

North Yorkshire County Council

Executive

10 January 2023

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 Harrogate and Knaresborough Area Constituency Committee – Special Meeting held 10 November 2022

2.1 A special meeting was held on 10 November 2022 for the purpose of receiving an update from Andrew Jones MP, which included work he was undertaking regarding water quality and the possible submission of an application for bathing water status at Knaresborough Lido. Committee Members asked Andrew Jones MP to pledge his support behind work being done by the Area Constituency Committee, Knaresborough town councillors and the Knaresborough community to tackle the issue of water pollution. Andrew Jones MP responded that a team effort was required, involving local government, national government, community groups and businesses, as many actions were necessary and would need to come together.

2.2 Other issues Members discussed with Andrew Jones MP were: - the adult social care sector; housing developments and infrastructure; green issues; mental health services; North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service; funding for schools; Woodfield Primary School; 20mph speed limits; active travel; the Boundary Commission's recommendations for parliamentary constituencies; and strike action by nurses.

3.0 Harrogate and Knaresborough Area Constituency Committee – 24 November 2022

3.1 One question was put to the Committee's meeting on 24 November by a member of the public. It asked the Committee to confirm that it would not approve or support any proposal for the Council to sell or lease public land, known as Rotary Wood, for development by Harrogate Spring Water, now part of Danone. A response was provided on behalf of BES officers, which advised that, if the company could obtain the appropriate statutory consents, including planning permission, then the Council would then need to consider whether it wished to allow use of the land and terms for any transaction. No comment was made by members of the Committee to avoid suggestions of predetermination of any associated planning application.

3.2 One statement was put to the Committee's meeting by residents of Pannal Ash Road. It highlighted that an application was being submitted for the creation of a 20mph zone, with appropriate additional infrastructure, including safe crossings, around Harrogate Grammar School, Rossett High, Ashville College, Rossett Acre Primary, and Western Primary. The residents outlined how they could demonstrate a need for a 20mph zone as set out in the County Council's Revised 20mph Speed Limit and Zone Policy of January 2022. They advised that they had worked with schools, local groups and residents to develop a plan and highlighted the strong local support achieved. A response was provided at the meeting on behalf of BES officers, namely, thanking the residents for their thorough and detailed research and engagement with the Pannal Ash community in forming their application and

confirming that the application would be assessed in accordance with the revised policy. Various members of the Committee commended the work undertaken by the residents.

3.3 The Committee considered an annual report about schools, educational achievement and finance, with a particular focus upon the area covered by the Committee. Members thanked the officers for providing a thorough and excellent report and asked many questions. Key themes within the questions were as follows: -

- A survey being undertaken to gather information on actions which schools are taking to address the impact of increasing electricity and gas prices.
- School performance, with the results for the Harrogate and Knaresborough constituency area being above averages across the county, and sometimes nationally. Members expressed concern that some performance across the county was below the national average. Officers advised of the actions which the LA was taking to improve performance of local authority schools and could take regarding Academies.
- Detailed work undertaken to plan school places to ensure capacity for new and future housing developments. Members commented that: - (i) they would prefer a secondary school to be provided straight away to serve the proposed Maltkiln development, to reduce home to school travel by car or bus. The officers advised that land within the Maltkiln development was safeguarded for secondary provision, should it be required in the future. However, Boroughbridge High School was being expanded and would have sufficient capacity to serve the Maltkiln community; and (ii) having all secondary schools, and no 6th form, on one side of Harrogate was increasing traffic congestion. Members suggested that a secondary school was needed in the Bilton/New Park area of Harrogate. Members highlighted that the LA was at risk of making pragmatic decisions rather than considering climate change issues which would create problems in the longer term.
- The Targeted Mainstream Provision work, intended to help the LA meet demand for full time education provision for children with SEND and who had an EHC Plan, was described as “excellent” by Members.

3.4 The Committee considered a presentation by Dr Victoria Turner about fuel poverty in North Yorkshire, its impact on health, what was being done nationally and locally, and future opportunities. Members commended the work being done to address fuel poverty and asked questions. Members highlighted that residents were in fuel poverty within in the relatively affluent constituency of Harrogate and Knaresborough. Dr Victoria Turner undertook to check what specialist property support was available to insulate old buildings in conservation areas where uPVC windows were not permitted.

3.5 The Chair and Chief Executive of Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust attended the Committee’s meeting to provide a briefing about the hospital’s recovery from the Covid pandemic. Members welcomed the update and asked questions. Key themes within the questions were as follows: -

- The Hospital’s plans to run its own Domiciliary Care Service, the risk that such plans would distort the social care market recognising that care providers were currently struggling to recruit staff, and the suggestion that the Hospital and the County Council should work together to try collectively to make the situation better. The Chief Executive advised that the Hospital was very much aware of the situation, wanted to help address the problem of delayed discharges, and was working with Richard Webb’s team to work this through with the County Council rather than doing anything that would upset that.
- The Chief Executive confirmed that the Hospital wished to look both at:- (i) the Buurtzorg model to provide support around the District Nurses Team; and (ii) whether North Yorkshire was suffering from nursing home deregistration due to the inability to attract

nurses and, moreover, nurses moving from nursing homes to work for the NHS, and whether outreach nursing support could be given to ensure capacity in nursing beds within nursing homes.

- Actions the Hospital had taken following incidents of aggression to staff and volunteers.

