

North Yorkshire County Council

Thirsk and Malton Area Constituency Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2023, commencing at 10am – held Ryedale House, Malton

Present:-

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

NYCC Officers: Steve Loach (Democratic Services), Mark Kibblewhite (Senior Policy Officer – Economic Growth), Andrew Dixon (Strategic Planning Manager – Education and Skills), Howard Emmett (Assistant Director, Strategic Resources), Amanda Newbold (Assistant Director, Education and Skills) Jane Le Sage – (Assistant Director, Inclusion), Mark Ashton (Strategic Planning Officer, Education and Skills), Matt George (Strategic Planning Officer, Education and Skills), Tim Coyne (Improvement Manager, Highways and Transportation) and Stuart Grimston (Improvement Manager, Highways and Transportation).

Apologies - County Councillors Caroline Goodrick and Annabel Wilkinson.

There were 15 members of the public present.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

22. Minutes

Resolved

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 30th September 2022, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

23. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

24. Public Questions and Statements

Questions from Andy Wilson, Thirsk

With reference to the drainage work on York Road, Thirsk, and Sowerby flats, please will NYCC explain why:

1. it failed to answer parts of the question to the Cabinet, especially the part which asked why it proceeded to act without awareness of the relevant Protected Species information;
2. how the reply given at the Cabinet Executive and the information provided by FoI shows compliance with
 - a) its statutory duty towards Biodiversity;

b) Protected Species legislation and guidance (which require a survey if work will have impacts on the habitats of these species and ban actions which disturb or destroy their habitat) - given that: no data, survey, or other sign of awareness or interest was present with regard to the habitats and Protected Species on the site and in the vicinity of the work carried out and reliance was placed purely on the supposed absence of protected sites;

3. why it is apparently unaware of Protected Species and obvious examples of their protected habitats in the area (can it now name those present?);

4. why it is apparently unaware that its operations took place partly in a SINC (Site of Importance for Nature Conservation);

5. why it funded additional work damaging to wildlife adjacent to the Beck at the behest of a land manager which Hambleton District Council has classified as 'agricultural'; and why this element of the question to Cabinet was not responded to;

6. why the aftercare work outside the compound was done in a way which degraded the ecological value of the area;

7. whether there is any physical, financial, managerial, legal or other connection between any of the work on York Road and the development of the Oakfield Lorry Park;

8. Why were the five or more conversations with private landowners/agents held in connection with the York Road drainage scheme not recorded in any way;

9. What was the status of the land to the west of York Road as a designated green corridor ignored... and will it agree to protect Cod Beck better in future?

County Councillor Keane Duncan, the Executive member whose Portfolio covers Highways issues, responded to the questions, outlining the following:-

In order to reply to this question fully, I have consulted with Stuart Grimston, the Improvement Manager at the Area 2 Highways office in Thirsk, who shared the following information:

The scheme referred to by Mr Wilson is one of the schemes in the 22/23 capital programme.

The York Road Drainage scheme is a maintenance scheme currently being carried out to replace/renew the existing highway drainage between the A19/A168 interchange and White Mare roundabout, along the A170 in Thirsk, much of which was/is currently "beyond repair".

The requirement for a drainage scheme was first identified in financial year 16/17, due to ongoing issues with blocked gullies and standing water on York Road – which is a category 2 road, causing disruption – and road safety issues. Investigations since then, including CCTV surveys, have proved that much of the existing system had failed (collapsed etc), or was in a very poor state of repair. The standing water eventually dissipates, but it is feared that some of this water is likely to be undermining the foundation of the carriageway pavement, with the associated risks of voids (sinkholes) – and contributing to the poor surface condition. York Road is in need of a resurfacing scheme; however, we cannot implement such a scheme without first renewing the drainage assets.

In response to Mr Wilson's latest question, the key point to make is that local NYCC Highways Officers – as well as staff from WSP (our partner consulting engineers responsible for designing – and project managing - this scheme) - were unaware of the ecological status of the land located immediately to either side of the Cod Beck, which is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). For the benefit of others, SINC is a non-statutory designation which does not engage the Habitats Regulations, and the need for appropriate assessment. Likewise, Mr Wilson has also referred to the status of Sowerby Flatts as a 'designated green corridor', which is not a formal nature conservation designation. Given the aforementioned, NYCC are not guilty of any wrongdoing, although would like to take this opportunity to formally

apologise for this oversight on behalf of the officers/staff who have been involved with this scheme to date. In hindsight, had the status of the SINC been identified prior to - or during – phase 1 of the works, NYCC Highways would have sought specialist advice from an Ecologist.

