

North Yorkshire County Council

Selby and Ainsty Area Constituency Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Selby and Ainsty Area Constituency Committee held virtually via Microsoft Teams on 24th September 2021 at 10 am.

Present:-

Members:-

County Councillors Andy Paraskos, Karl Arthur, Stephanie Duckett, Mike Jordan, Andrew Lee, Cliff Lunn, Richard Musgrave, Don Mackay, John McCartney, Chris Pearson and Cliff Trotter.

Co-opted members:-

Howard Ferguson.

Invited Executive Members:-

Apologies were received from the invited Executive Members.

Officers:-

Sharon Fox (Area Highways Office, BES), Daniel Harry (Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager), Philip Allott (North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC)), Neil Irving (Assistant Director - Policy, Partnerships and Communities), Rebecca Gibson (Senior Transport Planning Officer, Highways and Transportation, BES), Gary Lumb (Area 7 Highways Improvement Manager, BES).

Apologies were received from County Councillors David Chance, Gareth Dadd and Carl Les.

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 No. 109, below.

108. Appointment of a Chairman and Vice Chairman

Daniel Harry, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager, welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that as the committee Chair and Vice Chair has recently stood down, the first matter of business would be the election of a new Chair.

County Councillor Karl Arthur was nominated by County Councillor Richard Musgrave and this was seconded by County Councillor Andrew Lee.

There were no other nominations and so a vote was held. On a show of hands, County Councillor Karl Arthur was unanimously elected to be Chairman of the committee through to the May 2022 elections.

County Councillor Karl Arthur then asked for nominations for the position of Vice Chair.

County Councillor Mike Jordan was nominated by County Councillor Andy Paraskos and this was seconded by County Councillor Don Mackay.

There were no other nominations and so a vote was held. On a show of hands, County Councillor Mike Jordan was unanimously elected to be Vice Chairman of the committee through to the May 2022 elections.

109. 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 will be reviewed by full Council at its November meeting.

110. Minutes

Resolved -

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2021, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed and would be signed by the Chairman as a correct record at the next available opportunity.

111. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at this stage of the meeting.

112. Public Questions or Statements

There were no public questions or statements.

113. Presentation by the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner - Mr Philip Allott

Considered –

A presentation by Philip Allott, North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC).

Philip Allott gave a presentation on his priorities and plans, as summarised below:

- The focus in the first three months has been upon getting out and about and meeting with staff across the Police and Fire and Rescue Service
- Priorities include the safety of women, support for victims of crime, greater use of youth diversion, tackling drug supply and drug use, reducing anti-social behaviour, dealing with cross border crime and river safety along the Ouse

- More use of 'nudge theory' to promote behaviour change and a reduction in anti-social behaviour
- There is to be a renewed focus upon tackling rural crime and greater use would be made of modern technology, such as drones, to extend the reach of Police Officers and PCSOs
- Speeding on roads remained a high priority
- Work will be done to support the retained/volunteer fire fighters and small rural fire and rescue stations
- More will be done to develop the relationship between the Police and local communities so that they are better able to work together to promote community safety
- Will look to review and address the problems that exist with the 101 service and the high levels of calls that had recently been received
- Noted that the public appeared in general to be less tolerant following months of lockdowns and restriction during the pandemic
- Currently consulting on the Police and Crime and Fire and Rescue Plans.

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

- Concerns were raised the use of mobile speed cameras and whether they could be deployed in a more targeted way so that there was greater opportunity for deterrence and prosecution
- The impact of speeding cars through villages was noted as were the concerns frequently raised with county councillors by Parish Councillors about the difficulties in getting the issue raised with the Police
- Parish Councils are asking for greater Police involvement and visibility in their areas
- The 101 service is in need of a wholesale review to ensure that it performs and helps manage the Police response to more minor incidences
- Speeding also an issue in urban areas
- It is not always clear what the local Safer Neighbourhood Policing Team is and how to get in contact with them.

The PFCC responded to the concerns that had been raised about speeding, as summarised below:

- Research is going to be commissioned to better understand how speed on the highways can be better regulated in the county. This will include enhanced measurement of road use and speeds
- In some cases, speed limits could be reduced from 40mph to 30mph on roads where there were particular concerns
- The support of the Council and councillors would be welcomed in working through where fixed speed cameras could be placed
- Acknowledged that more could be done to be more responsive to calls from local people about speeding. The existing Speed Management Protocol may need to be reviewed
- Police are prepared to prosecute speeding and other driving offences based upon dash-cam footage submitted by members of the public
- The Police have limited resources and have to cover over 6,000 miles of roads. As such, the people are encouraged to raise complaints about speeding as this then helps the Police build up an understanding of where the problems are and so how to target resources. For example, the A64 is targeted due to the number of people killed and seriously injured in that road.

