

**Meeting:** Richmond (Yorks) Area Committee

**Members:** Councillors Alyson Baker, Caroline Dickinson (Vice-Chair), Kevin Foster, Bryn Griffiths, David Hugill, Tom Jones, Carl Les, Heather Moorhouse, Stuart Parsons, Yvonne Peacock (Chair), Karin Sedgwick, Angus Thompson, Steve Watson, David Webster, John Weighell OBE, Annabel Wilkinson, Peter Wilkinson and Malcolm Warne.

**Date:** Monday, 27 January 2025

**Time:** 10.00 am

**Venue:** The Grand Meeting Room, County Hall, Northallerton, DL7 8AD.

This meeting is being held as an in-person meeting. Members of the public are entitled to attend this meeting as observers for all those items taken in open session. Please contact the Democratic Services Officer whose contact details are below if you would like to find out more.

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## **Business**

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 November 2024** (Pages 3 - 14)

3. **Declarations of Interest**

All Members are invited to declare at this point any interests they have in items appearing on this agenda, including the nature of those interests.

4. **Public Participation**

Members of the public may ask questions or make statements at this meeting if they have given notice to Stephen Loach of Democratic and Scrutiny Services and supplied the text (contact details below) by midday on Wednesday 22 January 2025, three working days before the day of the meeting. Each speaker should limit themselves to 3 minutes. Members of the public who have given notice will be invited to speak at this

Enquiries relating to this agenda please contact [stephen.loach@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:stephen.loach@northyorks.gov.uk)

**Website:** [www.northyorks.gov.uk](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk)

point in the meeting (subject to an overall time limit of 30 minutes)

If you are exercising your right to speak at this meeting, but do not wish to be recorded, please inform the Chair who will instruct anyone who may be taking a recording to cease while you speak.

**5. North Yorkshire Council's Petition Scheme - 'Rethink North Yorkshire School Transport Cuts' (Pages 15 - 18)**

A combined paper and electronic petition has been received by North Yorkshire Council and contains 2129 signatures of people who live, work or study in the county.

As the petition contains 500 or more signatures (but less than 30,130 signatories), it has been scheduled for debate at this meeting of the Area Committee.

The process for debating and responding to the petition is set out in the report.

**6. Any other issues which the Chair agrees should be considered as a matter of urgency because of special circumstances**

**7. Date of Next Meeting**

**Contact Details**

Enquiries relating to this agenda please contact Stephen Loach Tel: 01609 532216 or e-mail:

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Barry Khan  
Assistant Chief Executive  
(Legal and Democratic Services)

County Hall  
Northallerton

Friday, 17 January 2025

## North Yorkshire Council

### Richmond (Yorks) Area Constituency Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 18th November, 2024 commencing at 10.00 am at County Hall, Northallerton

Councillors Yvonne Peacock (Chair), Caroline Dickinson, Kevin Foster, Bryn Griffiths, David Hugill, Carl Les, Heather Moorhouse, Stuart Parsons, Karin Sedgewick, Angus Thompson, Steve Watson, David Webster, John Weighell OBE and Annabel Wilkinson; together with co-opted Member Malcom Warne

Steve Loach, Democratic Services Officer, Martin Dodd, Yorkshire Ambulance Service, Area Operations Manager (North Yorkshire), Matt Robinson, Head of Resilience and Emergencies, Barrie Mason – Assistant Director, Highways and Transportation and Paul Romans, Community Safety & CCTV Manager

Other Attendees: 11 members of the public.

Apologies: Councillors Alyson Baker (non-voting), Tom Jones and Peter Wilkinson;

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**Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book**

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#### **119 Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 23 October 2024**

The Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 23 October 2024 having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chair as an accurate record.

#### **120 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Yvonne Peacock declared an interest in anticipation of questions/statements from Members of the public

#### **121 Public Participation**

The following questions or statements, as detailed below, were submitted by members of the public:

##### **Cllr Philip Holder - Member of Leyburn Town Council**

(A diagram of the proposed route was circulated at the meeting)

Go-Ahead have bought Proctors, in May, and their depot at Leeming Bar which is en-route. They have a network to Ripon and Helmsley from York with North Riding under East Yorkshire Bus Services. Also they have just ordered 1200 buses from WrightBus in NI for £500M so they may be interested in linking up with their North East interests. The headline this week was "Go-Ahead to reap benefits of mayoral public transport schemes" by Graham Whitfield in Business Live 23 October 2024. I call the route "The North Riding Superloop" after TfL's round London new routes.

**Response from North Yorkshire Passenger Transport Services – Andy Clarke**

Much of the area included is already covered by existing commercial bus routes so NYC would not be able to commission it even if there was a budget.

