

North Yorkshire County Council

Scarborough and Whitby Area Constituency Committee

Minutes of the remote meeting held on Friday, 26th March, 2021 commencing at 10.30 am.

Present: County Councillor Joe Plant in the Chair. plus County Councillors Clive Pearson, Andrew Backhouse, Derek Bastiman, Eric Broadbent, David Chance, Liz Colling, David Jeffels, Janet Jefferson, Andrew Jenkinson, Tony Randerson, Roberta Swiers and Callum Walsh.

Also in attendance: County Councillor Caroline Dickinson.

Officers present: Richard Marr, Marie-Ann Jackson and Karen Atkinson.

Other Attendees: Rt Hon MP Robert Goodwill.

Apologies: County Councillor Carl Les

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

77 Welcome by the Chair - Introductions & Updates

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and Members introduced themselves. There were no apologies given.

78 Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2021

Resolved –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2021, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

79 Apologies & Declarations of Interest

No apologies were received and there were no declarations of interest.

80 Public Questions & Statements

There were no public questions or statements.

81 Attendance of Rt Hon Robert Goodwill MP

County Councillor Joe Plant welcomed Rt Hon. Robert Goodwill MP to the meeting, and the MP thanked Members for their work throughout the pandemic and for keeping him updated on issues affecting his constituency. He confirmed he had been involved in weekly meetings with NYCC's Leader, other North Yorkshire MPs, and representatives from Partner organisations, from which he had been able to feedback information into central Government.

The MP acknowledged the impact the pandemic had on every aspect of life. In particular

he highlighted:

- The potential disadvantage to year one Sixth Formers at exam time;
- Secondary school children being tested in schools;
- The reducing levels of infection across the county;
- The high number of visitors expected to the county during the coming summer, with more people holidaying in the UK this year, and the boost that would give to local businesses, particularly those in tourism;
- The problems associated with mobile home owners i.e. the debris and waste they leave behind, and the likely increase of that as a result of more staycations. It was agreed they needed to be encouraged to use mobile home/caravan parks;
- The Chancellors VAT rate cut for hospitality businesses had in almost every case been used to compensate for loss of income and had not necessarily generated additional income through and increasing in custom;
- It was likely there would be a lot of latent demand with money in bank accounts waiting to be spent and therefore high demand for the hospitality industry once businesses re-opened;
- The possible need for more Park and Ride over the summer in Scarborough;
- Other areas across the country had not worked as well as North Yorkshire;
- Track and Trace would have worked better if led by Local Authorities as they could have drawn on their local knowledge and expertise;
- The closure of some local schools due to a Covid case being identified. Members noted that some schools were choosing to completely close and others were just sending the effected class home;
- The possibility of foreign travel in 2021 and the steps that might be required in order to enable that to happen, was also discussed;

Members discussed the successful roll out of vaccinations, but recognised there was an ongoing issue of people not turning up for their appointments. They questioned whether it might have been more appropriate to focus on vaccinating key professions e.g. the Police, teachers and supermarket workers, but the MP confirmed the decision to prioritise vaccinations based on age was taken following very clear advice from epidemiologists and doctors.

Members also questioned whether the statistics on Covid deaths were accurate. It was noted that even though many people had passed away from other causes if they had a positive test within 28 days, Covid had been put as the cause on their death certificate and the other causes had not being recorded. It was thought that in order to protect themselves, doctors were not necessarily visiting to identify cause of death, but were instead basing their decision on patient records.

County Councillor Liz Colling questioned the appropriateness of the Governments decision that local Authorities should return to holding decision-making meetings in person (with social distancing measures in place) as from 7th May 2021, particularly in light of the fact that government would continue with remote meetings until 21st June 2021. The MP confirmed his view that it was not possible to get the same levels of engagement and debate in meetings held remotely as those held in person, and therefore we welcomed the planned return to in-person meetings. However he stressed the primary concern was ensuring the safety of members during the transitional period, and noted that whilst many members would have been vaccinated, council officers may not. He asked that the Council write to him with lots of signatures attached so that he could raise the issue with the relevant minister.

The MP also acknowledged a number of other issues:

- In regard to Brexit, a tariff free trade deal had been agreed and a large number of trade deals had been rolled over;
- The bureaucracy around fishing– it was noted there had been long periods where the

fishing fleet had not been able to go out and Members thanked the MP for his support in getting them grants throughout the pandemic. It was noted that the lack of flights and new EU legislation had seriously affected fishing exports. Also that the majority of fish eaten in the UK was from Iceland and Norway, which needed to be addressed if the UK's fishing fleet was to be supported.

- Greater control of our borders would result in less pressure on our lower paid jobs which was good news for younger people in particular;

Members discussed problems associated with road closures, and the lack of appropriate and timely information for local people; signs put in situ but no work initiated etc. The MP gave an example of an issue in Terrington where signage had been put up and a letter circulated to villagers. The road had subsequently been marked up but no work commenced. Other examples were discussed e.g., where roads had been left closed overnight etc.

In response, Richard Marr - Highways Area Manager, confirmed communications were improving and that other contractors e.g. Yorkshire Water were responsible for their own signage and communications. He also confirmed that in some cases permits were issued, but that Contractors did not always apply for them and carried out the work before the Authority became aware of a problem. He requested feedback on specific instances so that the causes and lesson learnt could be explored.

