

North Yorkshire Council

Richmond (Yorks) Area Constituency Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 17th June, 2024 commencing at 10.00 am at County Hall, Northallerton

Councillors Yvonne Peacock, Caroline Dickinson, Kevin Foster, David Hugill, Carl Les, Steve Watson, David Webster, John Weighell OBE and Annabel Wilkinson.

Councillor Heather Moorhouse attended remotely.

Officers present: Mark Ashton – Strategic Planning Officer, Louise Wilson – Head of School Improvement, Cerys Townend – Locality Manager (Inclusion), Steve Loach, Democratic Services Officer, Lucy Moss-Blundell – Migrant Programmes Manager, Sharon Hudson and Lisa Wilson – Localities West Team, Austin Gordon – Richmond Leisure Trust, Andy Clarke – Public and Community Transport Manager, Nigel Smith - Head of Highway Operations and Jayne Charlton - Area Manager Areas 1 and 2

Other Attendees: 8 members of the public and a representative of the press.

Apologies: Councillors Bryn Griffiths, Stuart Parsons, Karin Sedgwick Angus Thompson and Peter Wilkinson.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

83 Election of Chair

Resolved –

That Councillor Yvonne Peacock be elected Chair of the Richmond (Yorks) ACC for 2024/25 until the meeting following the Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2025

Councillor Peacock thanked Members for her election and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

She stated that Members would be aware of the pre-election period, with the General Election being held on 4 July 2024. Whilst the business of the Council continued, Members should be mindful of avoiding giving an individual or a political group a platform by which they could influence public opinion in the lead up to the election. She asked that all members were mindful of this during today's proceedings

84 Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 18 March 2024

The Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 18 March 2024 having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chair as an accurate record.

85 Election of Vice-Chair

Resolved –

That Councillor Caroline Dickinson be elected Vice-Chair of the Richmond (Yorks) ACC for 2024/25 until the meeting following the Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2025

86 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Yvonne Peacock declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of the agenda item Stronger Communities update in relation to her being a Board Member of the Upper Dales Community Partnership who had a great deal of involvement with the Stronger Communities service.

87 Public Participation

Questions/statements from Northallerton Town Council

Bus Provision to Serve New Residential Developments to the North of Northallerton.

In 2016 planning consent was granted by Hambleton District Council for some 900 houses forming part of the North Northallerton Development Area. Much of the residential element has now been constructed and is occupied. The signed Section 106 Agreement (dated 2nd December 2016) clearly includes the requirement to fully implement the incorporated Framework Travel Plan, which contains the statement that an hourly bus service would be funded for a five-year period by the applicant, along with associated infrastructure.

Whilst bus stops have been implemented no bus service has been provided to date

Given the large size of the development and its distance from the town centre, the Town Council would like to ask why no bus service has been provided to date, as referenced in the Section 106 Agreement, and what measures are now proposed to ensure that residents are able to access key town centre services by public transport?

Furthermore, the Town Council would like to understand how NYC can provide assurances that any future major planning applications, specifically relating to land to the east of Stokesley Road, will be serviced by public transport?

It should be noted that NYC's Let's Talk Transport consultation demonstrated that bus services in the Hambleton area was the main transport related issue for residents. This was confirmed and reinforced by a well-attended Transport Consultation Event held by the three Parish Councils in Northallerton on Saturday 10th February 2024.

Questions/statements from Northallerton Area Over Fifties Forum

Why does NYC Passenger Transport not give adequate time for consulting members of the public, in particular bus passengers, prior to making changes to all bus services ?

A recent example of this is the Northallerton Town Bus Service 74a & 74b bus services which are being suddenly been adapted to incorporate a 74c service, totally to the detriment of the 74a & 74b services.

Whilst it is recognised that the North Moor Road development requires a bus service, it should not be to the major detriment of existing bus services, which is what has happened before with this bus service.

We did request that the introduction of the 74c service be PAUSED until a suitable alternative & acceptable proposal can be made available, a request which has been ignored.

Response from North Yorkshire Passenger Transport Services – Andy Clarke

When the Highway authority was initially consulted on planning application 15/01083/HYB, the North Northallerton development site, it was recommended a number of payments were sought, including money to help fund additional bus services. However, as detailed in the planning officers report for the application eventually considered by the planning committee

at Hambleton DC, it was noted that some of the funding originally requested (not just the bus contribution but also some other payments) were not to be included due to the impact this would have on the viability of the scheme. The S106 that was eventually signed, dated 2/12/2016, did not detail a payment from the developer to the highway authority for bus services. With no specific funding being provided we have been unable to introduce a new service to the North Northallerton to date. However we are now proposing to extend the North Yorkshire Council town service to include some new off peak 74C journeys to the development. These will start on 10th June and a copy of the timetable is attached.

