

# North Yorkshire County Council

## Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 January 2021 remotely using MS Teams, commencing at 10.00 am.

This meeting was live broadcast on the North Yorkshire County Council YouTube site and a recording is available using the following link - <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/live-meetings>

### Present:

County Councillor Stanley Lumley in the Chair.

County Councillors Karl Arthur, David Goode, Paul Haslam, David Jeffels, Don Mackay, John McCartney, Andy Paraskos, Caroline Patmore, Clive Pearson and Roberta Swiers.

Other County Councillors present: Executive County Councillor Don MacKenzie, Executive County Councillor Carl Les and County Councillor Caroline Goodrick.

NYCC Officers attending: Fiona Ancell, Road Safety Team Leader (BES), Karl Battersby, Corporate Director - Business and Environmental Services (BES), James Farrar, NYCC Assistant Director – Economic Partnership Unit (BES) and Jonathan Spencer, Principal Scrutiny Officer (CSD).

Present by invitation: Simon Brown, Team leader, planning and development Operations Yorkshire Humberside and the North East, Highways England.

County Councillors Robert Heseltine and Richard Welch had sent their apologies for absence.

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**Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book**

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### 108. Minutes

#### Resolved -

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2020 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### 109. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest to note.

### 110. Public Questions or Statements

There were no public questions or statements.

## 111. Corporate Director's update

Considered –

The verbal update of the Corporate Director - Business and Environmental Services.

Karl Battersby provided the following update.

- The directorate had been busy responding to recent weather events, including snow and localised flooding. Regular updates had been provided to Members. A number of road closures had been required due to surface water issues. There had been some water egress into gardens and properties but not on a significant scale. The high river level around York remained a key risk and was being monitored closely.
- NY Highways, the new Teckal company replacing the existing highways maintenance contractor, would be operational from 1 June 2021. Preparations were at an advanced stage, including arrangements to transfer staff over in accordance with the TUPE regulations, and in terms of procurement activity.
- The Kex Gill road scheme had achieved unanimous support from the County Council's Planning Committee. The County Council was awaiting an announcement about funding, which it hoped to receive this month. The County Council would then commence the procurement process to appoint a contractor to deliver the scheme.
- The County Council was currently working closely with Yorwaste in relation to the Allerton Waste Recovery Plant on a number of issues in respect of the contingency plan in place and efficiencies required at the Plant. This also included planning what the future would look like if local government re-organisation occurred and what that would mean for the Plant and the collection regimes and how both collection and disposal would need to align.
- The Public Rights of Way Network remained very important and covid-19 had shown how important local walking routes were for people to be able to exercise. There was a national deadline by 2026 to deal with the definitive map modification orders and so there was a need to deal with those and to do what was required in terms of maintenance. North Yorkshire was fortunate to have a good group of volunteers to support the council in maintaining the public rights of way.
- The draft devolution deal had been submitted to government and there would be work done this year to try to finalise the deal. This linked to the local government review. The Business and Environmental Services Directorate led on the devolution element in terms of what that deal looked like.
- The directorate was involved in trying to co-ordinate a bid to the 'Levelling-up' Fund using the Directors of Development Meeting across the county and working that through as a cohesive bid for the county through the LEP.
- Work was ongoing on the Minerals and Waste Local Plan and the hope was for it to be adopted this year.
- The directorate also continued to support the district councils in their regeneration aspirations as well, such as the town deals and the Transforming Cities Fund to

support local place based delivery. In connection with this was the North Yorkshire Economic Plan. Various workstreams were involved. A peer review was being carried out on the County Council's Planning Service as well. That had commenced to make sure that the planning service was fit for purpose going forward.

- Brierley Homes was another priority. There were 233 homes scheduled to be built. One site had been completed with 17 dwellings and there were three developments at various stages that would be on site this year and into 2021.
- In terms of the management of the overall directorate, it was anticipated that there would be a balanced budget this year. The capital programme on the highway was a very significant one this year and in excess of last year's spend. Part of that included large schemes to help the district councils deliver projects under the Transforming Cities Fund.
- Delivering sustainable transport was another area that the County Council was putting in resources. The County Council had received £1 million from Tranche 2 Active Travel Funding from government. The plan was to get on site in the spring or summer 2021. This involved working closely with the district councils.
- Work was ongoing around digital infrastructure, namely the 5G Mobile Access North Yorkshire (MANY) pilot. The pandemic had served to further highlight the importance of digital connectivity.