In regard to the levelling up fund, it was suggested that Whitby would benefit from having a Park and Ride service. Members agreed an increase in facilities in the town required the necessary infrastructure to support them.

The MP confirmed he had recently been in discussion with Trans Pennine Express in an effort to address the concerns of Scarborough residents who had raised complaints about low frequency noise coming from trains idling in the depot off Seamer Road overnight. It was confirmed that TPE had identified a solution which was being progressed, and would be communicating their plans with nearby residents.

The issue of dentistry was raised, a problem particularly felt in the Eastfield Division. Members discussed what more could be done to tempt international dentists to start up in the UK, particularly in areas like Eastfield. It was suggested that greater engagement with the British Dental Association may result in more dentists coming to the area, and it was confirmed that the Scrutiny of Health Committee would be investigating the issue further. In the meantime, noting that many treatments were not available through the NHS, it was suggested that regular dentist goers should consider an affordable dentistry plan with a private dentist.

Finally the moth-balling of Bewlay Park and East Barmby Recreational Centres was raised with the MP, and he was made aware of the ongoing problems associated with financing the service and upgrading the facilities. Assurance was sought that he would take the matter up with the relevant Minister to ensure those types of facilities could be kick-started after the pandemic and maintained for the longer term. It was noted that staff had been furloughed and there was always the possibility that this would lead to a loss of their expertise. The MP again requested that the Committee formally write to him regarding the matter so that he may take up the issue as requested.

The Chair thanked the MP for his attendance at the meeting.

82 Stronger Communities Update

County Councillor David Chance introduced the report confirming that within four days of the announcement of the first lockdown, the Stronger Communities team had managed to set up the Community Support Organisations that had gone on to serve the county so well.

This included setting up liaison with all the contributing partners, and smaller voluntary groups and arranging the necessary financing of the CSOs. He expressed his personal thanks to the team for all their work.

On behalf of the Committee the Chair also expressed thanks for their achievements throughout the pandemic and for going above and beyond for local residents.

Karen Atkinson provided a brief overview of the report, highlighting a number of local points of interest e.g.:

- Scarborough South CSO – a partnership between Scarborough Age UK, Scarborough, Whitby & Ryedale Mind and YMCA provided a robust response to all issues arising in Scarborough and the surrounding area;
- They were quick to recruit new volunteers and their awareness of emerging concerns such as fuel poverty enabled the provision of a timely response;
- The CSO built on the existing network of formal and informal partnerships for the effective utilisation of resources;
- They also worked closely with other local organisations and together were able to secure additional grants;
- A number of new projects were delivered alongside core support e.g. a cooked meal service, counselling over zoom etc;
- The Whitby area was served by two CSOs – CAFCA supported Whitby town, and the more rural villages and coastal areas were supported by Revival North Yorkshire;
- Contact with local businesses gave them access to furloughed staff;
- Both CSOs provided a core offer of community support including shopping, prescription delivering and befriending;
- A community magazine called 'In Touch' was introduced in the Whitby area;
- Both Whitby CSOs were key members of the Food Alliance, alleviating issues around food poverty;

Finally, Karen Atkinson confirmed that work was underway by all the CSOs to identify how and when to deliver transition activity, and summarised a range of activities to be undertaken in the coming six months.

Members thanked officers for the update and question what might happen after the CSOs were closed down in September 2021, to support financial hardship and mental health, noting that unemployment figures for the area were high (6.5%).

It was confirmed that the Team would continue to react to what was needed in their communities and that some additional funding had been sought by MIND, CAB and Age UK to continue to provide such support.

Marie-Ann Jackson Head of the Stronger Communities Programme, confirmed some additional funding would also be provided by MHCLG to continue to support anyone still self-isolating post 1st April when shielding would be lifted. It was also expected there would be a third round of DEFRA Grant provided in due course for some much more targeted and nuanced support going forward.

It was confirmed that the number of volunteers had fluctuated throughout the pandemic and that the three CSOs to the constituency area are currently in a reasonable position. It was noted that the transitional period would likely attract different/new volunteers.

The Chair thanked all members for their commitment and input to supporting and helping residents throughout the pandemic.

Resolved – That the update report be noted.

83 Draft Work Programme 2021/22

Considered -

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) asking Members to review the draft Work Programme for 2021/22, taking into account the outcome of discussions on previous agenda items and any other developments taking place across the area.

County Councillor Liz Colling suggested future updates on Dentistry and Mental Health/Suicide. She also requested that the Committee write to the MP asking that he give his support to the continuation of remote/hybrid local authority decision making meetings.

The Chair asked that committee members submit any additional suggestions via email to the Democracy Officer.

Resolved - That

- i. The work programme be updated to reflect the decisions made during the meeting.
- ii. The MP be invited to attend the next meeting in July 2021.
- iii. A letter be sent to the MP seeking his support for the continuation of remote/hybrid meetings
- iv. A letter be sent to the MP requesting government funding and support to enable the long term future of Bewlay Park and East Barmby Recreational Centres

The meeting concluded at 12.27 pm.