improvement Manager, Highways and Transportation (BES) introduced the report detailing the impacts of the trial and the feedback received during the trial period.

Members noted the written response to the public question from Mr Simon Thackray, provided by Richard Marr NYCC Area Manager, Highways & Transportation (BES), which confirmed:

- The effects of the temporary HCV ban were currently being consulted upon and that the impact of the experimental order on Highfield Road and Pasture Lane would be considered when the consultation period ended.
- Unfortunately the construction of a new roundabout at Musley Bank and the construction of a new interchange on the A64 at Broughton Road did not appear on the County's or Highways England's short to medium term plans. However, officers were aware of the potential benefits and dis-benefits those improvements would bring and would consider them when looking at new planning applications and Local Plan issues.

Members also noted:

- The feedback from residents relating to damage to their properties as a result of HGVs travelling past, in particular, the detrimental effects on Highfield Road.
- Empty vehicles going over speed bumps caused greater issues
- The increased travel time and travel costs for HGVs associated with the diversionary routes.
- The detrimental impact on some villages e.g. Settrington, Scagglethorpe etc.
- Supermarket delivery vehicles were allowed to use Wentworth Street.
- The school entrance was to be re-located further down towards the old Malton end as part of the school refurbishment

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County Councillors Lindsay Burr and Keane Duncan both agreed the restrictions were not working in their present form and drew specific attention to the issues of pollution and safety on Highfield Road.

Members questioned how best to ensure the safety of pedestrians and school children if the restrictions remained in place, and what measures could be implemented to prevent Highfield Road from being used as a rat run.

County Councillor Keane Duncan stressed the original purpose of the restrictions was to improve air quality at Butcher Corner and queried whether there had been any change in air quality as a result of the ban, and what would happen at the end of the trial period.

In response, Tim Coyne NYCC's Area Improvement Manager, acknowledged there were no easy solutions to the issues at Highfield Road and Butcher Corner but accepted they needed addressing. He confirmed that Ryedale District Council were currently assessing the air quality figures gathered during the trial and that they had been asked to provide their expert opinion on whether any changes in air quality were due to the restrictions or the changes to the junctions. He also confirmed that Ryedale District Council had yet to provide their formal response to the consultation on the trial, and that as the experimental order could not be extended, a decision would need to be taken on the way forward.

County Councillor Keane Duncan stated his view that the trial needed to come to an end as it had not been successful and its impacts had been monumental.

Finally, it was noted that a further public consultation period would commence on 3rd May for a 3 week period, providing evidence of the effect of the HGV restriction and asking whether the ban should be lifted or made permanent. A further report would then be brought to the Committee at its next meeting in early July detailing the officer recommendations to be considered by the Corporate Director and Executive Members for Business and Environmental Services in late July 2019. County Councillor Gareth Dadd confirmed the Committee's views could be fed in to inform that decision.

County Councillor Caroline Goodrick thanked Mr Simon Thackray for his public question and gave him the opportunity to ask the following supplementary question:

At the Public Hearing on the afternoon of 25th September 2018, Ryedale District Council finally conceded that the Brambling Fields junction upgrade scheme, which cost the residents of Ryedale and North Yorkshire £6million pounds, and which was deemed 'critical' in order to facilitate large scale development in Malton and Norton as part of the Ryedale Plan, has failed to deliver the reductions in traffic movements through Butcher Corner on which the Plan depends.

When asked by the government appointed Planning Inspector to explain "the additional impact from the development proposed in the sites document, in terms of the impact on that junction", the officer replied: not once, not twice, but three times, with the words: "It is still over-capacity." Since I was the only member of the public present in the council chamber when this bombshell was dropped, I am grateful to the Planning Inspector for agreeing to my request that the Public Hearing sessions audio recordings be made available online. It is regrettable however, that despite my repeated requests to the Chief Executive of Ryedale District Council, transcriptions of the audio have not been made available. (If you have a hearing impediment you are being actively discriminated against.)

The recording transcript (made by me, Simon Thackray) begins at 0:57:41 of the audio file available on the ROC Local Plan Examination website. The contributors were; Mrs Jill Thompson (JT below) of Ryedale District Council and the government appointed Planning Inspector Mrs Caroline Mulloy. The public session formed part of the Examination of the local Plan Sites Document and Policies Map.

Despite the planning officer's statement (repeated three times) that Butcher Corner would "still be over capacity" as a result of additional proposed development in Malton and Norton, she was unable when pressed by the Planning Inspector, to quantify 'the extent of the damage'. The officer in charge of justifying the future developments in Malton and Norton could not say what the impact of the new development would be on the congestion at Butcher Corner.

I think it is time to question the sincerity of Ryedale District Council and North Yorkshire County Council, and ask if they can be serious about taking steps to reduce the traffic congestion in Malton at Butcher Corner, whilst they are simultaneously proposing to increase the level of development and local traffic which will by their own admission, cause the junction to remain "over-capacity" or get worse.

Members noted the additional information provided by Mr Thackray, and County Councillor Peter Sowray stated his view that the butcher Corner junction was over capacity. County Councillor Caroline Goodrick again thanked Mr Sowray for his contribution, and it was

Resolved -

- (i) That the report be noted;
- (ii) That at their July meeting, the Committee consider the analysis and recommendations arising from the trial and feed in their views to the report going to the Corporate Director & Executive Members in late July 2019.

28. SEND Transport Policy Update

Considered –

The report of the SEND Transport Manager providing an update on the implementation of NYCC's revised Home to School Transport Policy.

Gail Chester, the SEND Transport Manager introduced the report and provided a brief background to the reasons behind the changes and an overview of those changes, as agreed in May 2018.