Members made the following key comments:

- The Chairman asked for Karl Battersby's key observations about the directorate and any possible improvements that could be made. Karl Battersby thanked officers and Members for their help in welcoming him into the role. He said he had found the County Council to be well-run, tightly managed, calm and considered. His observations about the directorate were that it comprised some very good teams of staff. There was scope to tighten and speed up some processes, with planning being one such area arising from staff vacancies and other resourcing issues. Waste delivery was an area where there was scope to have a closer relationship to the district councils. This included the interface between their collection regimes and the County Council's disposal regime and making the best use of the Allerton Waste Recovery Plant. He was pleased to have inherited a well-managed directorate from his predecessor David Bowe. Both Cabinet Members had also been helpful to work with and supportive.
- County Councillor Paul Haslam noted the major procurement processes in respect of the Kex Gill scheme and other schemes in the county. He commented that procurement served as an opportunity for the County Council to influence contractors and suppliers to help mitigate climate change and lower carbon dioxide emissions. Karl Battersby replied that one of the aspects that NY Highways was actively looking at was wherever possible to use local suppliers to reduce the distance people had to travel to provide kit and materials for NY Highways to use when carrying out works. He gave an example of the lease hire of equipment. NY Highways was also looking at the use of more sustainable materials and what more could be recycled as part of the highways work. He also cited examples that the directorate had done and was currently doing to reduce carbon emissions; this included the rollout of the LED streetlight programme, the introduction of more efficient fleet vehicles and

changes in working practices. In terms of procuring contractors for highways schemes there was also the social value element of what they did and whether as part of the contract the County Council could get them to invest and help support climate change initiatives.

- County Councillor Paul Haslam asked if the Teckal companies that the County Council worked with would be required to put in place their own climate change/environment policy to help meet the County Council's climate change commitments. Karl Battersby replied that this was the case. As part of the business planning process each of the companies was required to provide a climate change impact plan which would set out what they could do in terms of influencing climate change in a positive way. The plans were due to be signed off in March 2021. They would be submitted to the Brierley Group Board as part of the individual plans for each company.
- County Councillor Caroline Goodrick asked if the County Council was no longer tied as tightly to procurement rules, arising from the UK leaving the EU, and if so would the changes help. Karl Battersby said there has been changes and his understanding was that the local authority was no longer required to put notices in the European Journal as part of the procurement process. He agreed to circulate a briefing note to the Committee about the changes.

#### **Resolved –**

That the Committee notes the Corporate Director's update.

### **112. York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership Annual Report**

#### **Considered –**

The written report of the Corporate Director - Business and Environmental providing an update on the performance of the York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

James Farrar presented the report.

James Farrar explained that the Local Growth Fund would end on 31 March 2021. The government had confirmed that there would be no facility to move funding beyond then despite the challenges posed by the covid pandemic. The current forecast was that there might be £2 million to £2.5 million underspend by the end of the financial year but this included an over-commitment made of in the region of £3 million. The LEP was confident that it would be able to deliver all of the projects in the Local Growth Fund. Projects with significant risks included two flood defence projects to be delivered in Quarter 4 but due to the recent flooding there, work had been delayed. The LEP was working with the County Council and other partners to mitigate those risks. If the LEP delivered all of the Local Growth Fund for this year it would mean that it had delivered £33 million of spend and investment this year, which would be the highest that had been achieved in a single year.

The LEP had also secured an additional £15.4 million in June 2020 to be delivered by the end of 2021, with £7.7 million of that to be delivered this year.

Due to the covid-19 pandemic it had been a difficult year for business support. In a normal year, the LEP would be looking to target those businesses that aimed to grow and export. In 2020/21, however it had instead been about supporting businesses to

survive and more recently the focus had been about looking at the impact of the UK's exit from the EU and making sure businesses continued to prosper beyond that. The LEP's budget for business support at the start of the year was £250,000 but central government had subsequently trebled this. The funding had been fully allocated.

