

North Yorkshire County Council

Skipton and Ripon Area Constituency Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 9th March, 2023 commencing at 10.00 am.

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

County Councillors Brodigan and Cunliffe-Lister joined the meeting remotely using MS Teams.

Officers present: Daniel Harry, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager, NYCC; Andrew Clarke and Allan McVeigh of Business and Environmental Services, North Yorkshire County Council; Liz Meade and Marion Tweed-Rycroft, Stronger Communities Team, North Yorkshire County Council; Chloe Thwaites, Youth Voice and Creative Engagement Officer, Children and Young People's Services, North Yorkshire County Council; David Smith, Craven District Council; David Caulfield, Linda Marfitt and Emily MacDowell from economic development at Craven District Council and Harrogate Borough Council; and Francesca Hewitt of the Airedale NHS Foundation Trust.

In attendance, remotely using MS teams: Rt Hon Julian Smith MP and County Councillors Carl Les and David Chance.

Apologies: Robert Windass.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

42 Apologies for absence

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

Apologies were recorded from County Councillor Robert Windass.

County Councillors Barbara Brodigan and Felicity Cunliffe-Lister attended the meeting remotely via MS Teams.

43 Minutes of the committee meeting held on 15 December 2022

Considered –

The minutes of the meeting of the Skipton and Ripon Area Constituency Committee held on 15 December 2022.

Resolved –

- a) That the Minutes of the meeting of the Skipton and Ripon Area Constituency Committee held on 15 December 2022, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

44 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

45 Public Questions or Statements

A public question was submitted by Cllr Chris Moorby of Craven District Council, regarding the use of speed cameras on the A65 and the A682. The question and two supporting documents were circulated to the committee prior to the meeting.

The question was as follows:

As you may be aware I have been trying to get North Yorkshire County Council and the Police to introduce speed restrictions and average or fixed speed cameras in Long Preston and along the A65 and the A682 that goes to Gisburn. The A682 was classed as the most dangerous rural road in England.

A few years ago a motorcyclist was killed in a collision at Hospital Bridge near the Almshouses at Long Preston.

Another, a few years ago, involved an HGV that couldn't stop for the pelican crossing and careered into the War Memorial, If the driver had hit the tree instead I think he would have been killed. Isn't it lucky that no one was injured.

Vehicles have crashed at the junction of the A65 and A682.

I could go on describing accidents that have occurred in the village including a car on it's roof, cars mounting the pavements and so on and so forth.

The Parish Council installed a Vehicle Activated Sign, at their own expense, last year and the data that can be retrieved from these units is amazing, it logs every vehicle.

If one looks at the data sheet I have supplied separately it will be seen that the frequency of high speeds is unacceptable in a community where many elderly, infirm and very young people who live adjacent to the A65. It suggests that many motorists, 11700 of them consider the 30mph speed limit to be optional and that there were 11700 chances of someone to be knocked down by a speeding vehicle. It also suggests that this happens roughly 165 times per day!

But, of course this is just Long Preston.

I have read in the local press, social media and just last week viewed the television coverage of the problems that the people of Cowling are facing on a daily basis. But this is not the only village in this situation.

It is very frightening indeed.

A great deal of engineering work has been carried out by North Yorkshire County Council, for which the people of Cowling are, no doubt, very grateful, but I'm afraid it hasn't cured the problem of speeding traffic.

What can be done to help the situation?

The introduction of cameras would help build a blended/multi layered approach to speed enforcement – fixed cameras, average speed cameras and mobile cameras. Unfortunately, the reliance only on mobile cameras means the strategy is a single approach, and isn't enough, despite their obvious success at the time they are deployed.

A few years ago Lancashire County Council installed average speed cameras on the A682

from Gisburn to Barrowford resulting in a tremendous fall in accidents.

At the same time the same council installed a 50mph speed limit from the Yorkshire, Lancashire border to Gisburn. They are now going to install average speed cameras on this section.

