

# North Yorkshire Council

## EXECUTIVE

4 July 2023

### Area Constituency Committee Feedback Report

#### Report of the Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer

#### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To bring to the attention of the Executive key issues considered at recent meetings of the Area Constituency Committees (ACC) and any recommendations made.

#### **2.0 SKIPTON AND RIPON ACC – 1 JUNE 2023**

- 2.1 Councillor Richard Foster was appointed as Chair and Councillor Andy Solloway was appointed as Vice-Chair.
- 2.2 The Rt Hon Julian Smith MP provided an overview of some of the key issues arising in Westminster and through his constituency work and responded to questions regarding: concerns about Yorkshire Water and sewerage release; the reduction of bus routes; the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill; licensing legislation and the number of members able to sit on the General Licensing and Registration Committee; issues with NHS dentistry, the 111 phone service and the DWP phone service; and parliamentary boundary changes.
- 2.3 The Committee considered the ACC Ways of Working report and were keen that the ACCs work with and make recommendations to the Executive and the economic development department. They were also keen to learn how the £50,000 funding could be used. Most members felt that the meetings of the ACC should alternate between Skipton and Ripon, that all meetings should be broadcast and recorded, and that meeting dates, times and venues should be changeable.
- 2.4 The committee received a presentation update on the Economic Growth Strategy and the Destination Management Plan. They were keen to have an influence on the action plans once the strategies are finalised.
- 2.5 The committee received an update on the Digital Demand Responsive Bus Service (YOR Bus), Members supported the Council's innovative approach but agreed that the pilot had not worked as a solution to rural bus service issues.
- 2.6 Finally, some members of the committee were keen to have an influence on the appointments to category 1 outside bodies, which are currently decided by the Executive or Full Council.

#### **3.0 HARROGATE AND KNARESBOROUGH ACC (SPECIAL MEETING) - 5 MAY 2023**

- 3.1 The meeting was scheduled so that the Traffic Regulation Orders – Harrogate Transforming Cities Fund report could be considered. Thirteen statements and/or questions were put before the committee by members of the public, representatives from businesses and other organisations. It was recognised that the scheme was an opportunity, although not perfect to transform the town centre, improve transport access, revitalise Harrogate as a destination and is a potential step to address the issues facing Harrogate at present and in

the future. There were strong views both for and against demonstrated through the consultation and at the meeting. Confirmation was provided about the following:

- The Odeon roundabout cycling infrastructure
- The wider sustainable and active travel infrastructure
- Traffic congestion and improvements to signals and Pelican Crossings in the immediate area
- Traffic modelling and the Traffic Regulation Orders
- The current reception to visitors of Harrogate in terms of railings, dual carriageways and public realm
- The balanced approach to travel around the town and choices available
- Cycling and walking
- Car journeys and emissions
- Economic forecasts and potential future impacts
- Consultation results
- Shopping patterns and business impacts
- Funding must be spent on physical infrastructure within a proximity to station hubs. It comes from the Department for Transport, administered by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority.

3.2 The report and presentation led to questions around a number of key themes as follows:

- Possible deterioration in air quality
- Changes to bus lanes
- Traffic light changes
- Economic assessments
- Traffic impacts outside the scheme
- Scheme content
- A clear Strategic Plan.

3.3 The Committee agreed the following:

“This committee believes that Harrogate needs a vibrant, prosperous, safe, attractive, accessible, healthier and sustainable town centre and would welcome further investment in it to achieve that goal through a Gateway scheme, subject to the following conditions:

- i. That the genuine concerns of individuals and groups continue to be listened to, debated and responded to where possible within the constraints of the scheme funding.
- ii. That the ACC has a meaningful role in the implementation of the scheme, including the above mentioned conversations, and that a full report on progress is received at its meeting in the Autumn.
- iii. That a rigorous monitoring system for expected and actual impact on traffic flows, the environmental, active travel take-up and businesses in the area of the scheme is put in place pre-shovel and made open and transparent from day one.”

#### **4.0 HARROGATE AND KNARESBOROUGH ACC - 8 JUNE 2023**

4.1 The Committee elected Councillor Pat Marsh as Chair and Councillor Monika Slater as Vice-Chair.

4.2 Four statements and/or questions were put before the committee by members of the public/representatives from organisations:

- Statement from Western Arc Coordination Group concerning the lack of progress with the production of a West Harrogate Infrastructure Strategy and associated

Infrastructure Delivery Schedule. A response was provided on behalf of the Council's Planning and Transport officers

- Two statements/questions about the Planning Committee meeting held on Wednesday 31 May 2023. A response was provided on behalf of the Council's Legal, Planning and Democratic Services
- Statement in support of a petition about 20 mph restrictions.