The PFCC asked that anyone who wanted further details of the Safer Neighbourhood Policing Team in their area should contact Democratic Services who would in turn liaise with his office.

County Councillor Karl Arthur summed up and thanked the PFCC for attending the meeting and answering the questions raised by Councillors.

Resolved –

That the committee receive an update on progress after the first 12 months in office.

114. COVID 19 - Update

County Councillor Andrew Lee provided a verbal update on the latest position regarding the COVID 19 pandemic and the County Council's response.

- Covid remains an issue and is likely to be the focus of work for the coming months. Infection rates are up but the level of hospital admissions has not risen at the same rate and people who are vaccinated tend to be less ill
- Infections are rising in care settings and education settings, particularly schools
- The Government's 'Covid-19 Response: Autumn and Winter Plan 2021' was published earlier this month. Included is a 'Plan B', which will be implemented should the NHS come under unsustainable pressure in autumn and winter. The Plan B may include, in settings yet to be determined: mandatory vaccine certification; mandatory face coverings; and advice to work from home
- The emphasis is now upon learning to live with Covid-19, rather than lockdowns
- Vaccination rates are increasing, as are the number of people who have received a second dose. The NHS is delivering a programme of booster doses to people aged over 50 years and those considered to be at risk due to a long term health condition
- There are strong budgetary pressures in social care, particularly adult social care and concerns that there may be a bubble of unmet need, linked to the pandemic and lockdowns, that is now starting to work its way through the health and social care system
- There is a risk that the Government requirement that all care staff are fully vaccinated may exacerbate existing adult social care staffing shortages in the county.

Members discussed the presentations and raised the following issues and points:-

- There is a need to learn to live with Covid and try and return to pre-pandemic ways of living and working
- It is concerning that some health and care workers have yet to be vaccinated against Covid. Also, what impact this will have upon staffing levels in the county
- There has been close work between the Council and local MPs throughout the pandemic
- Recent data suggests that 45% of deaths from Covid in the county have occurred in residential and nursing care homes.

County Councillor Karl Arthur summed up.

Resolved –

That the County Councillor Andrew Lee be thanked for the update the details of which be noted.

115. Rural Commission - Findings and Recommendations

Neil Irving, Assistant Director (Policy, Partnerships and Communities) gave a presentation on the findings and recommendations of the Rural Commission, highlighting the following:-

- The commission was chaired by the Very Revd. John. Dobson, Dean of Ripon and consisted of 8 members
- Not decision making
- Held a series of evidence sessions with 70 plus people contributing
- It was independent with administrative support provided by the Council
- There were 7 themes and a total of 57 recommendations have been made for consideration by 17 agencies and organisations at a district, county, regional and national level
- A report went to the Executive on 21 September 2021 to consider how the Council responds to the report and recommendations
- The Council is broadly supportive of the recommendations and has been asked to establish an Advisory Task Force to take forward the recommendations.

There followed a discussion, as summarised below:-

- The report and recommendations simply re-stated what was already known and did not identify anything new or suggest any innovative solutions
- Very little of the report was relevant to Selby. Indeed, Selby was only mentioned twice. The focus appeared to be largely upon the Dales and a lesser extent the Moors
- There are lots of demands made in the report and it is no clear how these will be met or by whom
- It is not clear how the implementation of the recommendations will be overseen, which risks the report simply sitting on the shelf
- The report gives the wrong impression about Broadband connectivity, which is very good across the vast majority of the county following years of work and investment
- There is no mention of the Drax power station.

In response, Neil Irving explained:

- The report had been well received by a wide range of organisations locally, regionally and nationally
- The Commission were able to provide a fresh perspective on a number of persistent issues and challenges and will give new impetus to the work to tackle them
- The Commission have provided independent challenge
- The work of the Commission was never intended to cover all aspects of life in the county. The focus was always going to be on the more sparsely populated areas of the county
- The report does not set policy for the Council. The Council will review the report and recommendations and then decide how to respond.

Howard Ferguson asked how much the work of the Commission had cost and also raised some concerns about the accuracy of some of the data and information on broadband coverage.