There was much work being undertaken by the LEP at present focused on the impact of exiting the EU, with proactive calls out to businesses to mitigate and understand the impacts. The LEP was also providing one-to-one support for businesses directly impacted to try to ensure they continued to be successful.

James Farrar went on to explain that just before the covid pandemic hit the Local Industrial Strategy had been signed off. There would now be some delay in its delivery because since then the focus had been to work with the local authorities, the business network and key stakeholders to develop a covid response plan. The current focus was about immediate action to help businesses work their way through the covid crisis but then in 2021/22 the focus would be on the covid recovery plan. From 2022/23, the expected focus would be to deliver the ambitions set out in the Local Industrial Strategy and then possibly in relation to devolution.

The future pipeline of projects linked to that timescale. One of the challenges and concerns that the LEP had was that it did not know what level of government funding there would be beyond the end of March 2021. The LEP had a pipeline of over 200 projects and was looking at how they could be packaged together in the most effective way.

James Farrar went on to note that the LEP had had its annual review with central government this week, examining the LEP's assurance, its strategy and its delivery. There were no issues identified and the LEP had been highlighted as best practice in a number of areas, which he went on to detail.

Members made the following key comments:

- County Councillor David Goode queried if five years was a realistic timescale for the LEP's Economic Plan given the uncertainties faced by funding sources in the near future. In respect of paragraph 5.5 relating to the Kickstart Programme for SMEs and tourist business grants, he noted that the report stated that it was ten times over-subscribed and that the LEP was looking for alternative sources of funding. He asked how successful the LEP had been in that regard. He went on to ask what specific initiatives the LEP had got in place to address covid pressures on the high street. James Farrar replied that the timeframe for the Economic Plan, was a 20 year timeframe but with a focus on the next five years. The reason why the Economic Plan was presented as five years was on the basis of where funding would be able to be drawn down. The hope was that there would be funding in the next financial year around covid-recovery, and then funding for the Local Industrial Strategy within the current Parliament and then the hope would be to have a devolution deal in place. Concerning the tourism grants, the LEP received about £500,000 from the government to award to SME's. The LEP had doubled that by using underspend from committed business grants linked to growth and job creation that had not been able to be spent due to the businesses concerned not being able to deliver the jobs and growth that they were contracted to do. Concerning the future of the high street, the LEP had already been working across all of the local authorities to do a strategic piece of work looking at the future of towns and what they might look like to make them better places to live. The impact of covid had not changed the recommendations but what it had done was to have sped up the required transition. In the forward plan of projects there was a key tranche of activity to

reshape town centres.

- County Councillor David Jeffels noted that it would be another tough season for businesses on the Yorkshire coast as it would be for all tourist areas in the county. The LGA's Culture Tourism Board was urging government to continue with the 5% VAT level. James Farrar said that there was no question it would be a difficult year for tourism on the coast but for the whole of North Yorkshire staycations would be very popular in 2021 and possibly beyond into 2022. There was a need therefore to make sure that tourism in York and North Yorkshire capitalised upon it was safe for visitors to return.
- County Councillor Karl Arthur noted in the report about the redevelopment of potential places for commercial development. He referred to a number of potential sites in Selby district and asked if the LEP had any plans on developing those in the future. James Farrar said that this was the case and the LEP was working with Selby District Council in that regard. There were major industrial opportunities there. Taking a longer-term view, the potential benefit that carbon capture and storage that Drax were looking at if it came off, could be a game-changer for commercial sites in Selby district because carbon capture and storage would enable them to tap into that pipeline. There would suddenly be a unique opportunity to either attract businesses that emitted a high level of emissions and needed to capture them or alternatively businesses that used carbon dioxide and wanted to locate and take advantage of that.
- County Councillor Caroline Goodrick mentioned that no reference had been made in the report to the A64. She said there was a need for the LEP to keep the pressure on government to dual the A64 from the Hopgrove Roundabout to the Jinnah Restaurant. There had been no A64 Growth Partnership meetings recently, which was of concern. James Farrar acknowledged that there was a need to restart the meetings but wished to underline that the dualling of the A64 remained a priority area for the LEP. Currently the dualling of the A64 was in Road Investment Strategy (RIS) 3 covering the years 2025 and 2030. What the LEP wanted to do was keep up on the pressure on government because the risk was that projects earmarked for some time in the future were more easily able to be removed by government. County Councillor Caroline Goodrick went on to note that there were now some additional pressures on the A64 with prospects for a development of the crematorium opposite the FERA site. It was important to ensure that the local planning process did not allow proposals to go ahead that later would be regretted if they stood in the way of upgrading the A64. James Farrar said he was not aware of the planning application but would take note of it.

