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North Yorkshire Council

Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 18th January, 2024 commencing at 10.00 am.

Councillor David Staveley in the Chair plus Councillors Mark Crane, Melanie Davis, Caroline Dickinson (substitute), Hannah Gostlow, Paul Haslam, David Ireton, David Jeffels, George Jabbour (substitute), Tom Jones (substitute), Steve Mason, Arnold Warneken and Steve Watson.

Officers present: Melisa Burnham, James Farrar, Michael Leah, Allan McVeigh, Simon Moss and Will Baines.

Apologies: Councillors John Cattanach, Caroline Goodrick, Phil Trumper, Robert Windass, Subash Sharma and Philip Barrett.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor John Cattanach, Caroline Goodrick, Phil Trumper, Robert Windass, Subash Sharma and Philip Barrett.

Councillors Caroline Dickinson, George Jabbour and Tom Jones attended as substitute members.

2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 October 2023

Resolved -

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2023, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed by the Chair as a correct record.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Public Participation

One public statement had been submitted prior to the committee from Mr Ian Conlan:

Concerning Agenda item 5, on including the DfT guidance in your 20mph policy: "Traffic authorities can introduce 20mph speed limits on major streets where there are - or could be - significant numbers of journeys on foot/cycle, and this outweighs the disadvantage of longer journey times on the motorist.

In Malton and Norton, just one major NW to SE route, B1257 Broughton Rd to B1248 Beverly Road through Butcher Corner, is responsible for half, or 30 out the 60 casualties in Malton and Norton urban area over the last 5 years, including 1 fatality 6 serious injuries

and 23 minor injuries, many of them pedestrians, child cyclists, elderly residents. Most casualties are on this or other main roads, many of them at junctions.

The decisions based on the current policy demonstrate that there is such extreme reluctance to bring in 20mph on main roads as to make it impossible. This policy in practice treats pedestrians and cyclists as second class citizens in their own communities, and takes a Victorian approach of profit before safety. But doing nothing effective about road safety costs society in the long run.

Removing onerous conditions such as has occurred in Cornwall and elsewhere is essential in order to make any significant and lasting improvements in road safety. Hiding behind a restrictive interpretation of DfT guidance should fool no one.

Will councillors select to instead agree to the Action Vision Zero Target of zero killed and seriously injured on our roads by 2030 in this committee, with an intermediate target of 50% reduction in killed and seriously injured by 2027.

With the new Mayor for York and North Yorkshire holding significant power and funds on Transport policy and direction, it is essential that North Yorkshire speak up on road safety, and actually listen to the most vulnerable residents: 77 out of 99 residents who returned surveys in Malton backed the Town Council's position on making 20mph the normal speed limit for the town.

Allan McVeigh, Head of Network Strategy responded as follows:

The North Yorkshire Council 20mph speed limit and zone policy that Mr Conlan refers to, is progressive and a significant step forward from its earlier iteration. The Council's Executive approved changes to a revised policy in 2022, which have resulted in 37 20mph scheme applications having since been received, with nine schemes approved from 12 that have been through the full review process; one of which being unprecedented in scale covering the Pannal Ash and Oatlands areas of Harrogate. This scheme does include Category 3A and 3B roads, which can be described as major streets. The policy revision and indeed a more recent report, approved by the Council's Executive in July last year, will also result in the introduction of a planned programme of speed limit reviews across the urban and rural road network, including major streets and is actually prioritising the vulnerable road users referred to by Mr Conlan.

The 20mph speed limit and zone policy already makes reference to acting in accordance with the DfT Circular 01/2013 and the York and North Yorkshire Road Safety Partnership Safer Roads Strategy refers to road safety partners, including North Yorkshire Council, working towards Vision Zero.

A review of speed surveys on the B1257 and B1248 through Malton and Norton shows speeds are already low with ranges between 17 and 25mph within the town, the majority being at or just below 20mph, which suggests there is not a problem with speed compliance on these roads.

