

North Yorkshire County Council

Thirsk and Malton Area Constituency Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at The Galtres Centre, Easingwold on Friday 30th August 2019 at 10.30 a.m.

Present:-

County Councillor Caroline Goodrick (Chairman), County Councillors Val Arnold, Robert Baker, Gareth Dadd, Caroline Patmore, Peter Sowray, Helen Swiers, Roberta Swiers and Greg White.

Apologies: County Councillors Lindsay Burr MBE, and Janet Sanderson.

Also in Attendance: County Councillors Carl Les and David Chance; and, in connection with Minute No. 48, Kevin Hollinrake, MP

Officers in Attendance: Richard Marr (Area Highways Manager, Highways and Transportation, BES), Patrick Duffy (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and Luke MacIntosh (Business Support Officer).

There were two members of the public present.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

42. Welcome by the Chairman – introductions and updates

The Chair welcomed everyone, including those members of the public who were present, to the meeting.

There were no particular updates from the Chair on this occasion.

43. Minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2019

Resolved –

That the Minutes of the previous meeting of the Thirsk and Malton Area Constituency Committee held on 3 July 2019, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

NOTE: As she had not been present at the last meeting, Councillor Caroline Patmore abstained from voting the Minutes as a correct record.

44. Matters arising from the Minutes

Minute No. 36, Public Questions or Statements

With regard to the County Council's attitude to Rural Transport, Councillor Peter Sowray advised that, the Chairman of the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee had agreed to consider this at their meeting on 24 October 2019.

45. Declarations of Interest

NOTE: Whilst there were no declarations made at this stage of the meeting, as a result of the discussion that transpired under Minute No. 48, below, the Chairman and Councillor Patmore made declarations. Please see Minute No. 48.

46. Public Questions or Statements

No public questions or statements had been received.

47. Work Programme

Considered -

A report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) which contained the Committee's current Work Programme.

The representative of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) stressed that the Work Programme was very much owned by the Committee.

He added that:-

- to assist Members, in considering future potential areas for consideration, the Work Programmes of the Scrutiny Committees had been included as appendices to the report;
- the Items currently earmarked for the next meeting on 27 November 2019 represented a fairly full agenda. However, there were no Items currently scheduled for the meeting on 11 March 2020; and
- if Members had any suggestions for future Items following today's meeting they would be welcome to contact either Melanie Carr, Principal Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer, or himself.

Members made the following points:-

- Mobile 'phone coverage needed to be added. There are still a lot of "black spots".
- Unpaid Carers should be considered and this should have regard to not only the carer but the person being cared for.
- If we are looking at carers and mental health, we must not lose sight of young carers and the impact of mental health on young people as well as those who are older.
- Tourism is critical for every area within Thirsk and Malton and was therefore an area that should be included.
- Mental Health continues to be under-recognised. It can be a particular issue in the farming sector. We should see whether Kate Dale, from the Yorkshire Agricultural Society, could attend a future meeting. Also, include information on the organisations who assist people with mental health issues and who they signpost to.
- Consider some rules and regulations for how cyclists behave - whilst the vast majority are sensible, some do not act well.
- Fracking and the Highways Agency, in relation to the A64, should be considered.

Re the above bullet point, the Chairman advised that she had asked for these matters to come to the next meeting.

The Chair noted that a venue had not been agreed for the next two meetings and sought Members views. The feeling was that whilst, in principle, the ideal would be for the Committee to “move around” the constituency area, it should be recognised that there may be occasions when a particular area would be appropriate because there was, for example, a burning issue of particular concern in that locality. The North York Moors National Parks Office in Helmsley was felt to be a good venue for the next meeting in November 2019 and a venue in Pickering should be sought for the March 2020 meeting.

Resolved –

- a) That the following topics be added to the Work Programme – the timing to be agreed by the Chairman in discussion with the Principal Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer:-
 - Mobile ‘phone coverage
 - Unpaid Carers (young and old)
 - Tourism
 - Mental Health (and its impact on young people and older people) to include information on the organisations who can assist and who they signpost to – invite Kate Dale from the Yorkshire Agricultural Society
 - Cycling
 - Fracking
 - Highways Agency/A64
- b) That the next meeting on 27th November 2019 be held at the North Yorkshire Moors National Parks Office in Helmsley and that the meeting on 11th March 2020 be held at a venue in Pickering unless, in either case, a particular matter arises in another part of the constituency area that would make it more appropriate to hold the meeting there.

48. Attendance of Kevin Hollinrake, MP for Thirsk and Malton

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Kevin Hollinrake, MP for Thirsk and Malton.

Mr. Hollinrake said that he was pleased to be able to join the Committee today.

Prior to the meeting, Mr. Hollinrake had been advised of a number of matters that the Committee would appreciate an update on, from his perspective. Before providing this update Mr. Hollinrake said that he was confident about the outcome of Brexit and he urged his colleagues to wait until the 14th October to give the Prime Minister the chance to secure revisions to the deal.

Mr. Hollinrake then updated the Committee on the matters that they had raised:-

- a) Social Care
In his view, the system was not fit for purpose and needed to be changed entirely. There was no correlation between funding plans and future needs for social care.