Lancashire and other County Councils can see the benefits of speed cameras. (see attached documents). If the attached paper from Lancashire County Council is studied then perhaps North Yorkshire County Council and North Yorkshire Police could see the benefits and act on them?

North Yorkshire, along with Durham are the only Counties in England that don't have a policy for fixed speed cameras I hope that will change for North Yorkshire in the near future.

I hope that you that are here today will inform your colleagues on the authority of this address and the attached documents.

The following response was provided by Allan McVeigh, Head of Network Strategy, Highways and Transportation, North Yorkshire County Council.

May I first thank Cllr Moorby for his question.

The A682 was identified as a high risk road by the Road Safety Foundation, which resulted in the award of £615,000 through the Department for Transport's Safer Roads Fund. The criteria used to make that assessment of 'high risk', takes into account a wide range of criteria such as road geometry, elevation and other physical features, as well as traffic volume and the number of collisions in which people are killed or injured.

The Council used the funding to deliver a variety of road safety improvements to reduce risk along this section of the A682, including resurfacing, white lining and better road signs. Land was also purchased to remove walls, fences and trees, in order to improve visibility at junctions and extensive sections of vehicle restraint systems or crash barriers were also introduced along the route.

The detection capabilities of Vehicle Activated Signs or VAS are less accurate than other bespoke devices for measuring traffic speeds and volume, which are closely calibrated and so produce more accurate outputs; the data VAS capture though do provide for a useful approximation of traffic speeds and driver behaviour.

For completeness, in terms of the statistical analysis presented, the percentage of vehicles exceeding the 30mph speed limit should perhaps be 5% and not 9% as stated and assuming 5% is the correct figure, this equates to 1 in 19 vehicles rather than 1 in 11. It is also unclear from the data presented, how many vehicles that make up the quoted 165 'speeding vehicles' each day, are travelling at speeds between 30mph and 33mph, the typical margin for error of vehicle speedometers. There is perhaps a distinction to be made between motorists driving at or around the posted speed limit and those who have a wilful disregard for road safety.

Therefore, from a traffic engineering perspective, more analysis would be required, in order to fully understand the average speed of traffic and the speeds undertaken by a dangerous minority, but based on the information provided, it appears that only 5% of traffic is actually exceeding the speed limit.

Nevertheless, the points that Cllr Moorby makes around the increased risk that speeding vehicles pose to the local community, are well made and alongside the improvements the Council introduced with the Safer Roads Funding mentioned earlier, in Cowling, it also implemented a series of engineering measures designed to moderate speeds, including installing central refuge islands, Keep Left bollards and Vehicle Activated Signs, as well as a 40mph buffer zone at the western end of the Village.

OFFICIAL

More widely, in terms of other measures that exist to manage speed, North Yorkshire Police is about to commence a review of its enforcement strategy, which I believe will include the potential for fixed site or average speed cameras. Members will be aware that NYCC and North Yorkshire Police are founding members of the York and North Yorkshire Road Safety Partnership and the County Council has been assured that the Police wish to see a Partnership approach towards the Review's development and implementation and our input is considered a key element. For our part, the Council will be a willing and active participant in the Review and we are similarly keen to explore the feasibility of safety cameras in North Yorkshire and indeed, to see a timely conclusion to any investigations.

There was no supplementary question.

The Chair thanked Cllr Chris Moorby of Craven District Council for attending the meeting.

46 Verbal 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:

- Welcome greater scrutiny by the council of the frequency and impact of speeding through villages
- Have recently been involved in helping out with the Northern Ireland Protocol and the Windsor Framework
- Illegal migrants, particularly arriving via small boats across the Channel, are a key concern at Westminster
- Attended a meeting with young people at Skipton Academy, which went well and had representation from the Youth Council and the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner.