Neil Irving said that the Commission were not paid for this work. Officer support was provided by the Council but this came from existing staff teams, as and when needed, and had not been costed out.

Neil Irving agreed to pass the data source on broadband to Howard Ferguson.

Resolved –

That the Neil Irving be thanked for his report and answers to issues raised the details of which be noted.

116. Selby District Places and Movement Study

Rebecca Gibson (Senior Transport Planning Officer, Highways and Transportation) presented a report updating Members on the current position regarding the Selby Places and Movement Study. She highlighted the following:-

- The Study was jointly commissioned by the County Council, the LEP and Selby District Council in the summer of 2020
- The aim was to consider how congestion could be reduced, how air quality could be improved and how the improved traffic flows could be achieved
- Selby, Sherburn in Elmet and Tadcaster were covered by the study
- A set of proposals were developed and consulted upon. The consultation was undertaken online due to the restrictions associated with the pandemic
- A total of 575 people completed the survey online. In addition, 15 individual emails were received
- Approximately 50% of the responses were from Sherburn in Elmet postcodes
- The responses to the consultation included a range of issues that did not directly relate to the proposals themselves but which are important considerations: a number of issues relating to the lack of cycling infrastructure; increasing the number of trees and greenery in built up areas; the lack of public transport serving the area; a need to reduce standing/idling traffic; and concerns about large vehicle movements in the village of Sherburn in Elmet
- In the main, the benefits of the various packages put forward did not outweigh the perceived dis-benefits of the reallocation of road space
- For the Selby place options, the proposals for Market Street/the Crescent were the most popular
- The explanation of the proposals had been difficult when done as part of an on-line, rather than in-person, consultation
- Recognising that the response to the consultation undertaken was relatively low and that there was no clear consensus on the options for either Selby or Sherburn in Elmet, it is proposed that further development work and consultation is undertaken.

Following the presentation of the report Members raised the following issues:-

- There is a need to help Selby Town to prosper and become a more attractive place for people to live, work and socialise in, much as has been done in Malton
- The low level of responses to the consultation was noted
- The lack of focus upon Tadcaster was raised and officers urged to progress work in the area and also to ensure that it was linked into the Local Plan
- Concerns were raised that the changes that had been outlined for Selby could result in increasing pressure upon a small number of existing routes to enable changes to Selby town centre to go ahead
- A heritage-led development scheme is being developed for Tadcaster by Selby District Council.

County Councillor Richard Musgrave made a declaration of interest on the basis that he had previously voted on this matter as a member of the Selby District Council Executive.

Resolved –

That the officer be thanked for the report, the contents of which be noted, together with the issues raised during the discussion and further updates be brought to subsequent meetings of the Committee.

117. A19 Rebuild and Repair – Final update

Gary Lumb (Area 7 Highways Improvement Manager, BES) provided a final update regarding the current situation in relation to the rebuild and repair of the A19 following extensive damage to the road resulting from flooding last year.

The following issues were highlighted:-

- The road was re-opened on 21 June 2021
- All of the construction works were finally completed in August 2021
- Landscaping work will be completed by October 2021. This work not affect the highway itself nor traffic flows
- It is anticipated that the work was carried out on budget, subject to receipt of a final invoice
- A speed survey will be undertaken on the approach to Chapel Haddlesey.

County Councillor Chris Pearson raised concerns about the increase in traffic through the village of Burn, which was making it increasingly difficult for people who lived there to cross the road.

Gary Lumb said that he would look into a crossing assessment being undertaken.

Resolved-

That the officer be thanked for the update, the contents of which be noted.

118. Work Programme

Considered -

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) providing details of the Work Programme for the Area Constituency Committee to consider, develop and adopt.

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.

It was agreed that the work programme be amended to include an item on the deployment of fixed and mobile speed cameras.

County Councillor Karl Arthur said that Nigel Adams MP would normally attend the April meeting of the committee but this would not be possible due to that meeting being in the pre-election period. He would, therefore, be invited to attend on an alternative date.

Resolved -

- a. That the development of the Work Programme be ongoing;
- b. That the contents of the report be noted.

119. Next Meeting

It was likely that this would be a virtual meeting held on the Microsoft Teams platform, but, should face-to-face meetings have returned, a suitable venue would be utilised and Members would be informed accordingly

Resolved -

That the next meeting of the Committee be held on Friday 14th January 2022 at 10am.

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

There was none.

The meeting concluded at 12.25pm.

DH