Any bus company is free to register a bus service if they wish but that would be a decision for them rather than NYC. Proctors / Go-Ahead are unlikely to start a parallel service to Arriva between Catterick, Richmond and Darlington.

### **Alexandra Robson – Clerk to Northallerton Town Council**

It is now 14 months since we asked why the North Northallerton site, allotments, could not be formally opened. No progress appears to have been made in resolving the legal issues highlighted in NYC's response to that question. The completed allotment site now requires significant remedial work before it could be used. What are the specific legal issues causing this continued delay, who are the parties involved, how will NYC ensure that these issues are resolved quickly and who will be responsible for the costs to remediate the allotment site before it can be used?

### **Response from Legal Services**

The transfer from the developers to NYC was recently completed.

Negotiations are now underway with Northallerton Town Council with a view to completing shortly on the allotment headlease as well as the transfer of the Ramsden ransom strip.

### **Home to School Transport Policy**

#### **1. Stephen and Christine Clarkson**

I am emailing to give notice to speak at the Richmond & Northallerton Area Committee meeting at County Hall 10 am Monday 18 November. I understand a discussion about school transport is to be allowed.

My statement is as follows

The new home to school transport policy will severely affect our area both in the short and long term. The proposal will take our children over mountainous ungritted routes. As an example, the Kirkby Stephen route goes over Tailbrigg a notorious road that is often impassable. If you don't believe me, please take notice of these statements, both from people who have no skin in the game. Simon Alderson, the owner of the garage at the foot of Tailbrigg. He states "We are well aware of this issue as the road is closed regularly in winter due to snow and also from ice on the upper sections. We call the council to come and clear it, but we are told it's not a priority road and after a gritter crashed through the barrier and rolled over one year, a gritter will not attempt to clear it without a digger alongside now" Or Doris Harker a lady who in the 1960's went to Kirkby School whilst living in Upper Swaledale She states "I had to board during the week and could not get home at weekends for snow many feet deep. Please think about the safety of the Children and the time they will be unable to attend school"

I sent both these compelling statements as part of the consultation but still no one from the Council has investigated the route. The digital mapping tool correctly considers Kirkby Stephen as the nearest secondary school to the children of Upper Swaledale. I would hope that it would be considered an unsuitable option once the route is assessed, but parents of 11 year olds need to choose now, but how can they make an informed choice when no risk assessments have been completed.

Long term it will affect families desire to move to the area, if your only options were to either send your child to school on unsafe roads or to drive them yourself to a school over 20 miles away, you would choose somewhere else to live.

The Yorkshire Dales National Parks Vision Statement includes that the area by 2040 will be "Home to strong, self-reliant and balanced communities with good access to the services they need"

This policy goes directly against that and in the long term will deter working families from moving in. And we desperately need more working families in our area not less. To create that balanced community and help realise the vision of the Yorkshire Dales National Park, please look at this again.

## **2. Charlotte Fowler**

Last week we handed a petition to the government with the help of Tom Gordon MP for Harrogate and Knaresborough. We want to be listened to, we live in North Yorkshire too and you have forgotten us. You say that you understand the importance of the local communities that we live in, yet you have not considered the negative impact that this policy will have for generations to come. There are many implications that have not been considered for Swaledale and Arkengarthdale and other rural areas in North Yorkshire. The department for Education guidelines states(point) 39. Where the schools are beyond walking distance, local authorities may consider it more appropriate to measure the shortest road route or the straight-line distance. The shortest route to Wensleydale school from Swaledale is over Grinton Moor, which has a 7.5 ton weight limit, a school coach will not be able to drive this way, instead they will have to take a route that is a longer journey than the existing journey to Richmond school. We invite you to please come and see these journeys for yourself, then you will see why we are in disbelief that we are being told our children should travel on routes to their nearest school if we want to have transport provided. A risk assessment is not good enough to put our minds at rest, we don't use these roads when the weather turns, we will not risk putting our children on them when there is a safer route available. A consultation is ongoing with the closure of Wensleydale sixth form, does this not mean that transport will have to be available for post 16 students to access in Upper Swaledale, this would be Richmond school. Does it not make sense to make this the nearest road journey to school to make education accessible to all. The policy does not work for rural communities. We have no public transport to use, we can live and adapt without having things on our doorstep, what we will not accept is that our children will not have a safe journey to school. I ask you to reconsider the policy, to change it so that ungritted routes will not be considered for school transport and that the safest road route will be adopted that is the B6270 to Richmond.

