

North Yorkshire County Council
Transport, Economy and Environment
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held at County Hall, Northallerton on 17 July 2012 at 10.30 am.

Present:-

County Councillor David Jeffels in the Chair

County Councillors Phillip Barrett, John Blackburn, Michael Heseltine, Robert Heseltine, Don MacKenzie, Stuart Parsons, David Peart, John Savage, Herbert Tindall, Cliff Trotter, Geoff Webber, Richard Welch

Also in attendance County Councillor Gareth Dadd

Officers

David Bowe	Corporate Director Business and Environmental Services (BES)
Ian Fielding	Assistant Director Waste and Countryside Services
Kerry Green	Development and Outreach Team Leader Waste & Countryside Services
Phillip Strand	Projects and Partnerships Officer Waste & Countryside Services
Pam Johnson	Team Leader Transport & Development Control
Lorraine Laverton	Corporate Development Officer

1 member of the public attended.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

77. Minutes

That the Minute of the meeting held on 4 April 2012, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

78. Public Questions or Statements

Mr Kevin Grainger requested to speak to the Committee. Although Mr Grainger had not given notice to speak the Chairman used his discretion and allowed him to do so.

Mr Grainger spoke to the Committee over his concerns around the use of 'A boards' on the High Street in Northallerton on market days. Mr Grainger believes that the 'A boards' cause an obstruction to pedestrians especially for those people with sight impairments or problems with mobility.

Mr Grainger supported his claims with a report from the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) report on a site visit to Northallerton. A copy of this report is in the minute book.

Mr Bowe Corporate Director for Business and Environmental Services advised Members that recently guidance had been issued to the County Councils Area

Highways Managers to clarify the position regarding the use of 'A Boards' and that locations were being looked at where they may cause an 'impediment to carriage'. He proposed to speak further with the Area Manager for Northallerton with a view to further investigation into the claims around Northallerton High Street on market days. He acknowledged that it was a difficult issue to 'police' as there had to be a balance between appreciating the value of advertising for local businesses but not causing an obstruction to pedestrians.

County Councillor Gareth Dadd (Executive Member) assured the Committee he was well aware of the situation concerning the use of 'A boards' and welcomed the Committees endorsement of a common sense approach. Cllr Dadd proposed to bring the findings of the work in Northallerton back to the Committee at a future date.

Councillor Jeffels thanked Mr Grainger for bringing the matter to the attention of the Committee and welcomed feedback from Cllr Dadd to a future meeting

79. Business and Environmental Services

Considered –

An oral update from the Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services.

Mr Bowe updated the Committee on:

- The position regarding financial savings.
This financial year the Directorate is on target to achieve savings of £1.4m
- Street Lighting
The roll out of measures to reduce street lighting commenced in the Bilton area of Harrogate. There had been no negative feedback from members of the public. The consultation process had begun in the Jennyfields area of Harrogate with the distribution of 18,000 leaflets. 30 responses had been received 15 of those were positive and 15 negative. It should be possible to switch off 62% of the lights in Harrogate and this would contribute significantly to the overall savings that could be made.
- Highways Maintenance Contract
There had been a positive handover of the contract with no specific detrimental effects on the service. Ringways have introduced a new tier of management that will allow direct influence on the culture and delivery at local level.
- Unsurfaced, Unclassified Roads and Civil Parking Enforcement
Reports on both these matters are to be brought to the September 2012 meeting of this Committee.
- Major Schemes Devolved Funding / City Deals
Clarification is sought from central government on how proposals to allocate funding to and delegate implementation of major transport schemes to local Highways Authorities will work. No decision has yet been taken by central Government on this but if it does go ahead the County Council would have to have plans in place. Timescales for this remain an issue.
- Allerton Waste Private Finance Initiative (PFI)
Nothing further to report

- Highways Agency – A64 Hopgrove Roundabout
The Highways Agency have offered to attend the September 2012 meeting of the Committee or if Members prefer to attend a special meeting before that date. They have also agreed to broaden the scope of the discussion to the A64 in general and not to focus specifically on the Hopgrove Roundabout.