Since identifying this issue NYCC's Highways officers have engaged with Julia Casterton, NYCC's Principal Ecologist, in order to establish what the best way forwards is. In the future NYCC Highways will be working closely with the ecologists to minimise any potential disturbance or damage to flora and fauna by implementing any measures that can realistically be implemented, e.g. using the most suitable seed mix to re-instate vegetation growth in areas where excavations have scarred the earth. Also, in terms of the delivery of phase 2 of the scheme (between Thirsk Industrial Park and the Ingramgate/Long Street/Sutton Road roundabout), an Ecologist has already been to the site to make an assessment of any measures required during the works to reduce or minimise the impact on any flora and fauna. Furthermore, NYCC Highways are also putting measures in place locally (i.e. staff training) in order to ensure that another incident of this nature does not happen again.

As well as the questions on the environmental/ecological aspects of the scheme, Mr Wilson has also asked why conversations with private land owners and/or agents held in connection with the scheme have not been recorded in any way. The simple answer is that some meetings were held on site, and other conversations were also had via telephone. Agreements were made as to how to progress with various matters, but not all meetings are recorded. This is only generally carried out in formal meetings in an office environment, as and when there is a need. In this situation the actions were clear to all parties, and any e-mails exchanged between NYCC or WSP and private land owners and/or agents have already been provided to Mr Wilson in NYCC's previous responses to his Freedom of Information (Fol) and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) requests.

With regard to the aftercare works to the area currently being used as the site compound, these have not yet commenced – or been completed, as the works are still ongoing. However, works to 'make good' this part of the field will be undertaken upon completion of the scheme.

Finally, NYCC can confirm that there is absolutely no connection between the ongoing NYCC Highways drainage work and the Oakfield Lorry Park development. As stated above, and also in previous conversations and correspondence with Mr Wilson, NYCC's drainage maintenance works have been proposed since the 2016/17 financial year but have taken some time to come to fruition due to the requirement for further investigatory works, as well as securing the funding necessary to deliver the project.

Officers now consider that Mr Wilson's questions have been fully answered and addressed in a number of communications including several phone calls, attendance at an Executive Member meeting, an Fol request, and most recently an EIR request. If Mr Wilson remains unsatisfied with the responses that he has received then we would encourage him to progress this matter through the County Council's corporate complaints procedure, details of which can be found on the NYCC website.

The following issue was raised:-

A Member noted that the Community Framework recognised a legal responsibility for the protection of species and asked what action was being taken to collect appropriate data to ensure that disturbed habitat areas were returned to their original status. Councillor Duncan stated that he would obtain those details and circulate to Members.

Questions from Councillor Steve Shaw – Norton Town Council

1. When the new Beverley link Road is built will the present traffic lights on Scarborough Road/ Beverley Road junction be replaced with a more sensible roundabout configuration?

County Councillor Keane Duncan responded, outlining the following:-

The new link road between Beverley Road and Scarborough Road represents key infrastructure that will provide significant benefits to residents of Norton, Malton and the surrounding area.

It is proposed that the traffic lights at the Westfield Way/Scarborough Road junction will remain in place. Traffic modelling has indicated that even during peak times the junction and signals would continue to operate within capacity with the additional development traffic. However, this situation will continue to be reviewed, with potential for the signals to be upgraded and optimised as required.

2. Will the new Beverly Road link be constructed prior to housing development commencing so traffic congestion can be avoided at as earlier date as possible?

The developer has proposed that no more than 100 dwellings would be occupied before the link road opens. The additional traffic from up to 100 dwellings has been modelled at a number of junctions within Norton and Malton, with most experiencing an increase of less than 3% at the peak hours. The exception is the Beverly Road/Mill Street roundabout which would experience a 6% increase, although the roundabout would still remain with capacity.

I ask these questions because infrastructure development is a critical matter for Malton and Norton and should not be treated as an ad-hoc matter.

Has any progress been made in convincing the Highways Agency to change the A64 junction at Musley Bank to allow Southbound traffic to exit there?

As it stands all southbound traffic whose destination is the southern edge of Malton has to go through Malton to get to its destination. Musley Bank does not allow access for vehicles wishing to head north from this point.

County Councillor Keane Duncan responded, outlining the following:-

North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) is committed to working with Department for Transport, National Highways and local partners and stakeholders to ensure the A64 between York and Scarborough is improved and this includes the need for junction upgrades at Malton.

The A64 junction at Musley Bank has limited movements, meaning use of the bypass is restricted and vehicles are unable to travel east on the A64 when exiting Malton from Musley Bank. They are also unable to exit at Musley Bank for Malton when travelling west along the A64.

We have consulted National Highways who unfortunately confirmed funding for improving this junction is not available and it does not represent a priority for them because there is insufficient benefit to the strategic road network to justify the significant investment (estimated to be at least £10m) that would be required.

