

North Yorkshire County Council

Richmond (Yorks) Area Constituency Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2021, commencing at 10am – held remotely via Microsoft Teams.

Present:-

Members: County Councillors Yvonne Peacock (Vice-Chairman in the Chair), David Blades, Caroline Dickinson, Bryn Griffiths, Heather Moorhouse Karin Sedgewick, Angus Thompson John Weighell OBE, Annabel Wilkinson and co-opted member Malcolm Warne.

Other Cllrs Present: County Councillors David Chance, Gareth Dadd and Andrew Lee.

NYCC Officers: Philip Allott (North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner), Neil Irving (Assistant Director - Policy, Partnerships and Communities), Steve Loach and Ruth Gladstone (Democratic Services), David Edwardes (Technology and Change) and Liz Simpson (Communications).

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

All decisions made by the Committee are subject to the procedure set out in Minute 139, below.

139. Chairman's Welcome, introductions and apologies

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and read out the following statement:-

Under his delegated decision making powers in the Officers' Delegation Scheme in the Council's Constitution, the Chief Executive Officer has power, in cases of emergency, to take any decision which could be taken by the Council, the Executive or a committee. Following on from the expiry of the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, which allowed for committee meetings to be held remotely, the County Council resolved at its meeting on 5 May 2021 that, for the present time, in light of the continuing Covid-19 pandemic circumstances, remote live-broadcast committee meetings should continue (as informal meetings of the Committee Members), with any formal decisions required being taken by the Chief Executive Officer under his emergency decision making powers and after consultation with other Officers and Members as appropriate and after taking into account any views of the relevant Committee Members. This approach was reviewed by full Council at its July meeting and agreed that it be continued with a further review taking place at the November meeting of the County Council.

County Councillors Helen Grant, David Hugill, Carl Les, and co-opted member Malcolm Warne submitted their apologies. It was noted that the Chairman, County Councillor David Hugill, had been taken into hospital following a dog attack. Members wished him a speedy recovery.

140. Minutes

Resolved

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 9th June 2021, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

141. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest to note.

142 North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner – Plans and Policies

The recently elected Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, Philip Allott, provided a presentation to Members, highlighting the following:-

Priorities and Plans

- Briefing and Site Visits
- Out and about with North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Out and about with North Yorkshire Police

Initial priorities

Tackle Neighbourhood Crime

- Clamp down on drugs
- Deal with County Lines and pervasive recreational drugs.
- A new approach to Anti-Social Behaviour
- Reinvigorate partnership work to solve the root causes.
- Counter cross-border crime
- Protect our borderlands from travelling criminals.
- Reduce reoffending
- Reform offending behaviour to reduce persistent criminality.

Protect the vulnerable and victims

- Prevent harm before it happens
- Instil a prevention first culture in both Services.
- Promote the Victim's Code
- Ensure victims get a rigorous, timely and empathetic service.
- Enhance safety for women and girls
- Counter domestic and public violence and prevent offending behaviour.
- Developing a Women & Girls Strategy which will be live in the new year
- Tackle hate crime
- Help build an inclusive society
- Develop a Public Safety Service
- Work to prevent vulnerability collaboratively.

Enhance rural services

- Fair funding - To meet the challenges of serving the largest county in England.
- On Call Fire Service - Reform the Service to recognise their commitment and improve availability.
- Stop speeding - Deal decisively with road safety on rural roads and in villages.
- Rural and wildlife crime - Proper recognition of the impact of crime in rural areas.
- Dog theft - Criminalise the offence and improve the response.

Services that are fit for the future

- Properly equipped - Ensure Services have the technology to keep them at the cutting edge. Make sure estate, fleet and equipment is up to date and meets the need. New combined Police and Fire Station in Ripon
- Customer focused - Improve 101 response times.
- Enhance collaboration - Foster new cross-border agreements to protect our area. Work closer with local partners to improve prevention. Pool resources to co-fund and co-commission
- Save to re-invest - Maximise efficiency to release funds to re-invest in frontline services.