## **3. Rob Macdonald**

Thank you for allowing me to speak. Given the Council's circumstances, you may feel that you bear the burden of having to make difficult decisions. I am here to make your life easier. You voted for substantial savings. But you voted for a fantasy. When I spoke directly with Amada Newbold, the architect of this policy, she was unwilling to attach an above zero probability to any of the published range of savings figures. Worse than a fantasy councillors, you were presented with a smokescreen. There are credible savings to be had from applying the 'nearest school' algorithm. More households will be drawn within statutory walking distance and require no transport. But the blanket application of this algorithm to geographies it was never intended for will incur additional costs. Add to this the duplication of a lengthy transition, and the knock-on cost to other council budgets and you will wipe out these small savings. This is a net zero policy councillors. Net zero savings. It is argued that this policy will ensure equality because every child's eligibility will be considered on the basis of exactly one school. Right around North Yorkshire, the new algorithm has selected schools to which no buses currently run.

But here's the rub. Cllr Wilkinson is on record as saying that no new routes are expected. The Council has no intention of bussing children to the only eligible school some parents can choose. So some parents get exactly one choice while others get exactly no real choice at all. Where is the equality in that? It's not equal, and it's not compliant with government guidelines. No savings. No equality. No compliance with government guidelines. You need to pause and rethink this policy councillors. Now that all its justifications have evaporated, that shouldn't be hard at all.

#### **4. Jo Foster**

Thank you for permitting me the time to speak this morning. I want to draw attention back to the petition handed in to County Hall and to the Department of Education in Westminster last week. 2122 signatures so far, gathered in just a few weeks. I would urge you to think about them as 2122 very, very good reasons why you need to rethink your decision to restrict free school transport to the nearest school only. Quite simply, that policy does not work for a huge number of families across North Yorkshire. Councillor Sanderson said at Full Council, "This decision only impacts 13% of North Yorkshire children." Well, that's 10,000 children, and you don't need me to remind you that you are councillors for every child in our county. Not just the ones who live in towns and cities, but for every single child, wherever they live. This policy ignores that fact.

You might be taking some reassurance from the fact that this petition is being driven by a group of parents and residents from a distant corner of Swaledale. That you're dealing with a fairly parochial issue and that energy will soon fizzle out. Well, think again. Check the postcodes on those signatures and what you will see immediately is that there are people signing this from across all divisions. This may have started here in our patch, but believe me, the anger around this decision is growing and it's rolling out across North Yorkshire. Most residents are not yet aware of what you've done. But every single day, more and more parents, and grandparents, are finding out. And right now, as applications are being made for school places for next September, the pace is quickening. When families do find out the facts, they're furious. They are furious at you, because you've just made their life more difficult.

For example, there's a working Mum who lives in Croft-on Tees. She has three children attending Richmond School. She has just learned that in September her fourth child will have to travel to Hurworth School in Darlington. That means in an instant, no sibling support, no chance to save money with hand-me-down of school uniforms, logistical nightmares when it comes to extra-curricular activities, and, possibly most frustratingly of all, different term times to manage. The whole family have a headache that you've created and it's making people really angry. And angry parents do not forget. They won't forget this and they will not forgive you for this. So, please, let's get this mess sorted out. It is time for you to say in public what I think most of you now realise in private - this policy in its current form just does not work here. It needs sorting. Please rethink it and do it quickly, before any more damage is done.

#### **5. Gordon Stainsby, Headteacher, Reeth and Gunnerside Schools**

This statement represents the views of the Governing Body of Reeth and Gunnerside Schools. Under the new transport policy, none of the pupils on roll at our schools are eligible for funded transport to Richmond School, ending a service that has been provided for 60 years, since the catchment was established. Working with their parents as they have tried to navigate the secondary school application process has given us an insight that we think is useful to share with you.

We asked you to give consideration to the topography of Swaledale, pointed out issues regarding safety and suitability of roads, and asked for action prior to the 31st October. Inaction prevailed. Encouraged to use the Council's digital tool, families from Upper Swaledale have found that their nearest school is in Kirby Stephen. We know that road is unsuitable for school transport on too many days during the winter for the route to be used – children would miss too many days of education. There is no alternative route.

The journey via Richmond and the A66 is a 120 mile round trip. Telling those families that a risk assessment will be completed in the future, was not sufficient. They needed information earlier this year so that they could make an informed decision by the application deadline. Other parents have questioned why the digital tool uses the nearest available walked route for journeys that will be completed by bus, on roads. The digital tool uses footpaths, and even crosses fords and military training facilities. When was the last time you planned a journey by car using footpaths? Why has the council decided to do so? In a region where there are very few roads, and with many of them being unsuitable for a school bus in winter, relying on the footpath network is particularly unhelpful, even stupid. A more practical solution is needed.