With regard to future applications the highway authority would review the proposals in due course but accessibility by all means of transport and all users will be a key requirement. On bus provision specifically should it be deemed the existing services do not adequately serve a proposed development the developer may put forward their own proposals or be requested to contribute towards or fund new services. However there can be competing financial demands and viability assessments for an application that have to be taken into account and it would be for members of the planning committee to assess the benefits of any development coming forward and what if any financial contributions can and should be sought for public transport.

In response to the issues raised by the Over Fifties Forum he stated that the changes were in response to requests from members of the public and councillors for a service to North Northallerton. Proposals had been shared with Councillors in April and then more widely in mid-May with the changes due to take effect from the 10th June. Subsequent feedback resulted in some timetable amendments and the start date was then delayed until 17th June to allow time for these to be communicated.

The Chair noted that local Members would like to have had a full discussion on the issues raised by the questions/statements but were restricted due to being in a pre-election period for the forthcoming General Election. It was agreed, therefore, that the questions/statements would be re-submitted to the September meeting of the Committee to allow a more extensive discussion to take place.

88 Updates from the Previous Meeting

The Chair referred to the discussion on the BT Digital Phone line roll out in Upper Dales Areas at the previous meeting and the subsequent press release which had highlighted what action residents could take and had provided useful contacts.

89 Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies

Resolved –

That Valerie Margaret Nelson be appointed to the Atkinson and Clarke Educational Foundation, a Category 3 appointment, as nominated by the local Member, Councillor Tom Jones.

90 Annual Schools Educational Achievement & Finance Report - Report for Information Only

A report informing the Committee of the local educational landscape, educational achievement and the financial challenges which affect schools in the Richmond (Yorks) constituency committee area had been submitted to the previous meeting and a further report, providing the details requested by Members, was submitted to address those issues.

The report again included details of:

- The number of schools across the area and their status;
- School standards and attainment;
- Suspension incidents and exclusions;
- Special educational needs and disabilities;
- Elective home education;
- School Finance; and
- Local school place planning issues.

Previously Members had request details in respect of the following:-

- The provisional key stage 4 data, specifically the attainment 8 score, which measures achievement of a pupil across eight qualifications. The score for pupils across the constituency area has been consistently below both the North Yorkshire and national average for a number of years. Clarification on what steps were being taken to address the situation was requested.
- The issue of school funding and budget management.
- The marked increase in suspensions and in particular the significant increase in 2022/23 with clarification sought on the reasons behind the increase and the measures being taken to bring about a reduction in the numbers. Separate figures showing the length of suspensions was also requested.

Appendices provided full details of the information requested, alongside the original report.

- A Member highlighted the fall in attainment for children in early years for 2023 and asked whether this was related to the affect of COVID. In response it was stated that this was the case but the attainment figures were now improving and were expected to improve further, going forward. The impact on pupils was at different stages, dependent upon their Key Stage level. Members stated that they would continue to monitor the data to determine whether improvements in attainment continued, going forward.
- A member referred to the SEN statistics provided within the report and sought clarification as to whether the figure of those children with an EHCP related to the Constituency area. In response it was stated that the figure was in relation to all school children in the North Yorkshire Council area that received additional funding in view of them having an EHCP.
- The Chair suggested that any further issues in relation to the report should be taken up directly with the appropriate officers outside of the meeting.

Resolved –

That the report and issues raised be noted.

91 Stronger Communities – Annual update

Considered – A report providing Members with an update on the Stronger Communities Programme and an overview of progress made in the Richmond Constituency area in 2023/24.

The report highlighted the following:-

- Core Stronger Communities Programme
 - Community Anchor Organisations (CAOs)
 - Inspire Grants
 - Community Partnerships
 - Capacity Building

- Broader Stronger Communities work
 - Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF)
 - Household Support Fund
 - North Yorkshire Local Assistance Fund (NYLAF)
 - Food Insecurity
 - Broader Cost of Living Activity
 - Homes for Ukraine Programme
 - UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)
 - Digital Inclusion
 - Health & Wellbeing
- Progress in Richmond Constituency area
- Future arrangements – Localities restructure

The Committee were introduced to Sharon Hudson (Manager) and Lisa Wilson (Lead Officer) for the Localities West Team.

Members welcomed the report and praised the work carried out by the Stronger Communities Team in local communities throughout the Constituency area. It was requested that further initiatives from the team be reported to subsequent meetings of the Committee.

Resolved –

That the report and the newly appointed Localities West Team be welcomed by the Committee.

92 Let’s Talk Food - Feedback Session

The Chair noted that details of the consultation were provided in the report submitted to the Committee.

