

# North Yorkshire County Council

## Skipton and Ripon Area Constituency Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Skipton and Ripon Area Constituency Committee held on 11 March 2021 remotely using MS Teams, commencing at 10am.

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 Councillors Margaret Atkinson, Philip Barrett, Mike Chambers MBE (Chairman), Robert Heseltine, David Ireton, Stanley Lumley, Patrick Mulligan, Gill Quinn and Andy Solloway.

County Council Officers: Daniel Harry (Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager), Allan McVeigh (Highways and Transportation, BES), Alexandra Hollifield, (Highways and Transportation, BES), Liz Meade (Stronger Communities Delivery Manager), Marion Tweed-Rycroft (Stronger Communities Delivery Manager), Chloe Thwaites (Youth Voice, CYPS) and Matthew Edwards (Youth Voice, CYPS).

Officers from other organisations: Ali Jan Haider (Bradford District and Craven CCG), Michael Dyson (NHS Property Services Ltd), Trudy Balderson (Airedale NHS Foundation Trust).

Other County Councillors present: David Chance, Gareth Dadd, Caroline Dickinson and Carl Les.

Guest speaker: the Rt Hon Julian Smith MP.

### 96. Welcome and introductions

The committee Chairman, Mike Chambers MBE, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

A minutes silence was held in the memory of County Councillor Richard Welch who sadly died in January 2021 and who had been a prominent member of the committee and the Craven Area Committee.

### 97. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors Michael Harrison, Stuart Martin MBE and Robert Windass.

### 98. Minutes

Considered the minutes of the meeting of the Skipton and Ripon Area Constituency Committee held on 7 January 2021.

### Resolved -

- a. That the Minutes of the meeting of the Skipton and Ripon Area Constituency Committee held on 7 January 2021, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

## **99. Any Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

## **100. Public Questions or Statements**

There were none.

## **101. Update from the Rt Hon Julian Smith MP**

The committee Chairman, County Councillor Mike Chambers MBE, invited the Rt Hon Julian Smith MP to give an overview to the committee of some of his areas of work, concerns and priorities. The key points are as summarised below:

- The national vaccination programme is progressing well with 21 million people having received their first dose. The local delivery in North Yorkshire and the committee area has been exceptional
- The hospitality sector will need national and local support to help it recover from the pandemic
- There are significant economic challenges ahead and work will need to be done to adapt to the new trading environment, ensure that as few as possible jobs are lost and that new jobs are created
- The funding that has been secured for the work on the A59 at Kex Gill is very welcome
- The consultation on the options for Local Government Review (LGR) in North Yorkshire and York is also welcome. A unitary deal will help secure a devolution deal which will result in more powers and funding at a local level, particularly for infrastructure planning and delivery
- The tensions that have arisen as a result of the LGR process are noted and it is important to say that all councils in North Yorkshire and York have performed well and that the proposed reorganisation is not an indictment of poor performance.

There followed a discussion, during the course of which County Councillors made the following points:

- A huge amount of work has been done by all local authorities to deliver support and protection for vulnerable and shielded people. This demonstrated how organisations can work positively together and it is hoped that this will continue, whatever the outcome of LGR
- There is a need to reconsider how adult social care services are supported and funded in the long term. A review is long overdue and it is disappointing that the recent health and social care white paper makes very little mention of social care
- Some concerns raised about the appointments for vaccinations at national centres and the travel times involved. More could be done at a local level, building upon the work that had been done to date in response to the pandemic.

County Councillor Mike Chambers MBE thanked the Rt Hon Julian Smith MP for attending the meeting and answering questions from the committee members.

The Rt Hon Julian Smith MP left the meeting at 10:25am.

## 102. Final update on the re-provision and re-use of the Castleberg Community Hospital, Giggleswick

Considered -

A presentation by Ali Jan Haider (Bradford District and Craven CCG), Michael Dyson (NHS Property Services Ltd), Trudy Balderson (Airedale NHS Foundation Trust).

Ali Jan Haider delivered the presentation, with key points as summarised below:

- The hospital was temporarily closed on 13 April 2017 due to significant problems with the building structure. A public consultation was held over the period September to December 2017. The decision was taken to re-open the hospital in May 2018. Work commenced on the site and it was formally re-opened on 26 November 2019.
- The work was delayed by a number of factors including nesting birds and the need to manage more asbestos in the structure of the building than had previously been anticipated
- The landlord, commissioner and provider had worked well together on the project, This was not always the case and so there were some positive learning points from this
- Since the re-opening of the hospital there have been some snagging issues that the contractor has responded to
- There is further investment planned in the site, including replacement of windows and further development of the first floor
- The hospital was re-opened only 3 months prior to the pandemic and the national lockdown and so the focus has been upon maintaining a covid-safe site and enabling high quality care to be delivered as part of the NHS response.