Pupils that live in the same village have different lists of schools. That could mean that pupils from the same community are transported down the same road on several buses, to be taken to different schools. The transport policy states: 'The transport will be the most efficient, environmental, and economical method and route suitable for the child's needs.' We are struggling to see how that will be achieved given the information provided by the Council's Geographical Information System.

The digital tool has failed to provide clarity for parents and there seems to be a complete absence of strategic planning. The information that is provided doesn't make sense, leaving parents to make an unfair and unreasonable decision – to send their child to the nearest school via a dangerous route, or pay for them to be transported to their catchment school.

### **Response from Assistant Director Inclusion, Amanda Newbold**

The Council understands that the new Home to School Travel Policy has resulted in uncertainty and concerns for residents in some parts of the county, including Swaledale.

The Committee will be aware that the revised policy was adopted at the meeting of the Full Council on 24 July after a consideration of the outcome of an extensive consultation exercise, including representations made at the meeting.

Senior officers have provided information to the media about the policy and the concerns being raised. This is likely to have been reported in the media advance of the meeting, some of the same information is included in the next part of my statement:

The policy aligns with the Department for Education's Statutory Guidance for Home to School Travel, including in respect of the main eligibility criteria for home to school travel which is that transport will be provided to the nearest suitable school with available places. The council is expecting to see a savings profile over the course of the policy implementation of up to £4.2 million.

When considering applications for school places for the 2025/26 academic year parents have been encouraged to visit schools and to speak with them about the options for travel in the event that their child were to secure a place at the school. Parents have also been encouraged to utilise the Council's online distance calculator tool for identifying the nearest schools to their home address and we know that several thousand parents have used the tool already.

In line with national timelines and a process that is unchanged from previous years, Parents will be informed of their child's school place on 'National Offer Day' which is 3 March 2025 for secondary aged children, and 16 April 2025 for primary aged children. Children's eligibility for assistance with Home to School Travel will be assessed after each national offer day.

Once eligibility for assistance is known, officers will determine whether eligible children can be accommodated within existing contracts or whether new contracts, including new routes, are required. This is in accordance with the council's longstanding arrangements for the provision of home to school travel. No new routes have been set up and will not be established until the admissions process is complete.

Whenever new contracts are procured, risk assessments are carried out with operators.

The contracts that are arranged are not necessarily the shortest routes as they will take account of the home locations of other passengers on the route, local knowledge, vehicle size and time spent travelling.

The Home to School Travel Policy provides that 'it is for the Council to decide how to arrange free travel for an eligible child' and that transport will be the most efficient, environmental, and economical method and route suitable for the child's needs.

Finally, the council received the petition referred to my Ms Foster last Wednesday and this will follow the council's Petitions Scheme; therefore, it will be discussed at a future meeting of this committee. Please be assured that a commitment has already been made by the council to undertake a review of the policy in summer 2026 when the policy's impact can be assessed.

## **122 Yorkshire Ambulance Service – response times**

Martin Dodd, Area Operations Manager (North Yorkshire), Yorkshire Ambulance Service, attended the meeting to assist Members with their discussion of ambulance response times in the area following details having been considered at the June meeting of the Committee, which were recirculated prior to this meeting.

He outlined the following:-

- He provided details as to how Category 1 and Category 2 incidents were determined
- The response time for a Category 1 incident was 7 minutes and Category 2, recently reset, was 30 minutes, as set by the Government.
- In North Yorkshire the Category 2 target was being met with the current average being 26 minutes and 20 seconds.
- Every effort was being made to improve current response times.

Members highlighted the following:-

- Recent events, involving elderly members of the public, had seen response times way in excess of those provided, with wait times of between 3 and 5 hours plus experienced. The Member asked whether those involved had been unlucky or whether the response times stated were inaccurate, noting that there was an ambulance station nearby to where the incidents occurred. In response Mr Dodd apologised for the delayed responses outlined and requested the details so that he could investigate the specific circumstances. He emphasised that North Yorkshire was a large geographical area and response times were dependent upon where ambulances were deployed. There was also the issue of Accident and Emergency departments being located out of the area which added to the time taken for an ambulance response.
- The challenges outlined were appreciated, especially in relation to the out of area Accident and Emergency facilities and it was asked whether neighbouring ambulance services were utilised to provide a back up service, for example the North East Ambulance Service, when delays were being experienced. In response it was stated that this co-ordination of services took place on a daily basis with reciprocal arrangements in place for peak periods. The back up services for each ambulance area were a useful resource and were deployed effectively to provide the most efficient service.
- It was noted that back in the 1950s ambulance response times to the Upper Dales were 4 hours and above, resulting in a local, independent service being developed. This led to the provision of an ambulance station at Bainbridge which remains in place now. The Member highlighted the difficulties in recruiting to the station due to its rurality, although she noted that an appointment had just been made, and asked whether the recruitment issue affected the performance of the station. In response it was stated that there was an issue in trying to recruit to rural areas, but the recent



appointment had relieved the issue to a certain extent for the Bainbridge station. Every effort would be made to maximise the recruitment to rural areas.