Given this improvement would be of significant benefit to addressing congestion issues in Malton and Norton, and unlocking future growth, Ryedale District Council and NYCC officers are working together to agree next steps to deliver this and will continue to liaise with National Highways to secure the funding needed.

The following additional issues were raised:-

It was suggested that a roundabout would be the most appropriate solution as this would lessen traffic build-up in an area suffering from high pollution levels. This was disputed and it was emphasised that pollution levels were within EU legal limits. It was further suggested

that any proposals should be resubmitted to determine how they address the Climate Emergency Plan.

New development expected to take place in the area would place an additional strain on the existing road network and it was suggested that further highways development was required to take traffic away from the centre of Malton. It was clarified that the alteration of the road network related to the A64, which would require the involvement of National Highways, and recent discussions with them had concluded that there was no available funding for this currently. The Council would continue to work closely with the Highways Agency and would explore alternative sources of funding and look to utilise CIL, to obtain the improvements to infrastructure required.

Questions from Councillor Di Keal – Ryedale District Council

What progress has been made in the negotiations with the developer of the Norton Lodge housing site in Norton regarding a timeline for a potential new school? Are plans for the new school drawn up and what is the projected cost of the build?

County Councillor Janet Sanderson, the Executive Member whose portfolio covers schools and education, responded as follows:-

In recent years a further form of entry (210 places) was added to Norton Community Primary School partly through the development of a new satellite site at Brooklyn House. This was projected to meet the need for new places arising from existing sites with planning permission within Norton.

The Norton Lodge site, the largest housing site allocated within the Local Plan, includes land for a further school site. NYCC Officers are working with Ryedale District Council colleagues and the developer to secure this land as part of a S106 agreement. This application was submitted in 2021, is still going through the planning process and we are told is not expected to be determined in the near future.

Securing the site means we retain the option to deliver a new school at an appropriate point in the future as and when the need arises. The timescale for the whole development remains uncertain and therefore so does the potential delivery date for a new school. As such, the County Council has not commenced design work at this stage, other than in the broadest terms to agree the site area.

Projecting the future cost of a new school is therefore difficult. The latest official DfE figures from 2021 indicate a cost per place for new build provision in the region to be c.£21k which equates to c.£4.5m for a 210 place school, but of course there has been significant inflationary pressure since then. The construction cost is expected to be funded by a combination of council grants and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding, so it is vital that this funding is retained so it is available when needed.

Councillor Di Keal – Ryedale District Council

Discussions have been held in Malton and Norton on possible solutions to traffic congestion and high levels of air pollution in our twin towns since 2016. The Malton and Norton Infrastructure and Connectivity Improvements Study was discussed by Ryedale DC in 2018.

Quote: “Short-term goals include promoting walking and cycling for short journeys and improvements to bus service connectivity. The medium-term goals include a bridge for pedestrians and cyclists to access Malton station from the south, a new car parking strategy for the district and strategy to improve junctions.” –

So from the proposals outlined in the report, to my knowledge the only things we have seen delivered are the Car Park Strategy - by Ryedale DC - and a joint project between RDC and NYCC to reconfigure the traffic lights at Butcher Corner.

A one way trial on Norton Road was scheduled for June 2022 and still hasn't come to fruition and proposed traffic lights on the junctions in Norton are nowhere to be seen.

Meanwhile residents in Malton and Norton continue to face daily traffic queues and in Norton they - motorists, cyclists and pedestrians - continue to negotiate dangerous junctions. -

Q. Please can you confirm that this work is still going to be delivered by NYC and provide a timeline?

County Councillor Keane Duncan responded, outlining the following:-

Combating traffic congestion and promoting sustainable travel in Malton and Norton, and elsewhere, must be a key priority for the new council.

We have already delivered the improved traffic signals at Butcher Corner, funded by NYCC and RDC. Parts of the Car Park Strategy have been delivered, but not all. This was funded by NYCC and RDC. The new council will provide oversight and control of both on and off street parking, which will give much improved coordination to our approach.

We are keen to move forward with the next stages of our traffic plan – a one-way on Norton Road and new signals at the level crossing.

The proposed one-way trial on Norton Road was postponed last year due to the Environment Agency advising us at relatively short notice that they needed to close the road in order to work on maintaining/replacing their underground pumps at this location. The work on the pumps was prioritised given the time of year then and given the risk of flooding to nearby properties should the pumps fail this winter.

The good news is that six months of baseline traffic data is being collected as we speak. The experimental one-way will hopefully be introduced on Norton Road from September 2023 and will run for 6 months, providing a further six months of data while the one-way is in place.

All collected data will be analysed and the traffic modelling assumptions on vehicle movements and air quality can be fine-tuned to allow an informed decision on the way forward proposed.

