

North Yorkshire County Council

Skipton and Ripon Area Constituency Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 15th December, 2022 commencing at 10.00 am.

County Councillor Richard Foster in the Chair and County Councillors Phillip Barrett, Nick Brown, Robert Heseltine, Nathan Hull, David Ireton, Andrew Murday, Simon Myers, David Noland, Andy Solloway and David Staveley.

County Councillors Andy Brown and Barbara Brodigan attended the meeting remotely using MS Teams.

Officers present: Daniel Harry, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager, NYCC; Andrew Clarke of Business and Environmental Services, North Yorkshire County Council; Chloe Thwaites, Youth Voice and Creative Engagement Officer, Children and Young People's Services, North Yorkshire County Council.

In attendance: Rt Hon Julian Smith MP.

Apologies: Andrew Williams and Robert Windass.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

29 Apologies for absence

The committee Chair, County Councillor Richard Foster, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were recorded from County Councillors Andrew Williams and Robert Windass.

30 Minutes of the committee meeting held on 1 September 2022

Considered –

The minutes of the meeting of the Skipton and Ripon Area Constituency Committee held on 1 September 2022.

Resolved –

- a) That the Minutes of the meeting of the Skipton and Ripon Area Constituency Committee held on 1 September 2022, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

31 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

32 Public Questions or Statements

There were none.

33 Update from RT Hon Julian Smith MP

Considered –

An update from the Rt Hon Julian Smith MP, provided remotely using MS Teams.

The committee Chair invited the Rt Hon Julian Smith MP to give an overview to the committee of some of his areas of work, concerns and priorities. The key points are as summarised below:

- Recently met with young people from Skipton who said that they had nowhere to go and that they often felt unsafe. This was surprising and so keen to meet with the Youth Council and the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner to discuss what can be done to support young people in and around Skipton
- The Government is committed to provide long term support for businesses with their energy costs but there is a need to balance the support provided with the long term tax burden
- Concerns about the impact of strike action across a range of services nationally and what impact that this may have upon people's health and wellbeing
- Requested that members provide him with feedback about the influenza and covid-19 vaccination programme and how well it is operating locally
- Noted that it is good to see how well all of the local authorities are working on the creation of a new unitary council for North Yorkshire
- Paid tribute to the County Councillor Margaret Atkinson and all of the work that she had done as a local councillor and Chairman of the Council.

There followed a discussion, the key points of which are as summarised below:

- Concerns raised about the future of Airedale Hospital and the ongoing structural problems associated with the use of aerated concrete in its construction. Members requested that the Rt Hon Julian Smith lobby on their behalf at Westminster to make the necessary funding available for a new hospital to be built on the existing site
- Concerns raised about bank branch closures across the area and the impact that this has upon local businesses and people. It was acknowledged that Post Offices could provide many of the needed counter services for cash deposits and withdrawals but that further work could be done to explore the viability of multi-bank hubs
- The issue of increased energy costs faced by leisure services, particularly gyms and swimming pools, was raised. There were concerns that these key services would not be viable in the longer term unless tailored government support was provided
- Large numbers of houses are being built in the area that are not meeting the highest standards to energy efficiency and insulation. This then means that additional time, effort and money will be spent in a few years' time retrofitting them. The question was raised as to why the right standards for new builds were not in place now.

Resolved –

- a) The committee Chair thanked the Rt Hon Julian Smith MP for attending the meeting and providing an update for members.

34 Youth Council - verbal update - Report of the Corporate Director, Children and Young People's Services, NYCC

Considered –

A verbal update by Chloe Thwaites, Youth Voice and Creative Engagement Officer, Children and Young People's Services, North Yorkshire County Council.

Chloe Thwaites was joined by a representative of the Youth Council. Chloe Thwaites joined the meeting remotely using MS Teams and the Youth Council representative attended in person.