- It was asked whether voluntary staff were utilised to enhance the service provision. In response it was stated that the Community First Voluntary Service was used to assist the service until an ambulance was able to attend. A Member suggested that the use of the First Responder service was used to reset the response times for ambulance services but he was assured that this was not the case, and only the downgrading of an incident, triggered by an additional phone call to the ambulance service, could create that.
- A Member noted that the average response time could be offset by very quick response times in urban areas. In response it was stated that the overall average response time for the Constituency area was 26 minutes and 20 seconds, whereas for the whole of North Yorkshire and York that was 34 minutes and 34 seconds. It was asked whether the range of response times was available and it was stated that these would be circulated to Members following the meeting.

### **Resolved –**

That Mr Dodd be thanked for his attendance at the Committee and his assistance with the discussion on this issue.

### **123 Resilience and Emergencies Annual Update 2024**

Matt Robinson, Head of Resilience and Emergencies, provided Members with an update on the resilience and emergencies plan.

He noted that his report had been provided previously and, therefore, provided the following highlights:-

How emergencies are responded to including partner and community response.

The North Yorkshire Council system, structure and process for responding to emergencies.

Developing a consistent and understandable approach.

The involvement of Members in area arrangements

Details of area co-ordination including dedicated officers.

The development of appropriate policies.

Members highlighted the following in relation to the report:-

- Some discrepancies within the report relating to which Electoral Division certain features were located and, therefore, had been assigned to the wrong Councillor for contact in emergency situations. In response it was agreed to do an enhanced review to ensure that the correct areas and Councillors were identified in respect of this.
- A Member emphasised the need to ensure that local communities were fully aware of what was required of them during emergency situations and it had to be ensured that appropriate plans and communications were in place, through appropriate engagement. In response it was stated that a group was in place for the local launch of Community Emergency Plans however knowledge of those Plans was imperative. Engagement continued to be sought to ensure that progress was been made.
- Concerns were raised regarding a serious incident that had occurred in a local community of which the local Councillor had not been made aware. The local press,

Parish Council and residents were seeking assurance via the Member but there was no information to be provide. He suggested that a 24 hour, seven days a week contact point was required to address such situations and assist with communications. In response it was stated that whenever a serious incident took place Silver Command were always contactable with details of the duty officer available in the Members Handbook. It was also stated that the contact number can be utilised both ways with Members informing Silver Command of an incident they have become aware of, which would be of assistance to their response.

- A Member expressed her disappointment that some Plans developed and under development were not detailed in Appendix B to the report, which provided information on Flood warning sign up and Emergency Plans within the Constituency area. She considered that the omission of this information from the report was a disincentive to the local communities that had no acknowledgement of the Plans they had developed and for those that were in the process developing Plans. She asked for this to be taken account of, going forward, with a better reflection of what is actually taking place. Other Members concurred with the issues raised and suggested that the appendix required an update. There was also a requirement for Members to be fully prepared through appropriate planning for emergency situations. In response it was stated that work was being undertaken alongside clusters of Parish and Town Councils to provide more resilience.
- A Member requested a copy of the flood warning plan for Stokesley as he noted that some flooding situations had occurred with no warnings issued. In response it was noted that the warnings would be issued by the Environment Agency in terms of river flooding, but not for surface water flooding. A copy of the report would be provided to the Member.
- In terms of surface water flooding a Member noted that this was the responsibility of the landowner to attend to. In response it was stated that was a great deal of legislation relating to how surface water flooding was addressed and there was a preventative role for the landowner. Co-ordination of the various services was undertaken alongside the landowners to try and manage these incidents.

#### **Resolved –**

That the report and issues raised be noted and any action highlighted be undertaken as indicated.