Can I take this opportunity to thank you for your support for the work we are doing to progress this scheme in your role as a district and town councillor? I think we agree that this scheme is not perfect – no solution can be – but we both wish to see this scheme progressed as action on traffic is much needed. Doing nothing is not an option.

Unfortunately, Malton Town Council has lodged opposition to the scheme progressing. Meanwhile, Malton's County Councillor has not publicly expressed her support or opposition for the scheme. Perhaps, she might like to take the opportunity to do so in this public forum. Unity from Malton and Norton's representatives would help make the very strongest case for further progress.

The following additional issues were raised:-

The current one-way system, alongside the traffic lights, was part of a package of measures being considered to address the situation, and further resources were likely to be introduced as a response to collected data.

A written response would be provided to the questioner in respect the response to the original plan for this location. Details relating to the potential withdrawal of Yorkshire Water funding due to the delays in providing the junction alterations would also be sought and addressed in a written response.

Ian Conlan, Malton – Statement

Mr Conlan and other representatives of the 20s Plenty group, unfurled a banner to demonstrate the stopping distances for a vehicle travelling at 20mph as opposed to a vehicle travelling at 30mph, whilst the following statement was read out:-

"I am a child. I made a mistake

Distance from a driver noticing someone potentially in the path of their vehicle	Driver speed At 30mph	Driver speed At 20mph
0-6 metres	Likely to kill	Likely to injure
6-12 metres	Likely to kill	Likely to hurt
12-23 metres	Likely to seriously injure, less likely to kill	Driver stops without hitting child.

This is Driver 20. This is Driver 30.

Driver 20: "I see a child. I am driving at 20 miles per hour". If I hit in the 1st 6 metres, I am likely to injure the child.

Driver 30: "I see a child. I am driving at 30 miles per hour". If I hit in the 1st 6metres I am likely to kill the child.

At 6 metres, Driver 20: "I have started braking. But I am still doing 20 miles per hour." At 6-12 metres I am likely to hurt the child.

At 6 metres, Driver 30: "I am still thinking about braking. I am doing 30miles per hour."

At 9 metres, Driver 30: "I have started braking. But I am still doing 30 miles per hour.". At 6-12metres I am still likely to kill the child.

At 12 metres: Driver 20: "I was originally doing 20 miles per hour. But have now stopped."

At 12 metres, driver 30: "I was originally doing 30 miles per hour. My current speed is 27 miles per hour. I have hit the child."

At 23 metres, driver 30: "I was originally doing 30 miles per hour. But have now stopped." At 12-23metres I am likely to seriously injure a child. I wish I had been driving at 20mph. I wish the speed limit I was observing was 20. I have hit the child, they are now a number that might lead to a lower speed limit on this street, but a new speed limit here is too late for this child and their family.

You are a councillor. You have a duty of care to the child, and to that poor driver 30 who was lawfully observing the 30 speed limit. Do you agree with me that 10 more people per area, 65 in County, not being hit by a vehicle every year is good for me, you, our families, our community? Do you agree to vote for the 20mph motion, to make all the roads where I live be safer, feel safer?

Say yes to finishing your 20mph review Cllr Duncan, and report on time to get £1M in the 2023/24 budget, £5 each. £5 is the cost of 2 school lunches. Not much to keep me safe.

Say yes to 20mph being normal in my town, and in all towns and villages in the area, to make better places to be. Thank you.

It was noted that a recent meeting of the Harrogate and Knaresborough ACC had agreed to be part of any pilot scheme that would benefit from a 20mph scheme in that area, and the questioner was hoping that the Thirsk and Malton ACC would support a motion later in the meeting for a similar proposal in this area.

It was stated that the issues raised would be taken account of when the agenda item relating to 20s Plenty was discussed later in the meeting.

Statement from Bill Breakell

The 128 serves a significant area of Ryedale, providing the only bus service for over 20 communities, connecting Helmsley, Kirkbymoorside, Pickering, Thornton le Dale and Scarborough. The frequency has reduced significantly over the past decade or so. In winter 2011 the first bus from Helmsley to Scarborough left at 0815, and the last left at 1045. There were 13 buses a day at approximately hourly intervals. Today there are a maximum of 8, but only 5 serving Helmsley. The first bus from Helmsley to Scarborough leaves at 1025, and the last at 1825.

