

# North Yorkshire County Council

## Thirsk and Malton Area Constituency Committee

Minutes of the remote meeting held on Friday 26th March 2021, commencing at 2.00 pm.

County Councillor Caroline Goodrick in the Chair plus County Councillors Val Arnold, Robert Baker, Gareth Dadd, Caroline Patmore, Janet Sanderson, Peter Sowray and Greg White.

In attendance: County Councillors Carl Les, David Chance and Caroline Dickinson.

Officers present: Richard Marr and Paddy Chandler.

Other Attendees: Simon Brown and MP Kevin Hollinrake.

Apologies: County Councillors Keane Duncan, Lindsay Burr, Helen Swiers and Roberta Swiers. .

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

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#### **87 Welcome by the Chair - Introductions & Updates**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, including MP Kevin Hollinrake, Leader of the Council Carl Les, the Executive Member for Stronger Communities David Chance, and the Executive Member for Public Health, Prevention & Support Housing Caroline Dickinson. She also confirmed there were no updates to provide.

#### **88 Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 January 2021**

##### **Resolved –**

That the Minutes of the previous meeting of the Thirsk and Malton Area Constituency Committee held on 13 January 2021, having been printed and circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

#### **89 Apologies & Declarations of Interest**

In reference to the Holiday Activities and Food Programme referred to in Agenda Item 6, County Councillors Janet Sanderson and Carl Les both declared a personal non-pecuniary interest as Trustees of North Yorkshire Youth.

It was noted that no formal apologies had been received from the members of the Committee who were absent from the meeting.

#### **90 Public Questions or Statements**

There were no public questions or statements.

#### **91 Attendance of MP Kevin Hollinrake**

The Chair welcomed MP Kevin Hollinrake to the meeting. The MP provided an overview of

how things were at Westminster and his views on issues affecting his constituency. This included:

- The effect of the pandemic on local businesses, particularly in the hospitality industry and tourism;
- His weekly/monthly business calls with local companies;
- The support offered to businesses e.g. the job retention scheme and business rate grants;
- The rise in consumer savings available to boost the economy going forward;
- An increase in staycations in 2021 – a boost for the hospitality industry;

The MP acknowledged the terrible time some people had experienced because of Covid and gave thanks for the successful vaccination programme – both production and delivery. He noted the success of the vaccination hubs and confirmed he was looking forward to more things re-opening in line with the Government's roadmap.

The MP also referenced other central Government initiatives e.g. the clamp down on illegal immigration, longer sentences for criminals and more Police on the streets.

In regard to Brexit, the MP raised his current concerns about the agricultural industry. He noted the problems with cross channel export deliveries but was encouraged that opportunities would be provided in the future for improved supply chains, and suggested an increase in the consumption of seasonal UK-grown produce was needed.

He also recognised a number of ongoing issues affecting the region e.g.:

- Adult Social Care – the need for greater funding in the system from Government;
- Business Rates – the need for reform in response to the increase in online purchasing;
- Levelling Up – the MP acknowledged the size of the task ahead and welcomed the moves towards a fairer deal for the north, which included the relocation of jobs into the area particularly in the public sector;
- Local Government Review – the MP welcomed the steps being taken and confirmed his view that on balance based on the current situation, a North Yorkshire & York split was the best solution;

In response to questions from members of the Committee, the MP confirmed:

- A £3billion investment in public transport nationally, the majority for an increase in buses in urban areas, but approximately £23m for a high-tech dial a ride solution for more rural areas. He suggested the County Council put forward a bid for some of that funding. County Councillor Gareth Dadd referenced the cut in local transport plan funding and the knock on effects for the highway authority that were likely to result in an increase in complaints from constituents. He suggested that central government should, not overlook the reliance on the road network in rural counties in respect of its economy.
- A re-siting of council headquarters as part of the introduction of two unitary authorities, would require a common sense approach based on the availability of the necessary infrastructure.;
- The rural proofing of energy supplies was needed, in order to move away from a reliance on fossil fuels and to prevent an increase in fuel poverty. He suggested the retro-fitting of rural properties would reduce demand;
- A community ownership fund was available to protect against the loss of community facilities such as village pubs, sports clubs, local shops etc;
- Development of the A64 was in the pipeline, with routes and costings being looked at. The expectation was that firm proposals would be ready by the end of this five year

roads period for delivery in 2025-2030. It would likely require up to £25m investment for dualing between the Hopgrove and the Jinnah Restaurant to be secured;