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

- Concerns about the release of sewerage water into the River Aire. In 2021, there were releases of sewerage over 4,000 times
- Settle HSBC bank is closing. Bank branches and post offices have closed all over the county over the past 5 years. More needs to be done nationally to ensure the provision of counter-based services for people who use cash
- There have been incidences where sewerage has seeped out of the sewers in some villages and caused significant problems and distress locally. Efforts to engage with all of the key service providers locally (Highways, Yorkshire Water and the Environment Agency) to resolve the problem have been frustrating
- There are significant variations in petrol prices across the county. The question was asked as to what role the government played in standardising prices, particularly in rural area where you had a 'captive market'
- The funding for the re-build of the Airedale Hospital needs to be agreed as a matter of urgency. It would be a quick win as a new hospital can be built on the existing site with little or no disruption to the work of the current hospital
- The Colne railway link and the associated crossing points continues to cause significant delays and disruptions to road traffic flows that are impacting upon local businesses
- The increasing energy costs are impacting upon the long term viability of public and private leisure centres and gyms, which in turn will impact upon health and wellbeing. Is

there more that the Government can do to help mitigate these costs increases?

- As devolution for North Yorkshire and York progresses, there is a need to ensure that there is a fair share of funding between the two council areas.

Resolved –

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

47 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:

- There are opportunities for schools to introduce matters relating to a wider range of cultures in the syllabus
- Work is underway to look at establishing youth councils elsewhere in the area, other than solely Skipton, through engagement with young people at local schools and libraries
- Settle College and the Giggleswick school have engaged in the activities of the Youth Parliament and this is as good base to work from
- A successful meeting with held with the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner and the RT Hon Julian Smith MP at Skipton Academy to hear the views of young people regarding concerns over safety, lack of meaningful activities and lack of transport
- The Youth Opportunities survey has been sent out to all schools
- Work is underway, with the support of County Councillors Brodigan and Murday, to develop youth councils for Nidderdale and Ripon
- The views of young people on leisure services in the area would be welcomed as part of a member-led review
- Young farmers in the area may also be an important voice.

Resolved –

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

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

Considered –

A report from Andrew Clarke, of the County Council's Highways and Transportation service,

providing an update on work undertaken following the consideration of a petition regarding 'Restoration of the original bus service between Ingleton and Lancaster - previously the No80 service provided by Stagecoach' at the meeting of the committee on 15 December 2023.

Andrew Clarke introduced his report and said that the intention, subject to consideration by the committee, was to provide a link service between Bentham and Hornby to improve connections to Lancaster. The service would operate a scheduled journey from the Low and High Bentham to Hornby on Wednesdays and Thursdays in time to connect with the 09:48 Service 82 departure to Lancaster (arriving at Lancaster at 10:22). A return journey could be operated back from Hornby at 14:20 which would be available for passengers returning from Lancaster on the 13:35 departure, allowing three hours in Lancaster for shopping or other appointments.

County Councillor David Ireton said that the option of a link service was welcome but that the preference would be for the restoration of the original bus service by Lancashire County Council.

In response Andrew Clarke said that there were ongoing discussions with Lancashire County Council regarding bus service in the Craven area but that the annual cost of the service provided by Stagecoach was over £450,000.

Andrew Clarke said that 70 days notice has to be given of any proposed changes to bus routes and so the earliest that the link service could start would be the May half-term.

Resolved –

- a) That the committee supports the proposed link service and ongoing dialogue with Lancashire County Council regarding bus services in the Craven area
- b) That an update is brought back to the committee in 12 months so that the use of suitability of the link service can be reviewed.

49 Economic development in the Ripon area - Report of the Corporate Director, Business and Environmental Services, NYCC

Considered –

A presentation by David Caulfield, Linda Marfitt and Emily MacDowell from economic development at Craven District Council and Harrogate Borough Council regarding economic development in the greater Ripon area.