**Resolved –**

That the Committee notes the performance of the LEP and its forward strategies and plans.

**113. Highways England annual update on maintenance and improvement activity**

Considered –

The written report of Highways England annual update on maintenance and improvement activity.

Simon Brown from Highways England, provided an overview on schemes recently delivered or planning to deliver.

He cautioned that in relation to the forward plan, plans were produced on a regional basis but were subject to approval on a national basis. For renewals schemes, Highways England was planning a further iteration of the programme in February 2021 and that could also change the forward programme. Schemes planned for March 2021 had greater risk of moving into the next financial year if there was a variation in delivery timing, most commonly due to the weather conditions. 2020/21 had been a particularly challenging year because of the covid-19 restrictions, which had resulted in resourcing and supply restrictions on the delivery programme.

In respect of the A1 (M) section from Darrington to Dishforth, this was delivered under a PFI arrangement. The contractor had no major works planned in the area except overnight resurfacing. The A1 (M) Junction 47 improvement scheme, had been part funded by Highways England and Highways England was working closely with North Yorkshire County Council on the project. In respect of north of the Dishforth junction, Highways England had completed a programme of renewals in 2020/21 with further renewals planned in 2021/22.

Simon Brown provided an overview of the renewals and carriageway resurfacing that had occurred on the western section of the A66 from Scotch Corner to the Cumbrian border. In 2021/22, central reserve gap closures were planned on some sections and re-surfacing and footpath repairs.

In relation to the A64, Highways England had put in place an enhanced programme of stakeholder communications with stakeholders between York and Scarborough. This had included producing and distributing leaflets, using social media and putting extra information on the Highways England. Simon Brown then went on to detail the works that had been carried out on the A64 in 2020/21 and planned programmes of work in 2021/22. A number of the works included safety improvements such as new traffic islands, improved alignments of right hand lanes, traffic signals, safety barriers and improved facilities for pedestrians.

Simon Brown went on to provide an overview of the work being carried out and planned on the A19 section in North Yorkshire at Thirsk, including carriageway improvements and some gap closures.

He noted that since the report had been produced, he had been informed that from February 2021 further scoping work ('project control framework stage 2 work') would be underway to consider road improvements around the Hopgrove Roundabout, including dualling that section of the road. Colleagues working on the study would firstly carry out an assessment of the surveys and models of the previous work undertaken, with the aim being to move to the consultation stage later in 2021. The intention was to put forward the scheme to the Department for Transport for consideration for inclusion in the Road Investment Strategy 2. Highways England's governance process and the Department for Transport's governance process was multi-staged so there was no promise of construction at this point. Part of the early work would be to work out how best to engage with stakeholders, which would include elected representatives.

Members made the following key comments:

- County Councillor Caroline Goodrick said that it was encouraging the A64 study was going forward and that as far as she could see the best solution was to dual the road to get rid of the pinch points around the Hopgrove Roundabout. She

asked about the timescales in light of planning proposals along the A64 corridor. She referred to a scheme that had come forward to Ryedale District Council for a crematorium at the junction of Sandhutton Lane opposite the Fera site, which had a three-month holding time period placed on it. Simon Brown replied that Highways England was assessing the scheme at the present together with another proposed scheme nearby. Generally, it did not take long to work through the assessment of schemes, but Highways England often had to place a holding recommendation on an application when further information needed to be provided by a third party. Regarding the particular application, Highways England had received questions on how it would impact the pipeline scheme but until the scheme had got to the stage where it became the preferred route such matters could not be taken significantly into account in the planning process. However, Highways England looked to engage in discussions with the developers so that the developer could submit the most pragmatic proposal. Most developers would want to make sure they would not have a problem by a larger scheme coming along later in the process.