Force Control Room

Currently experiencing significant demand

- 999 – August daily demand in excess of New Year's Eve – 300+ calls per day, highest 368 on 29 Aug.
- 101 – daily average peaked in August at 761 – 100 more than usual daily average in August

Staffing to demand

- Changing shift timings to ensure maximum cover at peak demand
- Recruited an additional 8 staff and temporarily increasing by 6 FTE

Digital channels

- Single Online Home – digital contact and transactions
- Publish peak times and live call waiting / call volumes

Governance

- Intend to maintain current governance arrangements
- Home Office PCC Review part 1 requires a resilience plan be in place
- Deputy may be mandated, but decided not to appoint and to review in 12 months
- Areas for Investment in the OPFCC – and for Chief Executive to deliver – to provide resilience and equally importantly enhance Service Delivery for North Yorkshire and the City of York
- Establish permanent and resilient leadership, management and organisational development model as part of an overall Business Development Strategy
- Put in place a Delivery and Governance Plan to ensure delivery of the PCP and FRP – and enhance good governance of policing and fire.
- Communications, Digital Engagement
- Education Sector and Youth Engagement
- Ensuring our Customer Service model is enhanced and resilient

Plans and Consultations

Analyse

- Goal
- Commitments
- Risk profile
- Public need
- Service and partner needs
June- August

Consult

- 12 weeks
- Open and representative survey
- Street events
- Focus groups
Aug-Nov

Publish

- Finalise Plans
- SMART outcomes
- Evaluation framework
- Panel review
Nov-Jan

Consultation on Police and Crime and Fire and Rescue Plans

- Consultation Questionnaire live on-line 16 August
- Town centre public consultations started 23 August
- Skipton 17 Sep and 10 Oct, Northallerton 8 and 29 Sep, York 12 and 22 Oct
- Harrogate 2 Oct, Malton 11 Sep and 9 Oct, Selby 20 Sep, Richmond 25 Sep
- Scarborough 6 Oct
- Telephone interviews with selected residents to meet demographic profile
- Telephone interviews with businesses
- Local councils to be asked for input

Commissioning priorities

- Recommissioning of Sexual Assault Referral Centre and Child Sexual Assault Assessment Service ahead of UKAS accreditation
- Renewed Victim Needs Assessment
- Implementation and evaluation of new Diversion Services
- Implementation of new Young people in Domestic Abuse households service
- Recommissioning of Independent Victim Adviser service and Youth Commission
- Review of Child Sexual/Criminal Exploitation and CSCE Parent Liaison services

Working in Partnership

- Reinvigorate relationships across local government and wider partnership landscape
- Looking to work closely with partners on issues and joint priorities
- Keen to engage broadly and welcome support to gather public views and understand local concerns

Following the initial presentation, Members discussed the issues raised and the following matters were highlighted:-

- A Member raised concerns regarding the excessive noise created by motorcycles travelling in and out of her area and asked whether the Police could carry out checks to determine whether legal limits were being adhered to and that the correct noise limiters were in place. The Commissioner recognised that this was a significant issue for local communities. He noted that action was taken against this when identified by Officers, but he would enhance the response in specific hot-spots. He also stated that work would be carried to highlight this issue with Biking Magazines, to try and pro-actively address this.
- A Member noted that the issue of travellers parking on private land was about to be considered by Parliament and it was asked whether this would address the concerns of local communities in respect the Police not responding effectively when land is used without permission. The Commissioner recognised this issue, and noted that

Parliament was looking to provide more powers to the Police to address this. He noted that North Yorkshire Police took appropriate action to address these situations through the available legislation.