Some of the key points highlighted in the presentation are as summarised below:

- Ripon has a resident population of 16,200 (2020)
- 25% of Ripon's population is aged 65+
- Median house prices in Ripon are 10% (£26,250) higher than for North Yorkshire
- The key employment sectors are agriculture, forestry and fishing; construction and accommodation and food services
- Average of 15 new business start-ups per quarter, over the past two years
- Ripon has nearly 260 retail units, of which 10% are currently vacant
- The Phoenix Business Park in Ripon is council owned and has 26 units
- Enablers are: public Wi-Fi and superfast broadband; proximity to the A1(M); active city centre e.g. Ripon BID; and co-ordinated, local business support services and the redevelopment of Ripon Barracks to Clothierholme
- A new Economic Growth Strategy for North Yorkshire is under development and further information will be shared with members in due course.

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

- The Area Constituency Committee is a key stakeholder in the development of local economic development plans and strategies and needs to be directly involved in the shaping of them
- The residential development at the former barracks site in Ripon will increase the population by 25%. Most of which will be of working age. Opportunities for work and upskilling need to be provided locally otherwise Ripon will simply become a dormitory city for people working elsewhere
- Concerns raised that the employment allocation on the former barracks site was not enough
- There needs to be more training opportunities for young people leaving school in Ripon. At present there is nothing in Ripon itself
- More work needs to be done on travel and accessibility. There is no railway station and bus services are continually under threat
- There remains a lack of clarity over what has happened to the Ripon Masterplan for economic development
- Ripon has been underserved by Harrogate Borough Council in the past and it is hoped that the new North Yorkshire Council will look seriously at the potential for economic development in Ripon
- There is too great a focus upon building houses, without any consideration of the associated economic issues and provision of infrastructure, jobs and training
- Concerns around the high levels of shop vacancy in key parts of the city, particularly the Market Place and radiating streets
- The highways in Ripon are in a very poor state. This, combined with the vacant shops, make Ripon look rundown and undermines its development economically and as a tourist destination
- Concerns raised that local councillors had not been directly involved in discussions around economic development in the area
- The Local Plan will be a key route for influencing economic development in the area.

County Councillor Andrew Williams said that £85,000 had been spent on the development of the Ripon Masterplan by Harrogate Borough Council but that there was nothing to show for it. He asked when the plan would be available for consultation and comment.

In response, Linda Marfitt said that Harrogate Borough Council had contracted external consultants to do the work. The work had taken longer than anticipated and the contract with the consultants has now expired. The council is unable to access the work that had been done by the consultancy. Work is underway to gather together as much information and analysis as possible and then use that to inform the development of the North Yorkshire Strategy. There is still £30,000 of the original £85,000 available to support further work.

Linda Marfitt explained that the problems experienced in the development of the plan were unforeseen and apologised for the delays and inconvenience arising.

The committee Chair summed up and thanked David Caulfield, Linda Marfitt and Emily MacDowell for the presentation and answering the questions raised by committee members.

Resolved –

- a) That the committee notes the presentation
- b) That an update on the new North Yorkshire Economic Growth Strategy is brought to the next meeting of the committee along with details as to how the economic development function in the new council is resourced and led and what the priorities are.

County Councillors Andrew Williams, Andrew Murday and Nick Brown left the meeting at this point in the agenda.

50 Stronger Communities Annual Report - Report of the Assistant Director - Policy, Partnerships and Communities, NYCC

Considered -

A report by Liz Meade and Marion Tweed-Rycroft, Stronger Communities Team, North Yorkshire County Council regarding the work of the Stronger Communities Team.