4.3 The Committee considered a petition for a maximum speed of 20mph on roads in south and west Harrogate across Oatlands, parts of Pannal, the Stray, Hookstone and St George's. The following concerns were identified: safety health and well-being of children; the benefits of speed restrictions; and traffic accidents/Incidents and impacts.

4.4 The Committee endorsed the petition as stated in paragraph 2.4 of the report:

"The petition calls for North Yorkshire Council to deliver a maximum speed of 20mph across south and west Harrogate - covering Oatlands and parts of Pannal, Stray, Hookstone and St Georges areas in Harrogate (as outlined in red on the petition)."

4.5 The Committee recommended that the requested actions from the petition be considered by the Executive as part of the ongoing review by the council of its current 20 mile per hour speed limit and zone policy.

4.6 The Committee also reviewed a petition in opposition to the Harrogate Station Gateway scheme during which they considered: the large number of signatories to the petition; consultation with residents and local groups; and the discussions held at the meeting of the Executive on 30 May 2023.

4.7 The Committee agreed the following be recommended to the Executive:

"ACC Members wish to take the opportunity presented by this Petition to express grave disappointment that, to date, there has been no engagement with individuals and groups who expressed concerns regarding the proposed Gateway Scheme at our Meeting on 5 May 2023. This is despite the ACC passing a motion at that meeting asking for this to happen and receiving reassurances from the Executive Member for Highways and Transportation that it would happen.

This Committee therefore recommends that a full schedule of engagement meetings is circulated to members, no later than Friday 30th June 2023 and that members of this Committee are also invited to these meetings.

In addition, the ACC further requests that, within the same timescale, a politically proportionate ACC Working Group (5 members) be set up, charged with working with Officers and the Executive Member for Highways and Transportation, to produce a Report, to be considered by this Committee at its meeting on 14 September 2023, which addresses the concerns raised by Residents and Organisations, as well as detailing the rigorous monitoring systems referred to in the motion passed on 5 May 2023. (Expected impact on traffic flows, the environment, active travel take up and business in the area)."

4.8 The Committee considered the Area Constituency Committees - Ways of Working report and agreed its appointments to Category 2 and 3 Outside bodies.

4.9 An update was provided by Councillor Haslam about the Climate sub-group. This identified the following: the links in the Local Transport Plan to active travel needs; the potential use of member locality funding; and the opportunities arising from work with the VCS and other organisations across North Yorkshire.

## **5.0 SCARBOROUGH AND WHITBY ACC – 9 JUNE 2023**

- 5.1 The June meeting was dominated by discussion of local bathing water quality, in particular in Scarborough South Bay, which followed an update by the Environment Agency and the receipt of three public questions on the issue. Members were advised about the statutory framework in which the EA operated, and the detailed investigations undertaken at Scarborough South Bay in 2016. The committee committed to communicate its deep concern at the current situation regarding poor water quality in South Bay to all relevant agencies with a focus on accurately measuring the effluent from all sea outfall pipes at their source area across both North and South Bays and requested a formal response on how the coastal defence works had affected the currents in the Scarborough area.
- 5.2 The committee also received a presentation about the work of the Healthy Child 0-19 Service and local provision in the constituency. Reference was made to both successes, such as the increase in antenatal contact, and challenges such as efforts to promote take up locally of the Healthy Start Scheme which provided a nutritional safety net and promoted the practice of breastfeeding e.g. through identification of breastfeeding-friendly venues.
- 5.3 The committee also welcomed:
- Plans to develop the former Indoor Swimming Pool site on the North Bay in Scarborough through an open market competitive tender process to identify a development partner which would enable the council to meet its specific requirements.
  - The recent review of the area constituency committees' terms of reference and ways of working which had led to the inclusion of new elements such as mid-cycle briefings and the ability to make recommendations to the Corporate Director of Community Development in respect of seed funding for local projects which as an example could aid economic development. The committee approved appointments to various outside bodies whilst noting that British Destinations and the British Ports Association had been re-categorised as executive appointments.
- 5.4 Finally, several items were proposed for the work programme including evaluation of the local POMOC scheme and the local impact of the review of council public conveniences, and the committee agreed to change its start time to 10am and to alternate future meetings between Scarborough and Whitby.

## **6.0 SELBY AND AINSTY ACC – 15 JUNE 2023**

- 6.1 Councillor Melanie Davis was appointed Chair and Councillor John Cattanach, Vice-Chair for 2023/24.
- 6.2 The Committee considered the Area Constituency Committees - Ways of Working report and agreed its appointments to Category 2 and 3 Outside bodies. They also received an update on any changes to local bus services that had taken place since the previous meeting of the Committee.
- 6.3 The Committee considered the Area Constituency Committees - Ways of Working report and agreed its appointments to Category 2 and 3 Outside bodies.
- 6.4 The committee considered its work programme, in light of the Area Constituency Committees - Ways of Working report and highlighted topics for further development.

