

North Yorkshire Council

Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 12th April, 2023 commencing at 10.00 am.

Councillor David Staveley in the Chair plus Councillors John Cattanach, Melanie Davis, Caroline Goodrick, Paul Haslam, David Ireton, David Jeffels, Mike Jordan, Phil Trumper, Arnold Warneken, Steve Watson and Robert Windass.

In attendance: Councillor Carl Les

Officers present: Will Baines, Karl Battersby, Nigel Smith and David Kirkpatrick.

Other Attendees: Inspector Zoe Billings (North Yorkshire Police)

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Gostlow (substitute Cllr Murday), Cllr Crane (substitute Cllr Jabbour), Cllr Mason (substitute Cllr Aldred) and Cllr Packham (joined the meeting virtually).

2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 January 2023

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2023, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

3 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Aldred declared an interest in item 6 (Financial Performance and Allocation of Civil Parking Enforcement) as he was previously employed as a Civil Enforcement Officer.

4 Public Participation

No public questions or statements were received.

5 Verbal update from Karl Battersby, Corporate Director of Environment

Corporate Director for Environment, Karl Battersby began his update by speaking about the transition to North Yorkshire Council and reported that it had been a relatively smooth process for the directorate, although some issues with HR and internal systems matters had arisen during the transition period.

He explained that the Heads of Service positions within the new Environment directorate were close to being finalised, with efficiencies and savings planned to follow as part of a transformation process. It is hoped to be in a position to set out proposals by September

2023.

On major projects, work was progressing with the Kex Gill A59 realignment after approval from the Government, with works set to commence later this year. The Transforming Cities Fund schemes in Selby, Skipton and Harrogate were continuing, with the Harrogate Station Gateway project to be considered at a special meeting of the Harrogate and Knaresborough ACC on Friday 5 May.

A new Taxi Licensing policy for North Yorkshire has been approved, to deliver a harmonised fee and fare structure across the county. An Inclusive Service Plan for the policy, to be delivered in the first 12 months of operation has been progressed using external support, with a scope for this already agreed.

Officers are currently modelling scenarios for waste collection and harmonisation, ahead of consulting with the public and partners in the autumn.

North Yorkshire has been allocated £6.5m for pothole repairs in the Spring Budget. These will be decided by the Corporate Director in conjunction with the Executive Member for Highways and Transportation following a prioritisation exercise.

It was also reported that the overall budget outturn for the directorate over the last financial year shows an underspend following the mild winter.

Following this, questions were raised from members on topics such as:

- Winter road maintenance following recent heavy rainfall
- The ways that highways related issues can be reported in to officers to ensure a prompt resolution
- Delivery update on the Active Travel schemes in the county and how these will be prioritised in the transformation proposals for the new council
- The progress of the Transforming Cities Fund scheme in Selby
- How the allocation of the pothole repair money will be prioritised across the county as some roads are desperate for repair and resurfacing

6 Preventing flooding on highways - Gully clearance and maintenance

Considered – Report of the Corporate Director – Environment to update the committee on highway gully cleansing undertaken by NY Highways, the Council's operational company for the delivery of highways services.

Nigel Smith, Interim Head of Operations at NY Highways, set out that the critical objective of highway gully cleansing works is removing water from the highway network, as this improves safety for those travelling within and through the county and reduces the risk of accidents, particularly during winter where ice is an additional hazard.

Following a successful pilot roll-out, a new KaarbonTech risk-based approach and use of Environment Agency data for highway gully cleansing has been implemented. This data is continually evolving, meaning that resource is deployed to only attend gullies that require attention, therefore saving time and costs associated with gully maintenance.

It was noted that reliability issues did arise with the new gully tankers, but these have now been resolved. Whilst the introduction and embedding of the KaarbonTech programme was

still in its infancy last year, NY Highways still managed to attend around 75% of the programmed gullies, which is comparable with the previous contractor's performance.

This year, following good progress through March 2023, which was less-impacted by adverse weather and included some weekend / longer-day working, a performance level of 92.3% is expected, a big improvement on the 75% figure reported in the previous reporting year. By April 2024, all parts of the county will have had at least twelve months of the new KaarbonTech risk-based regime and therefore any inefficiencies in attending gullies under the previous programme that would have been part of the 2022/23 year will be removed.

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

- Whether councillors could be kept up to date with the gully cleansing schedules for their individual divisions?
- How known flooding hot spots will be targeted by the new approach implemented and how will problematic gullies with historic drainage systems be tackled?
- A Member felt the highways cleansing regime was reactive and asked what measures were being taken to move this to a more proactive response approach?
- How much partnership work with Yorkshire Water is undertaken to alleviate issues with combined sewer outflows?
- Could parish and town councils assist with the clearing of gullies as part of double devolution?
- Has a highway grip (to drain rain water from the highway into the roadside ditch) been considered to tackle issues in more rural locations?
- Will LGR allow greater collaboration between streetscene and highways services to tackle highway gully cleansing more effectively?
- What are the financial savings that have been realised to date and will be delivered from the implementation of the new risk-based, empirical approach?