Members noted that a final report, with recommendations, was to be created from the feedback provided and suggested that this be brought to the Committee for consideration when it was available. Should members wish to discuss the issues raised within the report they could contact officers directly or submit details via the Clerk.

Resolved -

That the details submitted be noted and a further update be provided when the final report is in place.

93 Richmond Leisure Trust – Presentation

Considered:-

A presentation by Austin Gordon of the Richmond Leisure Trust highlighting the following:-

- Summary of Richmondshire Leisure service and facilities

Total Annual Visits = 48,258 , this was for 9.5 months due to closure of the Pool in July , August and half of September 2023. Expected visits for a full year 60,000

Total Health and Fitness Members: 659 as of 31st March 2024

Total Swim Lesson Numbers: 275 , this number having dropped from 395 before the first closure in summer 2022

A deficit was incurred in 2023/24 of circa £52k, this would have been a surplus position of £50k had it not been for the additional £102k on utility consumption.

- Liberty Health Club – Membership Trends
- Richmond Pool – usage
- Current Organisation Challenges

Managing a deficit budget largely due to significant increase in utility consumption following the capital scheme.

Driving income especially learn to swim following a big reduction, following two closures in 2022 & 2023.

Managing the process of migrating the business from RLT to NYC along with winding up of RLT.

Managing building issues – ageing facility.

Long term future of Liberty's gym, current lease ends in 2026.

Future car park arrangements with nearby Station.

- Transformation

Management at RLT were involved in the Strategic Leisure Review that shaped the new Sport and Active Wellbeing service.

Staff are all receptive and supportive of the transformation and the approved Executive Report to bring facilities back in house, at a yet to be determined timeframe.

The RLT management team have held an initial scoping meeting with NYC to discuss transition, ICT, HR, etc.

Alongside the requirement of 'business as usual', the flexibility of approach from the new service has been a positive.

- Developing

Whilst still facing operational challenges such as energy costs, recent closures (impact on delivery), the balance of revenue / recovery; the facilities still provide a quality community offer that is developing.

RLT facilities are included in the scope for the NYC Leisure Investment Strategy.

Positive links have been established with the NYC Sport and Active Wellbeing team, and Brimhams Active to assist with management and operational aspects.

Continuing to develop work on energy efficiencies, decarbonisation and income generation, with the ongoing challenges to control increased energy consumption following improvement works.

- Future Plans

Transition into the new North Yorkshire Council in house delivery model.

Create a service link to Sport and Active Wellbeing (Development) to improve accessibility and develop outreach offer.

Assist in the service strategic priority of the pivot to wellness.

Continue to deliver a quality service and invest in workforce development.

Members welcomed the presentation but noted that their various questions were limited by the pre-election period for the forthcoming General Election, and suggested that a subsequent discussion be arranged for a later date.

It was asked how the Liberty Gym, with it being a commercial enterprise, would fit into the new arrangements. In response it was stated that it was unknown at this stage. The Liberty Gym had been taken on as a commercial venture in 2011, and it was utilised to subsidise the other leisure facilities following reductions in funding for the provision of those services. As the provision of leisure services was now with North Yorkshire Council they would determine the future of the Gym.

Resolved –

That the presentation be noted and a further update be submitted to a subsequent meeting of the Committee.

94 Highways Works Programme and Delivery, including the A684 Morton Flatts, River Swale Flooding

Considered –

A report by Nigel Smith, Head of Highway Operations and Jayne Charlton Area Manager Areas 1 and 2 apprising Members of how flooding issues at Morton Flatts are being addressed alongside the current position on highways matters across the constituency committee area and how they are being addressed.

The main issues addressed in the report were as follows:-

Flooding at Morton Flatts.

How a decision is taken on which roads are to be repaired and the how priorities are determined.

The actual process undertaken for repairing potholes.

In relation to the flooding issues it was stated that the issues detailed related to flooding from the River Swale onto the A684 at Morton-on-Swale. The flooding had resulted in the road being closed on numerous occasions with eleven named storms, in recent years, creating a major impact. Diversion routes were implemented when flooding occurred but this, alongside the flooding, was creating pressure to the highways network and was inflicting additional damage that required repair.

Issues around communicating the diversions were outlined and it was emphasised that routes were only provided on an advisory basis.

In the short term a review of permanent signage & barriers would be undertaken. In the medium term electronic signage was being considered, given the success of the electronic road closure/flooding signage on the A684 at Wensleydale. Careful consideration would be required as to where best to place this signage to prevent people from approaching the closed route and utilising alternatives. In the long term

a plan had been devised to re-route the highway to try and eliminate the flooding issues. Further exploration of the potential to develop this route would be undertaken.