## **7.0 THIRSK AND MALTON ACC – 16 JUNE 2023**

- 7.1 Councillor Nigel Knapton was appointed Chair and Councillor Caroline Goodrick, Vice-Chair for 2023/24
- 7.2 Provision of Post Office services in Helmsley was brought to the Committee, following cessation of Post Office facilities in the town for nearly a year, and, despite efforts to bring in these facilities, with temporary arrangements being in place for a time, the Town currently had no such facilities available. Around 70 members of the public attended the meeting and there were a number of public questions/statements on this matter.
- 7.3 The External Affairs Manager, Scotland, N. Ireland and North England, Corporate Affairs, Brand and Communications attended the meeting on behalf of the Post Office to explain the challenges being faced in trying to resolve the situation, initially in providing a temporary solution, and then a permanent solution. The Post Office had been assured, on several occasions, that a permanent solution was imminent, which had stalled the provision of a temporary solution, as that would have been counterproductive, only for those plans to not materialise at the last minute. It had also been difficult to identify a Post Master to operate a temporary solution. Every effort was now being made to provide a permanent solution for Helmsley, and there was some optimism that the issue would be addressed shortly, however, further thought would be given to providing temporary services in the interim.
- 7.4 The provision of public toilets in Filey, and issues in relation to that provision, were discussed under the Council's petition scheme, with the petition totalling 1,532 signatories, which passed the threshold for a debate at the ACC (500 signatories). The petitioner outlined the main concerns:
- The provision of temporary toilets for Coble Landing, whilst the new toilets are being demolished and replaced
  - Free access at the point of entry to all toilet facilities in Filey, so as to be compatible with the Thirsk and Malton Area, in which Filey is now based
  - To ensure that all toilet facilities are open all year round (allowing for reduced hours in winter)
  - To ask the council to reinstate the footbath at the side of Ravine toilets, and to ensure a suitable safety barrier is installed
  - To have flexible opening hours for the Ravine toilets in the month of December to support the Festive event.
- 7.5 A response to the issues raised highlighted the following:
- It was anticipated that the new facilities at Filey Ravine and Filey Country Park would open on 25 June 2023
  - Unfortunately an appropriate location for temporary facilities at Filey Ravine could not be identified but nearby facilities, however, nearby facilities had been made free of charge until the new facilities were open
  - A review of public toilet facilities across North Yorkshire was to take place to determine charges or to remove charges altogether. In the interim the new facilities would be chargeable
  - Resource issues would not see both facilities fully open during the winter, however, some of the facilities at Filey Ravine would remain open the whole year
  - Having worked alongside colleagues in Highways to re-align the footpath, it was not considered necessary to provide the barrier.
- 7.6 Members debated the issues raised by the petition and the responses provided, and as a result referred the following recommendations to the Executive:

- i. That the Executive respond to the issues raised on Filey Toilets in relation to Health and Safety requirements and compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act
- ii. That the Executive be recommended to produce an indicative timeline in respect of the proposed county wide review of public conveniences as soon as possible.

7.7 Finally, the Committee considered the Area Constituency Committees - Ways of Working report and agreed its appointments to Category 2 and 3 Outside bodies.

## **8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The financial implications of the issues raised in this summary report are included in the reports that went to the meetings of the Area Constituency Committees in June.

## **9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The legal implications of the issues raised in this summary report are included in the reports that went to the meetings of the Area Constituency Committees in June.

## **10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 The climate change implications of the issues raised in this summary report are included in the reports that went to the meetings of the Area Constituency Committees in June.

## **11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 The equalities implications of the issues raised in this summary report are included in the reports that went to the meetings of the Area Constituency Committees in June.

## **12.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

12.1 The recommendations to the Executive have been made by the Area Constituency Committees as part of their consideration of local issues at their June round of committee meetings.

## **13.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

13.1 That the Executive:

- i. 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.
- ii. Considers the recommendations proposed by Harrogate and Knaresborough Area Constituency Committee regarding a maximum speed of 20mph across parts of south and west Harrogate, as detailed in paragraph 4.4 above, as part of the ongoing review by the Council of its current 20 mile per hour speed limit and zone policy.
- iii. Considers the recommendations proposed by Harrogate and Knaresborough Area Constituency Committee regarding the proposed Harrogate Station Gateway scheme, as detailed in paragraph 4.7 above, and the scheduling of engagement meetings and the establishment of and support for a working group of the committee.
- iv. Considers the recommendations proposed by the Thirsk and Malton Area Constituency Committee as detailed in paragraph 7.6 above regarding the Filey toilet provision and the proposed county wide review of public conveniences.

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**Background Documents:**

Agenda, papers and minutes of the 6 Area Constituency Committee meetings in June 2023, which can be accessed via the following link -

<https://edemocracy.northyorks.gov.uk/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1>

**Note:** Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.