

# North Yorkshire County Council

## Thirsk and Malton Area Constituency Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2022, commencing at 10am – held at Sutton-under-Whitstonecliffe Village Hall, Sutton-under-Whitstonecliffe

### Present:-

Members: County Councillors Nigel Knapton (Chair) Joy Andrews, Alyson Baker, Sam Cross, Gareth Dadd, Keane Duncan, Caroline Goodrick, George Jabbour, Malcolm Taylor, and Dave Whitfield.

NYCC Officers: Jayne Charlton (Area Highways Manager); Daniel Harry, Chris Phillipson and Steve Loach (Democratic Services); Graham North (Strategy and Performance Officer – (Rail))

Apologies - County Councillors Lindsay Burr MBE, Michelle Donohue-Moncrief, Steve Mason, Janet Sanderson, Gregg White and Annabel Wilkinson.

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

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### 13. Minutes

#### Resolved

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2022, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### 14. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

### 15. Public Questions and Statements

Mr Mark Hughes (Luttons Parish Council) submitted the following question/statement, which was read out by the Clerk:-

We are all aware of the high numbers accessing hospital A and E. GP's are dealing with unprecedented increases in patient numbers with limited resources. Pt's have now turned to hospitals to access a GP.

However, Response times by the ambulance service in our area are impacted by hospital waiting times, causing unprecedented delays and queues for crews resulting in lack of ambulance availability. Hospitals are currently struggling with staff shortages, resignations and absence through stress and burnout. Yorkshire Ambulance Service are also struggling with staff shortages due to resignations and sickness absences impacted by stress and burn out. The high levels of staff burnout are affecting the NHS with little or limited support or care for all A and E workers.

How critical does it have to get to put plans in place to reduce A and E queues and Ambulance queues and support frontline NHS staff to try and keep the only resources we currently have on the frontline?

In response colleagues from the NHS provided the following responses:-

#### NHS national perspective

The NHS has treated more than 800,000 patients with Covid since the beginning of the pandemic, which undoubtedly had a knock-on effect on routine services; however record numbers of people are now being treated by the NHS with waits of more than two years virtually eliminated, and those waiting more than 18 months already down by over 20,000 since January. At the same time, the NHS is dealing with record demand for ambulances and A&E, but our message is clear and has not changed: it is vital that people do not put off seeking care when they need it, either through NHS 111 online, their GP, or calling 999 in an emergency. With the NHS likely to face another busy winter, we have announced plans to boost capacity across services including increasing the number of hospital beds and call handlers, whilst also encouraging those eligible to get their COVID and flu vaccinations as soon as possible.

Yorkshire Ambulance Service added the following:-

Along with other ambulance services across the country, Yorkshire Ambulance Service has been experiencing high levels of demand for its services.

This protracted period of operational pressures is being managed in line with the plans that we have in place to protect our core services. Unfortunately, there are patients who are facing delays and we are very sorry that we are unable to respond to them as quickly as we would like. This has been exacerbated by handover delays at busy hospitals and is something which needs to be addressed and minimised to improve patient care and experience, as well as reduce waiting times for those needing an emergency ambulance response in our communities.

“We continue to monitor the situation closely and thank all our hard-working staff and volunteers for their efforts at this challenging time.”

Members thanked the questioner and representatives of the NHS for their submissions. The Chair suggested that the item on the agenda in relation to NHS Services be brought forward as the details within the question/statement related to that issue. Members agreed.

#### **16. Scoping the details required from reports on the provision of dentistry in the area, the availability of GPs and the response of the Ambulance Service**

The Manager, Democratic Services and Scrutiny, Daniel Harry and Chris Phillipson, Principal Democratic Services Officer, attended the meeting, in their role as support to the Scrutiny of Health Committee, to assist with the consideration of what was required from reports on the NHS services outlined from a local perspective, in relation to issues previously discussed at Scrutiny of Health. The following issues were highlighted:-

#### Dentistry

Access to a National Health Service dentist continues to be difficult due to a number of factors:

- The national contract only requires a number of units of dental activity to be completed, and does not relate to the number of patients, however the commencement of dental reform may allow improved access
  - Private practices do not have to provide NHS places
  - Workforce shortages are having an adverse effect on accessibility
  - Access to and provision of NHS dentistry.pdf
  - Privatisation of dental practices.
- Issues can then have a knock on effect on accident and emergency services compounding further problems.
- Care Quality Commission reports confirm that access to an NHS dentist has been an issue since long before the pandemic, but there are “clear signs” the problem has

been compounded by Covid-19. COVID-19 Insight 10: Dental access during the pandemic

Area Constituency Committees can identify areas where provision is lacking and raise with the Chair of Scrutiny of Health who can liaise with the Executive Member & Department of Public Health. Outcomes identified can be communicated by letter to secretary of state &/or MP.

#### Yorkshire Ambulance Service Response

The Committee continues to receive updates on a regular basis from Rod Barnes, Chief Executive, Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust.

Recognised issues are:

- COVID has imposed high levels of demand on an already problematic service
- The service is operating at the highest level of escalation since early July 2021
- There continues to be a backlog in treatment of non-urgent health conditions due to the pandemic.

There is a greater demand on all emergency services with particular problems in availability of ambulances for discharged patients.

Area Constituency Committees can identify areas where provision is lacking and raise with the Chair of Scrutiny of Health who can liaise with the Executive Member. This should identify whether issues are specific to a particular area or if there is a County wide pattern. Outcomes identified can be communicated by letter to the chief of the trust.

#### GP Availability

The Committee has been regularly updated with key data on access to GP's from Wendy Balmain, North Yorkshire Place Director, Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board. Wendy continues to attend Scrutiny of Health Committee meetings. The current situation suggests:

- Access is generally good through a variety of mediums such as online appointments/face to face appointments and access to other professionals
- There is a recognised shortage of General Practitioners
- Focus is on reducing any backlog around routine reviews
- Digital technology will continue to be promoted to improve access.

Area Constituency Committees can identify areas where provision is lacking and raise with the Chair of Scrutiny of Health who can liaise with the Executive Member.

#### Integrated Care Systems

These continued to be developed to provide a connected NHS service that was expected to be further developed when the unitary Local Authority was in place.

#### Local Health Issues

The Scrutiny of Health Committee has, on occasions, accepted referrals from ACCs and has fed specific local issues into ACCs for a local consideration of those issues.

Members outlined the following:-

- A Member provided details of her recent experience of NHS services following the illness of a close relative. She highlighted the long handover time from the Ambulance Service to A&E, because of the need to monitor the patient, followed by a longer wait in A&E with no monitoring taking place.

- It was noted that GPs services in the area were operated by a single practice, with 19.5k patients, and it was considered that this was delivering effectively.
- Members stated that there was a large amount of anecdotal evidence available to demonstrate issues with the NHS, however, data comparison was required to provide appropriate information as to how the Constituency area was performing in comparison to others. It was also suggested that details of the dentistry list for the area be obtained to determine how many were currently accepting new NHS patients.
- In terms of GPs it was noted that there was a danger that the statistics would not generate the information required in terms of the concerns expressed for the area, as they operate under national contracts and guidelines. Members emphasised that expectations from a GP service were very different in rural areas, in comparison to urban areas, with patients preferring to see a designated GP and 1-1 service. It could be that these expectations need to change with longer waits to see fewer non-designated GPs. Members outlined a number of issues of concern regarding GP services in their local communities and emphasised that there was no easy fix for the situation.
- In relation to the performance of GPs it was noted that an Annual Assessment was undertaken with a range of performance indicators utilised to perform this.
- It was asked how many hospital beds were located within the Constituency area. In response it was noted that there were a number of hospital beds in the area but these were mainly targeted at care services, with specialist facilities for specific issues located outside of the County. It was recognised that this caused some concern for the public.
- A Member suggested that local people required a more personal service from their GP, with appointments with a Doctor that they wanted to see, and with additional services provided at various surgeries throughout the area on different days. A plan was required outlining where the service was currently and setting out the eventual aim, with milestones set in to determine the progress being made. It was stated that the performance data for the Constituency would be a good indicator of current levels of performance and provide a baseline for the Committee to develop targets they wish to see achieved, going forward.
- The role of the Scrutiny of Health Committee was outlined in terms of addressing concerns in respect of the delivery of local Health services. It was noted that some issues of serious concern were referred to the Secretary of State for consideration, but the threshold required for this meant that this happened infrequently, with very little success. The County Council's internal framework was also utilised to monitor social care and the related systems.
- A Member had particular concerns regarding the NHS dentistry provision in the area, highlighting the lengthening waiting lists, which was resulting in vulnerable people being unable to access what should be seen as a core NHS service. He understood that value needed to be added to services and that the provision of data, on a local basis, would assist in this process, with appropriate recommendations then being developed to benefit the provision in the Constituency area. A Member noted that a new dental service had recently opened in Helmsley, after a long period with no services, with NHS provision available, however, numbers would be limited.
- A Member noted the concerns raised at the meeting but emphasised that the issues resulted from the management of services, and not those directly providing services, and care should be taken not to criticise where it was not warranted.
- Members concluded that the appropriate data in respect of the provision of NHS services in the Constituency should be collected, collated and fed-back into the Committee for a way forward to be determined.

