

North Yorkshire Council

Skipton and Ripon Area Constituency Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 7th September 2023, commencing at 10.00am.

Councillor Richard Foster in the Chair and Councillors Philip Barrett, Barbara Brodigan, Andy Brown, Nick Brown, Felicity Cunliffe-Lister, Robert Heseltine, David Ireton, Andrew Murday, David Noland, Andy Solloway, David Staveley and Andrew Williams.

Officers present: Alice Fox, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager; Daniel Harry, Head of Democratic Services; Chloe Thwaites, Youth Voice Creative Engagement Officer; Matthew Robinson, Head of Resilience and Emergencies; Lee Brayford, Resilience and Emergencies Officer; Liz Meade, Stronger Communities Delivery Manager.

In attendance: Councillors Carl Les and George Jabbour; James Neill, Chair of Skipton Youth Council; Tim Myatt, Head of Corporate Affairs at Yorkshire Water; Rt Hon Julian Smith MP; Olivia King and Kerri Rose, IDAS.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

The Chair informed the Committee that Item 6: Verbal update from RT Hon Julian Smith MP would be heard after Item 9: Area Constituency Committees and their role in Community Resilience. Items 10 (Independent Domestic Abuse Service) and 11 (Update on Community Networks) also changed places on the agenda.

68 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Nathan Hull and Simon Myers.

69 Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 June 2023

Considered –

The minutes of the meeting of the Skipton and Ripon Area Constituency Committee held on 1 June 2023.

Resolved –

- (a) That the Minutes of the meeting of the Skipton and Ripon Area Constituency Committee held on 1 June 2023, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

70 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

71 Public Questions or Statements

There were none.

72 Updates from the Previous Meeting

The updates were received.

73 Update from the Youth Council

Considered –

A written and verbal update by James Neill, Chair of Skipton Youth Council (SYC). Also in attendance was Chloe Thwaites, Youth Voice and Creative Engagement Officer, North Yorkshire Council (NYC).

The update and subsequent discussion are summarised below:

- SYC was established just before the first Covid lockdown.
- SYC is leading the 'Keep Skipton Tidy' campaign which is looking to raise awareness through posters, leaflets and presenting to schools and youth organisations. A litter picking competition has been planned where raffle tickets will be rewarded to school students and attendees of youth organisations.
- The results of SYC's 'Youth Opportunities Survey' show that: young people are often unaware of clubs and activities that are available to them; that whilst most young people feel safe in the area, many would like more safe spaces; that stopping anti-social behaviour and littering will help young people to feel safer; and that vaping is a major issue in Skipton.
- A campaign against underage vaping has started that focuses on raising awareness of the dangers of vaping, the laws surrounding vaping and the environmental impact that disposable vapes have. A petition to restrict the accessibility of vapes will be worked on at future SYC meetings. It was reported that NYC was also working to stop underage vaping.
- At the North Yorkshire Youth Cabinet AGM in July, it was decided to incorporate York and change the name to the Youth Assembly for York and North Yorkshire.
- Members were reminded that they may wish to attend Youth Council meetings and that they should contact Chloe if they wish to start the process of setting up a Youth Council near them. Chloe is unable to facilitate the groups but can support Members and young people in helping to set Youth Councils up. She will visit schools to promote the Youth Council elections in November.
- All those present agreed that one Skipton and Ripon Youth Council would be too large, but that more local Youth Councils should be established and that these should work with each other. Utilising platforms such as MS Teams would allow young people to engage with their local Youth Council. The challenges in getting high levels of participation in Youth Councils were acknowledged.

- Members proposed that other Youth Councils from the Skipton and Ripon Constituency be invited to present to the ACC. Members also reiterated that young people can always approach their division Member.

Resolved –

- a) That the local Youth Councils be invited to the 7th March 2024 ACC meeting.
- b) That a quarterly report from the local Youth Councils be submitted at the 14th December 2023 ACC meeting.

74 Discussion with Yorkshire Water

Considered – A presentation and verbal update from Tim Myatt, Head of Corporate Affairs at Yorkshire Water (YW).