- A Member referred to the use of Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) in the Northallerton area and the success these have had in reducing the speed of traffic. He asked how these could be purchased to encourage reduced speeds in other areas. The Commissioner outlined the partnership approach to the deployment of VAS alongside local Councils and Highways. He stated that he was happy to liaise with local residents regarding their traffic concerns, but emphasised funding was not always available for items such as VAS, and other solutions had to be considered.
- The presence of Police Officers and PCSOs was highlighted as being important for the reassurance of local communities, and it was hoped that this would continue to be built upon.
- It was asked how co-ordination with the Probation Service was undertaken and how the location of ex-offenders could be identified. The Commissioner stated that the Police worked closely with the Probation Service and have a good working relationship, with the every effort made to try to prevent re-offending.
- A Member raised the issue of the difficulties faced in recruiting fire fighters in some local communities.
- Via the Clerk, the Chairman noted that Appleton Wiske Parish Council were seeking a 20mph zone through the village and were seeking the support of the Committee, Highways and the Police for that. In relation to this an Executive Member stated that the County Council had a 20mph Zone Working Group which took account of the fact that North Yorkshire Police would not support any applications for 20mph Zones unless appropriate reasons were provided. Emphasis was placed upon reducing speed through local communities through other means, with all relevant organisations engaged with this. It was also noted that 20mph Zones were not a panacea for speeding issues.
- The Chair had also asked for a message from Appleton Wiske Parish Council to be relayed to the Commissioner in respect of them having invited Mr Allott to a Parish Meeting but were yet to receive a response. The Commissioner stated that he had received a great deal of correspondence but would reply to the invite shortly. He noted that it would be difficult to meet all Parish Councils, individually, but would be able to meet a number of Parishes should they co-ordinate a meeting together.
- A Member highlighted a number of scams that were being generated in the name of NHS Direct. It was requested that details be forwarded to the Commissioner so that he could discuss these with the Chief Constable.

Resolved –

That Mr Allott be thanked for his presentation, the contents of which be noted.

143. Public Questions and Statements

There were no public questions or statements.

144. NYCC Response to COVID 19 Pandemic – Executive Members' Update

County Councillor Andrew Lee, whose Executive portfolio includes public health, highlighted the following:-

- The current 7 day rate for North Yorkshire was 354 per 100k population, with the England rate being 329.
- North Yorkshire was currently in an upward trend due although the Hambleton District had dropped slightly on previous figures.
- Vaccination rates were now around 90%, with over 80% having now received two jabs. The vaccine programme continued to work well with lower hospitalisations despite increased rates.

- Moving into Autumn it was likely that rates would again increase as young people returned to schools. The rates of infection would continue to be closely monitored.
- The majority of cases were currently in work settings and care homes with support provided where necessary.

County Councillor David Chance, whose portfolio includes Stronger Communities, highlighted the following:-

- Six Community Support Officers continued to provide assistance in the Richmond Constituency although the demand for their services was decreasing.
- A larger amount of time was now being spent on befriending individuals and encouraging them back out into the community to carry out tasks for themselves. This was also used as an opportunity to check on the health and wellbeing of individuals.
- Over 300 volunteers, co-ordinated through Stronger Communities were active in the area, and more face-to-face activities were now taking place.
- Drop ins, workshops and events were now starting to take place to encourage people to meet together again.
- Further funding had been provided by DEFRA to assist local communities.
- In relation to the resettlement of Afghan refugees 117 had been located in North Yorkshire, around 1% of the total for the UK. The majority had been removed from Afghanistan for their own safety and were currently located in a Scarborough Hotel, before they are moved to more permanent housing. The initiative was being led by Central Government.

Members discussed the update and the following issues were highlighted:-

- A Member asked how many people were currently in hospital due to COVID .In response it was stated that there were 143 throughout the County, but there was no breakdown available for each individual hospital. The level had risen slightly recently.
- It was stated that recent reports had indicated that flu vaccines were in short supply and, with winter approaching, it was asked how this was to be addressed. In response it was stated that the details on the availability of the flu vaccine were not available currently, and details would be provided to Members in due course.
- A Member noted that there had been a great deal of anxiety for some individuals in respect of leaving their homes and beginning to resume some normality of life, and she highlighted the work of the CSOs in assisting these people to reintegrate into their local communities..

Resolved –

That the Executive Members be thanked for their updated the contents of which be noted.

145. Rural Commission - Findings and Recommendations

Neil Irving - Assistant Director, Policy, Partnerships and Communities provided a presentation on the on the findings and recommendations of the Rural Commission, following their recent study, highlighting the following:-

Background

Why it was set up
 Who was involved
 What it was (and what it was not)
 How it worked
 Key recommendations
 Next steps.