We note the collision statistics referred to by Mr Conlan, which are consistent with the data held by the council. North Yorkshire Council undertakes annual and in-year analysis of collision data to identify the sites and routes with the poorest collision record in terms of number and severity of collisions. It is though essential to look at context and causation factors to identify any trends and patterns that can be mitigated through intervention.

I would seek to assure Mr Conlan that there is no reluctance to introduce 20mph speed limits on main roads, where it is considered to be suitable to do so, as evidenced by the proposed introduction of lower speed limits on major streets in Harrogate. There are many different criteria to consider through the assessment process and the Council's policy is explicit in recognising the need to move away from solely using collision and speed data

and recognising the benefits that lower speed limits can bring to communities, and modal shift is a key objective.

As a supplementary question Mr Conlan asked:

That said, how do you explain your decisions, for instance, in Langton and Welburn which concern one main road running through each village. I think there is an inconsistency and an unwillingness to actually embrace a default 20mph speed limit.

In response, it was noted that DfT Circular 01/2013 states that councils can consider introducing 20mph speed limits on main streets, where we consider it appropriate to do so, and in areas where we don't, then those proposals are not taken forwards. In terms of the perceived unwillingness to introduce 20mph schemes in North Yorkshire, the 20mph Speed Limit and Zone policy has been to the Executive, it was called in and considered by this committee. But it is not the policy of North Yorkshire Council to introduce default 20mph schemes. What it does do is it takes a proactive approach working with communities, and where there is support locally, and the council considers a 20mph scheme to be consistent with our policy, then it absolutely does look to implement those.

It was also added that in terms of January 2022 when North Yorkshire Council introduced the revised 20mph Speed Limit and Zone policy approach, there was a lot of criticism then that the policy would create additional barriers to the creation of future 20mph speed limit zones in North Yorkshire. It was felt by the officer that it has actually done the reverse, with a significant increase in the number of requests that have been received and as a result of that, a significant increase in the number of 20mph speed limit schemes that have been approved.

5 Question referred from Harrogate and Knaresborough ACC (1)

Considered – Report of the public statement and response text referred from the Harrogate and Knaresborough Area Constituency Committee (H&K ACC) on 23 November 2023.

Hazel Peacock attended to read out her original public statement to the committee, following which Allan McVeigh, Head of Network Strategy, then read out the response provided at the H&K ACC meeting.

A discussion then followed, in which questions and comments raised by elected members included:

- Councillor Arnold Warneken asked whether major streets in Harrogate were not able to be classified as 20mph speed limit zones because of the large volume of traffic on them? For example, on Hookstone Road or Wetherby Road in Harrogate, is the volume of traffic so high that it cannot be considered for speed reclassification. In response, it was noted that traffic volume is one of the considerations for implementing 20mph speed limits, but it is not the only one or the overriding one. Other factors include the collision history of the road, the composition of the road users, the function of the road, the proximity to schools and high footfall areas – a whole host of different criteria set out in the DfT circular 01/2013 – 'Setting local speed limits'.
- Reference was made to plans for the Harrogate Gateway scheme and comments made concerning potential speed restrictions on Station Parade.
- There was a concern of transparency for the public on how to find out what a main road is defined as to assist when making an application for a 20mph speed limit. It was also asked whether road category information could be made available in a user friendly way on the Council's website. In response, it was noted that road category information

is set out in the Code of Practice for Highways Maintenance. The road network is set out and categorised according to its functions, such as whether it is a strategic road designed to move high volumes of traffic over long distances, or is it more residential in nature for pedestrians and cyclists to use. Effectively, you have a road hierarchy that sets this out in North Yorkshire, from category 2 roads, which are strategic roads, going down to 3a, 3b, 4a and 4b. Typically in North Yorkshire, carriageways are category 2 or category 3 roads.

