

North Yorkshire County Council

Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held at County Hall, Northallerton on 17 April 2019 at 10.00 am.

Present:-

County Councillor Stanley Lumley in the Chair.

County Councillors Karl Arthur, David Goode, Robert Heseltine, David Jeffels, Don Mackay, John McCartney, Andy Paraskos, Caroline Patmore, Clive Pearson, Roberta Swiers and Richard Welch.

Other Members present were:

Executive County Councillor Andrew Lee

Executive County Councillor Carl Les

Executive County Councillor Don MacKenzie

NYCC Officers attending: Gail Chester, SEND Transport Manager (CYPS), Andrew Davies, Area Manager (BES), Ian Fielding, Assistant Director - Waste Management (BES), Michael Grayson, Project Manager Mobile Connectivity (BES), Kerry Green, Development & Outreach Team Leader (BES), Jonathan Spencer, Principal Scrutiny Officer (CSD) and Cathy Summers, Commercial Sector Service Development Manager (BES).

An apology for absence had been received from County Councillor Paul Haslam.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

59. Minutes

Resolved -

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2019 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

60. Declarations of Interest

Resolved -

There were no declarations of interest to note.

61. Exclusion of the Public and Press

Resolved –

That on the grounds that they each involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972

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as amended by the Local government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of:

- i) Agenda item 10, Mobile Phone Infrastructure Programme – Tender Update
- ii) Agenda item 11, Private Minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2019

62. Public Questions or Statements

There were no general public questions or statements from members of the public concerning issues not on the agenda.

63. SEND Home to School Transport 2018 Policy Change

The report of the Corporate Director – Children and Young People Service, updating the Committee on the implementation of the Home to School Transport Policy adopted May 2018.

Gail Chester presented the report.

Members made the following key comments:

- With reference to paragraph 3.2 of the report, a Member commented that a positive aspect of the removal of the free transport statement for SEND post 16 to 18 year olds had been that a number of young people who were capable of doing so now travelled to their place of education on mainstream transport. This was helping build up their independence. She went on to ask what arrangements were in place to provide parents with information on the variety of travel arrangements available. Gail Chester explained that parent workshops had been held in this regard and the County Council was working with parents of post 16-18 SEND students to look at SEND students' aspirations for when they left education so that they were confident in being able to function in wider society.
- Referring to paragraph 4.2 of the report, a Member asked if savings projections had been made beyond Year 4. Gail Chester said that the service was able to utilise data showing the number of under 11 and over 11 year old students with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) to extrapolate projections over a number of years. In relation to post 19, the implementation of the policy will be completed and all post 19 assessments will be through social care as business as usual. The service looked at destination data for Year 6 and Year 9 pupils and what their ambitions are for longer term outcomes.
- A Member noted that existing transport users had been reluctant to take up the Parental Transport Allowance to SEND sole-occupancy provision. He asked the extent to which the scheme had been promoted to existing parents. Gail Chester replied that all existing parents had been notified about the provision and each year the service made contact with parents to remind them about this option and would continue to do so.
- On behalf of a Member of the Committee who was unable to be present at the meeting, the Chairman asked the following questions on his behalf: Had the

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policy changes impacted upon education attendance levels?; Older pupils are the ones leaving the scheme, are these drivers that we are putting on the road and thereby reducing the environmental gain from the policy changes? Paragraph 3.3 suggests that 66 adults have been take out of education. What has happened to these young people? Are the money savings on schedule? Gail Chester replied that the changes had had no impact on education attendance levels in relation to post 16-18 SEND students with an EHCP. In relation to the adults no longer in transport provided by the authority, this included older students who had gone on to university and so had progressed beyond the expectations set out in their EHCP. The changes had not caused a barrier to participation in post-16 education. She went on to note that there had been an environmental gain as the majority of post 16-18 SEND students were using existing college transport and there were only two students she was aware of who possessed a car driving licence. The money savings were on schedule, as set out in the report. From a financial perspective in relation to the families, they had been referred to the welfare benefits assessment department to check that they were accessing the full range of benefits that they were entitled to and were also making use of any bursaries in colleges.

Resolved -

That the Committee notes the progress made in the first year of implementation of the Home to School transport policy 2018.

64. Scarborough Park and Ride

Considered -

The report of the Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services updating the Committee on the consultation of options to change the level of service provision of Park and Ride in Scarborough and to obtain the Committee's comments on the same.

Cathy Summers presented the report and invited Members to comment on the consultation of options to change the level of service provision of Park and Ride in Scarborough.

Members made the following key comments:

- A Member referred to paragraph 4.2 concerning the introduction of the £1 charge noting that there was a strong correlation between the introduction of the charge and the reduction in numbers using both sites. He asked what consideration had been given to removing the £1 charge in order to reverse the trend. Cathy Summers explained that the charge had been brought about by a legislative change removing Park and Ride services from the scope of the concessionary fares scheme. If the charge was dropped there would be an associated cost to the County Council as it would still be required to reimburse bus operators for the lost fares. Executive County Councillor Don MacKenzie said that removing the £1 charge would represent poor value for money as it would be a demand-led budget of which the County Council would have no control. The concessionary fares scheme already cost the County Council £8 million a year and Scarborough Park and Ride cost £0.5 million a year to run.

