

## NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

21 FEBRUARY 2024

### STATEMENT OF CHAIR OF THE TRANSPORT, ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a remit that includes the following:

- Transport and communications infrastructure of all kinds, however owned or provided, and how the transport needs of the community are met;
- Supporting business, economic development and regeneration, the work of the Local Enterprise Partnership and helping people develop their skills, including lifelong learning;
- Sustainable development, climate change strategy, countryside management, waste management, environmental conservation and enhancement flooding and cultural issues.

Since the last Council meeting in November 2023, the committee have met twice to receive reports on a range of topics as part of the remit of the committee.

#### **18 January 2024 – Committee Meeting**

The meeting began with two public questions that were referred from Harrogate & Knaresborough ACC, concerning a specific clause in the 20mph Speed Limit and Zone policy and the delivery of Active Travel schemes across North Yorkshire. Both these topics were discussed at length and committee members raised a number of points that they have asked for further information from officers on.

James Farrar then joined the meeting to discuss the achievements of the York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), in particular the significant delivery of three capital investment programmes between 2012 and 2022, at a total value of £110 million of grant investment. He also spoke about how the work of the LEP will continue through the transition across to the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority. The committee were appreciative of James' work and that of the LEP to drive economic growth and prosperity in the county and hoped to continue to be kept updated on the work of the Combined Authority that falls within the remit of the committee as it develops.

The committee also considered the Notice of Motion on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the outcomes are reported back as part of a separate report on this agenda.

#### **1 February 2024 – Committee Meeting**

At the most recent meeting the committee heard first from Alastair Taylor of NYnet and Robert Ling about the progress of Superfast Broadband Programme in the county and the new Project Gigabit, with the procurement process nearly complete for the North Yorkshire lots. A trial has been launched by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) around Very Hard to Reach premises and it was pleasing to note that one of these is a Starlink solution at Rievaulx Abbey.

The removal of public phone boxes by BT was discussed and concerns raised from councillors around the implications on local communities of this. Furthermore, the plans by BT to retire the old copper phone network to replace it with a digital phone line were highlighted, in particular what this could mean for residents who have a Lifeline device or who require an emergency response.

Questions raised by members included:

- The obligation of mobile phone operators to improve poor signal areas across North Yorkshire.
- The affordability and availability of broadband internet, particularly for elderly or vulnerable residents.
- The public need more information to help them feel more confident when using technology.

Next, members received an update on the development of a new Local Transport Plan (LTP). It was pleasing to note the consultation sessions held with all of the Area Constituency Committees (ACC), and to see how highly the public ranked 'Public Transport' as a priority in the Let's Talk Transport public consultation. We will be closely following the development of the LTP through the approval stage and beyond.

Following this, we considered the Climate Change Delivery Pathway, setting out the proposed tasks, actions and activities in areas such as governance, adaptation and supporting nature, that will underpin the overall Climate Change Strategy that was approved back in July 2023. Questions from members related to tree planting, encouraging walking and cycling and the potential to secure external private sector funding to help deliver the identified measures within the delivery pathway.

The final topic that was discussed was an update on the bus services in North Yorkshire. It was encouraging to hear about the improving passenger numbers recently and the potential opportunities for further funding through phase 3 of the Bus Service Improvement Plan. Topics discussed were the future of the £2 fare cap, improving cross boundary services, plans for the wider bus infrastructure such as bus stops and notice boards, and the potential for a wider comms campaign to encourage travel by bus.

### **Work Programme**

The next meeting of the committee is scheduled to take place on 10 April 2024, where we expect to hear from National Highways as well as reports on arrangements to monitor and improve air quality levels across the county.

COUNCILLOR DAVID STAVELEY  
8 February 2024