

# 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 8<sup>th</sup> April 2022 at 10 am.

### Present:-

### Members:-

County Councillors Karl Arthur (Chairman), , Mike Jordan, Andrew Lee, Cliff Lunn, Richard Musgrave, Don Mackay, John McCartney, Andy Paraskos, Chris Pearson and Cliff Trotter; together with Co-opted Member, Howard Ferguson.

### Apologies

Apologies were received from County Councillor Stephanie Duckett

### Invited Executive Members:-

County Councillors David Chance and Carl Les.

### Officers:-

Tom Jenkinson (Stronger Communities Delivery Manager); Liz Meade (Stronger Communities Delivery Manager); James Malcolm (Area Highways Manager); Sharon Fox (Area Highways) and Steve Loach (Democratic Services).

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**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. 132, below.**

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### 132. 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 AGM meeting in May.

### **133. Minutes**

#### **Resolved -**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2022, 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.

### **134. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **135. Public Questions or Statements**

John White of Whitley Parish Council attended the meeting and outlined the following question/statement:-

“Please can we table the same question for the April meeting, and are these now open to the public? Unfortunately more than 8 weeks have past and we’ve still not heard anything from NYCC re our crossing. Nothing at all. The background is that as far back as November 2020 we got funding for a pedestrian crossing awarded and it was only a few weeks later we made our first contact with NYCC. We have repeatedly been told the work has been ordered and told we will be notified when the work will start. Unfortunately we are beginning to lose faith that we will ever get the much needed pedestrian crossing. We do feel we have been very patient as we appreciate the CC will have many priorities. I hope you can put our question to the committee and obtain an explanation why we are still waiting and why no one ever contacts us.”

The Area Highways Manager, James Malcolm, apologised to Mr White for the delay in response and thanked him for resubmitting this issue. He explained that the plan for the crossing had been ordered and was expected to be on site in June 2021, however, the County Council had subsequently moved away from the contract with Ringway, which resulted in a delay for a number of projects. There had also been a large scale reduction in available labour resources which had led to further delays. He had considered it appropriate, therefore, to only provide an update when the scheme was ready to start. The project would now commence on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2022 and would take two weeks to complete.

Mr White welcomed the news and thanked the Area Highways Manager for his response.

### **136. Executive Update – COVID, LGR and any other issues.**

The Leader of the Council, County Councillor Carl Les, outlined the following:-

- COVID figures remained high but appeared to be reaching their peak. People appeared to be less ill with this strain of the infection, but the number of people infected was very high. He emphasised that people could still become very ill through COVID, therefore, care should continue to be taken to not spread the infection.
- The LGR workshops were progressing well and it was expected that everything would be in place for all services to be transferred in a safe and legal manner in twelve months time, with as seamless a transition as possible. The Transition Board was not meeting in the run up to the election, however, the Officer Group continued to meet. The reason behind LGR was to open up the opportunity for

devolution/levelling up. The Leader had met with the Minister and had a positive meeting with City of York Council in respect of devolution. Options for moving forward with this were being explored, but it was recognised that there would be challenges. Briefings had been undertaken with the MPs in respect of devolution, and they were supportive of taking this forward. Various priorities will be considered in relation to taking devolution forward from here, and provided the proposed refurbishment of Harrogate Conference Centre as an example.

- It was expected that there would be a major role for the ACCs going forward, in line with the proposals for LGR and ensuring local decision making is kept to the forefront of the democratic process.

Members raised the following issues in relation to the update by the Leader:-

- A Member asked whether North Yorkshire and York would get a West Yorkshire type devolution, with more decision making devolved, or a South Yorkshire type with little additional decision making powers. In response the Leader emphasised that he hoped there would be more decision making powers at a local level, but recognised that Civil Servants would be reluctant to lose their influence on these issues.
- It was noted that when the Harrogate Conference Centre was initially developed, Harrogate Council acquired a great deal of debt, and it was unclear at whether this was paid off. Concern was raised that a refurbishment would create more debt. The Leader stated that he did not think that the original debt was paid off, which was why they were seeking funding for the refurbishment. He emphasised that although this was a major project for Harrogate, it would be considered alongside all the region's priorities by the new Council, and should support not be provided, then alternative sources of funding would have to be pursued.

County Councillor David Chance provided an update on the response to the COVID pandemic by the Stronger Communities team, noting that a detailed report on this would follow later in the meeting.

- A range of programmes had been developed to assist with the strengthening of local communities.
- Many of the COVID support services, introduced during the pandemic, were now concentrating on restoring confidence to people in local communities.
- The Local Assistance Fund was available for those in crisis, and there had been a steep rise in those requiring assistance.
- Support and assistance continued to be provided for refugees and asylum seekers.
- Local food banks continued to receive support.