- County Councillor David Jeffels said that the recent and planned improvements to the A64 were to be welcomed but he hoped that Highways England did not take its attention away from delivering more major improvements between Malton and Scarborough, including the opportunity to dual some of the road. As a compromise, widening the A64 in places to enable three-way traffic to operate for ease of overtaking would be of benefit. The road was seeing an increased use all year round. This would only increase with greater investment in the coastal economy and planned housing developments.
- County Councillor Paul Haslam asked a number of questions. These included whether there were smart motorways in North Yorkshire; details of Highways England's de-carbonisation policy; the measures in place to enable public transport to take advantage of the road improvements; the potential for electronic gantry signs to display driver education messages about the benefits of travelling below 70mph to reduce CO2 emissions. Simon Brown replied that there were no smart motorways in North Yorkshire and Highways England had no schemes in the current RIS programme to introduce them. Concerning de-carbonisation, Highways England had an environmental designated fund and part of that had carbon improvement elements to it. Further details could be found on Highways England's designated funds website. In terms of carbon reduction, Highways England was continuing to rollout LED lighting and was looking to renew its fleet with more carbon efficient vehicles. Highways England also welcomed ideas about how it could work together with other organisations to reduce the overall carbon impact. Concerning enabling public transport to take advantage of Highways England's roads, Highways England was open to particular proposals and Simon Brown referred to the designated funds. People could make expressions of interest either through the website or through any Highways England contacts. Concerning the gantry signs, the main purpose was to warn of hazards. By default, the signs were switched off and then switched on when there was an information message to display. However Highways England had occasional campaign messages that it displayed on the gantries. He agreed to pass on the suggestion to the relevant Highways England staff for consideration.
- County Councillor John McCartney referred to the section of the M62 that ran through North Yorkshire, which also included Junction 34. He expressed the view that Junction 34 was not fit for purpose and was impeding economic development in terms of attracting high quality businesses to the area. He went on to caution against having smart motorways. Simon Brown said that there

were no planned upgrade schemes on that particular stretch of the M62. He said he would need to look into whether there were any proposals planned to be brought forward around Junction 34 and to check on the road ownership. Often Highways England owned the slip roads but not the roundabout. County Councillor John McCartney confirmed that the roundabout came under the responsibility of North Yorkshire County Council. However, because of the bureaucracy involved in providing extensive notice and extensive diversions, this was impeding the County Council from being able to do anything in that regard.

- County Councillor Don MacKay mentioned about an apparent dangerous section of the A64 half a mile south of the Braham crossroads close to the village of Hazelwood. This section of the A64 was of great concern to residents and to visitors staying at a local hotel in the village. Visitors to the hotel travelled from all over the country and so many were not familiar with the dangers of the road. He said that whilst he was not familiar with the accident rate in that area, a serious accident was waiting to happen. Improved signage would help. Simon Brown said he would pass on County Councillor Don MacKay's observations to colleagues within Highways England responsible for developing potential safety schemes and ask them to contact County Councillor Don MacKay directly.
- County Councillor Caroline Goodrick said she wanted to put on record her thanks to Highways England for the safety scheme at Welburn and Crambeck. She said she also wished to echo County Councillor David Jeffels's comments about the increase in traffic on the A64. She noted that a survey carried out by Highways England produced two to three years ago projected a 28% increase in traffic on the A64 within the next five years. As a regular road user of the A64 she had directly experienced the increase in traffic on the road.

#### **Resolved –**

That the Highways England's annual update be noted.

#### **114. Road casualties: North Yorkshire**

##### **Considered –**

The written report of the Corporate Director - Business and Environmental advising Members of the road casualty figures and activity for 2019 in North Yorkshire.

Fiona Ancell presented the report.

