

# North Yorkshire County Council

## Thirsk and Malton Area Constituency Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2022, commencing at 2pm – held at the Galtres Centre, Easingwold.

### Present:-

Members: County Councillors Joy Andrews, Alyson Baker, Lindsay Burr MBE, Sam Cross, Gareth Dadd, Michelle Donohue-Moncrief, , Keane Duncan, Caroline Goodrick, George Jabbour, Nigel Knapton, Steve Mason, Roberta Swiers, Malcolm Taylor, Gregg White and Dave Whitfield.

Constituency MP: Kevin Hollinrake

Other Cllrs Present: County Councillor Carl Les.

NYCC Officers: Steve Loach (Democratic Services.

There were four members of the public present

Apologies were received from County Councillors Janet Sanderson and Annabel Wilkinson.

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**Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book**

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### 1. Appointment of Chairman

#### Resolved

That County Councillor Nigel Knapton be appointed Chairman of the ACC until the first meeting following the Annual Council Meeting in May 2023.

### 2. Appointment of Vice-Chairman

#### Resolved

That County Councillor Caroline Goodrick be appointed Vice-Chairman of the ACC until the first meeting following the Annual Council Meeting in May 2023.

### 3. Minutes

#### Resolved

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2022, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### 4. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest to note.

## 5. Public Questions and Statements

Councillor Shirley Shepherd (Easingwold Town Council) asked the Committee about the future of Easingwold in terms of funding, economic development opportunities and potential boundary changes from the boundary review for Constituencies which had been subject to recent consultation.

In response the Constituency MP stated although changes were expected in response to the Boundary review he was hopeful that proposals to include Easingwold with Wetherby for a new Constituency area would not come to fruition, and noted that he supported alternative proposals that retained much of the existing Constituency area, apart from Filey, which would amalgamate with Bridlington to form a new Constituency. It was expected that the final details would be published by the middle of 2023, otherwise they could not be used for the next General Election.

A Member, who's Electoral Division (Hunmanby) would also move to the Filey and Bridlington Constituency, should those plans be approved, raised concerns that half of the area would be in the East Riding and half in North Yorkshire, which would lead to complications. She explained that she understood the logic in the proposals but there would be issues as the areas would come under different Local Authorities.

It was expected that a further consultation would be undertaken when the amended proposals were published and any issues could be raised at that stage.

In terms of economic development and funding opportunities for Easingwold the Chairman noted that he would be actively pursuing these and details would be reflected in the Committee's Work Programme.

## 6. Discussion with Constituency MP, Kevin Hollinrake

Mr Hollinrake highlighted the following:-

- The proposed imposition of an Asylum Reception Centre at Linton-on-Ouse remained a major issue for the area. This was a matter of great concern for the surrounding local communities, and the MP was supporting a legal challenge from Hambleton DC to block the proposal. The demographic for the area did not suit the proposal, despite the facility being available, and it was considered that this was the wrong place for such a facility to be provided. If the Government were unwilling to change their mind the legal challenge would be pursued.
- Food and farming were particular concerns within the area, as the rules in respect of financial support were changing. There were also issues in respect supply, borders and new trade deals that were affecting the farming industry. The MP emphasised that retaining farmers was important to the area, and emphasised the need for revenue levels to remain appropriate and constant.
- He considered that LGR created great optimism for the Thirsk and Malton Constituency area, not least because it cleared the way for devolution, which, with an appropriate deal, could provide substantial additional funding into the area. Meetings with local representatives had commenced in respect of devolution and negotiations regarding the deal with Government for this were underway.
- The bid for the upgrading of the A64, particularly on the section leaving York towards Malton, continued to progress, giving some optimism that this would be provided. It was expected that the final decision on the upgrade would be provided by the end of 2023.
- In terms of national issues, the cost of living crisis and inflation continued to be dominant issues. Further support packages for households were being sought. The

recent £37bn package had been well targeted to ensure a broad spectrum of people received some support whilst targeting those with the greatest need.

- Economic Crime remained a major concern, with this being a worldwide blight, that continues to increase.
- Levelling Up is a major policy of the Government that continues to be developed but will take a great deal of time to implement.