North Yorkshire County Council has reduced support for public transport by a massive amount in that time, (Overall bus service support: NYCC bus subsidy reduction between 2010 and 2017 was the highest in England and Wales – a 78% reduction) and also reduced most joined-up thinking whereby public transport was considered the preferred choice and supported by bus infrastructure such as shelters, and by information provision such as the compilation, publication and distribution of area-wide timetables. Yet it has failed to fund marketing of the 128 despite having over £100,000 in s106 developer contributions to do just that. It also has only recently commenced work on providing the infrastructure of bus boarders and shelters which was agreed many years ago in Kirkbymoorside. This is certainly closing

the door after the horse has bolted as most of the new residents of the Manor Woods development have been settled here for 4 or 5 years and planned their individual transport needs as there was no bus stop, nor promotion of the local bus service. I recently met a new resident (from London) who was shocked that the transport authority had apparently reneged on its proposals. It is therefore vital that the new council reverses these policies and addresses the known benefits of bus access – social, health, educational and employment. It could do this by a creative use of the £100,000 budget to market the 128. This would benefit the whole corridor. It should also put funding into timetabled bus services which offer reliability and capacity to enable people to get to doctors' appointments, to post offices, to shops, to school, to leisure facilities and just to avoid social isolation and improve mental health. It is also important to provide the low cost infrastructure of bus boarders and bus shelters to give some safety and comfort to those awaiting a bus. And the new council should learn from other authorities who provide accessible information for would-be passengers. Finally, every road scheme should start with an audit of how it can improve things for pedestrians, for cyclists and for public transport users.

It was stated that the issues raised would be taken account of when the agenda item relating to local bus services was discussed later in the meeting.

The following additional issues were raised:-

The new Council should utilise the powers provided by the Bus Services Act to ensure that public transport is more usable and operates for the benefit of local communities.

The issue raised in relation to the location of venues for ACC meetings was acknowledged and it was stated that although efforts had been made to ensure that these took place in the major towns in the Constituency area, additional care would be taken to ensure the venues could be accessed at appropriate times, where possible, by public transport.

25. Schools, educational attainment and finance

Considered –

The report of the Corporate Director, Children and Young Peoples Services, outlining the following:-

- Local educational landscape
- Summary of schools' status – December 2022
- School standards
- School Ofsted judgements
- Uneven impact of the pandemic on 2021/22 performance data
- Attainment overall
- Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)
- Key Stages 2 and 4
- Not in education, employment or training
- Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions
- Suspension incidents
- Permanent exclusions
- Special Education Needs and Disabilities
- Targeted Mainstream Provision- Reshaping of SEN Provision in Thirsk & Malton over the 2020/21 Academic Year
- SEN Statistics for Constituency Area
- Elective Home Education
- School Finance
- 2021/2022 School Revenue Balances
- School Budget Projections - Based on 2022/23 Start budgets
- School Finance and Funding Issues
- Local Authority Support for Schools in Financial Difficulty

- Schools Financial Position – Thirsk & Malton
- Planning school places
- School sustainability
- Collaborative working
- Pupil rolls – current and future
- Planning Areas and forecast surplus/shortfall school places

Resolved –

That Officers be thanked for the report the contents of which be noted.

26. North Yorkshire Cultural Framework

Considered –

A report and presentation from Mark Kibblewhite - Senior Policy Officer (Economic Growth) on the development of a cultural Framework for North Yorkshire.

The report outlined the following:-

- Background and Development of the Framework
- Key issues and opportunities for culture
- A Strategic Framework
- Key cultural development projects in North Yorkshire

Mr Kibblewhite stated that the development of the Framework was ongoing , whilst supporting existing cultural strategies.

Funding from the Arts Council, Government and supplementary funding from various initiatives specific to North Yorkshire was assisting existing projects and enabling developments to be undertaken. The Framework was seen as a stepping stone to an enhanced cultural platform.

Following on from the decision to reorganise Local Government in North Yorkshire it was considered appropriate that the Cultural Strategy should also be redeveloped to reflect strategies across North Yorkshire, with the existing strategy utilised as a basis to move forward from. Devolution agreements had the potential to provide additional funding which would assist in developing a co-ordinated approach, across North Yorkshire, to raise the status of the portfolio and improve the cultural offer across the board.

Members outlined the following:-

- It was asked whether the framework would require fundamental changes as a result of changing habits following the pandemic. In response it was stated that the Government had provided a great deal of financial support to the cultural sector to try and assist the effects of the pandemic, however, at this stage, it was not known how people's habits would have changed. COVID restrictions were gradually being removed and it would be determined whether people would return to traditional cultural events as things progressed. It was possible that local events would become more popular than those further afield.
- A Member asked how the cultural framework was being developed to address climate change issues. In response it was noted that the development of the strategy aimed to provide facilities at a local level to negate the need for travel, where possible. In terms of addressing climate change it was difficult to determine how the framework would support action against this, but action would be undertaken to ensure developments took account of this matter.
- A Member highlighted the 2019 Yorkshire Coast bid which was discontinued by Scarborough Borough Council. He stated that the delivery of a cultural offer on the coast was essential to the viability of that area and asked how the strategy was addressing that. In response it was noted that community networks would be fed into the structures of the new Authority to ensure

that the key local organisations were utilised to develop the offer on the coast. Scarborough currently had the Spa and the Stephen Joseph Theatre, and the aim was to engage better with local communities, to enhance the offer from those facilities and build on that.