There followed a discussion, during the course of which County Councillors made the following points:

- The hard work that County Councillor Richard Welch had done in supporting local efforts to develop and re-open the site was noted
- The Scrutiny of Health Committee took a robust stance on this back in April 2017, which helped raise the profile of the closure
- The commitment of the NHS locally to re-opening the site was applauded as it was recognised that it would have been easy to permanently close the hospital
- It was noted that the NHS locally working with partner agencies and community groups had achieved a great deal and the newly developed hospital was much valued.

County Councillor David Ireton asked what plans there were to use the first floor. Previously the committee had been informed that the lack of lift access meant that it could not be used as a multi-agency drop-in.

In response, Michael Dyson said that the first floor could be used as office space but was not suitable for wider public use and access due to the lack of a lift. At present, there was no funding available for a lift and the recent opening of a new community hub in Settle meant that there may be much less need for such a use of the first floor now.

County Councillor Mike Chambers MBE summed up and noted that this was a successful outcome for the Castleberg and that the hospital now had a bright future as a key part of health and social care delivery in the Craven area. He all thanked for attending the meeting.

## **Resolved –**

- a. Thank all involved for their hard work and commitment to making a success out of the Castleberg over the past 4 years
- b. Daniel Harry to feedback to the Scrutiny of Health Committee the outcome of the scrutiny that the Skipton and Ripon Area Constituency Committee had undertaken.

### **103. Operation of the permit scheme for highways works and the quality of work undertaken by utilities companies**

Considered -

A report by Allan McVeigh, Head of Network Strategy, Business and Environmental Services.

Allan McVeigh presented the report, with key points as summarised below:

- The Council's permit scheme was established in February 2018 to increase the efficient running of the highway network by proactively managing works on the highways
- There are four main types of permits: major, standard, minor and emergency
- There is a team that checks the submitted permits to ensure that any proposed works do not pose any co-ordination clashes and do not overly inconvenience the travelling public
- A team of 10 Street works inspectors monitor the works and undertake permit compliance inspections
- The reinstatement of the road or footpath surface after works can be temporary but permanent reinstatement must be completed within six months of finishing the works
- Where emergency works need to be undertaken, it is requested that the utilities company contacts the team directly
- There has been a big increase in the short duration works associated with fibre optic cabling schemes. The four major schemes in the county are Superfast North Yorkshire, NYnet, Cityfibre (formerly Talk Talk) and KCOM
- Many utilities companies suspended works during lockdown. Where possible, they were encouraged to go ahead to avoid a backlog in works post-lockdown.

There followed a discussion, during the course of which County Councillors made the following points:

- Good communication ahead of works taking place is key. A number of examples were given where works had been undertaken at short notice and with no explanation what was being done and when it would be completed
- Often Parish, Town, District and County Councillors are not informed of works
- The reinstatement of the highways after work has been completed is often of poor quality. It can be unsightly and out of keeping with the area. It can also mean that the reinstatement quickly de-grades and leads to pot holing
- Query as to whether 6 months was too long for the permanent reinstatement of the highway
- There was an incident recently in the committee area where emergency work was done immediately outside a vaccination centre, impeding access
- Concerns that there may be an incentive for some utilities companies to describe works as being 'emergency', when they are not, in order to get them done when they want them done

- Assurances were sought that, in urban areas, the work undertaken by one utilities provider did not then lead to damage to other utilities in that place and so further work being done in the future that could have been avoided
- Query as to whether more could be done to compel the utilities companies to better co-ordinate their work and so avoid the situation of the same area of the highway being dug up multiple times in a short time period
- Large scale works to highways and pathways are often started and then paused for days and even weeks, with no explanation.

In response to the issues raised by committee members, Allan McVeigh said that he would welcome the details of specific concerns raised about incidents in Pateley Bridge, Skipton and other areas so that he could provide a detailed response to the councillors concerned. In addition, he said that there were national guidelines in place for reinstatement works that were monitored by the 10 Street Works inspectors.

County Councillor Stanley Lumley said that the management of works on the highways by utilities companies was a massive challenge for the Council. He recognised the good work being done by the Network Information and Compliance Team, despite the limited resources that they had available.

County Councillor Carl Les said that the Council was going to setup an arms-length highways company and that all county councillors could engage in discussions about the service standards that we want to set.

County Councillor Mike Chambers MBE summed up and thanked the officers for attending.