Members noted:

- The policy now covered young people up to 25yrs old who had an Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP)
- Implementation was to be phased over 3yrs
- There had been no resulting impact on NEET
- 109 young adults had been impacted by the changes, and the changes in their needs following assessment
- The increase in parental transport allowance, bringing in in line with neighbouring Local Authorities
- The resulting savings

County Councillor Lindsay Burr queried the number of children and young people no longer accessing the transport and it was confirmed 70 post 16 and 70 post 19 students in total.

County Councillor Caroline Goodrick confirmed the care and due diligence taken when dealing with home to transport appeals.

County Councillor Gareth Dadd drew attention to the fears expressed at the time when the changes were being considered and confirmed that time had shown no evidence of the concerns raised. He also stated the County Council could be proud of the support that had been given to those who had struggled with the changes.

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County Councillor Janet Sanderson highlighted the positive impact of the changes e.g. the number of young people now accessing public transport who otherwise would not have, thereby opening them up to new opportunities.

County Councillor Lindsay Burr noted the positive impacts but gave thought to those people with lesser abilities or living in deprivation who may not feel able to voice their concerns. County Councillor Greg White agreed there may be some who do not feel they have the power or the energy to appeal, but agreed overall that it was important to focus public resources on those most in need.

Gail Chester outlined an example of the kind of support offered to those families who expressed concern at the changes, and County Councillor Caroline Goodrick confirmed that the appeals panel members were always careful in their assessment balancing all the issues in coming to a decision.

Resolved -

- (i) That the report be noted.

29. Stronger Communities

Considered –

A report of the Stronger Communities Delivery Managers for Hambleton, and Ryedale and North York Moors providing an introduction to the work of the Stronger Communities team in supporting partner organisations to delivery voluntary services in the Community.

The report gave an update on the stronger communities programme linked to the priority areas of transport and school readiness.

Members received a presentation from Ken Gill of Ryedale Community Transport, the key community transport provider in the district. The presentation provided an overview of their work which included providing transport solutions to isolated communities and groups, and individuals with special transport needs, with priority given to those attending medical appointments. In regard to the Volunteer car scheme, Members were impressed at the number of drivers volunteering their time and their commitment to the service, and noted:

- The breakdown of income sources e.g. 46% contract income and 29% grants
- The effect the loss of contracts would had on future delivery
- The increase in demand for services generated by:
 - growing elderly population
 - Patient transport changes (CCG cuts)
 - Reductions in Local bus services
 - Disbursement of specialisms with York Hospital Trust (Malton – Newcastle)
- The problems the provider would face in the future in continuing service delivery:
 - Reduced funding from County & District authorities
 - Dept of Transport changes
 - Removal of contract income
 - Continuing financial uncertainty.

Following a query from County Councillor Greg White, Ken Gill provided an overview of how the volunteer car scheme worked, and a breakdown of the costs involved in for use of an accessible vehicle for wheelchair use. It was noted that the service would benefit from having drivers and vehicles based in Pickering, Helmsley, Kirbymoorside etc, as it would reduce the number of dead miles.

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County Councillor Lindsay Burr provided examples of positive feedback from users, thanked Ken Gill for the services provided and passed on her congratulations for the recently won Duke of York Award.

County Councillor Val Arnold reiterated those thanks and congratulations.

Members then received a presentation from Pat Almond & Sally Burton of Thirsk Community Library which provided an overview of their offer to children and young people in the Thirsk area.

They noted the 29% slump in custom following the location move in 2015, and the steps taken to regain that custom, which included:

- Setting objectives to increase membership, active borrowers, community activity and awareness and support for the library
- Focusing on reasons for residents non-use of the library
- Addressing the myths about noise, fines, expectations and parents' concerns about time, toddlers, work, confidence re choosing books, not being library users themselves
- Formed a partnership approach with Thirsk Primary School to extend reading through the provision of a pop up library in the school and hosting school visits

Members received an overview of how a pop-up library worked and were pleased to note the increase in membership as a result of the initiative, and the intention to extend the service to other schools in the area.

Members discussed the use of volunteers and the benefits their long term commitment could bring. They also noted that having a senior champion in the school was key.

County Councillor Gareth Dadd stated his belief that the Local Authority would never be as good at delivering community services as a local community, and thanked the presenters for their work on behalf of the residents of Thirsk and North Yorkshire County Council.

County Councillor Peter Sowray questioned the long term sustainability of the management of the service, and it was confirmed that work was ongoing with the Stronger Communities team to carry out some targeted recruitment as well as general recruitment to ensure its future. It was noted that the majority of volunteers were middle aged or older but that the number of young people was increasing, particularly for specific pieces of project work.

County Councillor Val Arnold expressed her thanks for the service being delivered, and those thanks were reiterated by County Councillors Greg White and Caroline Goodrick.

Resolved -

That both presentations be noted.

30. Thirsk & Malton Area Constituency Committee Draft Work Programme for 2019/20

Considered –

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal & Democratic Services), providing a draft work programme for the coming municipal year for the Committee to consider and adopt.

Members noted the future meeting dates and the list of possible venues for those meetings. County Councillor Peter Sowray expressed a preference for holding meetings in village halls across the area. County Councillor Gareth Dadd queried the appropriateness of using hotels/public houses, and suggested the venue should be subject to the business on the agenda to enable residents who may be affected by the issues to attend. Members agreed

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the location of the meetings should not be limited to just Thirsk or Malton and agreed with the approach proposed by County Councillor Gareth Dadd.

With that in mind and taking account of the planned report on the HGV Ban Consultation coming to the next meeting of the Committee, it was agreed that a venue in Malton/Norton would be appropriate.

Resolved -

- i) That the draft work programme attached at Annex A of the report be noted.

The meeting concluded at 12:20pm
MLC