Some of the key points from the update and subsequent discussion are as summarised below:

- Two local priorities for Skipton are: 1) tackling youth crime and ASB; and 2) supporting the elderly. The latter offers opportunities for intergenerational work.
- Work is underway to support the development of youth groups and youth councils across the patch. Some of the groups have established themselves with very little support needed from the County Council
- A Youth Council for Skipton, as opposed to Craven, is being formed to better represent issues for young people in Skipton. Youth Councils for the other towns and rural areas can be setup and supported
- The Youth Councils in the county are keen to engage with and work with councillors. The Area Constituency Committee (ACC) meetings offer a route by which this can be done.
- The Youth Council is made up of young people from 11 to 18 years of age. As such, recruitment is ongoing and engagement is underway with year 6 pupils at primary school.

County Councillors Barbara Brodigan and Andrew Murday said that they would support any move to setup youth councils in their area (Ripon, Pateley Bridge and Nidderdale).

County Councillor David Staveley said that councillors had a key role to play in engaging with young people and encouraging them to play an active role in their community.

County Councillor Simon Myers said that all members had a locality budget that could be used to support the development of youth councils and youth groups in their area.

The Chair thanked Chloe Thwaites and the representative from the Youth Council for attending the meeting.

Resolved –

- a) That the Youth Council be invited to the next meeting of the committee.

35 Notice of Motion - Area Committees

Considered –

The Notice of Motion on Area Committees that was proposed by County Councillor Andy Brown and seconded by County Councillor David Noland.

County Councillor Andy Brown attended the meeting remotely using MS Teams.

County Councillor Andy Brown moved the motion stating that it was important that the committees did not remain talking shops but were able to influence key issues in their area. He said that it was also important to ensure that the geography reflected local needs.

County Councillor David Noland seconded the motion.

There followed a discussion the outcome of which was that County Councillor Robert Heseltine proposed that the motion be amended by removing the second half of it, which related to the geography of the committees. This was seconded by County Councillor David Noland.

A vote was taken on the proposed amendment to the motion and unanimously supported.

A vote was then taken on amended motion and unanimously supported.

County Councillor Simon Myers said that there would be opportunities to review how the ACCs were working after the first 12 to 18 months of the new unitary council.

Daniel Harry stated that the Member Working Group on the Constitution and the Member Working Group on Locality and Governance were meeting on 5 January 2023 to review the proposed model for the ACCs. The outcome of those discussions would then inform the recommendations by the Executive to the meeting of the County Council in February 2023.

Resolved –

- a) That the motion be forwarded to members of the Executive, as appropriate.

36 Notice of Motion - 20mph speed limit pilot

Considered –

The Notice of Motion on the introduction of a pilot 20mph speed limit in the area covered by the ACC that was proposed by County Councillor David Noland and seconded by County Councillor Andy Brown.

County Councillor David Noland moved the motion stating that the focus was upon safety and that introducing a pilot over a large geographical area would be cheaper than a series of very localised schemes. He said that the Harrogate and Ainsty ACC had recently supported such a motion.

County Councillor Andy Brown seconded the motion.

There followed a discussion with the key points as summarised below:

- The evidence base for some of the assertions made is questionable
- There is not widespread support for a blanket 20mph speed limit in the area
- Local people do not want to be used as guinea pigs
- County Councillor Keane Duncan is undertaking a review of the current policy on 20mph speed limits the outcome of which will be taken to a meeting of the County Council where it can be debated by all councillors. Therefore, it is concerning that the matter is being debated today at an ACC meeting
- The motion appears to be a standard one that is circulated by the '20's plenty' campaign group
- There need to be an evidence-led and case by case assessment of where 20mph speed limits would work, rather than a blanket approach
- Query as to whether the ACCs could have a role in determining whether an application for a 20mph speed limit should be taken forward
- The Transport Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee previously undertook extensive scrutiny of the 20mph policy and made recommendations to the Executive. The committee will continue to have a role in scrutinising the policy and its application

- 20mph speed limits need investment in infrastructure and active policing if they are to be effective
- A 20mph speed limit will help slow down traffic in built up areas and so improve safety and reduce pedestrian and cyclist fatalities and serious injuries
- Over 100 Parish Councils have so far supported the '20's plenty' campaign and the people behind the campaign are experts in road safety who have compiled a compelling evidence-base
- Everyone on the committee agreed that road safety is important but a blanket 20mph speed limit in the area is not the best way to achieve this.