#### **124. Electric Vehicle Charging points – connection to power supply**

Barrie Mason – Assistant Director, Highways and Transportation provided a report updating Members the on delivery of EV charging Infrastructure across the Area Committee area. He highlighted the following:-

- Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCP) were installed and subsequently switched off across the former Hambleton District Council area as was reported to the Area Committee in September 2023.
- The chosen supplier became insolvent ahead of arrangements being made for the ongoing maintenance and management of 37 planned EVCP's across nine sites and as North Yorkshire Council (NYC) had no specifications or manuals to enable them to resolve this it was no longer safe for them to remain in operation.
- In the former Richmondshire district six EVCP's were installed at four locations (under a contract with a supplier that had now expired. The EVCP's now belong to NYC, are still operational, and Officers are working to bring them under an existing contract with a Charging Point Operator (CPO) to have them maintained and managed.
- In the former Hambleton District area NYC engaged with the proposed receivers for the insolvent supplier to try and resolve the problems with the EVCP that had been installed, however, EVS Energy did not complete the installations, return any assets

that or share any specifications, user manuals or provide access to the back-office system and there was nothing in place to enforce this.

- Alternative options were considered however, there was no headroom remaining in any of the existing contracts to take on the EVCPs.
- A successful bid was made to the York and North Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority for the full amount of funding required to replace the EVCPs in Hambleton and would be completed by the CPO that is awarded by the contract for the LEVI programme. The award of a contract for a CPO is currently planned for Spring 2025.
- Until the new EV bays become operational, the EVCP's will remain bagged off and the bays will be signed and marked up so they can be used as normal parking spaces.
- It was envisaged that a tender exercise to seek a partner to deliver the EVCPs across North Yorkshire will be launched shortly and the first priority for delivery of the replacement of the charging points would be in the former Hambleton district area.

Members highlighted the following issues:-

- It was clarified that all areas in Hambleton would be prioritised for the connection and provision of EVCPs under the revised arrangements, however, the implementation was not imminent, with early summer 2025 anticipated to be the likely timescale.
- Work would take place alongside Town and Parish Councils to maximise the use of the funding generated through the LEVI programme.
- Engagement with Members, and Town and Parish Councils would be taking place to determine the appropriate locations for the placement of the EVCPs.
- A Member expressed surprise that the documentation and expertise was not transferred into the unitary Authority from the former Hambleton District Council. In response it was clarified that the documents referred to had not been provided by the contractor, prior to them becoming insolvent, therefore access to these had never been provided.

**Resolved -**

That the update on delivery of EV charging Infrastructure across the Area Committee area be noted.

## 125 Community Safety & CCTV Update

Paul Romans, Community Safety & CCTV Manager provided an update on Community Safety & CCTV across North Yorkshire including a focus on Community Safety Hubs, CCTV and the wider strategic Community Safety Partnership work.

He highlighted the following:-

- The development of Community Safety and CCTV Services
- Renewed Community Safety Hubs and the structures within those
- The North Yorkshire Community safety arrangements
- The current CCTV Service and forthcoming review

A discussion of the report highlighted the following issues:-

- Members raised concerns regarding the inconsistent service provided by CCTV in the area, with some communities being unable to access the videos and others having no service. In response it was stated that the CCTV provision was not a statutory service, and its use was dependent upon the resources put into this by the

former District Councils. Possible solutions to providing a more consistent service were being investigated and would form part of the review. The ultimate aim was to provide a 7 days a week, 24 hours a day service as extensively as possible.

- A Member asked whether the MoD had been approached to provide a joint CCTV service in Catterick Garrison. In response it was stated that NYC worked closely with the MoD at the Garrison and all community safety opportunities would be explored. It was also noted that there had been a number of hate crimes in the Catterick Garrison recently and every effort was being made to address this.
- It was noted that the current quality of images from the Stokesley CCTV cameras was not good and it was asked whether consideration could be given to enhancing that quality. In response it was stated that the provision of enhanced quality cameras was very expensive and it had to be taken into account that the service was not a statutory provision. The review would determine how the service could be enhanced, going forward.

**Resolved -**

That the update be noted.

**126 Proposals for the Allocation of the Economic, Regeneration, Tourism and Transport Project Development Fund - £50k AC Seed Funding**

It was noted that no update was available at this stage and updates would be provided to Members as appropriate progress was made.

**127 Work Programme**

Considered -

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) providing a Work Programme for Members to consider, develop and adapt.

The following issues were highlighted:-

- Following the receipt of a petition on the Authority's new Home to School Transport policy large enough to trigger a debate at the Area Committee an additional meeting of the Committee would be arranged in January to consider this.
- Enquiries would be made to determine whether the Constituency Area's MP would be able to attend a meeting of the Committee in the near future.
- A further request was made for issues relating to the performance of, and communication with, the local area Planning Teams to be discussed at a future meeting. It was noted that this matter would be addressed at a forthcoming briefing for Members of the Committee. A Member noted that a recent restructure of the Planning Services teams, together with a huge increase in applications, had created issues for the teams, and recognition of these difficult circumstances was required.

