

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

Minutes of the Meeting held at County Hall, Northallerton on 15 August 2012 at 10.00 am

Present:-

County Councillor David Jeffels in the Chair

County Councillors John Blackburn, Mike Cockerill, Michael Heseltine, Robert Heseltine, Mike Jordan, Penny Marsden, David Ireton (as substitute for Don Mackenzie), Stuart Parsons, John Savage, Cliff Trotter, Geoff Webber, Richard Welch

Also in attendance:

Members of Ryedale Area Committee: Mike Knaggs, Val Arnold, Elizabeth Fairburn, David Lloyd-Williams, Janet Sanderson, Stephen Shaw, Robert Wainwright, Clare Wood

Members of Yorkshire Coast & Moors Area Committee: Gill Kendall, Peter Popple, Pam Reeves, Herbert Tindall, Richard Thompson, Brian Watson,

County Councillors Phillip Barrett, David Peart,

Roger Wantling Highways Agency

Officers

Elwyn Williams Head of Network Strategy Highways

Lorraine Laverton Corporate Development Officer

0 members of the public attended.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

83. Minutes

That the Minute of the meeting held on 17 July 2012, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

84. Public Questions or Statements

There were no public questions or statements.

85. Highways Agency - A64 and Hopgrove Roundabout

Considered –

The report of the Scrutiny Team Leader.

This report gives the Committee background information on why the Highways Agency have been invited to present a report on the A64 Hopgrove Roundabout and engage in wider discussions around the A64 and asks the Committee to note the information in the report.

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming the members of Ryedale and Yorkshire Coast and Moors Area Committees, Roger Wantling of the Highways Agency and Elwyn Williams from North Yorkshire County Council. The Chairman went on to ask Mr Wantling to open discussions around the scheme at Brambling Fields.

Mr Wantling thanked the Committee for giving him the opportunity to engage with Members. He sincerely apologised to local residents and businesses for any inconvenience caused by delays surrounding the Brambling Fields scheme. Unfortunately the heavy rain had delayed the work, but the contractors were anticipating that the junction would be open to traffic by the end of August 2012.

The Chairman invited questions from the meeting.

(Q = Question from those present in the meeting, A = Answer from Mr Wantling unless otherwise indicated)

Q Had the delays added to the overall cost of the scheme?

A There would not be a significant increase in the original overall estimated cost of the scheme. Mr Wantling provided an estimated outturn cost and reassured members that confirmed costs would be provided in time for the next meeting on the 5th September 2012.

Q Why had there appeared to be periods of inactivity on the site?

A The original completion date was early August. Time had to be taken to allow the compacted earth to settle. The heavy rain had adversely affected this process and this had led to delays. It is critical, however, that this time is taken so that a solid foundation is present for the laying of the road surface.

Q What will the benefits be when the scheme is completed?

A The scheme would create an 'all movements junction' at this location.

Q Will the increase in cost be split between the Highways Agency, North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) and Ryedale District Council? Some Members felt there was no problem with Brambling Fields in the first place and that greater benefits could have been achieved with a slip road from the A64.

A The scheme was identified and promoted by NYCC and Ryedale DC, so those Local Authorities would be responsible for the increase in cost. Mr Williams (NYCC) advised the meeting that the scheme was identified as a priority by both NYCC and Ryedale DC to deal with all traffic in the area not just heavy goods vehicles and to redirect traffic to avoid it having to travel through Malton to Norton.

Q Has the quality of the materials being used played a part in delays?

A The materials being used have to meet national quality and design specifications.

Q Are there any penalty clauses within the contract around the timescale?

A The contract runs until the end of August 2012. There were 8 days delay due to awaiting installation of a cable from British Telecom and some time due to adverse weather conditions. This will extend the contract end date.

Members reiterated their concern around the additional costs that may be associated with the scheme and sought clarification on the final figure. This to be brought to the next Committee meeting on the 5th September 2012.

The Chairman moved discussions onto the Hopgrove Roundabout.

Mr Wantling advised the meeting that the scheme at Hopgrove roundabout had been designed to accommodate future growth of traffic. A recent evaluation of the scheme had seen that there had been a small benefit realised in the journey time in the morning peak travel time and a larger benefit in the afternoon peak travel time. The disbenefits were occurring when traffic was lighter as the sequence of lights was not adjusted to distinguish between the amount of traffic. The Highways Agency would be looking at the sequencing of the lights to see if this could be improved.