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- A Member asked if any work had been done to establish where visitors to Scarborough, other than those using the Park and Ride facility, were now parking instead. Cathy Summers replied that in producing the options the focus had been on looking at the demand for the Park and Ride rather than visitor numbers to Scarborough as a whole. Executive County Councillor Don MacKenzie noted that the County Council's receipts for on-street parking had not increased rapidly but off-street parking in Scarborough Borough Council's managed car parks might have increased.
- A Member said that the most sensible option in light of the falling demand for both sites particularly during out of season was to implement option 3 (ceasing the Park and Ride out of season). He said that in the long term retaining the Park and Ride facilities made good economic and environmental sense. Where he would like to see clarification was in respect of the last line of option 3. Rather than stipulating that the Park and Ride sites and services be closed from the second Sunday in November until the second Sunday before Easter, a specific opening date of 1 April should operate instead, unless Easter occurred earlier than 1 April within a given year. This was in view of the timing of Easter varying from year to year. Cathy Summers replied that she would take this suggestion on board and noted that this suggestion had been made by other people responding to the consultation. The Member went on to advise that immediately prior to the sites re-opening there should be a publicity campaign to raise awareness amongst potential customers.

Resolved -

- a) That the Committee notes the report.
- b) That the Committee recommends that the Executive adopts option 3 but that rather than stipulating that the park and ride sites and services be closed from the second Sunday in November until the second Sunday before Easter, a specific opening date of 1 April should operate unless Easter occurred earlier than 1 April within a given year.

65. DEFRA/HM Treasury Consultations on Elements of the Resources and Waste Strategy

Considered –

The report of the NYCC Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services to inform the Committee of four consultations relating to the Resources and Waste Strategy, and to invite the Committee to comment on the draft responses on behalf of the County Council to be sent to DEFRA and HM Treasury:

Ian Fielding presented the report, summarising the draft officer response to each of the four consultations: consistency in household and business recycling collections in England; reforming the UK packaging producer responsibility system; introducing a Deposit Return Scheme in England, Wales and Northern Ireland; and plastic tax consultation.

Members made the following key comments:

- A Member said that the initiatives set out in the consultation represented a starting point and that not bringing waste into the system was the preferred

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approach. There was a lot more that society as a whole could do to minimize waste. In respect of the draft County Council's response to the food waste collection proposal he sought clarification as to whether the proposed response was whether to not support food collections per se or as a separate collection. He asked if there would be support if food waste was integrated with other green waste. He noted that the Netherlands did allow food waste to be included and so he felt that this could be a missed opportunity if the same did not apply in the United Kingdom. Ian Fielding replied that the government was clear in its ambition to see separate food waste collections to deliver on its recycling target of 65% of waste. 51% of local authorities collected food waste, whilst North Yorkshire did not. For those that collected food waste it worked because a number of those local authorities had landfill sites only. In North Yorkshire there was the Allerton Waste Recovery Park which included an anaerobic food digester which could accommodate organic waste and so there was not a need for separate food waste collection. This provided a cost-effective way of dealing with food waste. If separate food waste collection was brought in it would significantly increase costs which would need to be passed on to taxpayers as a whole.

- A Member referred to the proposal in paragraph 5.5 for the County Council to not support a minimum fortnightly collection frequency. He said that he disagreed with this stating that in his view a collection frequency longer than a fortnight would lead to an increase in vermin, especially as larger families were likely to struggle to contain their household waste in the bin provided. In relation to the packaging plastic tax, he said his concern was that the tax revenue collected from the government would simply be used by government to raise the tax burden and so would need to be offset by tax cuts elsewhere.
- A Member queried if there was a separate food collection would this mean that the anaerobic digester would work less effectively. Ian Fielding said that separate food collections would still be transported to the Allerton Waste Recovery Park but the benefit of going separately would be that the food waste material could be returned to the land and free up more capacity at the energy waste plant. Whilst separate food collections could work there would need to be detailed work with district councils to establish how it would be collected. It would also require additional vehicles which was likely to outweigh the benefits of carbon reduction.
- A Member queried if in the consultation response there was much impact on reducing waste in the first instance such as banning single-use plastic cups. Kerry Green replied that in the consultation documents the waste produced by society was mentioned and discussed in terms of green waste collections. The government position was that it did not see the composting of household waste as a way out. Plastic cups were mentioned as an item in the Deposit Return Scheme. The County Council's draft response was that home composting should be included as it would create a behaviour change.
- Executive County Councillor Andrew Lee said that North Yorkshire had taken a pro-active approach to waste through the construction of the Allerton Waste Recovery Park and so was at an advantage compared with some other areas. Regarding food waste the county had the capacity to deal with it through the Allerton Waste Recovery Park. If there were separate food waste collections it might impact on doing that. With regards to re-use/prevention of waste in North

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Yorkshire, there more opportunities to do home-composting than in urban areas so might encourage households to do that. He went on to state that it was important to look at how the government's proposals would impact on the County Council financially. The government was stating that costs would be shifted on to the producer notably with the introduction of the plastic packaging tax but it might not always work out like that. He went on to state that there were opportunities for more joined up working between the district councils and the County Council to look at how collectively they could have a more co-ordinated waste strategy and make savings. With regards to the Deposit Return Scheme he said that he had some concern given the rurality of the county about the impact on small businesses and so more details were required from government.

