

North Yorkshire County Council

Executive

11 January 2022

Area Constituency Committee Feedback

1.0 Purpose of the Report

To bring to the attention of the Executive key issues considered at recent meetings of the Area Constituency Committees.

2.0 Richmond (Yorks) Area Constituency Committee – 24 November 2021

2.1 The committee considered the Annual Schools, Education Achievement and Finance Report. The following issues were highlighted:-

- The impact on small local schools and their finance of a lack of housing to buy and rent in rural areas.
- Strategies to further decrease the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions.
- The return of OFSTED inspection and assistance offered to schools in respect of those.
- An update on the provision of a new Primary School at North Northallerton.

2.2 A presentation on Elective Home Education (EHE) was provided. Issues raised included:-

- The protection offered to the young people involved with EHE from NYCC.
- The safeguards in place to ensure children reached their true potential.
- Members welcomed the positive action being delivered to support children and parents/guardians undertaking EHE.

2.3 Members received an update on the North Northallerton Bridge project. The following issues were detailed:-

- The entire length of the road would be 30mph and would have a footway on either side
- At this stage it was not anticipated that a pedestrian crossing would be provided on Brompton Road, however, the location would be monitored when the road opened.
- Appropriate signage would be put in place to route traffic along the road rather than travelling into Northallerton Town Centre.
- An update on the flood prevention work on Stokesley Road would be provided to the next meeting.

2.4 COVID 19 and LGR – Executive updates were provided on these issues by the Leader of the Council. The following issues were highlighted:-

- Extensive work was taking place in respect of the transition into a new Council for North Yorkshire.
- COVID rates continued to fluctuate throughout the area.
- Avian Flu had been identified in the Constituency, leading to restrictions being put in place.
- Members would like to see local Committees, making area based decisions, within the structure for the new Council, with local delivery hubs supporting the decision making process.

- Consideration should be given to extending mask wearing in more settings to prevent the further increase in COVID rates.
- Signs relating to COVID awareness should be raised to eye level to have more of an impact. Matrix signs could be utilised to reinforce the messages.
- The roll out of booster jabs continued to be delivered effectively.

3.0 Thirsk & Malton Area Constituency Committee – 3 December 2021

3.1 The MP provided an overview of how things were at Westminster and his views on issues affecting his constituency. This included:

- The management of the new Covid-19 Omnicom variant, and the new restrictions in place;
- The improvements in the economy, expected to be back to pre-Covid levels by the end of the financial year, evidenced by massive labour shortages;
- The recent turbulence in Parliament as a result of the recent serious breaches of the lobbying rules
- The pressure on supply chains and the increasing cost of raw materials and energy, putting pressure on inflation;
- Concerns about regional investment – He suggested it would not be possible to level up the North as was needed without a new rail link between Leeds and Manchester
- The unfair cap on Adult Social Care, which would disregard the means test – Members were pleased to note the MP had voted against the Adult Health & Social Care Bill.
- The need to follow through with levelling up – fiscal measures needed to be fair for those in the north;
- The small boats crisis – both a diplomatic and domestic legislation issue;
- The devolution deal for York City Region for York and North Yorkshire, with the benefits it would bring, such as having a directly elected Mayor leading on regional development and inward investment;
- The national 4% unemployment rate - He suggested the country needed to be more productive and efficient through greater business investment;
- The planned closure of some of the vaccination centres across northern Ryedale and southern Hambleton at the end of January 2022, meaning residents would have to travel much further to receive them, which would be a barrier to some;
- The shortage in labour in farming and health care due to the combination of Brexit and Covid - He suggested it would only become clear whether a structural change in immigration rules was required once Covid was over.

4.0 Skipton & Ripon Area Constituency Committee – 16 December 2021

4.1 The Rt Hon Julian Smith MP was unable to attend the meeting of the committee due to other commitments at Westminster. It is anticipated that the MP will be able to attend the next meeting of the committee on 7 January 2022.

4.2 There was a public statement from Craven District Councillor Stephen Morrell, regarding road safety measures on Sutton Lane, between Eastburn and Sutton, following a recent pedestrian fatality there. The work that the County Council is doing with Bradford MDC and local police services was reviewed. A further update on progress with the development and implementation of possible road safety measures will be brought to the committee in March 2022.

4.3 An update on the report and recommendations of the Rural Commission was provided. Committee members raised some queries about what more could be done to develop job and career opportunities in rural areas that were not tourism or food production and processing. There was also a discussion about what work would need to be done and by

whom to ensure that the electricity generation and supply infrastructure in rural areas was robust enough to enable decarbonisation to continue. It was noted that the apparent weakness in the current national infrastructure was illustrated by the damage caused by storm Arwen.

- 4.4 The committee also considered the Annual Education Report and raised concerns about increases in Elective Home Education over the past 18 months, which seemed to be linked to parental concerns about Covid-19 transmission in schools, and also the persistent underfunding of rural primary and secondary schools by Government.
- 4.5 The committee continues to engage with the local Youth Council and this has provided a helpful setting for some of the issues impacting upon young people in the area to be highlighted and discussed.

5.0 Recommendation

- 5.1 That the Executive notes the report and considers any matters arising from the work of the Area Constituency Committees detailed above, that merit further scrutiny, review or investigation at a county-level.

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23 December 2021