

North Yorkshire County Council

Thirsk and Malton Area Constituency Committee

Minutes of the remote meeting held on Friday, 3rd December 2021 commencing at 2.30 pm.

County Councillor Caroline Goodrick in the Chair. plus County Councillors Val Arnold, Robert Baker, Gareth Dadd, Peter Sowray, Helen Swiers, Roberta Swiers and Greg White.

In attendance: County Councillor Carl Les.

Officers present: Richard Marr and Melanie Carr.

Other Attendees: MP Kevin Hollinrake.

Apologies: County Councillor Janet Sanderson.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

112 Welcome by the Chair - Introductions & Updates

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, including the Leader and MP Kevin Hollinrake, and confirmed there were no updates to provide.

113 Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 October 2021

Resolved –

That the Minutes of the previous meeting of the Thirsk and Malton Area Constituency Committee held on 1 October 2021, having been printed and circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

114 Apologies & Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

115 Public Questions or Statements

There were no public questions or statements.

116 Attendance of MP Kevin Hollinrake

The MP provided an overview of how things were at Westminster and his views on issues affecting his constituency. This included:

- The management of the new Covid-19 Omnicom variant, and the new restrictions in place;
- The improvements in the economy which he expected would be back to pre-Covid levels by the end of the financial year, evidenced by massive labour shortages;
- The recent turbulence in Parliament as a result of the recent serious breaches of the

lobbying rules - Members discussed the clamour in Parliament to ban all private consultation work in light of those events, and the MP confirmed new rules were being proposed but suggested more oversight was needed. Members agreed that it could deter some from stepping forward and if taken too far, could make it difficult for MPs to ensure your future employability post tenure;

- The pressure on supply chains and the increasing cost of raw materials and energy, putting pressure on inflation;
- Concerns about regional investment – the MP confirmed his view that the integrated Rail Plan would not deliver improvements in east-west journeys, in particular it not including the proposed northern powerhouse rail link between Leeds and Manchester. He suggested it would not be possible to level up the North as was needed without that new line.
- The unfair cap on Adult Social Care, which would disregard the means test – Members were pleased to note the MP had voted against the Adult Health & Social Care Bill. County Councillor Greg White suggested the removal of the means test coupled with the lower house prices in the north, would result in little benefit to North Yorkshire residents from the new scheme. The MP confirmed there was a housing disregard for those receiving domiciliary care, with the home only being taken into account if moving to a care home. The MP confirmed that of the £12bn raised by the Health & Social Care Levy a year, only £2bn approximately goes into Local Authority social care, with the rest effectively going to the NHS;
- The need to follow through with levelling up – fiscal measures needed to be fair for those in the north;
- The small boats crisis – both a diplomatic and domestic legislation issue;
- The devolution deal for York City Region for York and North Yorkshire, with the benefits it would bring, such as having a directly elected Mayor leading on regional development and inward investment;
- The national 4% unemployment rate, considered to be full employment. The MP suggested the country needed to be more productive and efficient through greater business investment;

County Councillor Greg White raised the issue of vaccinations and boosters and the planned closure of some of the vaccination centres across northern Ryedale and southern Hambleton at the end of January 2022, meaning residents would have to travel much further to receive them, which would be a barrier to some. The MP agreed it was a concern but confirmed the decision had been taken in order to try to address the drop in GP appointments available for issues other than Covid. He also expressed concern about the deployment of vaccines at school level.

County Councillor Bob Baker drew attention to the shortage in labour in farming and health care because of Brexit. The MP agreed that the combination of Brexit and Covid was having an influence and suggested it would only become clear whether a structural change in immigration rules was required once Covid was over. He also noted that inflation would influence any future decision to open up more to an external workforce.

County Councillor Carl Les confirmed it would be a tough budget round this time with the ongoing challenges to the County Council being Covid, Climate Change and the Care Market. County Councillor Gareth Dadd suggested those issues would be helped by Devolution and the Local Government Review, and the authority would be helped by a 2/3 year funding settlement.

County Councillor Peter Sowray drew attention to the level of fraud reported with the bounce back loan scheme, and the number of those loans going into default. The MP suggested that many of the loans were taken out as a form of insurance rather than to address an immediate need, and therefore the default rate would likely be lower than expected. He also agreed more transparency and accountability was needed around

government grants and subsidised loans, in order to limit the opportunity for fraud.

In regard to education, County Councillor Caroline Goodrick suggested that poor degree choices was leading to a void in the appropriate skills required to address today's employment needs. The MP confirmed his view that the vocational qualification route was being lost, and suggested that instead of pushing students into university; more should be done to encourage a take up of technical subjects. Members agreed it would be helpful if the courses available were more coordinated with the needs of the region.

The Chair thanked the MP for his attendance and his contribution at the meeting.

117 Work Programme

Members considered a report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) which contained the Committee's current work programme for the remainder of the municipal year (2020/21).

The Chair highlighted the issues with getting an update from both Highways England and the Environment Agency, and confirmed that as a result both items had been slipped to the March 2022 meeting.

Resolved – That the work programme for the remainder of 2020/21 be noted.

The meeting concluded at 3.30 pm.