Comments from Members included:

Some members present felt that the scheme had been a waste of public money and that there would have been greater benefit by dualling the A64.

Barton Crossroads was raised as an area that was known as a notorious blackspot for traffic accidents and that would benefit greatly if a scheme was undertaken to improve the safety of the road. Pedestrians should not have to cross a fast moving dual carriageway to catch a bus.

There had been some problem ensuring engagement with the Highways Agency and Members sought assurance that the Area Committees and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee could have regular liaison with the Highways Agency.

Mr Wantling agreed that it was key that the Highways Agency engaged with local Members and reassured those present that there will be attendance at meetings where this was possible or by special arrangement if necessary. Mr Wantling went on to ask Members to contact him directly if there were issues around safety over the A64, for example if there was poor visibility where grass had not been cut. With regard to Barton Crossroads he advised the meeting that the Highways Agency will work closely with colleagues at NYCC regarding the development of a scheme to address the issues. He recognised that a full grade separated junction may not be practical, as all schemes have to offer value for money, but that the Highways Agency would continue work with NYCC colleagues regarding developing a scheme that could be delivered. He also said that the Highways Agency would work collaboratively regarding future bids for improvement schemes on the A64 and suggested if it was not possible to undertake major schemes there might be some minor improvements that could be taken to help improve safety.

Members felt that the problems with Hopgrove Roundabout were due to the three entries onto the roundabout being dual carriageway but leading onto a single carriageway.

Mr Wantling advised the meeting that the layout had not been changed. The scheme had seen the introduction of traffic signals to balance the flow of traffic and overall this has been achieved.

A Member felt frustrated that the Highways Agency evaluation report had not been made available and that it appeared the Coastal area of the County was being forgotten.

Mr Wantling agreed to provide a copy of the report for Members and said that if the Member had any specific issues regarding the A64 near the Coastal area he would address them.

Members reiterated the need for good lines of communication between the area and the Highways Agency. One Member went on to raise safety issues for those villages separated by the A64 such as Rillington and Staxton.

The Chairman referred to a recent scrutiny task group that had been looking at the use of temporary vehicle activated signs and questioned whether they could be used on the A64. Mr Wantling responded by saying any suggested methods for addressing safety concerns would be considered although it was a balancing act as the A64 was not only a major arterial route, but is also a community road too passing through villages.

Members returned to the increase in costs associated with the scheme on Brambling Fields. Mr Williams advised Members of the original tender price but stated that this would need to be confirmed with the Highways Agency. this cost would need to be confirmed with the Highways Agency.

Members felt that the increase highlighted was not insignificant and asked for further detail to be provided to the next meeting. Mr Wantling agreed to provide further information to a subsequent meeting as previously agreed.

Members strongly felt the most benefit that could be achieved by the area would be through the dualling of the A64. Mr Wantling reassured the meeting that it was clear the strength of feeling around the A64 and he was keen to work together for the benefit of the area.

The Chairman summarised the meeting and thanked everyone for their involvement. He went on to clarify the further information that was sought from the Highways Agency in time for the next meeting of the Committee on the 5th September 2012. The pieces of information required are:

- A copy of the Highways Agency report on the Hopgrove Roundabout
- Feedback on the discussions around the sequencing of the traffic lights on Hopgrove Roundabout
- Any information available on a Rillington bypass scheme
- Costs associated with the Brambling Fields scheme

The Chairman was pleased to hear that the Highways Agency was as keen to engage with local Members, as were the Members themselves, and welcomed Mr Wantling's assurances that he would attend future Committee meetings when this could be arranged. He also went on to suggest it might be useful for a copy of the minutes of this meeting to be provided for the visit of Justine Greening (Secretary of State for Transport) when she visits the A64 in September 2012.

Resolved –

Members resolved to note the information in this report and receive further information on:

- A copy of the Highways Agency report on the Hopgrove Roundabout
- Feedback on the discussions around the sequencing of the traffic lights on Hopgrove Roundabout
- Any information available on a Rillington bypass scheme
- Costs associated with the Brambling Fields scheme

To the next meeting of the Committee on the 5th September 2012.

The meeting concluded at 12 noon.

LL/ALJ