Some of the key points highlighted in the report are as summarised below:

- Local community support infrastructure through the Community Support Organisation (CSO) network has remained largely in place since March 2020
- Pre-pandemic projects have been resumed
- National initiatives have been launched over the past 12 months around alleviating the cost of living pressures
- £924,700 has been invested in the CSO infrastructure across the county in 2022/23, of which £92,000 went to the Craven area and £203,500 to the Harrogate area
- Community grants has been re-instated and these have enabled communities and small grass roots groups and organisations to recover from the pandemic and to re-establish local events and activities
- Across the county in the last year, work has been undertaken on and in support of: the Holiday Activities and Food Programme for free school meal eligible children; the Household Support Fund; Homes for Ukraine Programme; Wellbeing and Prevention investment; Digital Inclusion; Cost of living; UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF); and Mental health programmes (NHS)
- An independent Learning Review Evaluation of the work undertaken over the period 2018 – 2022 has been undertaken and this found that: 1,100 community projects were supported in over 200 communities; 600 Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations had been supported; and £3.45million of external funds had been secured.

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

- It would be helpful to include key trend information so that councillors are able to understand whether things are getting better or worse
- Prevention is critically important and there is always more to be done on this
- Funding officers who can identify funding opportunities and support people in the applications process are important and need to be considered as part of the new council
- It would be helpful to councillors in their work in their electoral divisions if they could have details of funding and grants that are available so that local people can be sign-posted
- Community First North Yorkshire has a key role to play locally as an infrastructure body for the voluntary and community sector
- Concerns about the risk of volunteer fatigue and how volunteers were be supported and recruited.

County Councillor Robert Heseltine raised a specific concern regarding the risk that assets purchased, with funding from the Stronger Communities Team, by a voluntary and community sector body may be lost once that group ceases to operate.

Resolved –

- a) That the annual report be noted and that a further update on the work of the Stronger

OFFICIAL

Communities Team and the Community Support Organisations be brought to the committee meeting in March 2024

- b) That information on funding streams and grants be shared with the members of the committee.

51 Update on Structural Safety at Airedale Hospital - verbal update - Report of Airedale NHS Foundation Trust

Considered –

A presentation from Francesca Hewitt of the Airedale NHS Foundation Trust regarding ongoing issues with the structure of the Airedale Hospital.

Francesca Hewitt updated the committee, with key issues as summarised below:

- Structural engineers have advised that the existing building needs to be replaced by 2030
- If construction of a new hospital was to commence now, then it is estimated that it would take 7 years to complete
- The Trust continues to work closely with NHS England, other affected reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) hospitals and structural engineers
- Every effort is made to avoid disruption to patient care but ongoing remedial works and structural support works have meant some loss of beds, restricted access to wards and treatment rooms, decanting of some wards and the cancellation of some physiotherapy classes
- The impact upon patient care is likely to become more significant over time as the structure of the building continues to degrade
- The Trust put forward an Expression of Interest to be part of the Government's New Hospital Programme in 2021
- In 2022, the Trust was invited to join a scoping exercise to determine the need for a new hospital alongside four other hospitals that are predominantly constructed of RAAC
- No update on where the Trust has been included in the programme, to date
- There is the ability to build a new hospital alongside the existing one with little or no disruption to treatment provision.

There followed a discussion with key points as summarised below:

- Airedale Hospital is a key health facility for people across Craven
- Remedial work is a waste of money and the focus of the Government should be upon a new build up the existing site as a matter of urgency
- Alternative care at Lancaster, Bradford, Leeds or Harrogate is simply not an option due to travel times, lack of public transport and the difficulties it would pose for ambulance cover.

Resolved –

- a) That the Chair write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, the Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP, to urge that Airedale Hospital is included in the Government's New Hospital Programme.

County Councillors David Ireton and David Noland left the meeting at this point.

52 Committee work programme

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 the committee work programme be reviewed by members.

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

County Councillor Andrew Murday had previously raised an item of other business as follows. There is a review underway of the walk-in Mother and Children's Facility. The site at Pateley Bridge has been closed since 2019 and there is a risk that it will not re-open. He urged committee members to engage in the consultation and attend the Executive, when the matter is being considered.

The meeting concluded at 1.45 pm.