A vote was taken and the motion defeated with 1 vote for, 7 against and 3 abstentions.

Resolved –

The motion was defeated.

County Councillor David Ireton left the meeting at this point.

37 Petition referred to the committee for consideration - Report of the Corporate Director, Business and Environmental Services, NYCC

Considered –

The petition 'Restoration of the original bus service between Ingleton and Lancaster - previously the No80 service provided by Stagecoach'

Daniel Harry, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager, introduced the petition stating that the petition has been referred to the Committee under the Council's Petitions Scheme due to the number of signatories being above 500. He outlined the options that the committee had under the Petitions Scheme, as follows:

- (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 county council executive are required to make the final decision, the county council will decide whether to make recommendations to inform that decision.

Daniel Harry then read out the following on behalf of the petitioner, Sheila Kay, who was unable to attend the meeting:

The Agenda for this meeting makes it quite clear that the Business and Environmental Services Officers comments in the Pre-Agenda meeting indicate that the Bus service will not be restored despite the petition asking for its restoration.

Item 4.6 in the Agenda reads: Regarding the specific comments made in the cover letter, the aim of the 583 service was to provide links to the nearby service centres of Ingleton and Kirkby Lonsdale.

I'm not quite sure that I want to wait around for a bus to take me to the Dynamic Village of Ingleton to use their Co-op since that is their main shop, similarly, Kirkby Lonsdale, pretty as it is; has a small Booths shop and mainly tourist outlets.

No alternative was discussed or even considered at this meeting.

In the year 2016 the population of the Ward was 3,634. 1,274 are 60 years or older. That's 35% of the Ward. 1,883 are 50 years or older. That's 52% of the Ward. Since these figures were produced a 'Retirement and assisted living facility' has been built in Bentham. The residents have to be 55 years or older. There are 64 apartments and 8 Bungalows on the development so those quoted percentages are rising!

The Ward, generally, has an older population than most. With age, mobility issues arise more frequently and Hospital visits become a routine. Our nearest Hospital is in Lancaster which as a result of the lost service is out of the question unless we further drain the NHS by demanding their transport.

There followed a discussion with the key points as summarised below:

- The Stagecoach contract was managed by Lancashire County Council and was not economically viable. A local coach company, Kirkby-Lonsdale Coaches, stepped in to provide what service they could as a small company
- There may be some value in exploring a link between Bentham and Hornby as this would improve the overall service
- It needs to be recognised that commercial bus services in rural areas are increasingly not economically viable and that the county council is not in a position to provide large scale subsidies for services that are not widely used
- Lancaster and Preston are key service centres and efforts need to be made to ensure that there is access to them for people who are unable to drive
- There is little that the ACC can do about this other than refer to the Executive member and/or overview and scrutiny. The ACC have little power
- The Petitions Scheme may need to be reviewed
- There is a need for the transport system as a whole to be reviewed and a broad range of partners and organisations brought together to come up with some creative solutions
- There may be a lot to learn from the YorBus on-demand bus service pilot that connects Ripon, Masham, Bedale and surrounding villages
- A consequence of free bus passes is that the economic viability of some services is undermined.

Andrew Clarke from Highways and Transportation said that work is already underway to look at what can be put in place in the longer term to support the communities affected by the loss of the bus service. The focus at present is upon the link between Bentham and Hornby.

The Chair summed up and thanked Andrew Clarke for attending the meeting.

Resolved –

- a) That the matter be referred to the Executive Member and the Director of Business and Environmental Services and a report brought back to the committee meeting in March 2023 regarding progress being made with bus services between Ingleton and Lancaster.

38 Annual Education Report - Report of the Corporate Director, Children and Young People Services, NYCC

Considered –

A report on schools, educational achievement and finance.

