

North Yorkshire County Council

Harrogate and Knaresborough Area Constituency Committee

Minutes of the remote meeting held on Thursday, 18th March, 2021 commencing at 10.00 am.

County Councillor John Mann in the Chair, plus County Councillors Phillip Broadbank, Jim Clark, Richard Cooper, John Ennis, David Goode, Michael Harrison, Paul Haslam, Don Mackenzie, Zoe Metcalfe, Cliff Trotter and Robert Windass.

In attendance: County Councillors Carl Les and David Chance.

Officers present: Karl Battersby, Barrie Mason, Liz Meade, Louise Neale, Aidan Rayner and Ruth Gladstone.

Other Attendees: Andrew Jones MP.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

In opening the meeting, the Chairman referred to the untimely death, on 11 March 2021, of County Councillor Geoff Webber. The Chairman paid tribute to the valuable contribution that County Councillor Geoff Webber had made to the work to this Committee and expressed, on behalf of Members of the Committee, condolences to the family.

80 Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 8 January 2021

Resolved –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2021, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

81 Declarations of Interest

County Councillor Richard Cooper declared an interest in agenda item 4 “Update from Andrew Jones MP” on the grounds that Mr Jones was his employer. County Councillor Richard Cooper advised that he would not be taking part, in any way, in that item of business.

County Councillor Michael Harrison declared an interest in agenda item 6 “Covid-19 Pandemic in North Yorkshire – Update” on the grounds that he had relatives who worked in Health and Adult Services. He advised, however, that the Standards Committee had granted a dispensation which allowed him to take part in that item of business.

82 Update from Andrew Jones MP

Considered –

The verbal update by Andrew Jones MP regarding:-

- The effects which the Covid-19 pandemic was having on ways of working, and the changes in the volume, and the nature, of work undertaken.
- The community efforts being made to help others who needed support during the pandemic.

- The ways in which he had represented his constituency in Parliament, including taking forward a request for a policy change regarding alcohol duty on hand sanitiser.
- The very helpful weekly calls between all MPs for North Yorkshire, the Local Resilience Forum and senior county councillors and officers.
- The continuation of non-Covid work, such as the seeking of permission and funds for the A59 Kex Gill.
- His thanks to county councillors and officers for their work during a challenging year.

In response to Members' questions, Andrew Jones MP advised of the following:-

- Work continued on a reform of the Social Care Sector. No date was available regarding when this was likely to come before Parliament.
- Andrew Jones MP had supported the Policing Bill at its second reading in Parliament on 16 March 2021.
- The Domestic Abuse Bill, currently under consideration by the House of Lords, was likely to receive Royal Assent by the end of April 2021.
- The current weekly calls between MPs and senior county councillors and officers were unlikely to be necessary following the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Countries should work together in an international effort to achieve high Covid vaccine take-up around the world. Vaccination nationalism, as seen from the EU, was highly inappropriate.

Resolved –

That the update be noted.

83 County Update by County Councillor Carl Les (Leader of the County Council)

Considered –

The verbal report of County Councillor Carl Les (Leader of the County Council) providing an update on the following issues:-

- The County Council's 2021/22 budget included Locality Budgets and a budget for Climate Change.
- County Councillor Carl Les looked forward to progression of the Fairer Funding Review and the Adult Social Care Funding Review.
- County Councillor Carl Les considered the weekly calls with all MPs for North Yorkshire to be invaluable during the Covid pandemic.
- The work of the Regional Climate Commission, which had been launched on 17 March 2021, would impact on the County Council.
- The North Yorkshire Rural Commission was due to produce its report during the summer of 2021.
- County Councillor Carl Les's encouragement to members of the public to participate in the consultation currently underway concerning local government reform.

Resolved –

That the update be noted.

84 Covid-19 Pandemic in North Yorkshire - Update

Considered –

The verbal report of County Councillor Michael Harrison (Executive Member, and Chair of North Yorkshire Health and Wellbeing Board) providing updates on the Covid-19 pandemic in North Yorkshire in relation to:- infection rates; care home infections; hospitals and hospital discharges; testing; and vaccinations.

