

# North Yorkshire County Council

## Harrogate and Knaresborough Area Constituency Committee

Minutes of the informal remote meeting held on Thursday, 17th March, 2022 commencing at 10.00 am.

County Councillor John Mann in the Chair, plus County Councillors Philip Broadbank, John Ennis, Michael Harrison, Paul Haslam, Don Mackenzie, Matt Scott, Cliff Trotter and Robert Windass.

In attendance: County Councillors Carl Les, Gareth Dadd and David Chance.

Officers present: Liz Meade, Graham North and Ruth Gladstone.

Other Attendees: None.

Apologies: County Councillors Jim Clark, Richard Cooper, David Goode and Zoe Metcalfe.

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

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#### 119 Minutes of the Informal Remote Meeting of the Committee held on 6 January 2022

##### Resolved –

That the Minutes of the informal remote meeting held on 6 January 2022, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

#### 120 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

#### 121 Verbal Updates from Executive Members

Considered –

Verbal updates of Executive Members on the issues identified below. Executive Members also responded to Members' questions regarding these issues.

County Councillor Carl Les (Leader of the Council):-

- Executive Members very much appreciated receiving invitations to the Committee's meetings as they found it helpful, for carrying out their role, to attend.
- Local government reorganisation – (i) The Structural Change Order had now gone through the House of Commons and the House of Lords and was awaiting ministerial sign off. (ii) All councils, with the exception of Richmondshire District who had not been present, had signed off the Implementation Plan, which was the 'road map' to the successful transition to go from 8 councils into a single unitary council and gave options for the councillors to be elected in May 2022 to choose the new council's ways of working. A copy was being sent to all current Members. (iii) The work of the various work streams was going well.
- Devolution – Discussions with the Minister and civil servants had now commenced and were very positive.

- Ukrainian evacuees would be welcomed with open arms once they started to arrive in the county.

County Councillor Gareth Dadd (Deputy Leader of the Council):-

- Local government reorganisation – (i) Councils' treasury staff were working tirelessly and collaboratively to deliver the transformation programme so that North Yorkshire residents saw no visible change to services on 1 April 2023, ie on the date when the new unitary council came into being. (ii) The County Council's proposal for local government reorganisation had included a clear mandate for localism, eg to area constituency committees, and he hope that that pledge would be honoured by the new council. His personal preference was to go one step further by giving rights and responsibilities to local Members to make very local decisions on behalf of their communities. Various Committee Members expressed support for County Councillor Gareth Dadd's personal preference.

County Councillor David Chance (Executive Member for Stronger Communities):-

- The Syrian Refugee Scheme was going exceptionally well, with people who had been relocated in North Yorkshire being extremely thankful for the lives that had been given to them. Afghan refugees continued to be received in North Yorkshire and that was likely to continue throughout the Summer. Detailed information was awaited from the Government about the arrangements to assist Ukrainian evacuees and he had no doubt that Yorkshire would be very supportive.

County Councillor Don Mackenzie (Executive Member for Access):-

- NY Highways, the teckal company created by the County Council, had had a benign first winter in terms of providing a winter gritting service and had, in fact, probably spent more time dealing with flooding on roads and removing trees blown over during storms than with ice and snow.
- Major Schemes – (i) Kex Gill was still proceeding and one or two legal aspects were currently being worked through before an announcement could be made about the appointment of a contractor. (ii) Work had been held up a little at the A1(M) junction 47, although this had not caused congestion.
- Bus services improvement – The Harrogate Advertiser, on 17 March, had carried a fairly big article on its front page, and in inside pages, about buses following discussion at the meeting on 15 March of the County Council's Executive. He remained fairly confident that the whole fleet of Harrogate Bus Company would be converted to electric traction.
- In response to a question from County Councillor Philip Broadbank, County Councillor Don Mackenzie undertook to enquire why a meeting between officers and local Members, regarding the provision of a footpath and street lighting at Kingsley Road/Bogs Lane, had not taken place, as agreed by the Area Constituency Committee on 6 January 2022.
- Rail – The December 2021 timetable had shown a doubling of rail services between Harrogate and York, which was excellent. However, there would be a little hiccup from May 2022 for a few weeks, namely, that Northern, the train operator, was having difficulties running a full service throughout the north of England and were consequently having to make or two savings on many of their routes.
- Digital infrastructure – The County Council was introducing free public Wi-Fi to 18 town centres. This was now available in Knaresborough and Ripon. It would be available in Harroqate the Boroughbridge shortly, thereby assisting those local economies.