- Members welcomed the report which was considered to contain a tremendous amount of useful information and thanked those involved for the work carried out.

Resolved –

That the report be noted.

27. NHS Services - Details and Statistics on provision in Constituency Area

The details and statistics requested at the previous meeting to determine how to respond to the issues raised in relation to provision of GP, dental and ambulance services.

Local dentist – Mark Green – had been invited to take part in the meeting but, unfortunately, was unable to attend due to other commitments, however, he was still keen to discuss issues that arise in relation to Dentistry, with Members at a subsequent meeting.

A Member noted that the Scrutiny of Health Committee were preparing a report for Parliament in relation to the provision of health and social care services in North Yorkshire, and the ACC had been invited to participate in a consultation that would provide the details for the report. He encouraged Members of the Committee to take part in the consultation process. It was suggested that the final report could then be submitted to the ACC for further analysis.

Resolved that the details and statistics provided be noted at this stage.

28. National Highways – update on maintenance and improvement activity

Considered -

A report by National Highways which included updates on maintenance and improvement activity in the Constituency area. No officer from National Highways was available to attend the meeting.

Members welcomed the update.

A Member referred to the helpful information now being circulated to Members in respect of roadworks taking place in the Area 4 highways area, and neighbouring areas, which he had found extremely helpful.

Resolved –

That the report be noted.

29. Local Bus Services - Service 128, Helmsley to Scarborough

County Councillor Joy Andrews requested that the 128 bus service that operates between Helmsley and Scarborough along the A170 be considered at this meeting.

She highlighted how the service had been operating for decades but over the years the frequency had decreased, with it now operating a limited service every two hours, however, this is still a vital service to residents. There has been talk about it ceasing altogether which would be a travesty.

She also raised concerns regarding the continued service of the 840 Malton to Whitby service

An earlier public question had also referred to this matter and would be taken account during consideration of this item.

County Councillor Duncan, the Executive Member whose portfolio includes passenger transport outlined the following:-

Bus Service operators were currently under significant pressure with staff shortages, rising costs and decreasing passengers, which was reflected in bus service alterations throughout the County. The subsidy available from the County Council for bus services had been further reduced and was fully committed. The 128 service was operated on a commercial basis and was subject to the same pressures as outlined above. Passenger transport officers had worked closely with the provider to establish the new timetables and no further alterations to the service were expected in the short term.

In relation to Service 840 it was noted that there had been no decision on the provision of the service currently. A subsidy was being sought to provide a solution to enable the service to continue.

A bid had been made to the Government for additional funding to support bus services, however, this had been unsuccessful. Work continued with the bus operators, therefore, to preserve service, where possible, and to find alternative options for the public where services are removed. The Local Transport Plan was also being developed to take account of public priorities. It was likely that the devolution agreement between York and North Yorkshire would generate additional funding that could be utilised to assist passenger transport provision in May 2024, but, in the interim, services would require as much support as was available to the Councils.

Passenger Transport Services had also responded to County Councillor Andrew's question, stating the following:-

Bus services in North Yorkshire are facing significant pressure due to reduced passenger numbers following the pandemic, increasing costs and staff shortages. This is an unprecedented situation affecting the whole country with many bus routes seeing a reduction in service or at risk of withdrawal. The Department for Transport has been providing funding to help bus companies and local authorities ensure essential services continue to operate but this is due to end in March 2023. The council also uses £1.6m each year to support bus services that are not commercially viable but this budget is fully committed.

Service 128 is a commercially operated route which runs from Scarborough to Helmsley and is one of over 70 routes in the county that have seen passenger numbers fall and costs rise to the point where it wasn't viable to continue at the previous frequency of timetable. Officers have worked with East Yorkshire Motors Services to put in place a new timetable that retains regular journeys six days a week but also reduces costs by operating at a 2 hourly frequency. While the situation is still very challenging, the bus company haven't indicated that further changes will be needed to the timetable and provided passengers keep supporting it we expect the service to continue running for the foreseeable future.

County Councillor Andrews welcomed the responses provided. She emphasised that North Yorkshire had a substantial amount of very rural areas and the loss of bus services left people feeling isolated. She considered it unthinkable that the 128 service could be lost, and emphasised that connectivity and environmental impact issues would need to be addressed should the service cease. There was also a risk to jobs as a number of people would be unable to access their place of work should the service be discontinued. She noted that a 3000 name signature had been created to prevent the service being cut, but acknowledged that people needed to use the service to ensure it was viable, and an advertising campaign was taking place in relation to that.