County Councillor Carl Les thanked the MP for attending the meeting, and for attending the weekly Local Resilience Forum meetings along with the other North Yorkshire MPs. He confirmed the Levelling Up Fund would be driven by the District Council's with input from the County, and the County Council would be leading on the Community Renewal Fund. It was noted that the Community Renewal Fund was the pre-cursor to what would replace the European funding streams that Council's previously received. He also confirmed his full support for highway maintenance across the county and for the campaign to dual the A64. Finally, he acknowledged the County Council's previous successful funding bids e.g. £50m for the A59 Kexgill, and £500m for dualing the final stretch of the A66.

The MP confirmed he welcomed the introduction of the Local Resilience Forum, recognising the opportunities it provided for bringing the right people together for collaborative working and the sharing of information.

The Chair again thanked the MP for his attendance.

## **92 Stronger Communities Update**

The Chair welcomed Paddy Chandler (Stronger Communities Delivery Manager) to the meeting, and he provided an overview of the key themes of Stronger Communities update report, which included:

- The development of the 23 Customer Support Organisations with the involvement of voluntary sector partner organisations,
- The support provided to residents by those CSOs throughout the Covid pandemic;
- The work with emerging community;
- The funding to enable the continuation of the CSOs for at least a further six months;
- The number of self-isolation grants, Shopping deliveries, befriending requests and the delivery of meals etc;
- The roll out of the vaccination programme across the county;
- The role of community transport in Ryedale to ensure vaccine appointments were attended

In particular, he drew attention to the ongoing independent evaluation of the impact of the CSOs, in part to support an independent review but also as part of a Stronger Communities' wider strategic goal of better understanding the role of a community anchor organisation in delivering local place-based initiatives.

Specifically in regard to the Thirsk and Malton Constituency area, he drew attention to of some of the interesting projects ongoing, some of which were expanding what volunteers could get involved in and others which had been recognised nationally.

County Councillor David Chance paid tribute to the work of the Stronger Communities team and the volunteer groups, and the Chair and other members of the Committee echoed those thanks. He also confirmed the locality budgets for 2021/22 would be made available following the end of the purdah period for the Police Fire & Crime Commissioner election.

County Councillor Janet Sanderson raised an issue on behalf of voluntary groups who were unable to fund raise because of the pandemic. In addition she raised concern on behalf of two voluntary groups in Thornton le Dale whose return to business as normal would likely be affected by the high pollution levels in the village stream and queried if pressure could be put on the Environment Agency and Yorkshire Water who were responsible for dealing with it.

Finally, the Chair raised concerns about the long-term viability of some of the smaller charities/voluntary organisations supporting the area, and the emergence of fuel property for some residents.

In response, Paddy Chandler agreed to circulate a report from Community First Yorkshire, which evaluated the sustainability of the voluntary sector across the region and provided an understanding of where the sector was at in each individual constituency area. He also confirmed that the Stronger Communities team continued to work hard to identify appropriate funding streams for them.