- In terms of transparency, the network hierarchy for North Yorkshire is online, but it is accepted by officers that it is difficult to find currently. It is proposed to make this more visible by sitting a table alongside the 20mph Speed Limit and Zone Policy on the website, so that the reader can refer to both documents at the same time. A series of planned speed limit reviews across the whole of the network in North Yorkshire, both urban and rural, are to be undertaken in the coming months and years, so officers will be proactively engaging with communities.
- Councillor Hannah Gostlow asked what the impact would be if the speed limit reductions had taken place on the roads under discussion. Is the issue the delays to journeys? In response, it was explained that delays is not necessarily the main factor, there is also the congestion and negative impact on air quality to consider alongside this.
- It was asked if physical barriers could be used to protect pedestrians on narrow pavements?
- A Member felt as a council we need to listen to the priorities of local people and change our default position, to look at different ways of doing things.
- In response on a question on enforcement, it was noted that North Yorkshire Police has commissioned a study to look at the feasibility of fixed and average speed cameras in the county, it is an active project.
- On implementing 20mph speed limits outside schools, it was emphasised that the revised policy states that there will be more 20mph speed limits outside schools and high footfall areas.
- It was reaffirmed that the local elected member will be a central part of the local engagement process in any traffic plans put forward.
- Councillor Paul Haslam asked if there is a halfway house option of a timed window of speed restrictions. In response, it was not believed that this was enforceable, but the officer committed to coming back with a fuller response.
- Councillor David Ireton felt that motorists do not take notice of speed limits unless they are enforced.
- The pros and cons of introducing 20mph speed limits in other areas of the country, and how much this was accounted for when developing the revised policy for North Yorkshire was asked about. In response, the background research undertaken of 20mph schemes elsewhere in the country, such as in Wales, Scotland and other parts of England was set out and formed a key part of the most recent report to the Executive.
- Councillor David Jeffels asked in areas where there are difficulties introducing a specific speed limit, can Vehicle Activated Signs display 'Slow Down' to offer more flexibility.

Despite not implementing 20mph speed limits on the roads in question, officers explained that they are engaging with alternative options to keep road users safe. As part of this:

- Road signage and lining reviews are taking place to see if improvement measures can be made.
- A pilot School Streets, the first in North Yorkshire, has been introduced for Oatlands Junior School to limit traffic in term time

- Officers are recommending a 20mph speed limit in front of one entrance to Oatlands Infants School
- Traffic calming measures including a 20mph speed limit on Oatlands Drive and a new crossing point at the end of Oatlands Drive
- Seeking to improve and widen the existing crossing at St Aidan's CE High School.

There is one school that is not covered as part of these improvements outside it, but officers are working with that school on travel planning and improving the existing signing and lining. Officers are also meeting with the primary school on Wetherby Road and are committed to a review of the signage and lining and the existing crossing points on that road.

A significant amount of work has been undertaken to review these areas for potential improvements, and later this year the extensive implementation of 20mph speed limits in residential areas in South and West of Harrogate.

A proposal was moved and seconded to set up a Task and Finish group to consider the issues raised in detail, to review current policies and their impact in terms of making road safer for all users, in particular people and active travel alongside the good work already underway.

Upon being put to the vote, this proposal was lost.

In summing up the discussion, the Chair noted he was reassured by the ongoing and commitment to proactive work by officers and that the local member is a key part of any consultation process for speed limit mitigation work. A future update from officers on how this area of work is progressing, picking up the main issues raised by elected members at the meeting, was requested.

Resolved – That the further information and clarifications requested form part of a future report to the Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

6 Question referred from Harrogate and Knaresborough ACC (2)

Considered – Report of the public statement and response text on active travel referred from the Harrogate and Knaresborough Area Constituency Committee (H&K ACC) on 23 November 2023.

Councillor Arnold Warneken began the discussion by asking officers what would be done differently to make the Council more successful in future bids for active travel funding and learning from previous submissions?

In response, Allan McVeigh, Head of Network Strategy, noted that although recent bids to the Active Travel Fund (ATF) had not been successful, in overall terms it was felt that the Council has been successful in capital and revenue terms to secure funding for active travel schemes, such as through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) packages, National Productivity Investment Fund and Emergency Active Travel funding.