**Resolved** that Daniel Harry and Chris Phillipson be thanked for their input, and the course of action outlined above be undertaken.

## 17. Levelling Up Fund - Round 2 submissions

Considered -

A report by Graham North, Strategy and Performance Officer – (Rail) relating to the round 2 submissions for Levelling Up funding in respect of the Constituency area.

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

### North Yorkshire County Council LUF bid

- In March 2022 the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) round two prospectus was announced. This was a £4.8bn fund, with £1.7bn awarded in round one and £3.1bn remaining for round two submissions.
- The objectives of transport bids within the LUF are to:
  - Reduce carbon emissions
  - Improve air quality
  - Cut congestion
  - Support economic growth, and
  - Improve the experience of transport users
- An accessibility scheme at Thirsk Railway Station was included within the NYCC Transport package bid, which also included accessibility improvements at Seamer and Scarborough railway stations. The estimated cost of the Thirsk scheme was approximately £6.3m, 16% of the total LUF grant request.
- Full details of the proposals and benefits were set out in the report.
- A funding announcement for the Levelling Up Fund was expected in Autumn, and should this be successful the main construction works at Thirsk were planned to start in September 2023 and be completed by March 2024

### Ryedale District Council – Malton Station Redevelopment

- The redevelopment of Malton Station and the immediate surrounding area had the potential to be the catalyst to wider regeneration opportunities in the area and contribute towards:
  - addressing issues including safety at the level crossing
  - encouraging and supporting active travel in and between both Malton and Norton
  - providing an alternative route when the River Derwent is in flood
  - creating a more appealing gateway to the two towns
  - improving air quality
- The cost of the Malton scheme was approximately £19.9m, with RDC contributing 10% of the funding. The Malton Station Redevelopment scheme had an initial BCR of 0.56 but with further work identifying wider economic benefits the BCR is 1.30.
- Full details of the proposed scheme were set out in the report and it was noted that, currently, the development of the project was at an early stage.

### Other bids

- Details of other NYCC Levelling Up bids were also outlined

Following the initial presentation of the report Members undertook a discussion of the issues raised and the following issues were highlighted:-

- A Member highlighted the importance of the Thirsk proposals for that community and welcomed the proposal to seek funding elsewhere should the bid be unsuccessful. He noted the current economic climate and the likely effect that would have on such bids. In response it was noted that further funding was expected for rail projects, going forward, however, there had already been challenges in terms of value for money from

the Levelling Up Fund in respect of the Thirsk scheme, therefore the full grant may not be forthcoming.