In response to Members' questions, County Councillor Michael Harrison:-

- confirmed that a site within Harrogate was being sought for testing to replace the current facility located at the Harrogate Convention Centre;
- undertook to pass on Committee Members' appreciation and thanks to the North Yorkshire team for all their work, including supporting the reintroduction of family visit to residents of private care homes; and
- confirmed that the County Council's Extra Care Programme had continued to progress across the county during the pandemic.

Resolved –

That the update be noted.

85 Stronger Communities: Covid19 Social Isolation and Approach to Community Efforts

Considered -

The report of the Head of Stronger Communities providing an annual update on the work of the Stronger Communities Team and the work they had done to support the establishment and operation of the Community Support Organisations across the County.

The report was introduced by Liz Meade (Stronger Communities Delivery Manager). County Councillor David Chance (Executive Member for Stronger Communities) paid credit to the Stronger Communities Delivery Managers for the exceptional work they had undertaken throughout the pandemic and also the 23 Community Support Organisations who had gone "above and beyond" in organising the voluntary groups. He added that issues anticipated going forward included a likely increase in mental health problems within communities and sustainability of the community groups following the pandemic.

Committee Members:-

- paid tribute to the scale of support which had been delivered;
- praised the Community Support Organisations for their work;
- expressed support for enhancing the model, which had been achieved to date, of working with the voluntary sector; and
- highlighted the need to work alongside the NHS to provide support regarding mental health issues going forward.

Resolved –

That the report be noted.

86 Public Questions or Statements

There were no questions or statements from members of the public.

87 Active Travel Schemes in Harrogate and Knaresborough - Progress Report

Considered –

The report of the Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services providing updates on progress regarding Active Travel Fund schemes, the Beech Grove Low Traffic

Neighbourhood, and Otley Road cycle scheme.

Louise Neale (Team Leader, Transport Planning) introduced the report, responded to Members' questions and:-

- undertook to put checks in place, via WSP Consultants, to identify any multiple responses being made by the same person as part of the County Council's formal public consultations regarding Active Travel proposals; and
- advised that post-scheme monitoring and evaluation would be taken for any schemes which went on to be approved.

County Councillor Don Mackenzie (Executive Member for Access), during discussion of a later item of business at this meeting, confirmed that the Otley Road cycle path scheme and the junction improvements plan for Otley Road would require the loss of a small number of relatively small trees, although these would be replaced. It was felt that the environmental advantages, of providing an alternative method to travel along Otley Road and the west of Harrogate by cycle or walking, was correct.

Members paid tribute to the Executive Member and officers for the progress being made regarding sustainable transport measures. Members also highlighted that the results of consultations needed to be taken into account by the County Council when it made decisions on whether to approve proposals and that such consultations were not referendums.

Resolved –

That the progress being made on Active Travel schemes in Harrogate and Knaresborough be noted.

88 Forthcoming Public Consultation on Detailed Design for a Cycle Facility on Oatlands Drive, Harrogate

Considered –

The verbal report of County Councillor Don Mackenzie (Executive Member for Access) giving an update on the Oatlands Drive Active Travel Fund scheme.

County Councillor Don Mackenzie advised that the Oatlands Drive Active Travel scheme had been chosen for submission of a bid to the DfT because, unlike the two other Active Travel schemes in this area, Oatlands Drive was very close to a large residential area and two secondary schools, and was considered to be ideally located to seek better facilities for cycling and walking. The Oatlands Drive Active Travel scheme bid to the DfT had included the introduction of one-way traffic management in order to create sufficient width on that road, which was hemmed-in on both sides by The Stray for much of its length, to create a good cycle path in each direction. The recent initial consultation had shown the majority of residents to be opposed/vehemently opposed to one-way traffic management on Oatlands Drive. There were many reasons for such opposition although a common reason was that it would result in a longer journey into town by car than at present. However, this had been one of the reasons why Oatlands Drive had been chosen for an Active Travel scheme, namely, that it was within a mile of the town centre and the Harrogate Congestion Study had identified that it was the short journeys into the town centre which should be made more attractive for people to walk or cycle rather than use their cars.