**Resolved –**

- (i) That the Work Programme be noted;
- (ii) That the issues raised above be added to the Work Programme;
- (iii) That further consideration be given to the development of the work programme at forthcoming briefings and meetings.

**128 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

**Resolved –**

That it be noted that the next scheduled ordinary meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 10am at a venue to be determined, however, an additional meeting of the Committee relating to the petition on the Authority's new Home to School Transport policy would be arranged in January 2025, and details would be provided to Members in due course.

The meeting concluded at 12.35pm

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## North Yorkshire Council

### Richmond (Yorks) Area Committee

27 January 2025

#### Receipt of Petition titled 'Rethink North Yorkshire School Transport Cuts'.

#### Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services)

##### 1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To advise of a petition containing more than 500 signatures.
- 1.2 To ask the Area Committee to consider a response.

##### 2.0 The Petition

- 2.1 A combined paper and electronic petition has been received by North Yorkshire Council and contains 2129 signatures of people who live, work or study in the county.
- 2.2 The title of the petition is 'Rethink North Yorkshire School Transport Cuts'. There are two statements attached to the petition which are outlined below (see *italics*):

- 1. *North Yorkshire Council's recent decision to limit free school transport to the nearest school only is detrimental to rural families. It will divide communities, harm local schools and risk children's safety by requiring travel on remote, often impassable routes. In return, there is no guarantee of any substantial financial savings.*

*We the undersigned, led by a team of anxious Upper Dales parents and local residents, demand that councillors rethink and reverse this damaging policy in the light of the negative impact it will have on the safety and education of children across rural North Yorkshire.*

- 2. *North Yorkshire Council has voted to reduce the provision of free home to school transport. None of the pupils that live in Swaledale will be eligible for funded transport to their catchment secondary school in Richmond. Free transport will only be offered to the nearest school, in Leyburn, Kirkby Stephen or Barnard Castle. All of these journeys involve minor, steep, single-track roads over high moorland. In winter, all of these routes become impassable before (and more often than) the low-level route to Richmond. While the nearest school principle is easy to understand in some places, its application in our region requires further consideration.*

*The Liberal Democrats, the Green Party, two Conservative and many Independent Councillors voted against the policy. Despite many objections from parents, teachers, school governors and members of the public, the Council has not yet made provision for our community.*

*The Action Group working on this has decided to send another petition to the Council asking them to rescind their decision, or to make an exemption for Swaledale.*

2.3 The petition can be seen on the Council's website here: [Petitions received | North Yorkshire Council](#)

### **3.0 The Council's Arrangements for Receiving and Responding to Petitions**

3.1 The key features of the Council's arrangements for receiving and debating petitions, as published on the Council's website, are as follows:

- Receipt of the petition is published on the Council's website (which has been done in the case of this petition).
- If a petition contains 500 or more signatures (but less than 30,130 signatories), it will be scheduled for debate at the next meeting of the appropriate Area Committee.
- The petition organiser is offered the opportunity to speak for five minutes at the Area Committee meeting to present their petition. Subsequently, at the meeting, the petition will be discussed by Councillors for a maximum of 15 minutes and a decision will be made on how to respond to the petition.
- Possible responses by the Council to petitions, as shown on the website, are:
  - (a) to take the action requested by the petition;
  - (b) not to take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate;
  - (c) to commission further investigation into the matter, for example by a relevant committee; or
  - (d) where the issue is one on which the council Executive is required to make the final decision, the council will decide whether to make recommendations to inform that decision.
- The petition organiser will receive written confirmation of this decision. This confirmation will also be published on the website.

3.2 In accordance with the arrangements described above, the petition organisers have been invited to join today's meeting to present their petition.

### **4.0 Officer comments relating to the policy change process**

4.1 The Council has a statutory duty to provide home to school travel for eligible children of compulsory school age in accordance with Statutory Guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE). The Council sets out how it meets these duties in the North Yorkshire Council Home to School Travel Policy. The overall cost to the Council of the provision of home to school travel is significant and has been rising at pace. Expenditure has broadly doubled since the last revision of the policy in 2019.

4.2 The Council consulted on the current policy between 12 February and 26 April 2024. This comprised of consultation meetings for the public and school groups and an online survey that received 1299 responses. In addition to online responses, other correspondence such as letters from parish councils and feedback from transport providers were also included in the consultation. A petition 'Stop school bus cuts' containing 378 signatories was also received.

4.3 During the consultation period meetings were offered and took place with individual councillors and political groups. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee also met informally on 20<sup>th</sup> May and reviewed the motion to 'halt the cuts' that was proposed and seconded at Full Council on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024. The report of the committee was provided and is referenced at point 499 in the minutes of the Executive meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2024.