Resolved –

Members note the information within the report and offer comments or suggestions.

A further update will be brought to the committee in 12 months time to monitor progress.

7 Financial Performance and Allocation of Civil Parking Enforcement Surplus

Considered – Report of the Corporate Director – Environment to update the committee on the financial performance and allocation of the Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) annual surplus and use of the CPE reserve general working balance for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial year.

Inspector Zoe Billings from North Yorkshire Police (NYP) also attended the meeting to inform members of the roles and responsibilities of the police with regards to civil parking enforcement.

David Kirkpatrick, Team Leader - Traffic Engineering introduced the report, with some of the key points summarised below:

- On-street parking charges are in operation in Harrogate, Knaresborough, Scarborough, Filey, Whitby and Northallerton. As a consequence of these charges and other income received through the administration of CPE, after operational costs have been met, a surplus is generated.
- The surplus can be used for parking, or alternatively where the provision of further off-street parking accommodation is unnecessary or undesirable, the surplus can be used for public transport, highway or road improvement projects or environmental

improvements. The surplus can be spent anywhere in North Yorkshire.

- Prior to 2016, the CPE surplus was not fully reinvested and consequently over a number of years accrued a substantial reserve. This general working balance has since been allocated to fund other projects identified in the North Yorkshire Strategic Transport Prospectus.
- The planned expenditure in the financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24 is greater than the forecast annual CPE surplus income and use of the remaining CPE reserve. To maintain the existing level of investment and delivery of these services, approval was given to fund the remaining shortfall through the Superintendence Reserve.
- Parking demand is influenced by a range of factors such as weather, national events, and economy. Given the national economic situation, the increase in cost of living and changes to working arrangements, it may have an impact on visitor numbers to towns. Therefore, a forecast surplus of £3m has been applied to the 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years.
- The creation of the unitary authority means responsibility for both on and off-street parking is now wholly within the remit of North Yorkshire Council replacing the previous split arrangement of on-street being the responsibility of the former County Council and Off-street local authority car parks and parking being the responsibility of the district councils. Operationally, there will be no immediate change with North Yorkshire Council ensuring the delivery of the service is 'safe and legal' from vesting day.
- Local Government Reorganisation does provide the opportunity to review the service and strategic approach to managing both on and off-street parking and the development of an inclusive new parking strategy.

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

- The consultation with the borough councils in Harrogate and Scarborough over the use of the CPE surplus, as required by the terms of the CPE Service Level Agreement, has meant that other areas of the county have been overlooked and not consulted on suggestions for spending the CPE surplus. It was asked if this will be considered in future years. An assurance was received that a county wide view will be taken in the future.
- Recognition of the work of civil parking enforcement officers on the frontline
- The timing of the potential parking strategy review and how members will be able to provide input into this
- The difficult parking situation in several rural villages and tourist areas was highlighted and the different tools available to combat unreasonable parking were discussed.
- The level of assistance NYP can provide through neighbourhood policing and problem solving teams if a situation escalates into a traffic policing offence due to a vehicle causing a hazard or obstruction.
- The installation of EV chargers in car parks was discussed and situations where supply is currently overestimating the demand and reducing the amount of standard car parking spaces available for ICE vehicles.

As part of the discussion on this item, Councillor Jabbour highlighted the car park situation at Malton railway station and the confusion it continues to cause residents due to the unclear signage and layout to distinguish between the two car parks owned by different operators. He gave an example of a local resident who recently received a £50 parking fine despite buying a ticket, albeit for the incorrect car park area. After appealing, the fine amount increased to £90. He asked whether the strategic review of on and off-street parking management and CPE services in North Yorkshire could seek to exert any influence to tackle the hard line approach and practices of some private car park operators.

The officers and Inspector Billings were thanked for their attendance.

Resolved – That:

- i. The TEEE O&S Committee notes the allocation of the CPE Surplus as set out in Table 2 of this report and the use of the Superintendence Reserve.
- ii. Note the opportunity for strategic review of on and off-street parking management and CPE services post Local Government Re-organisation.

8 Work Programme

Considered -

The report of the Principal Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer asking the Committee to confirm, amend or add to the areas of the work listed in the Work Programme.

Suggestions for future items included details of active travel schemes that are progressing around the county, the service transformation of the Environment directorate as it develops and an update on peat and moorland conservation work.

Resolved -

That the work programme be noted.

9 Any Other Items

There were no other items of business.

The meeting concluded at 12.20 pm.