Following the recent ATF funding rejections, it was confirmed that the Council always seeks to receive feedback from the Department of Transport as to why a particular bid at that time wasn't successful.

It was noted that since 2010 and the significant reduction in integrated transport block funding, there has been a focus on the priority of managing and maintaining the highway network. That is now starting to change, and it's likely that we will be receiving more money

for developing active travel in the future, potentially through the Mayoral Combined Authority for improvement-type active travel schemes.

Councillor Haslam felt that there are a number of easy wins that could be achieved, particularly in Harrogate, and they should be looked into. For example, there are lots of bits of footpaths and cycleways that are “unmade” and could be improved for a low cost into suitable paths/routes. These could be quick wins for active travel and safe cycling provision in the borough.

He felt that instead of focussing on big schemes and waiting for money to be handed down from government, that carrying out smaller pieces of work in the meantime would have a beneficial impact.

e.g. (1) Path behind Hornbeam Park that crosses various roads in various places, to make it safer.

(2) A61 into Harrogate, there’s a left turn onto the Greenway and you would be on a safe route right into the middle of Harrogate, but due to insufficient signage it isn’t widely used by cyclists and pedestrians.

These are labour intensive but low cost projects. As long as these smaller projects build into a wider active travel policy, then it was felt that they would be beneficial and improve public satisfaction. We would be seen as a Council to be a) taking action and b) when money becomes available from central government for bigger projects in the future, we’d be ready to go.

In response, the officer felt that it is exactly the approach the council has taken, but there is always more to do, as shown in the examples given.

It was noted that the council has been proactively engaging with the Harrogate and District Cycle Action Group (H&D CAG) to formulate a network of cycle plans together for in and around Harrogate. There is a meeting with H&D CAG shortly to discuss progress and will lead to a report going to the Corporate Director and Executive Member for Highways and Transportation. A Member asked whether consultation would take place with the ACC and Town/Parish Councils on the Corporate Director/Executive Member report. This was to be considered.

It was asked if the current list of active travel plans have a priority order for delivery? Is there a record of the active travels schemes that we don’t go ahead with? It was understood that there is little available spending in the current Council budget, due to the need for expenditure on adult social care and home to school transport.

Councillor Steve Mason raised efforts in the Malton area to get kids walking and cycling to school. He noted the work of the Ryedale Cycling Forum in raising concerns. He asked for an update on the Malton to Pickering cycle route, as surfacing of the route had not been completed. Despite lobbying for someone to finish off the route to make it happen, no one is wanting to take responsibility for it. That would be a quick win. The officer agreed to look into this project.

Councillor Arnold Warneken asked about the delays in forming an Active Travel team within the new unitary council and the reasons for this?

In response, it was explained by the officer that following a significant reduction in integrated transport block funding around 2010, active travel delivery has for a number of years now, been reliant almost exclusively on external funding from bidding opportunities and local developments.

Looking forward there is likely to be more funding available through the proposed Mayoral Combined Authority in the form of the recently announced Local Integrated Transport

Settlement (LITS), which will begin in 2025. The expectation is that this will provide a greater level of funding and critically, provide funding stability, as the money will be over seven years. This will facilitate a forward programme of works over a sustained period of time and provide the Council with the funding to invest in the resources required to deliver against that programme.

In the meantime, a new post has been established in Harrogate, which will be focussed on managing improvement projects and ensuring delivery of active travel schemes on the ground.

Also, the development of a new Local Transport Plan will allow for a focus on low carbon transport which will steer funding towards active travel modes.

It was asked if the council could take a basic version of the active travel framework from the Harrogate model and apply the principles to other areas in North Yorkshire, to try and adopt a more consistent approach and to create some momentum around active travel delivery.

In response, it was noted by the officer that some of the reasons why delivery is slower than liked is down to resource pressure. The new post referenced above is predominantly focussed on Harrogate currently as that is where the funding has been allocated and schemes currently exist. If another significant active travel scheme was successful in another area, then there is no reason why that postholder could not move to work onto that.