County Councillor Michael Harrison (Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Health Integration, including Health and Wellbeing Board and Extra Care):-

- COVID infection rates at present in North Yorkshire, England, and the Harrogate district were reported. There were rising hospitalisations with COVID locally,

although many of these were people who were in hospital more generally for other reasons and had transpired to have COVID on being tested when admitted to hospital.

- The continuing negative impact of COVID on the hospital sector and the care home sector. These sectors continued to follow the segregation protocols which had been in place during the previous two years. The social care sector remained fragile with resourcing constraints.
- Encouragement for Members to promote of the [makecarematter.co.uk](https://www.makecarematter.co.uk) recruitment hub website.

#### **Resolved –**

- (a) That Executive Members be thanked for attending this meeting and for their updates.
- (b) That Executive Members be thanked for attending and providing updates at each meeting of this Committee during the last 18 months, for which Committee Members are very grateful.

### **122 Stronger Communities and Community Response to COVID19 Update**

#### **Considered –**

The report of the Head of Stronger Communities which provided an update on the Stronger Communities Programme and the support provided to and by local communities in response to the Covid19 (Coronavirus) pandemic, together with an overview of progress made in the Harrogate and Knaresborough Constituency area.

In introducing the report, Liz Meade (Stronger Communities Delivery Manager) highlighted:-

- The mobilisation and activity of 23 Community Support Organisations across North Yorkshire, primarily facilitated by approximately 203,272 volunteer hours.
- Covid19 related work, including:-
  - the award of grants for food and essential supplies to support those facing financial hardship because of the pandemic;
  - delivery of a Holiday Activities and Food Programme;
  - support provided during winter, via the Household Support Fund, to assist households needing support with food, energy and essential living costs whilst the economy recovered from the pandemic;
  - the gifting of re-cycled digital devices to socially isolated individuals and school children.
- Wider Stronger Communities programme work, including:-
  - Various projects, run in conjunction with the Council's Children and Young People Service, to assist children, young people and their families.
  - Work with NHS partners including the administration of a range of NHS mental health grants, together with involvement in the Council's Health and Adult Services Transformation Programme.
  - The strengthening of local communities' assets and infrastructure, including encouraging relationships and collaborations between voluntary and community sector organisations as well as stabilising and/or building capacity within them if required.
- Planning for 2022/23, which was to include the ongoing 5-year independent evaluation of the Stronger Communities Programme also encompassing the community support organisations, and the continued development of a ten-year

strategy “People, Place and Power”.

- Information regarding Community Support Organisations in the Harrogate, Knaresborough and Boroughbridge areas.

Members commented that the work, not only of the Stronger Communities Team, but also of all the volunteers in the Community Support Organisations in Harrogate, Knaresborough and Boroughbridge, had been fantastic during the pandemic. They asked for the thanks of this Committee to be passed onto the volunteers and the three Community Support Organisations.

A Member highlighted the importance of good nutrition to help individuals’ mental health and their future, this being one of the issues with which the Team and the Community Support Organisations had assisted.

#### **Resolved –**

- (a) That the content of the report be noted.
- (b) That Members’ gratitude to the Stronger Communities Team and the Community Support Organisations, for all the work they have done during recent years, be recorded.

### **123 Car Parking at Railway Stations**

Considered –

The report of the Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services which provided follow-up on the recommendation, from North Yorkshire Rural Commission, which asked the County Council to review car parking spaces at railway stations.

In introducing the report, Graham North (Strategy and Performance Officer, Business and Environmental Services Directorate) highlighted that:-

- The Harrogate Line had seen significant improvements in frequency, modern rolling stock, station improvements and the introduction of the LNER services to/from London, all of which had potentially increased the demand for rail travel.
- Pre-pandemic, most car parks on the Harrogate Line were full. The pandemic had changed this, with currently more people working from home.
- The number of car parking spaces, and the amount of any daily charge, at the stations at Weeton, Pannal, Hornbeam Park, Harrogate, Starbeck, Knaresborough and Cattal were set out in the report to this meeting.
- The rail industry had looked at each station to identify any land available for car parking close to stations. Whilst some land had been identified, the cost to purchase, access to/from the site, and the poor business cases had meant that they were not developed further.
- Many stations on the line were close to the communities they served and active travel options, with station facilities that encouraged this and the use of public transport was a viable alternative to use of the car.
- Any car park developments coming forward would be expected to help deliver the York and North Yorkshire Routemap to Carbon Negative.
- The situation regarding car parking on each of the local stations was as follows:-
  - Pannal – Provision for a park and rail car park was included as part of the redevelopment of the Dunlopillo site in Pannal. The site was currently under construction and, as yet, this had not been provided.
  - Hornbeam Park – Any changes to car park provision at this station would need to include any potential impact on the local highway.