Discussion of the report with Members saw the following points raised:-

- It was essential that the deployment of electronic signs was carefully planned to ensure that diversions were in the appropriate place allowing vehicle users to use the appropriate route well in advance.
- The local Member stated that she was restricted in what she could say in view of the pre-election period but welcomed action being taken to address the situation.
- A Member referred to the difficulty in placing electronic signs for this purpose as they had to take account of where people had set off and where they are going. He noted that there was an appropriate diversion route between Catterick and Northallerton, but advising of the routes, in the appropriate places was the difficulty. He emphasised that the long-term solution of providing a by-pass was the most appropriate solution but that was dependent upon identifying the necessary funding.
- A communication plan is in place for when flooding occurs at the location with local Parish Councils and representatives of appropriate organisations contacted as soon as a flooding event was taking place. Further development of that communications network would be undertaken until the signage solution could be implemented. Further opportunities to enhance social media alerts were also being explored, enabling the wider community to be informed.
- Details requested by Members were included in the other sections of the report.
- It was requested that a further report be brought to a subsequent meeting in relation to the winter maintenance programme, particularly winter gritting details for the Constituency area. A Member suggested that this could be the subject of an all Member Seminar, however, other Members considered that this would require far too much information to be provided and suggested it would be better delivered on a Constituency area basis, which was agreed.
- It was noted that Members could raise any relevant issues with Highways Officers at their regular catch-up meetings.

Resolved –

That the report, and issues raised, be noted, with a further report on winter maintenance to be submitted to a subsequent meeting.

95. Update on Local Bus Services in the Stokesley Area

It was noted that a request for the item to be deferred had been received from a Member who had requested the report, however, at the request of other Members consideration of the report went ahead.

Councillor Yvonne Peacock declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to her being a Board Member of the Upper Dales Community Partnership in respect of the delivery of the Little White Bus Community Transport Scheme.

The report provided details in relation to the following:-

Stokesley local bus service update
National £2 fare cap scheme
Community Transport
Funding from central government

Members raised the following issues in relation to the report:-

- It was asked if a “Little White Bus” Community Transport service would be suitable for Stokesley. In response it was stated that a community scheme could operate there but this had to be led locally and sufficient volunteers would be required to operate the service. North Yorkshire Council could only provide advice and seed funding for the promotion and creation of the service.
- A Member stated that she would welcome the operation of community transport service in the Stokesley and Great Ayton areas particularly if they were to use smaller vehicles as, currently, the larger busses had difficulty in negotiating some of the narrow routes in the area. She noted that many local residents were unwilling to use taxis and the lack of a bus service on an evening left them isolated. A community transport solution would help address this.
- Issues relating to the Arriva bus services in the Richmond area would be discussed with the Officer outside of the meeting.

Resolved –

That the update be noted, together with the issues raised, and further updates on bus services in the Constituency area be submitted to subsequent meetings of the Committee.

96 Yorkshire Ambulance Service - Response Times

Details of Ambulance response times had been provided by YAS, at the request of a Member. The details were for information only at this stage and no-one was in attendance to discuss them.

Members suggested that a follow up be requested with the attendance of representatives from YAS to discuss response times in the Constituency area. Detailed information would be required in advance of the meeting allowing Members to co-ordinate relevant questions.

Resolved –

That the information be noted and a further report be requested from YAS in respect of response times in the Constituency area to provide an opportunity for the Committee to discuss this matter.

97 Work Programme

Considered -

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) providing a Work Programme for Members to consider, develop and adapt.

Members highlighted the following issues:-

- The issues highlighted at today’s meeting for consideration at subsequent meetings would be added to the work programme.
- A Member noted that the elected Mayor was now in office and was keen to co-ordinate and attend the ACCs. It was suggested that communication with the Mayor’s office should be undertaken to develop a timetable for his attendance at ACC meetings.

Resolved –

- (i) That the Work Programme be noted;
- (ii) That the issues raised above be added to the Work Programme;
- (iii) That further consideration be given as to the items to be considered at the next meeting of the ACC at the forthcoming mid-cycle briefing.

98 Update on the £50k per ACC seed funding pot

The Chair stated that this issue was not in a position for a report to be submitted to the Committee at this stage. The Mid-Cycle Briefing Group had also taken on the role as Steering Group for the £50k seed funding initiative and were monitoring progress to ensure this got back on track. Notes from the initial meeting of the Steering Group were circulated prior to this meeting for Members' information. There was disappointment regarding the lack of progress on this issue but it was expected that a substantial report would be submitted to the September meeting of the ACC.

Resolved –

That the update be noted

99 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Resolved –

That it be noted that the next scheduled ordinary meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday 16th September 2024 at 10am at a venue to be confirmed.

The meeting concluded at 12.20pm