A far better system would be one where everyone pays a small amount of their earnings into an insurance “pot”. Then, when they require services, they can fund these from either the Local Authority, a private provider or a relative. This would mean that care could be provided by the people who know the person the most and who love them best.

A short term solution was required but, for the medium and longer term, it would be necessary to bring more money into the system. The system that he had outlined operated in Germany, where there was no shortage of care workers or providers.

Whilst cross-party agreement could be difficult to secure, a Select Committee had concluded that a social insurance premium represented the way forward. We had to find a funding solution that was sustainable.

b) Special Educational Needs (SEN) Funding

Lobbying of the Secretary of State for Education had led to a £2.5 million increase for North Yorkshire. Indications were that there would be a significant increase in educational funding nationally.

c) Fairer Funding Review

A funding formula was in development. This would be fairer to North Yorkshire Schools.

Per capita funding was unequal. Rishi Sunak, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, was working on this.

Business Rates retention currently was a somewhat convoluted system.

d) A64 Connectivity

We are at a critical moment with this. The original plans were costed at £135 million, but with no dualling of the northern part of the York Outer Ring Road. That proposal, without dualling, should not have been advanced. A revised proposal was likely to cost more and would be categorised as low value for money and would therefore not be a priority. However, pressure could be exerted politically and he would be doing everything he could to get this project going. This would include a meeting with Grant Shapps, Secretary of State for Transport, shortly.

Councillor Peter Sowray said that, whilst funding for matters such as Social Care and SEN were clearly important, he was disappointed that there had been a cut for the money available for highway treatments, resulting in schemes being put on hold. Mr. Hollinrake asked Councillor Sowray to let him have further detail about this and he would take it up.

Members then raised a number of other issues with the MP as follows. Mr. Hollinrake's response is in italics:-

- Off-rolling in schools is a big issue. Schools should be responsible for a child until they complete their education, so that there would be no benefit in off-rolling, which was more prevalent in Academy Schools.

I agree and that is the plan. Having said that, it is reasonable for Schools to be able to impose a strict disciplinary policy. Therefore, it is a matter of balance.

- How can we get greater parental involvement in schools?

There needs to be individual responsibility rather than doing things for people. People should not be disempowered

- We cannot continue putting "sticking plasters" on social care funding; we need to be able to *plan in order to deliver services*. Therefore, we need a strong outcome to the Fairer Funding Review

Yes, there has to be a transformative solution along the lines that Germany moved to in 1995. A social insurance system represents the best way forward.

Item

- Until we get A64 connectivity with the A1 and it is dualled, the East coast will not attract more businesses. Also, accountability of the Highways Agency is not strong enough

The A64 is an economic bottleneck. This is my top domestic policy and I will keep fighting for this every day that I am your Member of Parliament. Regarding accountability of the Highways Agency, yes, as elected representatives, we should have a greater say.

At this stage, Councillor Greg White advised that the Leader of the Council had asked him to look the Council's Environmental Policy.

- You have said you are in favour of fracking. Are you happy for there to be an earthquake in Ryedale as a result of fracking?

There is a difference between seismic activity and an earthquake.

The UK limit of 0.5 is the safest in the world. If fracking satisfies safety and sustainability and scientists say that it is safe then, yes, I am in favour of it.

- Third Energy have been unable to give financial assurances to the Government. I assume you would not want the Government to be left as guarantor?

You must be able to fund remediation. I have campaigned for an Industry Fund.

At this stage, a Member commented that it should be borne in mind there are two issues – the principle of fracking; and the planning view. If an application satisfied planning requirements then it could not be refused.

NOTE: With the conversation turning towards planning, the Chairman declared an interest and took no part in the discussion. She stressed that, as Chairman of Ryedale District Council's Planning Committee, she could not pass any comment at all, as this could be seen to fetter her discretion.

NOTE: Councillor Caroline Patmore declared an interest as a Member of the North York Moors National Parks Authority.

- Is there any news on the Minerals and Waste Plan, which has been held up?

It is with the Inspector who has made further calls for evidence. Most provisions in the plan are workable for the local area and industry.

With regard to HS2, I hope you will join the voices of other Northern Leaders who feel that a review would be a good thing.

Yes, we tend to look at journey times "to London" rather than, say, Leeds to Birmingham. There is a powerful case to be made by the North of the country.

Following the above questions from Members, Mr. Hollinrake concluded by referring to broadband. He sensed that there was a renewed ambition to deliver on broadband connectivity and big strides had been made within North Yorkshire, although mobile 'phone connectivity in the county varied. Providers had suggested a shared rural network in 4G that would provide network coverage for 95% of the population by 2022. Of course, connectivity benefits not just residents in villages, but tourists too. The former Chancellor had estimated a figure of £30 billion.

The Chairman stated that North Yorkshire has been successful in providing superfast broadband - why not talk to the County Council to see how they did it and to see what can be learnt? Mr. Hollinrake said he would be happy to do so.

Item

The Chairman concluded the meeting by thanking Mr Hollinrake for having attended; for providing the updates he had; and for responding to Members questions. She also thanked him for working hard with the Committee to improve the situation for people in the area.

The meeting concluded at 12:30 p.m.

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