- Harrogate – The multi-storey car park adjacent to the station provided extra station car parking capacity.
- Cattal – Harrogate Borough Council and the County Council were working closely with the site promoters in connection with the new settlement proposals in the Cattal area. The new settlement would be focused around Cattal railway station and would comprise the enhancements to the rail station including provision of additional car parking. Harrogate Borough Council was currently developing a Development Plan document to guide the development of the new settlement.
- At Weeton, Starbeck and Knaresborough stations, no work was planned.

Members discussed the report and provided the following comments:-

- Members emphasised that one of their motivations was to make public transport, whether by bus or by rail, more accessible through other means of transport rather than the motor car. This was a main feature of the Harrogate Gateway Scheme.
- Pannal railway station car parking:-
  - Members acknowledged that there was quite a lot of spare capacity at present at the Pannal railway station car park but this situation might change as people returned to work from offices following the pandemic.
  - Members noted that any questions needed to be directed to Harrogate Borough Council planning department concerning when the developer was to commence work on the new provision for a park and rail car park as part of the redevelopment of the Dunlopillo site.
- Cattal railway station car parking – Members were confident that, whichever council was in place at the time, would impose conditions, to provide better facilities at Cattal railway station, on the developer or the developers of nearby housing developments.
- Hornbeam Park railway station car parking:-
  - A Member highlighted that, as at midday the previous day, there were 48 vacant car parking spaces in this station car park.
  - Members discussed the possible double-decking of the car park and highlighted various concerns, including the inappropriateness of a double-decked car park in such a semi-rural environment, and the implications for residents living on Hookstone Road in view of the levels of traffic at peak times. Another Member expressed the view that adding an extra, say 100, parking spaces, by double-decking the car park, was unlikely to have such a great effect on what was already a pretty busy highway junction.
  - Members also highlighted that there was already a fair bit of overspill of parking, by people using the Hornbeam Park railway station, onto local residential roads. There was some inconsiderate parking, longer term parking, or the blocking of driveways taking place and these were situations that Members were anxious to avoid.
  - A Member suggested that additional cycle routes, from further away, might be provided to encourage people to get to/from Hornbeam Park by cycling rather than by motor car.
- Starbeck railway station car parking:-
  - A Member commented that there was tremendous demand for car parking around this station because the current car park was always full, and nearby sites previously used for car parking had recently been built on. Graham North advised that no land had been identified, which was easily accessible and close to the station, for additional car parking.
  - Graham North advised that it was considered that the majority of the users

of this station were from the local community. The Member commented that there had been an increasing trend, during the previous 3-4 years, of people from outside coming into Starbeck by car to use the railway station.

- Knaresborough railway station car parking – In response to questions, Graham North advised that some potential land had been investigated for additional station car parking but had been considered to be not worth progressing for various reasons including the impact on the highways, difficulties in entering/exiting the site at peak times, and distance from the station.
- There was a discussion about charging to park at railway stations. Members expressed opposition to charging on the basis that it had the consequence of pushing parking into residential roads where such parking would be a danger and inconvenience to local people, and it would increase the cost to the passenger of using public transport. However railway station car park charges were already in place at Pannal and Harrogate railway stations.
- Facilities at railways stations were discussed and Graham North undertook to provide Members with more detailed information concerning:- current onward travel posters which promoted the different ways to get to and from the railway station; the current number of cycle spaces at the station; and current facilities at each station. Graham North added that the rail industry itself was keen to develop facilities actually at railway stations. He also advised that Northern had a programme to invest in CCTV at many stations along the Harrogate line.

**Resolved –**

That the content of the report be noted.

**124 Public Questions or Statements**

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

**125 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.

It was noted that this meeting was the Committee's last prior to the County Council elections on 5 May 2022. Members commented that they did not wish to add anything to the Work Programme at this time because the membership after 5 May 2022 should decide the Committee's Work Programme going forward. Members suggested that, between the elections and the Committee's meeting on 9 June 2022, the membership should be asked for suggestions for inclusion in the Committee's Work Programme

**Resolved –**

- (a) That the Work Programme be noted.
- (b) That, following the elections on 5 May 2022, the Committee's membership be asked, before the Committee's meeting on 9 June 2022, for suggestions for inclusion in the Committee's Work Programme.

The meeting concluded at 11.30 am.