County Councillor Don Mackenzie advised that the outcome of the initial consultation had now been discussed with the Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services and that the decision had been made, having taken into account the overwhelming views of local residents and the local Elected Member, to drop the one-way traffic management

element of the scheme. Therefore, the main consultation on detailed design, which was about to begin, would not include one-way working. However, it would include a proposal to make the whole area on Oatlands Drive, from York Place through to Hookstone Road and all the Saints residential area, a 20mph zone to slow the traffic to improve safety for walkers and cyclists. Other improvements were also planned. Every resident of the area would receive a letter and leaflet about this detailed design consultation, together with encouragement for them to give their views on the slightly reduced proposals which aimed to encourage walking and cycling.

County Councillor John Ennis (local Member) expressed his thanks to County Councillor Don Mackenzie and the Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services for considering residents' views. He also welcomed the dropping of the one-way traffic management element because he felt that that aspect would not have worked due, for example, to displacement of traffic, greater congestion, disproportionate inconvenience for residents with disabilities, and access problems for St Aidan's School. He felt that the various other aspects of the detailed design could nevertheless improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists on Oaklands Drive. In conclusion, he felt that there was a lot to welcome in this current version of the proposal, which excluded the one-way traffic management element, and he welcomed the detailed design consultation which was to take place soon.

Other Members expressed support for the changes which had been made to the proposal and for all the work being undertaken to encourage sustainable transport.

Resolved –

That the report be noted.

89 Harrogate Transforming Cities Fund Update

Considered –

The report of the Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services providing an update on the Transforming Cities Fund proposals for Harrogate.

Aidan Rayner (TCF Project Delivery Manager) introduced the report, advising that the Harrogate proposals comprised a £7.9m scheme focussed on sustainable travel and public realm improvements around the rail and bus station gateway. He highlighted the key elements of the scheme and, as part of the public consultation currently taking place, the two options for Station Parade and three options proposed for the length of James Street between Princes Street and Station Parade.

Aidan Rayner responded to Members' questions. He clarified that there was no intention to move the Queen Victoria monument as part of these proposal and that the monument was mentioned in this consultation only for the purpose of acquiring people's views for use in considering future proposals.

County Councillor Don Mackenzie (Executive Member for Access) highlighted that, whilst there were obvious advantages in creating a very pedestrian and cycle-friendly area in front of the railway station, a major concern was the consequential effect for southbound A61 traffic including possible detrimental implications of traffic congestion and air quality on Cheltenham Parade/Ripon Road. As such, there were major issues to be resolved and the views of the public were being sought.

Resolved –

That the report and the progress which is being made be noted.

90 Significant Investment Schemes by NYCC

Considered –

The report of the Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services providing a brief update on three major projects, namely, the Harrogate York railway project, A59 Kex Gill and Junction 47 major schemes.

Barrie Mason (Assistant Director, Highways and Transportation) introduced the report, highlighting the significant amount of transport and highways work being undertaken in the local area and that the three schemes mentioned in this report totalled £80m worth of transport investment.

Barrie Mason responded to Members' questions and undertook to circulate, after the meeting, responses to the following questions:-

- What is the latest position on the rail improvements that were included/considered as part of the Harrogate Congestion study?
- What is the latest position from Network Rail about any level crossing upgrades on the Harrogate Rail Line?

Resolved –

That the report be noted.

91 Committee Work Programme

Considered –

The report of the Principal Democratic Services Officer which invited Members to consider, amend and add to the Committee's Work Programme.

Ruth Gladstone (Principal Democratic Services Officer) introduced the report.

Resolved –

- (a) That the Work Programme be noted.
- (b) That Members contact the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman or the Principal Democratic Services Officer with any suggested business for future meetings.

The meeting concluded at 12.35 pm.