The headline points for the 2019 casualties were that:

- The total number of road collisions resulting in personal injury reported to the Police had reduced by 17% from the previous year.
- The number of people killed in road collisions increased from 32 in 2018 to 37 in 2019. The number of fatalities was higher than the 2014-2018 rolling baseline. In 2019 there was an average of four fatalities a month, 29 seriously injured and 124 slight injuries.
- The number of people seriously injured decreased slightly over the previous year.
- The number of slight injuries reduced by 20%.
- Child casualties decreased by nearly one third and no children were killed in road collisions.

- The number of children killed and seriously injured on the roads in 2019 was 17, which was that same number recorded for 2018.
- The number of pedestrians killed was five compared to six in 2018.
- The number of pedestrians seriously injured decreased by 25 from 30 the previous year.
- Two cyclists were killed in collisions, which was the same as in 2018
- The number of cyclists seriously injured increased from 30 to 52 in 2019.
- There were 229 motorcyclists' casualties, which was two per cent less than the previous year.
- The number of motorcyclists killed increased from 10 to 11.
- The number of motorcyclists seriously injured decreased by 11 per cent.

Fiona Ancell went on to refer to the long term trends as detailed in section 2 of the report. She then referred to section 3 of the report relating to personal injuries and casualties up to the end of July 2020. She explained that since the report had been published the provisional figures for the calendar year 2020 as a whole were now available.

The headline points were:

- The provisional figures for road casualties in the county in 2020 showed a marked increase on the numbers of seriously injured, when compared to 2019 (411 people in 2020 against 298 in 2019).
- There was also an increase in the number of slightly injured (1793 in 2020 against 1110 in 2019).

Fiona Ancell mentioned that North Yorkshire Police believed that the key reason for the increase in 2020 was that motorists travelled at faster speeds because there was less traffic on the roads. Consequently, some of the severity of the casualties was higher. This was a theory at this stage though and more analysis was required to verify this.

Information on traffic volumes covering the period 1 April 2020 to 31 August 2020 showed that in April, May, and June traffic volumes were significantly down on 2019 levels but in July and August they were about back to what they had been in 2019. Further analysis would be undertaken to see how the restrictions and lockdown had affected collisions.

Other points that Fiona Ancell highlighted were:

- The new Vehicle Activated Speed Sign scheme introduced to allow communities to purchase their own vehicle-activated speed signs had proved quite successful. Some parish councils had bought their own signs through the Police Commissioner's Road Safety Grants. There had been in the region of 15 parish councils and communities that had received funding to purchase their own signs as well.
- In respect of North Yorkshire County Council's Enhanced Pass Plus Scheme, the County Council had allocated funding for 100 places a year but only had 17 people taking up the scheme in 2019. The low numbers were thought to reflect the rule change in 2018, allowing learners with an approved driving instructor to train on the motorway. A key reason why learners had joined the young driver enhanced plus scheme previously was to gain experience of motorway driving after they had passed their driving test.
- 1828 reports had been assessed under the Speed Management Protocol up to the end of 2019. However, as had been the case throughout the operation of the speed management protocol, in areas where there were speeding concerns, there was not a speeding problem in nine out of ten speed situations.
- There were 77 Community Speedwatch schemes operating during 2019 but the covid pandemic had seen a huge reduction in 2020.

- The road safety team had been restructured in April 2020. That has had an impact on the work that the team were able to carry out last year.

Executive Member County Councillor Don MacKenzie said that he continued to welcome the long term downward trend in accidents and collisions in all categories. From time to time, as had been the case in 2019, there had been a slight uptake in the number of fatalities but overall the downward trend was downwards. Young drivers, older drivers, drivers under the influence of alcohol, drivers under the influence of drugs, and motorcyclists still presented the greatest of risks to road safety in North Yorkshire. One fatality was too high but North Yorkshire experienced a high number of motorcyclists travelling into the county to explore its wide-open spaces. There was a continuing need to try to reduce the casualties and raise the safety of motorcyclists. He welcomed the interventions put in place by the 95Alive Partnership and noted they were popular with motorcyclists. He also welcomed the decision taken by parish councils and other communities to purchase their own vehicle activated speed signs. He noted that there were quite often differences between the perception of speeding and actual speeds but the signs did at least provide a greater sense of safety to parish councils and others who bought them.