The Executive Member for Highways County Councillor Gareth Dadd suggested to Members that as Ryedale Area Committee had been unable to secure attendance to their meeting of a representative from the Highways Agency regarding the A64 the Committee might also like to consider extending an invitation to them.

- Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)
Half of the monies within the Growing Places funding have been allocated.

Comments and questions from the Committee included:

- Positive feedback on the reduction in street lighting
- Concern around the targeting of funding from the City Deals being channelled through the LEPs. Harrogate, Craven and Selby are in two LEPs and Members would not want to see these areas suffer by 'falling through any crack between the two' .

Mr Bowe responded to say that prioritisation has to look at the greatest risk and it has to be acknowledged that problems in Leeds and Bradford for example are far higher but the allocation for Harrogate would come to the County Council.

- Some Members expressed particular concerns around the handover of the Highways Maintenance Contract.

Mr Bowe welcomed feedback on this and undertook to look into the matters brought to his attention.

Resolved –

Members resolved to:

- a. Note the information in the update
- b. to hold a special meeting of the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the A64
- c. extend an invitation to members of the Ryedale Area Committee to attend the special meeting

80. Design Standards for Developer Funded Highway Works

Considered –

The report of the Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services seeking Members views on a proposed Policy for the application of appropriate design standards for developer funded road works within North Yorkshire.

Pam Johnson summarised the written report for the Committee and stressed the need for more robust guidance on developer funded highway works. The guidance would support decisions taken should there be a need to defend them in any appeals process.

Members agreed it was extremely useful to have clarification in this area not only for County Council officers and members of the Planning Committee but also for District and Borough Councils.

Resolved –

Members endorsed the proposal to adopt a policy that uses the matrix in Appendix 2 and accept it as the appropriate mechanism for guiding engineering judgement in determining when Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) or Manual for Streets (MfS) standards apply.

81. Local Nature Partnership

Considered -

The report of the Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services informing Members of the application to DEFRA for formal recognition as a Local Nature Partnership (LNP) for North Yorkshire & York, and our continuing involvement in the further development of this partnership.

Ian Fielding guided Members through the report and advised the Committee that a response was still awaited with regard to the submission to DEFRA for a Local Nature Partnership. However it was felt that whatever the decision the development of such a partnership was a good way forward and so arrangements for a Shadow Board are currently underway. The County Council have agreed to coordinate and administrate the Partnership. Membership will be drawn from across the private, voluntary and public sectors.

Members supported the development of the partnership seeing it as clearly beneficial from both an environmental and economic perspective.

County Councillor Jeffels pointed out to Members that the LNP would supersede the previous work on a Countryside Strategy and requested an update on progress to be scheduled into the work programme at an appropriate date.

Resolved –

Members noted the County Council's continuing involvement in the development and running of the North Yorkshire & York Local Nature Partnership.

82. Work Programme

Considered –

The report of the Scrutiny Team Leader.

This report asks the Committee to:

- (a) Note the information in the report;
- (b) Confirm, amend, remove or add to the list of matters shown on the work programme.

Lorraine Laverton summarised the work programme report.

County Councillor Tindall asked for clarification on whether funds realised in the sale of County Farms was being used to fund broadband development across the County.

A Member raised a question on the feedback from meetings of the Minerals & Waste Development Framework Task Group. Ms Laverton suggested that future meeting notes should be appended to the work programme report and Members agreed this was a useful way forward.

A Member suggested that the January 2013 meeting of the Committee should focus on economic development and include reports on NYnet, LEP, Apprenticeships, 'Buying Local' and Community Transport.

Resolved –

Members resolved:

- (a) to note the information in the report;
- (b) to receive the notes of the meetings of the Minerals & Waste Development Framework Task Group appended to the work programme report.
- (c) to have the January 2013 Committee meeting focussed on economic development

The meeting concluded at 12:20pm

LL/ALJ