

North Yorkshire Council

EXECUTIVE

20 February 2024

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). Specific recommendations to the Executive were made as follows:

2.0 HARROGATE AND KNARESBOROUGH ACC –23 NOVEMBER 2023

- 2.1 The Committee heard from two public representatives on the Councils Active Travel Scheme progress and an appeal for 20 mph zones in various parts of Harrogate. Both questions were referred to the Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee meeting on 18 January 2024.
- 2.2 The Committee considered a petition calling for ‘Recognition for Rachel Daly in her hometown’. Having considered the issues around cost and public perception, Members agreed to recommend to the Executive that the feasibility of developing a civic honours type scheme for the new Council be considered within 6 months with decisions about local recognition made in the appropriate area, and that Rachel Daly’s achievements be recognised through the new scheme.
- 2.3 The Committee also considered the Council’s response to a petition previously considered by the Committee about Electrical Vehicle Charging Points in Knaresborough. Some disappointment was expressed at the response, and it was suggested the Council should consider the future development of car parking and EV bays and develop a unified strategy and look to introduce on-street charging points. It was noted there was an ongoing piece of work looking at street charging but there were still challenges relating to installation, management and maintenance that would need to be addressed.
- 2.4 The Committee went on to receive a presentation on the Councils Playing Pitch Strategy which outlined the purpose of the strategy and the reasons for its development. It also provided a summary of the condition and provision of local pitches and made recommendations as to future courses of action with regards improving provision and how the Strategy could enable the Council to access and use open space contributions to address the outlined actions.
- 2.5 They also received a presentation from the Environment Agency focussed on their priorities around water quality issues with the River Nidd, and the financing and planning issues that would be required to address the many historic issues facing the area of the River Nidd.
- 2.6 Finally Members met with representatives of the Youth Council, and also discussed public safety concerns over the collapsed wall on Briggate Street in Knaresborough.

3.0 SCARBOROUGH AND WHITBY ACC – 1 DECEMBER 2023

- 3.1 The committee received two public questions seeking reassurances from the council: the first about the future of the Alpamare Water Park, and the second about the proposed establishment in Scarborough of a refuge for victims of domestic abuse. The latter was answered by Odette Robson, the Head of Community Safety and CCTV as part of her presentation to the committee about the new Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024-28 which also covered the work being done across the county to provide safe accommodation and protect victims from perpetrators, the embedded multi-agency approach, new governance model and use of commissioned services.
- 3.2 Winter preparedness on the coast was the subject of a presentation by Louise Wallace, Director of Public Health, Jenny Loggie Strategic Lead for Population Health and Inequalities, and Dora Machaira, Health Improvement Manager which centred on guidance for what could be done to keep well over winter, including practical solutions such as increased ventilation and staying away from people when unwell. Vaccination programmes were also discussed, and the importance of MMR vaccines was highlighted due to an increase of cases nationally. Members' questions included a request for data about falls and what more could be done to prevent them, and steps being taken to improve dentistry provision for the residents in Eastfield following the closure of the local dentist.
- 3.3 The committee considered the Annual Report of (Harbour) Performance against the Safety Plan which presented a positive picture of the harbour authority's efforts to ensure the operation of safe harbours across a range of measures in compliance with the Port Marine Safety Code. There were eight incidents to report amongst the 55,000 movements in the harbour, which showed a reduction from the previous year. None of these incidents found North Yorkshire Council to be at fault and there had been no drop in performance as a consequence of local government reorganisation.
- 3.4 Yorkshire Water's presentation on local bathing water quality coincided with the disappointing announcement that Reighton, Runswick Bay, and Scarborough North had slipped from excellent to good classifications, whilst Scarborough South Bay remained at poor. An update was provided regarding Aquarium Top in Scarborough which had seen a significant reduction in spills due to the redirection of sewage and surface water to the Toll House. Yorkshire Water was pleased to announce that their planned investment for 2020-2025 of £147m in their infrastructure to reduce discharges would now be increased by a further £180m. Further investment was planned from 2025-2030 of £1bn which would aim to improve further coastal assets. The programme for this work was under development. Members' questions covered a wide range of matters including YW's financial contribution to the planned Environment Agency investigations to identify potential influences on poor water quality, the cost of YW's additional investment to the bill payer, the impact of significant local housing allocations on Yorkshire Water's infrastructure, and the planned investment in surface water separation in the Whitby area.
- 3.5 Finally, the committee received a presentation by Northern Powergrid on its ongoing work to enable regional decarbonisation including the use of flexible connection agreements to allow speedier access to services and NP's support for local electric vehicle infrastructure and the social housing decarbonisation fund. In response to members' questions, the committee was assured that grid constraints were being addressed. Ofgem recently announced that it was introducing rules to remove 'zombie' energy projects from the grid connection queue, and the Chancellor's Autumn Statement included a promise to speed up access to the national grid through a number of measures including the acceleration of upgrades to substations and power lines to connect specific developments.

4.0 THIRSK AND MALTON ACC – 1 DECEMBER 2023

4.1 There were six public questions, each relating to the movement of heavy goods vehicles through villages in the constituency.

4.2 Kevin Hollinrake MP

4.3 Robert Ling, Director of Transformation at North Yorkshire Council, and Alastair Taylor, CEO of NYnet gave an update on broadband provision.

There followed a discussion with key points as summarised below:

- Concerns raised about the removal of public phone boxes and the criteria used by OFCOM. It is not uncommon for phone boxes to be broken and then left in a state of disrepair for a protracted period. This then means it is not possible for them to be used and so no calls are made, which means that it falls foul of the 52 call limit
- The commercial challenges faced by BT in maintaining public phone boxes is understood but there is a need to understand that impact that the removal of one can have upon a community
- There is a need to preserve public phone boxes in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty as they are part of the history of the area
- There are ongoing issues with connectivity in the Filey area that have yet to be addressed
- The changes to the landline network and the move from copper wires to fibre means that landlines no longer work in a power cut. This is of concern for vulnerable people living in an area with a poor mobile phone signal.