Tim Myatt, introduced himself and informed Members that they should go through him if they have any issues so that YW can address any concerns. A presentation was shown, with the key points being summarised below:

- In 2022, there were 2118 storm overflows from YW facilities, the 2nd highest of any water company. The overflow issues are exacerbated by the local geography. Tim Myatt informed Members that monitoring has improved significantly over the last few years, and therefore overflows aren't necessarily increasing as drastically as it seems. In the Skipton and Ripon Constituency, discharges fell from 4263 in 2021 to 3649 in 2022, partly due to dry weather and water droughts.
- A 'live' map will be in operation by the end of the year which will show all overflows and discharges.
- Tim Myatt explained YW's investment programme in depth (see PowerPoint slides), showing Members where investment was most likely to come and explaining that over £530 million was to be invested to improve treated effluent discharge between 2021-25. The aim is to reduce average discharges by at least 20% by 2025 (based on the 2021 figures). Tim Myatt also explained YW's investment programme post-2025, showing that long-term aims are in place and that YW is working to solve current issues as well as future-proof its infrastructure.
- Members highlighted that sewerage releases were not always in periods of wet weather and Tim Myatt informed Members that wet weather is the primary reason for discharge, not the only reason.
- It was highlighted that surface runoff, especially off tarmac, is a main reason for spillages, not lack of storage, and that YW's investment programme would reflect this. It was recommended that YW inform their customers how they can reduce surface runoff.
- Members were informed that YW consults with the Environment Agency and land owners regarding river health and farming activities.

- Members highlighted that extra homes were being built in the Skipton and Ripon area, but better YW infrastructure was not being witnessed. Members asked that YW continue to comment on planning applications where developments may increase stress on YW infrastructure. Tim Myatt reported that comments on planning applications are based on the history of the area and YW's Drainage Water Management Plan. The Environmental Agency are responsible for commenting if there is a danger of increased runoff water. YW is not a statutory consultee on planning applications, but Members and Tim Myatt felt that this should change.
- Tim Myatt told Members that after the meeting he would share information on the incidents of sewerage spillage within the area. He reported that there were roughly 600 spillages in the last 5 years. Members stressed that they are contacted by residents about sewerage in the streets and rivers.
- Members queried whether YW's investment plan takes into account the local plans of local councils and national parks. They were concerned that whilst some areas may not be currently producing high numbers of discharges, this could change when more houses are built. Tim Myatt confirmed that YW did consult with those responsible for designing local plans and will consult again as local plans change. He confirmed that that he would take this back to his colleagues.
- Members highlighted that some of the problems had been caused by underinvestment in the past and they asked that YW has a closer relationship with their customers, providing honest answers and reacting to feedback. It was raised that residents shouldn't have to pay for YW's underinvestment. Tim Myatt explained that YW have an internal 10-year strategy focussing on building positive relationships with customers.
- Members asked what had been done since the water drought in 2022 and Tim Myatt informed them that YW was investigating the issue and investing in infrastructure.

Resolved –

- a) That Members should contact Tim Myatt in order to report specific concerns and incidents.
- b) That Tim Myatt will liaise with Councillor A Brown regarding sewerage discharges at Snaygill.
- c) That Tim Myatt will provide Councillor P Barrett with information on Yorkshire Water's planned investment for the Aire Valley Sewer.
- d) That Members and Yorkshire Water will lobby so that Yorkshire Water become a statutory consultee on planning applications.
- e) That Tim Myatt will circulate the data on sewerage spillages in the Skipton and Ripon area.
- f) That Tim Myatt will feed back how Yorkshire Water consider local plans and manage potential increases in discharges.
- g) That the presentation slides be circulated to Members.

Considered – A presentation and verbal update from Matthew Robinson, Head of Resilience and Emergencies, and Lee Brayford, Resilience and Emergencies Officer for the Skipton and Ripon area.