Members made the following key points:

- The Chairman said it had long been overdue for learner drivers to get experience of driving on busier roads. In relation to North Yorkshire County Council's Enhanced Pass Plus Scheme, he said that it would be worth questioning the driving instructors to establish the reasons for the decline in the number of newly qualified drivers taking up the scheme. It would also be useful to know if there had been the same fall in numbers relating to similar privately funded schemes. Fiona Ancell replied that based upon initial feedback received by the County Council from driving instructors, the cause of the reduction was because of the rule changes discussed above but she agreed to make further enquiries.
- County Councillor David Goode referred to the report's reference to the work of the Committee's task and finish group concerning the 20mph policy recommendations. He asked what progress had been made. He then referred to paragraphs 4.3 and 4.4.2 concerning the investment of cluster sites and the reference to the number of cluster sites having reduced significantly. He asked how many were still in place and what level of reduction had there been. He noted that due to the reduction, the report highlighted changes in methodology and risk assessment. He asked for details of the methodology changes and the impact in terms of road-safety improvement activities. Fiona Ancell said that she would ask her colleagues to investigate and respond. Executive County Councillor Don MacKenzie provided assurance that the Executive had given a commitment to take forward the Committee's 20mph speed policy recommendations.
- County Councillor Paul Haslam asked for future road safety updates to include a breakdown of urban/non-urban data. In relation to Active Travel he asked what else could be done to get more people using active travel modes such as cycling, noting that people often perceived the roads to be less safe than they were. He went on to ask how near misses were monitored. With reference to the general road safety awareness campaigns referred to in the report, he suggested that an additional campaign should be included about the air pollution problems caused by engine idling. Fiona Ancell replied that road safety data on a rural/urban split could be provided. The higher severity of road incidents were

on rural roads because of the higher speeds that vehicles were travelling. The 95 Alive Partnership was developing an action plan for this year and would continue to implement initiatives to educate the public. In terms of Active Travel, in relation to cycling the road safety team provided training and advice. Sometimes fear of traffic and busy roads was presented as a reason not to change habits but the Council would keep supporting active travel through the Access Fund and the Active Travel Fund. Near misses were not recorded. Through the Access Fund campaign the County Council had campaigned about the problems caused by engine idling and it was part of the Climate Change agenda to tackle this alongside reducing car journeys in general.

- County Councillor Andy Paraskos said he was receiving a number of complaints that the village of Pannal in Harrogate district had not appeared to have followed the rules of the County Council's VAS scheme. Executive County Councillor Don MacKenzie said that press reports had stated that the speed sign in Pannal was a Speed Indicator Sign (SID). The County Council did not allow SIDs to be displayed in North Yorkshire. Its policy was instead to allow only signs that reminded road users of the local speed limit. The Area 6 Highways Office had visited the area to locate the SID in Pannal but had been unable to find it. In response to a supplementary question, County Councillor Don MacKenzie noted that even if the SID was not located on the public highway steps could be taken to remove it as it could be considered a hazard for road users.
- County Councillor Caroline Goodrick noted that one of the road casualties in 2019 had occurred in her division. She said the fatality raised the important question about growing problems of traffic congestion on the stretch of the A166 road between Grimston Bar Roundabout in York and the Stamford Bridge area. Traffic levels were increasing all the time and this would be exacerbated by new building projects being undertaken at Stamford Bridge and at the nearby prison, which was set to expand by over 1000 places. The pinch point of traffic at Stamford Bridge was causing the traffic to queue for up to three miles. There was a need for the County Council to keep a watching eye on the road as the pressures would be enormous on the road itself and, as was already happening, motorists were using minor country roads from Stamford Bridge to York as rats-runs.

#### **Resolved –**

That the Committee notes the figures for collisions and casualties on the roads of North Yorkshire and the actions being taken to improve road safety.

#### **115. Single Use Plastics Review**

Considered –

The written report of the task group's Single Use Plastics Review.

County Councillor David Goode thanked Members of the task group, the subject matter experts who provided evidence and to the officer who helped manage the work of the task group and pulled together the report.

He reminded the Committee about the terms of reference of the task and finish group.