Councillor Melanie Davis emphasised the need to step up as a council on active travel, join up the dots and find the resource to be able to deliver.

In rounding up the discussion, Councillor David Staveley noted many examples under predecessor councils of planning applications where active/green travel plans are submitted. He felt that it is clear that we should be looking for solutions, although funding is currently a big issue to overcome for the delivery of active travel schemes. However, with the formation of a new Combined Authority shortly and a new Mayor elected in May, this does give another opportunity to influence and champion spending on active travel schemes, particularly given the transport powers are set to sit under its remit.

It is clear from the comments made that there are currently inconsistencies across the county on delivering active travel.

The Chair suggested a working group be set up later in the year, once the Mayor is appointed and in post, to look at how to establish consistent active travel plans across the county and also link to the planning work with developing a new Local Plan for North Yorkshire. It was noted that the committee was set to receive an update on the Local Transport Plan at an additional committee meeting in two weeks' time, so it was agreed to wait until that date to consider next steps.

Resolved – That the referral of the public question to the committee and the comments arising be noted.

7 Notice of Motion on United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Considered – A report providing an overview of the current work of North Yorkshire Council in relation to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The committee were joined by Michael Leah, Assistant Director – Environmental Services and Simon Moss, Strategy and Performance Team Leader to answer technical questions on the UN SDGs.

As the proposer of the Notice of Motion, Councillor Steve Mason set out the rationale and

context behind it, the key points of which were:

- The motion was submitted to try and bring the UN SDGs into the strategies of the Council.
- It is about changing our collaboration with partners, finding potential black spots in the Council Plan in relation to the UN SDGs and identify where we can do better.
- Achieving better social value, for example through the allocation of Member Locality Grants and the potential multiplier effect of funding allocations.
- The LGA recommends that undertaking a mapping exercise will lead the council into making choices about which SDGs and targets align most to its own locality and communities, rather than having to adopt them all.
- He felt the Council could publish a report together with the Council Plan to show the external wider public the progress made against the SDGs as a local authority and by doing this it would help to encourage other organisations such as NGOs, businesses and community groups to get involved and engage with us.
- He noted the recommendations of the Audit Committee and felt they could be echoed as part of any recommendations from the Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise O&S Committee.

Simon Moss from the Strategy and Performance team detailed the work undertaken to map the North Yorkshire Council Plan Objectives against the UN SDGs (Appendix B) and subsequent work to look at other strategies and services provided by the Council that contribute to the UN SDGs (Appendix C). This showed that all of the 17 goals are covered by at least two of the NYC Council Plan objectives.

Of the underlying 167 targets, although some are applicable to the function of the council e.g. reducing waste generation and integrating climate change measures into policies and plans; many are not, for example reducing the illicit arms trade or combatting desertification. It should also be noted that a lot of the underlying targets are aimed at encouraging developing countries that are furthest behind to improve in particular areas, such as infant mortality, so a selective approach is required into which of the targets that we as North Yorkshire Council want to focus on and collaborate with others.

On the reporting, given the close relationship between the Council Plan and the SDGs, it was felt the right approach was to use and reference the SDGs into the next Council Plan, rather than creating a separate piece of work. It was noted that the SDGs are a useful tool to aid our current framework and thinking.

Following this and some general comments made by members, it was

Resolved - That the following recommendations on the UN SDGs motion be considered by Full Council on 21st February 2024:

1. The Committee notes that the Council is already working towards delivering some of the objectives that the UN SDGs outline; and;
2. Ask that the Executive Member for Managing our Environment informs Council Leadership Teams to make them aware of the importance of and the commitment to the UN SDGs, and;
3. The Council use and reference the UN SDGs in the ongoing development and communication of the Council Plan.

8 York & North Yorkshire LEP Capital Investment Programme and Delivery Plan Review

Considered – Report of the Director of Transition setting out the impact of the York & North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (YNY LEP).

The LEP will transfer across to the Combined Authority from 1st February 2024 and will be the organisation taking this agenda forwards in the future.