Matthew Robinson and Lee Brayford introduced themselves and their department. The discussion is summarised below:

- Members were informed that they should go to Matthew or Lee if they have any concerns or if organisations need help putting emergency plans together. Annual updates to the ACC should be provided.
- Members should use their link with their communities and pass on advice and issues between residents and Officers. Members can assist in identifying those residents most at risk.
- Parishes, with the help of Officers and Members, should be putting together emergency plans. These plans may not fit political boundaries and should be mapped so that all areas are covered. Matthew is currently assessing which emergency plans are still valid and can provide profiles to Members.
- Members raised concerns about the more rural areas, especially if they were to lose telephone signal and broadband during an emergency. Officers agreed that rural areas need increased support, and emphasised the importance of creating communication links, potentially through one location, that can withstand emergencies. Matthew explained that they are developing a resilience plan which is addressing this issue, but they are currently unable to reach all communities.

Resolved –

- a) That Members and Officers assist to create close links with local communities.
- b) That Matthew Robinson circulates a list of the valid emergency plans to Members.
- c) That annual update reports come to the ACC.

76 Verbal update from RT Hon Julian Smith MP

Considered –

A verbal update from the Rt Hon Julian Smith MP, provided remotely using MS Teams.

The Chair invited the Rt Hon Julian Smith MP to provide an update on his areas of work, concerns and priorities before there was a discussion with Members. The key points are as summarised below:

- Mr Smith confirmed that Members had seen the responses to the queries made at the last meeting and then highlighted key local issues which included: updates on the Airedale Hospital rebuild and the opening of an NHS diagnostic centre in Ripon; the consultation on train ticket offices closing; the funding given to North

Yorkshire Council (NYC) for housing projects and farmers sustainability grants; and updates on buildings with Reinforce Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC).

- Members raised concerns over RAAC and Mr Smith informed them that one school in Scarborough was impacted and that government departments are investigating other public buildings. Members agreed with Mr Smith that the work on Airedale Hospital should be implemented as soon as possible considering the building has RAAC and some were concerned that the rebuild had no strict deadlines. Members also discussed the emergency plans that Airedale has in place.
- Members raised that Yorkshire Water had informed the ACC that they would welcome becoming statutory consultees on planning applications and that this legislation can only be altered at a national level. Mr Smith asked the ACC to write to him regarding this.
- Members asked Mr Smith if the Kex Gill development would see an overspend and it was reported that there is no indication that more money will be required.
- The issue surrounding poor connectivity in rural areas was raised and Mr Smith informed Members that he would chase his previous query.
- Members were informed that there were schemes in place to help those struggling to pay their bills, including those that use oil.
- Members informed Mr Smith of a number of communities that were looking to introduce ways of collecting renewable energy but were restricted by the local network capacity and difficulties in selling the power to make money. Mr Smith asked that Members contact him with specific examples of this so that he could take it further.

Members thanked the Rt Hon Julian Smith MP for attending the meeting.

Resolved –

- a) That the Rt Hon Julian Smith MP be invited to the next Skipton and Ripon ACC meeting.
- b) That Members and the Rt Hon Julian Smith MP continue to push to have Airedale Hospital rebuilt as soon as possible.
- c) That Members write to the Rt Hon Julian Smith MP about Yorkshire Water becoming a statutory consultee on planning applications.
- d) That the Rt Hon Julian Smith MP will chase his previous query on poor connectivity in rural areas.
- e) That Members send details of communities that are struggling to get renewable energy implemented to the Rt Hon Julian Smith MP.

77 Update on Community Networks

Councillor Brodigan provided an update which is summarised below:

- Members are to lead on these networks, but Officers are able to assist when required or appropriate. Members should suggest ideas, steer discussion and be the elected authority.
- These can be structured geographically or thematically. If geographically, boundaries can be amended at any point. The networks should be mapped so that residents know who they can go to. Each pilot will evolve differently, responding to the specific characteristics and requirements of the area. Some Members were concerned that these networks may not work in every part of NYC.
- The networks should not replace Parish Councils but work with them.
- The networks will be stronger if they have fiscal power, but currently they do not.
- Each network may require somebody that is ultimately responsible for decisions and organising discussions.

Resolved –

- a) That further updates are provided where appropriate.