Members raised the following:-

- Bus Service cuts were not limited to rural areas with many urban areas also affected.

- The public have highlighted that they see public transport, therefore, external funding and locality budget can be directed towards this provision. This approach had enabled the Helmsley Hopper Community Transport Service to be developed, enabling people to access local services and other transport services via this on demand service.
- The 128 service was underused currently and every effort had to be made to get more people using the service to ensure it was viable and could continue to operate.
- The timetable changes for the 128 service had benefitted some local communities as this had provided a more frequent bus service to some of the smaller locations.
- A Member emphasised that local Community Transport, whilst welcome to the area it served, was not operated at the same level of service as the commercially operated services. He also noted that changes to the timetable had resulted in people not being able to access work, which in turn had led to less people using the service. He suggested that the timetable should better reflect the needs of local communities to improve usage. Members agreed that this would assist bus usage in the local area.
- Bus service provision was currently a national problem and cuts to services, coupled with re-timetabling had led to some local communities no longer receiving any bus service. There appeared to be a national desire to assist train services to operate effectively but not for bus services. It was suggested that additional support and funding from central Government was required as bus services are strategically important to the viability of local communities.
- County Councillor Duncan acknowledged that the issues of connectivity and timetabling are important to the delivery of effective bus services. There was a need to invest to maintain services, however, it had to be recognised that long term sustainability was a key to this as it was unfair to place that burden on tax payers who were not using those services. He emphasised, therefore, that a greater use of bus services was the major factor in keeping bus services running.

Members discussed the recent failure of Levelling Up bids for improvements at Thirsk and Malton Rail Stations. A Member stated that there was a great amount of disappointment that the Thirsk improvements had been turned down, particularly as these, in the main, related to accessibility for disabled people. It was noted that the MP had been very disappointed with the outcome of the bids and efforts were now underway to deliver the projects through alternative funding sources. It was noted that there had been a significant number of bids for limited funding, and despite the disappointment of the failed bids, these were likely to be re-evaluated and resubmitted into the process for Round 3 of the Levelling Up Fund process. A Member emphasised the need to ensure that there was a thorough understanding of how these bids could be successful before they were resubmitted, otherwise the time and resources required for such bids would be wasted. Members agreed that clarity on how bids could be successful was important for any future bids. A Member emphasised that the Thirsk bid had related to disabled access and hoped that Round 3 of the bidding took a sensible perspective of the issues involved. Members agreed that further efforts should be made to ensure that both the Thirsk and Malton rail station plans were followed through to development.

Resolved –

That the issues raised in relation to both bus and rail services be noted.

30. Motion to Area Constituency Committee – 20 MPH Speed Limits

The following Motion was Proposed by County Councillor Michelle Donohue-Moncrieff and seconded by County Councillor Steve Mason:-

The Thirsk and Malton ACC wishes the executive to be advised that we would like to be included in the proposed pilot scheme as detailed in the proposal below approved by Harrogate and Knaresborough ACC

“The Executive be advised that the Harrogate and Knaresborough Area Constituency Committee wishes a 20mph speed limit to be piloted throughout the area towns and villages in the constituency where a benefit has been identified and that the Transport, Environment, Overview scrutiny Committee when it considers the County Council’s 20mph speed limit and zone policy on 19th January 2023 to consider appropriate amendments to the existing policy to enable the pilot to be introduced.”

County Councillor Michelle Donohue-Moncrieff moved the motion outlining the following:-

- She set out the context of the motion, outlining that this was first put forward to be considered at the meetings that had been cancelled prior to the announcement by the Executive Member that a review of the implications of the “20s Plenty” initiative was to take place, following consideration of the matter at Scrutiny. Since then, the issue had been debated at a number of other ACCs, with various recommendations coming forward.
- She emphasised that the motion was not dependent on the other discussions that had been held but resulted from genuine concerns raised in local communities throughout the Constituency area on how to manage speeding traffic. She noted that the request for the motion came from local residents and not from the “20s Plenty” campaign group.
- The issue had been discussed with Area Highways on previous occasions but there had been no move to lower the speed below 30mph, despite requests, through local towns and villages, as monitoring had not resulted in speed limits being breached. Despite this many people still felt local roads were unsafe, hence the call for a 20mph restriction.
- She considered that this provided an opportunity for Scrutiny and the ACCs to show how they were complementary to the democratic process in North Yorkshire rather than being contradictory.
- She emphasised the need to consider the holistic aspect of this issue, and how best to manage the concerns of local residents effectively. Those concerns were genuine and related to speeding traffic passing through local communities with 90% of roads unaffected by the proposal. This was not an anti-car issue but a response to those genuine concerns.