Sue Turley, Strategic Planning Officer in Education and Skills, presented the report the key

points of which are as summarised below:

- The academy conversion rate for schools in the area is lower than that for the county as a whole
- School OFSTED judgements for both primary and secondary schools are better than the North Yorkshire average
- Attainment data for 2020 and 2021 has been impacted by covid-19 and the cancellation of exams and use of teacher assessments
- There are low numbers of children not in education, employment of training
- The number of suspensions from school in the area is lower than expected (13%) based upon the share of the school population (17.4%)
- There are 615 children in the area who have an Education Health and Care Plan in place
- There are 1,556 children in the area who are recorded as receiving Special Education Needs (SEN) support
- School budgets have experienced significant cost pressures during 2022/23. The pressures include: pay awards; energy inflation; overall inflation; covid recovery; and increasing numbers of SEN children
- It is anticipated that schools will see a deterioration in their financial position over 2022/23
- Funding for secondary schools per pupil is currently £5,713 compared to the national average of £6,213
- School sustainability is influenced by falling pupil rolls, school standards and finances
- Recent school closures in the area have been Clapham CE VC Primary School and Kell Bank CE VC Primary School
- There is significant housing development planned in across the area. In some places school capacity will be increased, such as Ripon, and in other areas there is sufficient spare capacity in place, such as Skipton.

There followed a discussion the key points of which are as summarised below:

- SEND funding is not sufficient to meet current levels of need in the county. The special school funding levels were determined by the DfE in 2015 and have not been reviewed since
- Most special schools in the county are small and so do not benefit from economies of scale. Additional support is being provided to help with financial management
- The local councillor must be engaged at the earliest possible opportunity where a school in their division is at risk of being closed
- It would be helpful to have data on the availability of school places broken down by school
- Most school closures happen very quickly and do so due to falling numbers of pupils on the school roll
- The Pupil Referral Model and strategy was amended in 2020 to focus upon children at risk of permanent exclusion. This means that work is done with at risk children whilst they are still at school
- School performance has slipped over the past 10 years in the area
- Concerns raised that the number of school places in the area, particularly around Skipton, and whether there will be the capacity to meet the increased demand resulting from planned housing building
- Concerns that some schools are being pushed into academisation when there may be other alternatives to explore
- Generally, councillors do not need a DBS check to undertake their duties
- The figures provided in Appendix 1 regarding planning applications for house building and the associated forecast surplus or shortfall in school places do not reflect the scale of the planning applications that are currently going through Craven DC and Harrogate BC.

Resolved -

- a) That an updated report is brought back to the committee in December 2023
- b) That further information is provided to the committee as to how the number of additional school places needed is calculated when new houses are being built
- c) That local councillors are given early warning when a school in their division is experiencing difficulties with performance, finance or the numbers of children in the school roll.

39 Appointments to Outside Bodies - Report of Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager, NYCC

Considered –

A report on the appointment to a vacancy on the Sylvester Petyt's Foundation in Skipton.

Daniel Harry, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager, introduced the report and said that a vacancy had arisen on the Sylvester Petyt's Foundation. According to the Constitution, appointment to this vacancy is undertaken by the Area Constituency Committee following a nomination by the local member.

County Councillor Robert Heseltine, as the local member, said that he had someone who would be able to take on the role but needed to have further discussions with them before confirming.

Resolved –

That the committee delegate authority to Councillor Robert Heseltine to make the appointment to the Sylvester Petyt's Foundation.

40 Committee work programme - Report of Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager, NYCC

Considered –

A report by Daniel Harry, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager, outlining the committee work programme.

Daniel Harry introduced the report and asked that Members review the committee's work programme, taking into account the outcome of discussions on previous agenda items and any other developments taking place across the area.

Resolved –

- a) That an update on the structural issues at Airedale Hospital be provided at the March committee meeting
- b) That the report on structural issues at Airedale Hospital, that is due to go to the meeting of the Scrutiny of Health Committee on 16 December 2022, be circulated to the committee
- c) That members raise any issues that could be included in the committee work programme with Daniel Harry.

41 Other business which the Chairman agrees should be considered as a matter of urgency because of special circumstances

There were two items discussed, as follows:

County Councillor Andy Solloway requested that committee members send to him any local information that they had on issues with access to NHS dentistry, so that he could then feed it into discussions taking place at a meeting of the West Yorkshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

County Councillor Andrew Murday was nominated by the committee to the vacant position on the Nidderdale AONB Executive.

The meeting concluded at 12.50 pm.