Rural economy

- Devolution is critical to ensuring the right use of investment in the region and the Commission calls on the Government to agree a deal as a matter of urgency.
- The County Council must encourage investment in the region. This could be pursued through a mutual bank, with supporting funding from the Levelling Up Funds or the Shared Prosperity Fund.
- The Commission sees a role for North Yorkshire leading in green employment including food, farming, forestry, and renewable energy. The Levelling Up Funds or the Shared Prosperity Fund must provide seed funding support to be match funded by industry.

Energy transition

- The Government must invest in an electricity structure that does not overlook rural and remote areas.
- The LEP and the County Council must advocate for investment in rural electricity infrastructure.
- The National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty should execute an enabling strategy to permit the essential infrastructure and upgrades to buildings to be undertaken, to ensure a 'fit-for-purpose' future within these protected landscapes.

Digital connectivity

- The National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty must establish a Digital Inclusion Group to advise on a digital infrastructure that will be acceptable for these protected regions.
- The Government and OFCOM must understand digital connectivity as a human right. This is as much a human right for people in rural and remote areas as it is in urban areas. The Commission advocates that the Government begin by connecting its most remote citizens to avoid the typical lagging-behind model.
- DCMS must place a higher priority on digital inclusion in rural communities and set out a strategic approach to address the issue for North Yorkshire and other sparsely populated areas. The Shared Prosperity Fund could be used as a vehicle to address this issue.

Farming and land management

- Defra must have a more integrated approach to farming, land management and the environment. It must recognise that farming and land management practices are central to achieving environmental targets. Working with Nature, rather than substituting for it, will deliver the most profitable farms in conjunction with the most sustainable Nature.
- The County Council, in conjunction with the Yorkshire Agricultural Society, should facilitate a new Farm Business Task Force to direct the culture change needed for the farming future and to ensure changed business practice meets environmental targets. This should liaise closely with the national Agricultural Productivity Task Force.
- Defra must provide free business coaching and mentoring support to help farm businesses survive and restructure, whilst ensuring support is in place to help farmers exit the industry with dignity.

Rural schools, education and training

- The Commission believes that DfE must revise its National Funding Formula to ensure increased support for rural super sparse secondary schools.
- The County Council must lead on pioneering a two-stream educational system post GCSE in rural and remote areas, with one stream focusing on vocational education while the other remains academic.
- The County Council and the LEP must strengthen the offer for post-16 education and provide a better sense of future for young people.

Rural housing

- The formula for designating affordable housing must be revised by MHCLG so that it does not reflect market value in an area but rather average income in the area.
- Local authorities should have the power to levy a charge on second homes, which must stay in the county and be used to further affordable housing.
- Each parish in rural North Yorkshire should build five houses over a ten-year period. 40% of this housing stock must be affordable or available for rental.

Rural transport

- The Commission believes that Defra must make it clear what rural fund will replace the loss of the EU Rural Development Programme funding which allowed local communities to respond imaginatively to local needs around transport.
- Until the devolved authority is established, the County Council must have the power to use Shared Prosperity Funds and Levelling Up funds to design relevant schemes for rural and remote areas in North Yorkshire.
- The Commission believes that the County Council should take up the opportunity to provide more innovative passenger transport such as demand responsive transport across the county.

Cross cutting themes

- Devolution is critical to securing long-term investment into the region and the Commission calls on the Government to agree a deal as a matter of urgency. This will allow North Yorkshire to ensure best use of levelling up funds for its remote and rural regions.
- The County Council must establish an Advisory Task Force to include civil servants, rural business, banking and industry, academic and scientific expertise, and communities to take forward our recommendations.
- The Commission urges the government to ensure Levelling Up funds recognise the needs of sparsely populated northern regions as much as the needs of northern industrial regions.
- Community and social infrastructure are critical. The Government must ensure Levelling Up funds protect social infrastructure in remote and rural regions.