4.4 Presentation by Northern Powergrid – Enabling regional decarbonisation

4.5 A report by Callum McKeon, Assistant Director of Regulatory Services on the operation of the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) and the role of the SAG for the event known as Pickering Rocks held on 9 September 2023.

4.6 Graham North, Strategy & Performance Officer, gave an update on the Levelling Up Fund Rounds 2 and 3 in relation to the Thirsk and Malton stations bids.

4.7 Appointments to Committees. Councillors Goodrick, Baker and Andrews were appointed to the Development Plan Committee.

4.8 Update on the Scrutiny of Health Committee's ongoing scrutiny around North Yorkshire Ambulance Service, Dentistry and GP appointments was circulated for information only.

5.0 SKIPTON AND RIPON ACC – 14 DECEMBER 2023

5.1 There were two public statements. The first related to the reduction in the 72 Skipton – Grassington bus service and Members asked that an item regarding this be added to the 7th March agenda. The second was asking for an investigation into the leadership of the Upper Nidderdale Federation. Members recommended that the speaker asks for a written response from North Yorkshire Council regarding their complaint. Subsequently a petition of over 500 signatures was received and this will be discussed at the 7th March meeting.

5.2 The Rt Hon Julian Smith MP attended, and the following points were raised:

- Members highlighted overspends in NYC adult social care.
- The need for additional SEND funding was discussed.
- Settle Area Swimming Pool, as well as other NYC assets, was unsuccessful in their bid for financial support to assist with energy costs.

- Members expressed their concerns regarding the Skipton Barclays Bank closure.
- The Rt Hon Julian Smith MP asked that MPs are kept up to date with the work of the Council, especially when additional funding may be required.

- 5.3 The Nidderdale and Skipton Youth Councils provided an update on their work and Members were keen to keep involving youth councils in the area.
- 5.4 Members raised several concerns regarding local projects run by Northern Powergrid and so a representative was invited to the meeting to answer questions. The discussion was useful, and it was agreed that an update from Northern Powergrid's ongoing projects be added to the work programme as a standing item.
- 5.5 Two representatives from Airedale NHS Foundation Trust provided an update on the new Airedale Hospital before answering questions put to them by Members. It was agreed that regular updates regarding this project would be added to the work programme.
- 5.6 Members asked for an update on local care homes and so an intelligence report was put together. Members followed the presentation with a number of questions and it was agreed that a report with the following additional information go to the Committee: information on those care homes designated as requiring improvement; the opportunities to improve care home environmental sustainability; and information on the expected future situation of care homes in the area.
- 5.7 Parish Councillor Stanley Lumley and Mr David Gotto were appointed to fill the vacancies on the Gouthwaite Reservoir Board.
- 5.8 Councillor Felicity Cunliffe-Lister was appointed to the Development Plan Committee. Since the meeting, Councillors Robert Heseltine, Nathan Hull and Andy Brown were also appointed.

6.0 RICHMOND (YORKS) ACC – 18 DECEMBER 2023

- 6.1 The committee received a briefing on the work undertaken previously in relation to the vibrancy of market towns in the former Hambleton area, it also covered how that work is continuing and gave an update on the visitor economy and transport provision in the area. It was agreed that the work included a number of areas of good practice that could benefit all locations within the County.
- 6.2 The current position on the progress of drawing up an eligible list of projects from those put forward by Councillors for consideration as part of the Economic, Regeneration, Tourism and Transport Project Development Fund was provided. The Committee were advised that work would soon begin on developing the briefs to enable a full report to be brought to a future meeting for their consideration.
- 6.3 An update was provided on the A66 Northern Trans-Pennine Project. The details of the scheme were presented, and the process of the Development Consent Order explained. The Committee were advised that further consultation had been required on parts of the project due to a change in contractor resulting in a delay to work commencing. It was requested that a further update be provided when more progress has been made.
- 6.4 Councillor Paul Haslam, the Climate Change Champion gave an overview of his role together with details of his aspirations, including setting out the wider role all Councillors have in promoting and assisting with the delivery of the climate change goals.
- 6.5 Councillors David Hugill, Tom Jones and Yvonne Peacock were appointed to the Development Plan Committee.

- 6.6 Following a change to an Outside Body appointment, the Committee were required to reconsider the appointment to the Richmond School Trust. However, this was deferred for consideration to a future meeting to allow the categorisation of the body to be reviewed.
- 6.7 Finally, the Committee reviewed the work programme with the suggested additions being the Digital Switchover, subsidised educational transport, integrated passenger transport in Stokesley and the nonsubsidised Arriva Bus service.
- 6.8 The Committee has also held a number of informal workshops to consider the Let's Talk Climate consultation, the Economic, Regeneration, Tourism and Transport Project Development Fund and the Local Transport Plan consultation results.

7.0 BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 In January 2024 each Area Constituency Committee received a presentation on the draft budget for 2024-25 and provided feedback to the Corporate Director for Resources.

8.0 FINANCIAL & LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The financial and 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 September 2023.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 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 September 2023.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 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 September 2023.

11.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 The recommendations to the Executive have been made by the Area Constituency Committees as part of their consideration of local issues at their September 2023 round of committee meetings.

12.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 12.1 The Executive is asked to note the report and consider any matters arising from the work of the Area Constituency Committees detailed above, that merit further scrutiny, review or investigation at a county-level.

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Background Documents:

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

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

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