County Councillor Steve Mason seconded the motion and outlined the following:-

- He considered that rejecting the motion would be contradictory to the TE&E Scrutiny Committee and for the ACCs that had voted to undertake a pilot scheme within their Constituency areas.
- A lot had been stated during the LGR process about the local delivery of services and he noted that there was a strong feeling in local communities within the Constituency area that 20mph zones would be beneficial.
- He considered the speed monitoring recording to be measured inappropriately with the mean speed registered and suggested that a modal measurement would be more appropriate.
- He noted that there were other benefits related to the reduction of speed through local communities which were set out in a 10 point welfare plan.
- He was aware of two villages that were willing to take part in a trial of the 20 mph limit through their communities.
- He asked that the Executive report on the review of the possible 20 mph limit for appropriate locations be provided to Members as soon as possible.
- He urged Members to support the motion.

Members outlined the following in respect of the motion:-

- The current policy is not fit for purpose as local residents do not feel safe with the current speed limits. The current enforcement of speed limits was not effective as it was delivered on an ad-hoc basis and was not consistent. Campaigns for the 20mph

limit had been taking place for a number of years, with a view that reducing the speed of traffic would be advantageous to all road users and pedestrians. Agreeing to the motion would send out the message that the Council was willing to work with people to address issues, despite differences of opinion.

- It was suggested that Members' locality budgets could be utilised to assist the lowering of traffic speeds, with an example given of a VAR sign provided near to a school in Filey. The Member stated that he would prefer to see the report of the Executive and undertake further engagement with the public before making a decision on this issue. He considered that the subject of speeding related to perceptions and was aware of a number of people in local communities who were against the imposition of a 20mph limit.
- The Executive Member for Highways, County Councillor Keane Duncan acknowledged the valid issues raised by Members and clarified that the aim of "20s Plenty" was not for a default 20mph limit throughout North Yorkshire, but for a limit to be implemented in Towns and Villages where this would be beneficial, and that this was the position of the resolutions passed at other ACCs, with targeted pilot projects requested. An important caveat to the whole discussion is that any 20mph limits would be placed where they were needed and would be of benefit to the local community, and therefore based on consultation and agreement with those communities. Going forward Councillors need to see the work taking place in relation to this issue and recognise its complexity, leading for the need to take time to ensure that this can be implemented with the greatest effectiveness, where appropriate.
- A Member suggested that the requested pilot initiatives could be utilised as case studies to feed into the final report, otherwise it would be difficult to obtain the necessary data. In relation to this a Member pointed out that there were already 20mph zones in place in the Constituency area from which data could be obtained, therefore there was no need for others to be introduced. He emphasised that policy should be evidence based rather than developed through ad-hoc decisions.
- A Member stated that, should the motion be defeated, he would expect advice on how the number of killed and/or seriously injured (KSI) can be reduced on local roads. He considered that implementing 20mph limits through local towns and villages would significantly reduce the number of (KSI) and wondered whether reducing this risk was a priority for Members. He considered that the reduction KSI on local roads should be a significant factor in determining this issue.
- The mover of the motion emphasised that she had engaged with the "20s Plenty" group and had found them to be engaged and wishing to make improvements to their local communities. She acknowledged that some people were against a 20mph limit, but a way to address this issue was required. She emphasised that Members were elected to engage with their local communities and take account of the issues they raised and ensure that their opinions were represented. The current 20mph Zones were isolated and did not provide any co-ordinated connectivity to be able to determine whether their placement had an effect on the subsequent town or village. She considered that a pattern of recurring 20mph Zones would provide a much more effective demonstration of their benefit to feed into the Executive report. She acknowledged the issues raised in relation to having sight of the Executive report and reiterated the fact that the delay in the meeting had given the motion an appearance of being slightly outdated, but felt it appropriate to have a constructive, public debate on the matter.
- A member stated that he was not against a change to the speed limit in specific areas, for legitimate reasons, but could not support the motion without sufficient evidence having been provided.
- It was asked, should the motion be defeated, whether that would negate the proposals that had been approved at other Committees. In response a Member stated that the other Committees referred to could still submit their resolutions to the Executive, but only the Executive were in a position to change policy. He also stated that he would like to see the issue expanded to include all road safety.

The motion was put to the vote and defeated.

Resolved –

That no further action be taken on this matter at this time.

31. 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 proposals for Thirsk and Malton Rail Stations following the failure of the Levelling Up bids

Resolved -

That the Work Programme be noted and the issues highlighted be included in the Programme and considered at subsequent meetings of the ACC

32. Next Meeting

Resolved -

That the next scheduled ordinary meeting of the Area Constituency Committee would take place on Friday 31st March 2023 at a venue to be confirmed.

The meeting concluded at 12.30pm.
SML