78 Independent Domestic Abuse Service

Considered – A presentation from Olivia King, Domestic Abuse Practitioner in Harrogate and Craven, and Kerri Rose, DAWFA Worker.

Olivia King and Kerri Rose introduced themselves and outlined the role of IDAS. The below is a summary of the discussion:

- IDAS provide emotional and practical support across North Yorkshire and other areas. In 2022 there were 93 referrals in Ripon and 164 in Skipton. Whilst these figures don't include the more rural areas, domestic abuse still occurs, and IDAS are looking at how they can provide additional support and promote their work. Those that are older or lack phone and broadband connectivity are at serious risk.
- The organisation's Board of Trustees, Survivors Advisory Board and service users influence how IDAS operates and feed into funding applications.
- IDAS is attempting to reach out to schools and other organisations in the area and Members may be able to assist with providing contacts. Healthcare is a specific area of interest for IDAS. Foundation and Staying Put are two other organisations that work in the area and IDAS work closely with the CAB.
- IDAS aims to increase the offices, refuges, disperse flats and safe accommodation in the area as whilst there are some dispersed flats in Ripon, the nearest refuge is in Harrogate. Members may be able to provide IDAS with contacts or help to find volunteers that can offer a room in their home as short respite.

- IDAS do not work directly with NYC but have links in the housing department that help to ensure people are safe in their own home or can move to alternative accommodation. Olivia and Kerri were unaware of any NYC funding.
- Members and residents can go to the police, IDAS, Foundation and Staying Put if they know someone who is at risk. Members said that they can circulate contact information to their Parish and Town Councils.

Resolved –

- a) That Members will assist IDAS in creating links with organisations in their area.
- b) That contact details be shared with Members to circulate to parishes and town councils.

79 Appointments to Outside Bodies

Considered –

A report by David Smith, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer, inviting the Committee to make appointments, on behalf of the Council, to various outside bodies.

The following changes to the report were made:

- The Chair and Vice Chair to sit on the Parishes Liaison Group. Members were keen that this group continue to meet.
- Councillor Staveley to sit on the Settle Freight Quality Partnership.
- Councillor Myers to sit on the Settle Area Swimming Pool Committee.
- Councillor Ireton to sit on the Heysham Power Station Local Liaison Council.
- Councillor Myers to sit on the Hospital of James Knowles Trust.
- Councillor Murday to sit on the Pateley Bridge Quarry, Greenhow - Board of Trustees.
- Councillor N Brown to sit on the Mazars Yorkshire and Humber Governance Forum for Members.
- Councillor Noland to sit on the Settle/Carlisle Railway Development Company.
- Councillor Hull to sit on the Prince Henry's Grammar School, Otley.

Resolved –

- a) That the appointments above and in the report are approved.

80 Appointments to Internal Drainage Boards

Considered –

A report by Christine Phillipson, Principal Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer, inviting the Committee to make appointments, on behalf of the Council, to vacant Internal Drainage Board positions.

Resolved –

- a) That the appointments in the report are approved.
- b) That Members are to propose nominations as they become apparent.

81 Reports for Information

This report was noted.

82 Committee Work Programme

Considered -

A report by David Smith, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer, inviting Members to consider, amend and add to the Committee's work programme.

Members made the following amendments to the work programme:

- Members asked to receive more regular updates on economic development projects ongoing within the area.
- Members asked that the Northern Powergrid item in December looks into how the grid can be extended more generally, not just focussing on electric vehicles.

83 Any Other Items

Councillor B Brodigan informed the Committee that the Ripon Military Heritage Trust is concerned about the preservation of military items on the site of the proposed development of Claro and Deverell Barracks and the adjoining Laver Banks training area. The Trust would like these to be re-located and on display to the public. However, there are issues with the developers.

Resolved –

- a) Councillors B Brodigan and A Williams to raise this with Councillor S Myers.
- b) Councillor B Brodigan to send information on this to Daniel Harry, Head of Democratic Services.

84 Date of Next Meeting

Thursday, 14 December 2023 at 10.00am.

The meeting concluded at 2.05pm.