3.6 Representatives from Harrogate Youth Council, and the member of the Youth Parliament for Harrogate and Craven, attended the Committee's meeting to provide a briefing on the Youth Council, its structure, current campaign topics, and the difficulties they faced. Members welcomed the presentation and applauded the Youth Council's activities. In response to Members' questions, it was highlighted that finance was a key difficulty for the Youth Council. The Committee Chair suggested contacting County Councillors outside the meeting as they each had a Locality Budget.

4.0 Richmond (Yorks) Area Constituency Committee – 23 November 2022

4.1 The Committee received an update on the Yorbus Pilot which provided an overview of the service provided and confirmed the pilot was to be extended. They were pleased to note the service was attracting a different kind of user with customer satisfaction levels above the expected level. Having recognised the challenging cost of running the service, they were also pleased to note the options being considered to reduce the associated costs and identify future additional funding options.

4.2 The Committee also received an update on emergency resilience with a focus on how Councillors could help before during and after the introduction of an Emergency Plan. The Committee requested literature to use to support them in promoting the benefits of having an Emergency Plan to small community groups. They also received their regular update on the ongoing progress on the delivery of the Bridge at the North Northallerton Development.

4.3 Finally, the Committee received their annual update on Schools, Educational Achievement & Finance. The wide-ranging report provided information on the schools across the area and their status; School standards and attainment; Exclusions; Special Education Needs; Schools Finance; and planning of school places.

4.4 They discussed the measures being undertaken to reduce the number of families opting for elective home education, and the steps being taken to encourage those already in elective home education to return to school. They also noted:

- The increase in challenging behaviours as a result of COVID.
- The loss of rural schools due to falling pupil numbers.
- The impact of the rising energy costs on school budgets.

5.0 Scarborough and Whitby Area Constituency Committee – 25 November 2022

5.1 The Committee received an update from the Rt Hon Sir Robert Goodwill MP of some of the key issues arising in Westminster and through his constituency work. These included: - continued difficulties for residents to access NHS dentistry provision in the constituency; the recent hearing held by the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee into the crustacean mortality incident off the North East coast; the support required for GPs to continue to provide the levels of service required; the roll out of the Government's new agricultural policy for England, the Environmental Land Management scheme and the ways that this would impact on farming communities; the increase in the number of reported sewage 'dry spills' in the North Sea off the Yorkshire coast; the growing concerns for the future of rural bus services in the constituency and the opportunities available following the signing of a devolution deal for North Yorkshire from the Government.

5.2 An update was presented on rural policing and current crime trends, with the committee provided with the statistics showing a breakdown of the number and type of rural crimes

committed. Comments were made about taking criminal action on poaching activity and the advantages of signing up for rural watches to combat crime in the countryside.

- 5.3 As with the Harrogate & Knaresborough and Richmond (Yorks) ACCs, an annual report was also received on schools, educational achievement & finance across the constituency area. Officers responded to questions asked about the funding available for Scarborough and Whitby as a Priority Education Investment Area, plans to cope with an expected demand for secondary school places in the Scarborough South area (Eastfield and Cayton) plus current difficulties carrying out Education, Health and Care assessments within the 20 week target period.
- 5.4 Finally, an overview of the Stronger Communities programme and the ongoing community response to the rising cost of living was presented. The report updated the committee on the warm hubs set up for residents to use across the constituency and the grants distributed to local foodbanks to support them in continuing their work. Questions were asked about the delivery of the FEAST (Food, Entertainment, Arts & Sport Together) programme in 2023 and the eligibility criteria for families to access free school meals.

6.0 Skipton and Ripon Area Constituency Committee – 15 December 2022

- 6.1 The committee meeting was held at the Craven District Council offices in Skipton and run as a hybrid meeting, with officers and speakers able to attend remotely.
- 6.2 The Rt Hon Julian Smith MP provided an overview of some of the key issues arising in Westminster and through his constituency work. He then took questions from the committee. Concerns were raised regarding the future of Airedale General Hospital, which is constructed of a type of aerated concrete that is susceptible to structural failure, and what Government funding may be available to support further remedial work in the short term and a complete re-build in the longer term. The Scrutiny of Health committee is currently undertaking a review of this and further information will be brought to the March meeting of the Area Constituency Committee.
- 6.3 An update was provided on the work of the Youth Council and members explored the links that could be developed with local councillors and other local bodies and organisations to support their work. The annual report on educational attainment and school finances was also presented and committee members highlighted the need for local members to be informed at the earliest possible stage when a school was struggling financially or academically.
- 6.4 A petition was considered by the committee regarding the restoration of a commercial bus service between Ingleton and Lancaster. The committee resolved that the matter be given further consideration by the Highways Team and further information brought back to the March meeting. In particular, the feasibility of commissioning a service to link Bentham to Hornby.
- 6.5 A motion on the role and remit of the Area Constituency Committees (ACC) was considered by the committee. The original motion was amended and then unanimously supported. The motion has been referred to the relevant Executive members to inform the development of the model for the next iteration of the ACCs.
- 6.6 A motion on the pilot of a 20mph speed limit across the constituency area was also considered. The motion was defeated with concerns raised regarding taking such a blanket approach, particularly when the associated costs, lack of enforcement and differing public opinion had not been taken into account.
- 6.7 A briefing on the annual Council budget and its local implications will be held for committee members via Teams at 10am on 5 January 2023.

7.0 Recommendation

- 7.1 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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