He said that as highlighted in the introduction to the report, single use plastic was a

massive global pollutant, which took hundreds of years to decompose. When it did decompose, it posed a massive threat to humans and animals. Covid 19 had led to a massive increase in single-use plastic but we should not consider this situation as an excuse for not taking action now.

The task group had recognised early on that it was not possible to remove single-use plastic from all elements of daily use. However, there were actions that North Yorkshire County Council could take to reduce significantly its own use. In the information-gathering phase, the task group researched what other councils were doing, with the aim being to identify best practice. Examples of their work were cited in the report.

The task group received evidence from the County Council's procurement team. It was clear that progress had been made but the problem was that the Council was not telling anybody. There was also general agreement that North Yorkshire County Council could do more and examples were provided in the report.

The task group then took evidence from the York and North Yorkshire LEP about the work it was doing to influence adoption of circular economies. This included initiatives of where plastic items could be used multiple times; how manufacturing was working on such products locally and organisations in association with local businesses to come up with innovative ways to reduce single-use plastics; and the work that some schools were doing to implement projects to massively reduce the use-age of single-use plastics in their buildings.

County Councillor David Goode went on to state that as the County Council was working towards becoming a carbon neutral council, and hopefully in time a carbon negative council, dealing with the use of single-use plastic needed to be one of the fundamental building blocks of its campaign.

He said that to be successful this would need a whole-council approach to developing and implementing strategy and actions. Key would be the appointment of a senior officer to champion this work.

The UK government through its Resource and Waste Management Strategy and the Environment Bill had made it clear that the UK would need to reduce its dependence on single-use plastic. This was an opportunity for North Yorkshire County Council to be seen as a thought leader not follower. Eventually the County Council would be required to take action so why wait.

He asked the Committee to support the recommendations set out at the end of the report.

The Chairman thanked County Councillor David Goode and the other members of the task group for their work on this very important topic.

Members made the following key points:

- County Councillor Paul Haslam noted that one of the aspects that came out of this report was that the County Council had a major part to play in its procurement policies, whether that was in relation to single-use plastic or for other aspects. A lot of time, it was about the need for a major public relations exercise to get people to make changes. This worked best by many people doing a small number of things rather than a few doing a lot. Less than 40% of plastic was recycled in this county. This was substantially below what was required and so there was a need to do much more. A lot of the money spent

by local authorities was in relation to buying things and so they had a lot of influence to change things.

**Resolved -**

That the report be recommended.

**116. Work Programme**

Considered -

The report of the Principal Scrutiny Officer asking the Committee to confirm, amend or add to the areas of the work listed in the Work Programme schedule (Appendix 1 to the report).

Jonathan Spencer introduced the report. He noted that further to the Committee approving the single-use plastics task group report, the report would go to the Executive on 9 March 2021. He said a new area of work that the Committee might wish to be involved in was the County Council's Carbon Reduction Strategy, which was in its early stages of development.

Members made the following key points:

- County Councillor Karl Arthur suggested that now that the UK had left the EU a future report should be brought to the committee concerning the impacts of Brexit on the economy.
- County Councillor Paul Haslam suggested that a report be brought to the Committee reviewing the implementation of the requirement for County Council staff to undertake climate change assessments when producing reports. He also suggested that a report be brought to the Committee about the rollout of Active Travel initiatives in the county and to establish how Members could help promote those schemes.
- County Councillor David Goode referred to the item on the work programme relating to an update report on the implementation of the Committee's recommendations on the Council's 20mph Speed Limit Policy. He suggested that a report be brought to a committee meeting within the next six months, in view of the recommendations having been approved some months ago by the Executive. He also suggested a follow-up road safety report be brought to the Committee about the changing approach to methodology and risk assessments and how that might influence future investments in road safety improvements.

**Resolved -**

That the following agenda items be included in the work programme:

- North Yorkshire County Council's Carbon Reduction Strategy.
- Impacts of Brexit on the local economy further to the UK's departure from the EU.
- Review of the climate change assessment template.
- Active Travel.
- The implementation of the Committee's recommendations relating to the County Council's 20mph Speed Limit Policy.
- The approach to the changing methodology and risk assessment relating to the scheme identification process and how that might influence future investments in road safety improvements.

The meeting concluded at 12.23pm

JS