#### **Resolved –**

- a. Thank the officers for attending and answering the questions posed by the committee
- b. Detailed responses to the specific concerns raised be followed up by Allan McVeigh and reported back to the county councillors concerned
- c. Come back to the committee in 6 months' time to provide an update on how the scheme is working and any issues arising from the post-pandemic recovery.

#### **104. Stronger Communities: COVID19 Social Isolation and Approach to Community Efforts**

Considered -

A report by Liz Meade, Stronger Communities Delivery Manager (Harrogate District) and Marion Tweed-Rycroft, Stronger Communities Delivery Manager (Craven District).

County Councillor David Chance introduced the report and said that the work done by Stronger Communities over the past 12 months had been a key part of the Council's response to the pandemic. The team had achieved the astounding feat of setting up the 23 community support organisations in only 4 days.

Liz Meade and Marion Tweed-Rycroft presented the report, with key points as summarised below:

- 23 Community Support Organisations (CSOs) were setup immediately prior to the national lockdown. They acted as a single point of contact within a locality and worked with local networks to coordinate a variety of volunteer led support services

- The Council extended opening hours to include weekends and public holidays to ensure that support was in place 7 days a week between 8.00am and 5.30pm
- About £950,000 was used to fund the CSOs over a 12-month period
- The CSOs will remain in place until September 2021
- The CSOs were supported by 95,000 volunteer hours and responded to about 82,000 contacts
- Government emergency assistance funding was channelled through the CSOs
- The CSOs have also provided support with the implementation of the national vaccination programme locally.

There followed a discussion, during the course of which County Councillors made the following points:

- The work done to support vulnerable and shielding people in the community was exceptional and key to the overall response to the pandemic in North Yorkshire
- The commitment of volunteers to support the community response was impressive and it was hoped that this resource could be used in the longer term
- The Stronger team have worked really hard to setup and oversee the running of the CSOs. Their commitment is to be applauded
- The way that a broad range of organisations have pulled together during the pandemic shows that whatever the outcome of the Local Government Review, we will be able to make it work for the people of North Yorkshire
- There are lessons that can be learned from the work done by the CSOs during the pandemic. So much has been achieved and it would be sad to see an abrupt end to this form of active community support and engagement in September 2021
- Some concerns that the CSOs, in working with a broad range of vulnerable people in the community who prior to the pandemic would not have received a service from the Council, may have created a dependency that will be difficult to manage after the pandemic has abated.

County Councillor Mike Chambers MBE summed up and thanked the officers for attending.

**Resolved –**

- a. Thank the officers for attending and answering the questions posed by the committee
- b. The next Annual Report to be presented to the committee in March 2022.

**105. Executive members update**

County Councillor Carl Les thanked the Chairman for the invitation to attend the committee. He said that he welcomed the feedback from committee members on what was happening in their local area and the issues that are important to them and the electorate that they represent. He updated as follows:

- Whilst the infection rates were falling, there was still a need to follow the rules to help prevent a third wave
- The drive behind Local Government Review is the achievement of devolved powers and funding, which will enable substantial funding to be drawn into the county.

County Councillor Gareth Dadd said that an additional £0.5m of capital funding had been contributed by the Council to the A59 Kex Gill work. The Council is committed to the delivery of this scheme that has such strategic importance. He noted the hard

work that had been done by the Rt Hon Julian Smith MP to enable the scheme to progress and that this was a clear example of how the ACCs could work effectively with MPs and key stakeholders to improve infrastructure and services their area.

County Councillor Caroline Dickinson gave an update on the prevalence data for covid-19 and the roll out of the national vaccination programme.

County Councillor Patrick Mulligan said that he was pleased that pupils had returned to school and gave thanks to all of the teaching staff and Council staff that had made this happen.

County Councillor Mike Chambers MBE thanked the Executive members for their updates and for taking the time to attend the meeting.

#### **106. Committee Work Programme**

Considered -

A report by Daniel Harry, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager, outlining the committee work programme.

Daniel Harry introduced the report and asked that Members review the committee's work programme, taking into account the outcome of discussions on previous agenda items and any other developments taking place across the area.

**Resolved -**

a. That the committee work programme be reviewed by members.

#### **107. Other business which the Chairman agrees should be considered as a matter of urgency because of special circumstances.**

Chloe Thwaites and Matthew Edwards outlined the work that they are doing with the Youth Council and the links that they are hoping to make with the ACCs in the county. The Skipton and Ripon ACC is being used as a pilot to see how young people from the Youth Council could meaningfully engage with the committees.

County Councillor Mike Chambers MBE expressed his support for this pilot and welcomed greater engagement with young people in the work of the committee.

The meeting concluded at 12.20pm

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