- A Member said that on the whole he supported the government proposals but with reference to paragraph 4.3 he disagreed with non-binding performance indicators because unless they were binding, progress could be abandoned. In the past the government had environmental indicators and the requirement for councils to have an environmental strategy. However when this requirement was removed the County Council no longer had one and focused instead on cost savings.

Resolved -

That the Committee approves the draft response as submitted to be sent to DEFRA and HM Treasury.

66. Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Policy and Strategy

The report of the NYCC Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services to provide the committee with the opportunity to review the updated highways infrastructure asset management policy and strategy documents.

Andrew Davies presented the report.

Members made the following key comments:

- A Member said that she received complaints from members of the public about the funding being spent on green lanes/bridleways when more major routes still had potholes. Executive County Council Don MacKenzie replied that conversely he received complaints about the Council not spending funding on bridleways and neglecting green lanes. This year £55 million was being spent on highways maintenance to bring all classes of highways back up to standard. North Yorkshire had almost 6000 miles of highways and so there would always be potholes at a given point in time somewhere on the road network. However he believed that the County Council had got the balance right. Andrew Davies said that the Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Policy and Strategy helped to address the balance especially the strategy as it set out the rationale for prioritising investment.
- A Member raised a concern about incorrect signage during roadworks including signs not being taken away when works had finished. Andrew Davies replied that the County Council relied on its contractors to have a street works team to monitor signage. He acknowledged that there was room for improvement and that issues had been raised with the contractor at operational levels regarding

temporary road signs. More recently improvements had been seen with the introduction of the permitting scheme.

67. Work Programme

Considered -

The report of the Principal Scrutiny Officer asking the Committee to confirm, amend or add to the areas of the work listed in the Work Programme schedule (Appendix 1 to the report).

The Chairman introduced the report.

Resolved -

- a) That the work programme be noted.
- b) That the Committee approves the draft scope of the Vehicle Activated Signs Review as submitted in Appendix 2 of the report.
- c) That County Councillors Robert Heseltine, David Goode, David Jeffels, Stanley Lumley, Clive Pearson and Roberta Swiers be appointed to the task group.

Minute No. 68 - Mobile Phone Infrastructure Programme – Tender update – and Minute 69 - Private Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 January 2019, included confidential details, as outlined in Minute No. 61 and, as such, the minutes reflect the confidential nature of some of that information.

68. Mobile Phone Infrastructure Programme – Tender update

The report of the NYCC Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services, providing an update on the Mobile Phone programme and the progress to date following the tendering exercise.

Michael Grayson presented the report. He explained six areas had been identified to build masts. Following the tendering exercise, Arqiva had been appointed as the County Council's preferred partner in the project in January 2019 to build the masts.

Prior to building any infrastructure, at least one Mobile Network Operator (MNOs) must be signed up who will provide improved mobile coverage.

To date there was interest in two sites from EE who were providing the replacement Emergency Services Network.

The County Council continued to have discussions with the MNOs on the other sites in anticipation of securing agreement. At present the County Council was estimating that up to four masts would be able to be delivered with the monies available.

The current programme was still on track for the completion by March 2020 but it was dependent upon having the MNOs agreeing to anchor the Masts.

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Arqiva could provide other sites of interest for the MNOs and the County Council would review what other sites could be available.

Members made the following key comments:

- A Member commented that there was not 4G mobile phone coverage in his Division, which was a concern in relation to there being no 4G coverage for emergency services. Michael Grayson replied that he was looking at two areas where there was no mobile phone coverage for EE on the back of the network, with one doing an infill programme. He said that he was trying to talk to the energy service EE and another – extended areas service where to build masts in complete ‘not spots’. 25 masts were being proposed in the Dales and Moors area and another 15 masts by EE for infill. Nine out of 15 had been built. Executive County Councillor Don MacKenzie noted that there was funding available to provide superfast broadband coverage to 98% of county. The 4G network was a method to bridge the gap between 98% and 100% of coverage. Fully consulted to improve 4G broadband and mobile telephony in general and got funding just about to take us there.
- A Member asked how people could find out about the best provider for their area in terms of network coverage. Michael Grayson replied that individual operator sites showed some information but were not always up-to-date and so it was difficult to say if it was the best provider in certain areas. Ofcom information was anonymised. As part of the mobile network coverage project the County Council had produced a mast register to build up more detailed and up-to-date information.

Resolved –

That the progress update be noted.

69. Private Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 January 2019

Resolved -

That the Private Minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2019, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The meeting concluded at 12.05pm

JS