James Farrar started by thanking the committee for the positive challenge put forwards in many areas over the years of the YNY LEP since its formation in 2010.

- During its tenure, the YNY LEP has invested over £270m in the region. Through the Local Growth Fund, £145.9m was secured in infrastructure investments for 56 projects. For every £1 invested, £9 private sector investment has been delivered, totalling over £1.2 billion into the economy of the region.
- Following Covid-19, an additional £15.7m investment was secured through the 'Get Building Fund' in 15 projects, in particular to improve the digital infrastructure on nine rural business parks and 20 town centre WiFi areas.
- Nine flood resilience projects totalling £7.1m levered over £26m additional investment and will create or protect 1570 jobs and a cost benefit ratio of 9:1 when looking at the wider impact.
- Facilities for colleges were improved through a £12.3m investment to help young people prepare for careers of the future right across the region.
- Enterprise Zone status has been secured for the 'York Central' scheme, investing an additional £7.5m in infrastructure. Master development partners were appointed just before Christmas to progress the scheme, which will benefit not just York but the wider region as well, and is envisaged to deliver 6500 new jobs, 2500 new homes and £1.1billion Gross Value Added (GVA) benefit.
- The work of the YNY LEP couldn't have been achieved without the partnerships with the former district and county councils. The public/private sector partnership approach has delivered a range of capital projects and using a range of expertise to work through any difficulties and uncertainties has proved invaluable.
- The LEP also led on securing over £90m EU funding, in particular over £7m into the Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund, which has subsequently delivered a huge rate of return on investment (the highest in the North of England), benefitting many businesses and SMEs in North Yorkshire.
- The European Social Fund saw £44.5m in skills investment, with £17m in social inclusion and £19m in the workforce that supported over 25,000 individuals to improve their skills or address barriers to employment.
- North Yorkshire benefitted from over £13m investments from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) to support the creation of 22 food processing businesses, 304 new jobs and bringing 59 new products to market alongside business development and tourism infrastructure to help stimulate activity.
- The LEADER programme, managed by the YNY LEP supported Community Led Local Development in the most deeply rural areas, such as the Yorkshire Dales and the North York Moors, coast and hills communities.
- Wider work has seen the 'Routemap to Carbon Negative' developed to provide ambitious plans for the region to deliver net zero and beyond, as well as taking advantage of the economic opportunities it represents. The scale of challenge is enormous, but the work to develop the routemap has seen the region be selected by government to pilot an approach to securing private sector investment into natural capital (£1m) and to explore the potential for private sector investment into Local Area Energy Plans (£2m).

- £750k from the Community Renewal Fund to pilot new approaches in the hardest to decarbonise homes, such as the old stone houses in rural North Yorkshire, plus working with the NHS to deliver feasibility studies at key hospitals whilst also decarbonising community buildings. This will be built on by the £7m Net Zero Fund agreed as part of the Devolution Deal for the new Combined Authority. This requires a collaborative approach, such as the 'Grow Yorkshire' initiative that brought together the National Farmers Union, the Country Land and Business Association (CLA), Yorkshire Agricultural Society, University of York and FERA.
- Support for business has always been at the heart of the LEP work, such as small business support through The Growth Hub and COVID support grants to businesses during national restrictions of lockdown 1, 2 and 3, which will continue as part of a new collaborative 'One Front Door' model under the Combined Authority.
- Lessons learnt include the development of strong relationships across a key range of stakeholders, embedding partnership in everything we do. The YNY LEP is a public/private partnership and the mutual respect and genuine joint working has been key to its success.

As the Combined Authority is set up, it is hoped to continue these strong working relationships, with trust and transparency to be bigger, better and bolder in the future to deliver on our key ambitions.

Resolved – That the committee note the impact of the LEP since its inception; and thank the LEP team for all their hard work.

9 Work Programme

Considered -

Resolved - That the work programme be noted.

10 Any other items

There were no other items.

The meeting concluded at 1.15 pm.