The Chair thanked Paddy Chandler for the report and it was

**Resolved** – That the report be noted

### 93 Highways England Update

The Chair welcomed Simon Brown from Highways England (HE) to the meeting, and he introduced his report, which provided an update on a list of ongoing schemes across the constituency area. In particular, he highlighted:

- The steps taken to make road-sweeping work easier and more effective, including the removal of hardened material from along the side of key roads;
- The replacement of old assets e.g. worn out road pavements and drainage improvements;
- Improvements to the design of some roads;
- as part of its funding settlement for the current road period, HE had received designated monies from central Government for specific works - He suggested Members may like to consider submitting expressions of interest for environmental improvement work;
- HE were in the early stages of forming a forward programme for safety and small improvement schemes, which were a national priority for HE with regional solutions being compared to proposed schemes in other parts of the country;
- A number of schemes recently completed in the area, and a number of overnight closures still required in coming weeks to address some residual works associated with those schemes;
- The A64 village gateway scheme – In response to the questions about speed limits and the scheme's effect on the local road network etc., he confirmed the local road network was the responsibility of the local Highway Authority;
- Some detailed studies were underway to look at the best way forward for closing gaps along the lower part of the A19, in response to a number of tragic accidents associated with attempts to cross the highway;
- A road safety audit had recently been carried out for the A64 Scotchman Lane works and another was due to take place at Barton Hill, once some collision data became available. He noted this was a long term activity (over 3-5yrs) with a 12-month check for side effects as the first step;
- An average speed camera scheme had been assessed and would be undertaken subject to a successful funding bid;
- Work in regard to commercial vehicle activity, was also under consideration, in support of the Police;
- Plans were being developed for the Hopgrove junction and the stretch of the A64 up to Barton-le-Willow. The scheme, part of HE's 2025-30 Development Plan, would improve congestion and road safety, and support the local economy. It was noted that this was

one of 32 developments in the pipeline to be considered by the government as part of future road investment strategies, with the aim of the A64 Hopgrove options being identified by the end of 2022/23 for proposal submission to government;

Finally, in regard to Development Control, Simon Brown confirmed HE had worked with the applicants on the design proposals for the Catterick motorway service area development, and for the proposed crematorium at Sand Hutton, which had resulted in the removal of HE's objections for both those planning applications.

In response to questions from County Councillors, Simon Brown confirmed:

- In regard to speed reduction schemes for side roads coming off the A64, he agreed that ideally HE could have co-ordinated their work better with the local highways team but there had been practical issues that needed responding to quickly. Richard Marr agreed but stressed individual roads if looked at in isolation might not have met the criteria for lowering the speed. He noted that a consultation exercise would be required as the first step towards identifying the most appropriate solution for each trunk road.
- In regard to the diversion of traffic from the A64 on to the Marishes Low Road and the lack of passing places, Simon Brown agreed to investigate the issue and provide written feedback.
- Litter picking on all-purpose trunk roads was a challenge. He confirmed HE was responsible for the A64 but the environmental obligations laid with the local transport authority. However if things developed to where there were safety concerns, HE would intervene. County Councillor Carl Les asked for further clarification on the point as he had experienced similar issues in regard to the A1M, and Richard Marr confirmed that as a two tier authority, litter picking was the responsibility of District Councils.

The Chair thanked Simon Brown for his attendance at the meeting and it was agreed

**Resolved** – That the report be noted.

#### **94 Draft Work Programme 2021/22**

Members considered a report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) which contained a draft work programme for the coming municipal year (2021/22).

The Chair suggested it had been some time since North Yorkshire Police attended a meeting of the Committee to provide an overview of their work across the constituency area, and it was suggested that the new Police Fire & Crime Commissioner could also be invited to attend a future meeting, preferably the next meeting scheduled for June 2021.

County Councillor Janet Sanderson drew attention to one of the proposed items of future business, listed on the workplan as not yet scheduled – 'Heritage and Natural Environment - Tourism and the promotion of local heritage and natural environment'. She again raised the issue of increasing levels of pollution in the streams running through various villages, and the knock on effects that could have on tourism for those villages. She suggested that Yorkshire Water should be invited to a future meeting.

Finally, County Councillor Caroline Dickinson provided a brief overview on COVID, which included an update on the changing number of reported cases, access to lateral flow tests for school children, and the number of vaccinations across the constituency areas. She also recorded her thanks for the work of officers throughout the pandemic.

**Resolved** – That the draft work programme for 2021/22 be approved, subject to the suggested additions detailed above.

The meeting concluded at 3.55 pm.