Members raised questions with the MP and the following issues were highlighted:-

- It was asked what the current Government policy was in terms of placing refugees, in respect of the issues raised in relation to Linton-on-Ouse. Whilst agreeing that the site at Linton was the wrong place to place the refugees, the Member stated that they still required assistance, therefore, an alternative solution was required to best meet their needs. In response the MP stated that the Government supported the provision of a safe place for refugees to be located, as was demonstrated with the assistance provided for Syrian and Ukrainian refugees. There was a need to process claims for asylum as speedily as possible, and, where these were genuine, provide accommodation evenly around the country. Currently refugees were being placed in hotels while they wait for their papers to be processed, and the developing strategy was to provide Reception Centres to allow the processes to be undertaken more quickly as all the necessary services could be provided on one site. This strategy, however, should ensure that the Reception Centres are located appropriately, near to major conurbations, with easy access to services, which was not the case with the site chosen at Linton. He referred to the proposal in terms of relocating some refugees to Rwanda, rather than processing them to remain in the UK. He noted that the majority of people that this proposal had been established for had passed through safe countries, and this was aimed at deterring them from undertaking the extremely dangerous journey across the English Channel, by dinghy, and attempted to stop the traffickers from benefitting from this practice. It was recognised that this policy was seen as controversial by some, however, there was little option other than to try and deter those crossing the Channel. It was hoped that a better system would be developed within the EU to assist this deterrent.
- A Member referred to concerns regarding environmental issues and asked how these were being addressed. Mr Hollinrake emphasised the importance of this issue and his support for the move net zero carbon emissions. He noted that the UK was second only to Sweden in terms of the mitigation undertaken in response to Climate Change, as verified by an independent study.
- It was asked what action was been taken to speed up the ELMS payments to farmers. In response it was stated that the NFU were slowing the payment process and many farmers did not want to be part of this process as it required sustainable farming, with proof required of what benefits they would bring to the environment through the practices undertaken. It was emphasised that for this to operate fairly, there had to be equal opportunity for this to be developed, which was not the case for all farmers currently.
- A Member asked whether LGR would assist in delivering the net zero aspirations for carbon emissions. The MP stated that NYCC had initiated the development of this proposal and expected that this would continue when the unitary Council came into place, with discussions with the District Councils continuing in respect of this. The Leader of the Council, County Councillor Carl Les, stated that the development of devolved powers would enable issues such as this to be given greater focus, and noted that the MP was providing his full support for this. The MP emphasised that he was against the use of agricultural land for solar panels, however.
- It was asked what the future of the Linton-on-Ouse site was intended to be. Mr Hollinrake stated that he envisaged this being developed for residential and employment opportunities, and, ideally, used for military purposes. He considered that the facility could be put to better use than as a Refugee Assessment Centre.
- A Member stated that not all technology had green benefits and there had to be emphasis on other issues alongside this, such as food provision, and there was a

danger that the move towards the provision of green energy could lead to the loss of food producing land, due to the incentives involved. The MP agreed, stating that a reasonable balance had to be established to ensure that food production was not affected. More thought had to be given to utilising existing buildings for energy producing technology and for local energy producing projects to be made easier to establish. Difficulties for a rural area such as North Yorkshire providing the infrastructure for the charging of electric vehicles was discussed. It was expected that devolution would assist with this and also in communicating the difficulties faced in relation to such issues. In terms of the provision of solar panels and wind turbines, unless these were provided solely for local energy schemes, there was a need for access to be provided to the grid, which required further infrastructure provision. The MP emphasised the need for local schemes that could provide energy and assist with the local development of the economy, bringing a better quality of employment into the area and raising the prosperity of those living here. He considered that devolution would assist greatly in moving toward this.