Next steps:

- Report has 57 recommendations to 17 organisations
- Substantial interest from press and influencers
- Report broadly supportive of NYCC ambitions
- Response from NYCC agreed by Executive on 21 September
- Opportunities to open new, or to reinforce existing, discussions with government and others

Members discussed the presentation and the following issues were highlighted:-

- A Member stated that housing was a major issue in rural areas with rising house prices forcing some families out of rural communities. She welcomed the proposal to build 5 houses over a 10 year period in rural communities, but also felt that these houses should be available to buy, as well as rent, enabling families to remain within those communities and help them to be sustainable.
- A Member welcomed the report, highlighting the promotion of Rural Transport and encouraging the development of the “Your Bus” scheme for younger people and the recently trialled on demand services.
- The issue of the decreasing availability of banking services in rural areas was raised by a Member and suggested that further consideration should be given to providing multiple banking services in one location, as requirements were unable to be met through ATMs alone. In response it was stated that this issue had previously been

given extensive consideration through the County Council's Scrutiny service, and there was nothing further to add to that discussion currently, however the issue would be fed back to the Rural Commission. The Member considered that Scrutiny had investigated this issue a number of years ago, and, as the situation had moved on, it was time for a further consideration to be given.

- A Member referred to the issue of carbon reduction and the difficulties faced in rural areas of addressing this. It was acknowledged that, particularly in remote spots, where utility services were not always in place, dwellings relied on oil for energy, and changing that would be difficult. Further developments would be required to ensure that appropriate, greener energy could be provided in all locations in the future.
- It was suggested that the details of the presentation should be rolled out to Parish Councils to allow local action to be developed on the findings and recommendations.

Resolved –

That Mr Irving be thanked for the informative presentation, the contents of which be noted.

146. North Northallerton Bridge – update

The project co-ordinator for NYCC Pam Johnson, had provided a report on the progress of the project but was unable to attend the meeting, therefore, an update was read out by the Clerk, outlining the following:-

- The finished bridge would carry a 7.3 metres wide road with footways behind both kerbs.
- Only the first set of beams were currently in place.
- The second set over the railway would be lifted into place overnight on the Saturday following the meeting when the principle contractor would have 'possession' of the railway from Network Rail to carry out the lift.
- The third set of beams were due to be delivered to the Western side of the site on the Sunday and lifted into place on Monday. All this work was of course weather sensitive.
- Once all three sets of beams were in place :
 - o the bridge deck which sits on the steel beams would then be constructed
 - o drainage etc would then be installed.
 - o the final road surfacing would then be laid over the embankments and bridge.
- Final safety checks would then need to be undertaken before the whole route could be opened to vehicles and pedestrians.

Resolved –

That the update report be noted

147. Work Programme

Considered -

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) providing a Work Programme for Members to consider, develop and adapt.

It was noted that Members were invited to identify issues for inclusion in the Work Programme outside of the meeting and inform the Clerk accordingly.

Further consideration of flooding issues and flood prevention work in the Constituency area would be undertaken by a Working Group of the Committee, consisting of 3 to 5 Members, with feedback and findings submitted to the full Committee in due course.

Resolved -

That the Work Programme be noted.

148. Other Urgent Business

The Chairman accepted the following as an urgent issue due to the need to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

Bilsdale TV Mast and Transmitter – Loss of services in the area

A Member raised concerns that, following a fire at the mast a number of weeks ago, with local TV and radio services having been lost, there appeared to be no definite resolution to the issue, despite assurances that work was being carried out to resolve this.

Further complications had subsequently arisen regarding land ownership and a number of temporary solutions had proved unsuccessful for many local residents. It was considered that this was of particular concern for elderly and vulnerable people who relied on these services. There was also an issue of compensation, and at what level, for those affected. Members agreed that the matter required resolving as quickly as possible. It was noted that the local MP, Rishi Sunak, had been made aware of the situation and it was suggested that communication from the Committee should be made, to emphasise the concerns.

Resolved –

That the Committee write to Rishi Sunak MP, highlighting their concerns regarding the loss of TV and radio services in the local area, following the fire at the Bilsdale mast and transmitter, with a view to resolving this matter as speedily as possible, and for levels of compensation to be determined.

149. Next Meeting

Resolved -

That the next scheduled meeting of the Area Constituency Committee would take place on Wednesday 24th November 2021 at 10am.

The meeting concluded at 11:45am.
SML