- 4.4 On 16<sup>th</sup> July, the Executive Committee received a report requesting that the new policy was adopted and that consideration was given to seven recommendations, six of which had been subject to consultation and one which was added subsequently in relation to extending the eligibility for families on low incomes with secondary school age children.
- 4.5 Following consultation, the addition of this discretionary provision was in recognition of the impact of rurality on families where the nearest schools are further from home than in other areas. Eligibility for low income families to attend one of their three nearest suitable schools was extended from 6 to 12 miles.
- 4.6 During the meeting of the Executive, sixteen members of the public provided statements or questions, ten of these were read at the meeting.
- 4.7 At the Executive committee on 16<sup>th</sup> July 24 it was recommended unanimously to Full Council that a new home to school travel policy be adopted and the recommendations be made. The Full Council met on 24<sup>th</sup> July 24 and this item was considered and is referenced at point 101 in the minutes of that meeting. A named vote was taken, and the motion was declared carried with 48 votes for, 26 votes against and no abstentions.

#### **Officer comments relating to the petition**

**1      *The request that ‘councillors rethink and reverse this damaging policy in the light of the negative impact it will have on the safety and education of children across rural North Yorkshire.’***

- 4.8 The Council must include information about their school travel policy in their composite prospectus for school admissions (which must be published by 12 September each year). Following the consultation process and the Full Council decision, the policy has been implemented since 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024. An up to-date policy is required to be available by 19 September each year so that parents may take it into account when deciding which schools to apply for during the normal admissions round. Parents of pre-school children and those leaving primary school have applied for places in primary schools and secondary schools respectively, to commence in September 2025. Proactive communication about the travel policy change has taken place alongside the admissions rounds. National Offer Days will be held in March and April 2025 and this year’s admissions process is still live. It is therefore not possible for the Council to reverse or rescind the policy during this year’s cycle. To revise the policy at this time would not accord with our duties under The School Information (England) Regulations 2008 and also the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Therefore, the view of officers is that the policy, once approved and published, should not be *reversed* or amended during an admissions cycle.
- 4.9 The Council has agreed to undertake a post implementation review of the policy in summer 2026, when the policy will have been operational for a whole school year cycle. Before this time, it may not be possible to draw sufficient information to analyse and make meaningful recommendations. A full cycle would enable greater levels of analysis of the impacts of the policy across the whole county. The findings of this review will be published in autumn 2026 and should a revision to the policy be required, there would be time for this to be proposed, consulted on and adopted in time for 12<sup>th</sup> September 2027 at the earliest. Therefore, the view of officers is that this, already agreed review, could address the petitioners’ request for councillors to *rethink* the policy.

**2      *The request that councillors ‘make an exemption for Swaledale’.***

- 4.10 The Council is required to set policy for the county. The petition refers to the nearest school principle. This is a term covered by DfE within their statutory guidance ‘Travel to school for

children of compulsory school age' (January 2024) under 'Part 1: local authorities' statutory duty in relation to eligible children'. The Council has both considered and aligned the Home to School Travel Policy to DfE guidance.

- 4.11 Across the county, the journeys that children may take to school are not the same as the distance used to calculate the nearest school. This point has been reiterated to residents who have enquired on the matter before and since the policy change, and it has been publicised widely in media releases put forward by the Council. The journeys being referred to in the petition have not been determined as home to school travel routes; this is because the September 25 admissions round is still live and school places have not been confirmed. By association, eligibility under the travel policy has not yet been assessed for any children in Swaledale who are moving to secondary school in September 2025. The view of officers is that it is too early to consider *exemptions* and that policy changes of any kind should be considered after the post implementation review.
- 4.12 To conclude, the policy was subject to a consultation process and all responses were published alongside the reports at the time the policy was adopted. Today, the policy implementation is still in its early stages, so any changes should (i) only take place once there is sufficient evidence to review the current policy impacts, and (ii) should only be scheduled to occur within the timeframes set out in the school admissions regulations.

## **5.0 Recommendations**

- 5.1 That the Committee notes the petition and provides a response as detailed in paragraph 3.1.

*Possible responses by the Council to petitions, as shown on the website, are:*

- (a) to take the action requested by the petition;*
- (b) not to take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate;*
- (c) to commission further investigation into the matter, for example by a relevant committee; or*
- (d) where the issue is one on which the council Executive is required to make the final decision, the council will decide whether to make recommendations to inform that decision.*

Appendices:

Barry Khan  
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Northallerton

Author of report: Stephen Loach, Principal Democratic Services Officer.

Background Document: North Yorkshire Council's petitions information and advice, a copy of which is on the Council's website [Petitions | North Yorkshire Council](#)