- A Member referred to the A64 and sought clarity on whether this would definitely be upgraded and, if so, what the timescales were likely to be, as local businesses would be affected and would need time to make appropriate adjustments. In response the MP stated that he expected the improvements to go ahead, but noted that they were expensive and would take time to deliver, so nothing was guaranteed. He expected that work would commence towards the end of 2023.
- In relation to the move to being carbon neutral a Member suggested that there was now an opportunity for house builders to incorporate carbon neutral schemes into their developments and provide an holistic approach to this. The MP agreed that an holistic approach was required and noted that Planning requirements were being altered to accommodate this approach, however, care had to be taken so as not to make the cost of housing too high through this approach.
- A discussion of the use of some available rural land, but not the best most valuable available land, for solar panels, was undertaken and the MP suggested that the most effective place for these was on the roofs of buildings to ensure that food production could be maximised.
- A discussion on the prospect of independence for Scotland was undertaken and the MP outlined his reasons for not supporting that.
- A Member suggested that the County Council should have declared a Climate Emergency as this would have benefitted the pursuit of net zero. He agreed that solar panels were best placed on the roofs of buildings and for renewable energy solutions to be applied to new builds, but also warned against creating food and fuel poverty through this, with a co-ordinated approach being the most appropriate way to avoid this.

(County Councillor Steve Mason declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of him being the manager of a renewable energy company).

The MP considered that solar panels were best placed on communal buildings as this helped to generate energy for a larger number of people. He also wanted to assist with prevention of food and fuel poverty, while also ensuring that everyone had fair access to services and opportunities. The Member suggested that, to achieve that, emphasis on having one or the other had to stop, with a drive towards seeking to achieve a reasonable balance for all aspects. The MP agreed and emphasised the need to guard against that, pointing to issues where safety had been compromised in the pursuit of energy efficiency. A Member noted that Holland had called a Climate Emergency leading to all new builds being powered and heated using renewable energy sources, and asked how best practice and radical ideas could be better shared. The MP stated that there were different technical solutions for different circumstances, with each being developed for best and most appropriate use in the UK. The UK was already a world leader in offshore wind, and was developing other technologies with the assistance from around the world. In terms of the development of local solutions, devolution would assist with this.

- A Member referred to issues with the current housing stock, with upgrades required in many cases. She queried how the issue of replacing gas boilers would be addressed given the move to carbon neutral. In response the MP acknowledged the issue noting that some deep retrofits were required and the current system was ineffective and unsuitable. He recognised the need for a suitable, sustainable strategy to be developed, but stability within the housing markets was required for policies to be developed.

**Resolved –**

That Kevin Hollinrake MP be thanked for his attendance at the meeting and for his answers provided to the issues raised by Members.

**7. Area Constituency Committees - Ways of Working Report**

Considered -

A report by Daniel Harry, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager, North Yorkshire County Council regarding the work of the Area Constituency Committees.

Some of the key points highlighted in the report are as summarised below:

- There are six Area Constituency Committees which are coterminous with the six Parliamentary constituencies within North Yorkshire. Each committee meets formally in public four times a year
- Work to develop a new way of working for the area committees was underway as part of the Local Government Review 'Localities' work stream
- It was envisaged that a series of informal, development meetings will be held which enable councillors to build up their understanding of the constituency area and the new operating model of the area committees in the new unitary authority
- The role of the committee is to improve the quality of life for people in their area by acting as a 'critical friend' to policy makers
- The committee work programme is owned by the committee and support is provided in its development by Democratic Services. The emphasis is upon items that are: relevant; in the public interest; add value; and being scheduled in a timely and efficient way
- There are opportunities for the committee to lead on local scrutiny of a matter that has been identified by one of the Council's five thematic overview and scrutiny committees.

**Resolved –**

That the report be noted.

**8. Data Profile for Thirsk & Malton Area Constituency Committee**

Considered -

A report by Daniel Harry, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager, on the data profile for the Thirsk and Malton Area Constituency Committee.

The area profile had been produced to enable members to better understand the area covered by the committee. It also enabled members to identify issues that may be worth further consideration by the committee.

**Resolved –**

That the report be noted and any issues emerging from the report that Members considered should be the subject of more detailed consideration at future meetings of the ACC be conveyed to the Clerk and Chairman for inclusion in the future work programme.

## **9. Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies**

Considered -

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) regarding appointments to Outside Bodies.

The Clerk introduced the report and said that following the elections, the Area Constituency Committees were required to make appointments to Local Bodies. These were as detailed in Appendices A and B of the report. Committee members are asked to work through the list asking for nominations, seconders and then moving to a vote, where necessary.