- It was asked what elements of the Thirsk scheme would definitely be implemented should the grant bid be refused or diminished. Details were provided in response, which included disabled access to the platforms. It was asked whether the train companies could be persuaded to fund some elements of the improvements, as it was in their interests to do this. In response it was stated that Trans Pennine Express had been paid for works already undertaken at the station and Grand Central had paid for improvements to the Car Park.
- A Member referred to the poor quality and cleanliness of trains operating from Filey train station of late, and also the poor state of the station. He considered that for a relatively low investment significant improvements could be made. In response it was stated that the issues raised would be referred to Network Rail and the Department of Transport, and NYCC Officers would visit the station to consider those issues.
- A Member emphasised the need to ensure that the schemes were delivered whether the bids were successful or not, as they were important to those communities, and was pleased to see a level of commitment to this from NYCC. He noted that there had been no meaningful engagement with local elected Members in terms of the possibility of developing Norton Station, alongside the proposals for Malton Station, and asked whether an opportunity to comment on the proposals would be provided, to allow everyone to have an input on whether their issues were being addressed. In response it was stated that Ryedale District Council had been working on this element of the scheme, but it had to be ensured that there were no contentious elements to this to ensure that the funding criteria were met. It was also noted that providing information on the proposals had to be handled with great care in view of the potential impact on local landowners. An appropriate plan for the scheme was being developed with Ryedale DC and the train operators which would then be sent out to all for consultation. It was emphasised that local elected Members should be included within that consultation.
- A Member suggested that the issue of car parking at Norton Station required addressing to fully develop the potential for an integrated public transport service at that location and highlighted potential land at that location for such use. In response it was stated that attempts had been made to identify appropriate land for this but with no success at this stage. Some use of the nearby public house car park was being undertaken, but this could not be a permanent solution. For the longer term consideration was also being given to how to connect bus services to the station, to provide a fully integrated public transport system. It was noted that it would be beneficial to combine the stations into a Malton and Norton Station, however, all the systems would require changing which would be expensive. In terms of the car parking issue, it was emphasised that the matter would be discussed with local landowners, but it was recognised that the land ownership issues were very complex at that location.

#### **Resolved –**

That Graham North be thanked for his presentation of the report, and answers to the issues raised, and the report be noted.

#### **18. North Yorkshire Cultural Framework**

##### **Resolved –**

That due to the unavoidable absence of the presenting officer, this item be deferred for consideration at a subsequent meeting.

#### **19. 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 local key facilities in local towns – eg. Post Office Services in Helmsley and Banking in Easingwold – following recent closures
- Update on the dualling of the A64 – results of consultation process
- Malton/Norton – transport connectivity issues

Members also discussed the following issues:-

- Venues for future meetings – It was suggested that, going forward, venues for meetings of the ACC be sought in the larger market towns of the Constituency area to ensure that there were appropriate transport links available.
- It was noted that, should Members wish, virtual meetings could be held, particularly on occasions when there were no specific decisions to be made.
- It was expected that meetings of the Committee would happen more regularly following the introduction of the unitary authority, and it would be preferred if at least one meeting per month was held face-to-face. A system for local decision making on issues such as Planning and licensing was currently being developed, with the resulting system likely to have an impact on the ACCs.
- The possibility of hybrid meetings was discussed and emphasised that these could only take place at venues where the appropriate equipment was available.
- It was emphasised that no decisions had been made as to how the local decision making process would be delivered, at this stage, however the potential impact on ACCs was recognised and were likely to have to meet face-to-face for decisions to be made, although officers may be able to feed in remotely. It was also emphasised that there would be a need to involve local Parish and Town Councils in that process.

#### **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 the remainder of 2022/23, as set out below, be noted:-  
  
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
- (iii) That the issues raised in relation to venues and development of the ACC, going forward, be acted upon where appropriate.

#### **20. Next Meeting**

##### **Resolved -**

That the next scheduled ordinary meeting of the Area Constituency Committee would take place on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2022 at 10am.

## 21. Other Business

### Sutton Bank Maintenance Work

At the request of Members, and in view of the current annual maintenance work taking place on Sutton Bank (A170), the Area Highways Manager, Jayne Charlton, provided an update on the progress of the work outlining the following;-

- For the first time, the road had been closed for 3 weeks to enable comprehensive maintenance work to take place.
- It was expected that the work would be completed on the day of this meeting with the road re-opened accordingly.
- It was hoped, going forward, that this comprehensive work would prevent anything other than annual maintenance having to take place on the road.

Members highlighted the following:-

- There had been excellent communication between Members and the local highways team in relation to the current work.
- Members had visited the site to observe the work taking place and had been impressed with what they had seen. The Area highways Manager stated that Members were always welcome to visit maintenance schemes and observe what was taking place.

### Resolved –

That the update be noted.

The meeting concluded at 12 noon.  
SML