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

- The most recent figures showed that the local COVID rate was 550 – 700 per 100k over the previous 7 days and rates were slowly declining.
- Every effort should continue to be made to lower the COVID rates
- The vaccination programme continued to be operating well with a very high take up within North Yorkshire. People were encouraged to continue with their current vaccination programme as this reduced the chance of developing serious illness.
- The position would continue to be closely monitored and, if necessary, the response could be increased, dependent upon the levels of infection, and their direction of travel.

- Government COVID guidelines had changed on 1<sup>st</sup> April with more emphasis now on learning to live with COVID. Despite that it was emphasised that a sensible approach should still be adopted in terms of mask wearing and avoiding unnecessary contact.

**Resolved –**

That the Executive Members be thanked for their updates the details of which be noted.

**137. Stronger Communities and Community Response to COVID19 Update**

Tom Jenkinson (Stronger Communities Delivery Manager) and Liz Meade (Stronger Communities Delivery Manager) presented their report, highlighting the following:-

- Background - developing and mobilising community support infrastructure in response to the COVID19 (Coronavirus) pandemic.
- Community Support Organisation Performance (2021/22):-
  - 23,301 prescriptions delivered;
  - 36,288 shopping deliveries made;
  - 61,319 befriending calls and 33,990 phone check ins made;
  - 17,311 transport requests fulfilled; and
  - 48,923 meals delivered and 11,281 food parcels distributed.
- Covid19 Related Work
  - Sustainable Food Support
  - Holiday Activities and Food Programme
  - Household Support Fund
  - Digital Inclusion
- Wider Stronger Communities Programme Work
  - Children and Young People
  - Health and Wellbeing
  - Capacity Building
- Planning for 2022/23
  - Independent Evaluation
- Local Area Information
  - The Community Support Organisations within the Constituency
  - The Current Situation
  - Additional Grant Funding – Staying Healthy, Independent and Connected
  - Moving forward.

Members discussed the report and the following issues and points were raised:-

- It was noted that much of the work being undertaken at the moment was aimed at supporting people to be independent again.
- A Member stated that he was part of the “Carers Count” group and was aware that many people were unsure as to where to obtain help and advice. Age UK was currently closed in Selby and he wondered whether there were plans for something to be provided in its place. He also noted that there were a number of issues with the local bus services but people were unaware of the Community Transport provision available, and he asked how that could be addressed. In response it was acknowledged that obtaining information and support in the Selby district was challenging. Every effort was being made to address this matter and details of groups that can provide assistance and information will be made available. The areas where the biggest challenges are currently, in terms of information and support, are benefits, community transport, hospital and medical. People are being directed towards Selby AVS to obtain relevant information, as it

was recognised that there were challenges in the area. The concerns raised were being acted upon. The Member noted that there were issues for people living in the Sherburn area in relation to medical needs, including transport to and from appointments and picking up medication, many of them being elderly and infirm. He stated that he was directing people to community transport services but finding appropriate routes was challenging. In response it was noted that the most effective models of community transport in North Yorkshire were being evaluated with a view to introducing a more effective, similar service in the Selby area. The issue with operating such models was getting sufficient volunteers to deliver the service effectively, however, every effort was being made to improve the services, and to ensure elderly and infirm people were supported appropriately.

- The Chairman stated that he was a Member of the Selby AVS Board, and wished to pass on his regards to the Chair of that Board in relation to the help and information provided to local communities during the pandemic. He also welcomed the excellent information provided by NYCC during that period. Officers echoed the statement and also thanked Members and local residents for the support that they had provided during those difficult times.
- It was noted that Ukrainian refugees were now beginning to arrive in the area and a great deal of background work was taking place in respect of that. Support would be provided in local communities to assist with the resettlement process but an understanding of what will be required will take place initially.

**Resolved –**

That the officers be thanked for the report, and answers to issues raised, the details of which be noted.

**138. Work Programme**

Considered -

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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 this would be the final Meeting of the Committee within the current County Council and it was expected that the new Committee would develop the existing Work Programme.

Details of the proposed dates for meetings of the Committee during 2022/23 were provided

**Resolved –**

- (i) That the Work Programme be noted;
- (ii) That the proposed Meeting dates for 2022/23, as set out below, be approved:-
  - 2.30pm on Thursday 9th June 2022
  - 2.30pm on Thursday 22nd September 2022
  - 10am on Friday 13th January 2023
  - 2pm on Thursday 6th April 2023

**139. Next Meeting**

**Resolved -**

That the next meeting of the Committee be held at 2.30pm on Thursday 9th June 2022.

**140. 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 10.50pm.

SML