**Resolved -**

That the following decisions in respect of Category 2 Outside Bodies were agreed unanimously:

Howardian Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee – County Councillors Caroline Goodrick and George Jabbour

Safer Ryedale Delivery Team – Further investigation required to determine whether this still meets.

That the following decisions in respect of Category 3 Outside Bodies were agreed unanimously:

Amotherby educational Foundation – to be determined outside of the meeting and reported to the Clerk for ratification at the next meeting of the ACC

Christopher Wharton Educational Foundation – Cllr Caroline Goodrick

Constance Elizabeth Beckwith Bequest - to be determined outside of the meeting and reported to the Clerk for ratification at the next meeting of the ACC

Herber Charity – Mr Bob Baker

John Stockton Education Foundation - to be determined outside of the meeting and reported to the Clerk for ratification at the next meeting of the ACC

Lady Lumley's Educational Foundation – Cllr Joy Andrews

Middleton School Foundation - to be determined outside of the meeting and reported to the Clerk for ratification at the next meeting of the ACC

Old Meeting House Trust, Helmsley - to be determined outside of the meeting and reported to the Clerk for ratification at the next meeting of the ACC

Oswaldkirk and Ampleforth Education Foundation - to be determined outside of the meeting and reported to the Clerk for ratification at the next meeting of the ACC

Poad's educational Foundation - to be determined outside of the meeting and reported to the Clerk for ratification at the next meeting of the ACC

Rev James Grave's Foundation at Thorpe Bassett - to be determined outside of the meeting and reported to the Clerk for ratification at the next meeting of the ACC

**10. Risk and Resource Model 2022-25 Consultation (Police Fire and Crime Commissioner for North Yorkshire) - Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services)**

Considered -

A report by Daniel Harry, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager, North Yorkshire County Council regarding the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner's Risk and Resource Model 2022-25 consultation.

The report set out the risk in a given area and the Fire and Rescue Service resources in place to address and reduce that risk. The consultation ran from 23 May to 14 August 2022.

The Clerk stated that it had not been possible to invite anyone from the Office for the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner to attend the meeting to go through the consultation proposals. This was an opportunity, however, to consider how to respond to the consultation.

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

- There would be significant impact on Ryedale from the proposed reduction in Full-Time Fire and Rescue Officers replaced with Retained Officers. It was noted that a number of local communities were unhappy with this proposal. Members discussed whether a response to this issue should be submitted by the Committee, or by the individual Member, with several Members raising concern with regards to this being a Committee response. The Member who raised the concern stated that she would be meeting with the PF&CC and the FBU, and would discuss the results of that meeting with the Chairman to determine whether to bring the issue back to the Committee. Members stated that they were happy to leave the matter in the hands of the Chairman and the Member to express the concerns of the Committee with regards to this issue. Other Members highlighted their concerns in respect of the proposed model for the area and the levels of pro-active work that would be able to be introduced, when this was in place. Members were advised that they were welcome to join the virtual meeting with the PF&CC to outline their issues. It was also noted that issues of concern could be raised directly with the Police, Fire and Crime Panel.

**Resolved –**

That the report be noted and issues of concern in respect of the consultation be raised directly via the methods outlined above.

**11. 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.

The following issues were suggested as additions to the Work Programme, to be considered at subsequent meetings:-

- Access to NHS Dentistry
- Access to GP Services
- Levelling Up Bids to the Government
- The Ambulance Service Provision in the area
- Heritage and the Natural Environment

Members discussed how issues should be prioritised for consideration at the ACC Meetings. There was a difference of opinion on the priority issues, but it was agreed that these should be relevant to the Constituency area, rather than being Council-Wide matters.

**Resolved -**

- (i) That the Work Programme be noted and the issues highlighted be included in the Programme and considered at subsequent meetings of the ACC
- (ii) That the dates and times of Meetings of the Committee, for 2022/23, as set out below, be noted:-

Friday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022 at 10am

Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2022 at 10am

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at 10am – budget consultation meeting

Friday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 at 10am

**12. Next Meeting**

**Resolved -**

That the next scheduled ordinary meeting of the Area Constituency Committee would take place on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022 at 10am.

The meeting concluded at 3.40pm

SML