

North Yorkshire County Council

Selby and Ainsty Area Constituency Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Selby and Ainsty Area Constituency Committee held virtually via Microsoft Teams on 9th April 2021 at 10 am.

Present:-

Members:-

County Councillors Richard Musgrave (Chairman), Karl Arthur, Stephanie Duckett, Mel Hobson, Mike Jordan, Andrew Lee, Cliff Lunn, Don Mackay, Andy Paraskos, Chris Pearson and Cliff Trotter; together with Co-opted Member, Howard Ferguson.

Invited Executive Members:-

County Councillors David Chance, Caroline Dickinson Michael Harrison and Carl Les.

Officers:-

Sharon Fox (Area Highways), Steve Loach (Democratic Services), James Malcom (Area Highways Manager), Tom Jenkinson and Liz Meade (Stronger Communities Service Delivery Managers for the Constituency Area) and Chris Reynolds (SEND Provision and Resources Manager)

Apologies were received from County Councillor John McCartney

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

86. Chairman's Introduction

The Chairman welcomed Members to the meeting including the local MP, Nigel Adams and Members of the Executive that were in attendance. He noted that the meeting was being live broadcast and explained the protocols in relation to that.

87. Minutes

Resolved -

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2021, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed and would be signed by the Chairman as a correct record at the next available opportunity.

88. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at this stage of the meeting.

89. Public Questions or Statements

There were no public questions or statements.

90. Nigel Adams, MP - Update and discussion

Constituency MP, Nigel Adams MP provided an update on issues affecting the Constituency Area and discussed issues of relevance with Members of the Committee.

Initially he highlighted the following issues:-

- His main focus, within the Constituency, was the recovery from the COVID 19 pandemic.
- Overall, despite the initial shock of the pandemic, there had been a good response to the issues that arose in North Yorkshire, with all local authorities, including NYCC and Selby, making valuable contributions.
- He had been maintaining contact with all relevant organisations, bodies, authorities and businesses throughout the pandemic.
- He noted that, recently, there had been a small spike in the COVID levels in Selby, which had been identified and addressed accordingly.
- The vaccination programme continued to make good progress throughout the constituency area, with a good uptake from the local communities, and second jabs now well underway. He praised those involved with delivering the vaccines for a efficient and effective process.
- There would be long term impacts on finances, business and health. Many businesses had been affected and he hoped that the furlough scheme would help many of them to survive, but he was fully aware that some were coping better than others, because of the necessary restrictions for some sectors.
- The Selby area had been awarded £4.5m through the Government's Culture/Heritage recovery fund, to assist with the provision of outdoor events.
- The creation of a Freeport, nearby, had been delivered and would assist in creating additional jobs in the area.
- He had been working closely with Drax Power Station who had now extended their biomass energy production, meaning that coal was no longer used to produce power there. There were also further developments with their Carbon Capture programme.
- The A19 remained closed following the flooding in February 2020 (an update would be provided later in the meeting). Good progress was being made on the repair of the road, but emphasis was being put on trying to finish ahead of schedule in view of the undue pressure that had been put on local communities, due to the lengthy closure of the road.
- He stated that £11m had been secured for a flood alleviation scheme at Tadcaster, and a scheme for that was awaited from the Environment Agency.

Following the initial details outlined by the MP, Members undertook a discussion with him, and the following issues and points were raised:-

- Issues relating to the Police and Crime Bill were highlighted and it was noted that some concerns had been raised regarding the dilution of the right to protest. The MP emphasised that the Bill was being introduced to address some specific safety issues, would only be used in exceptional circumstances and would still provide opportunities to protest.
- It was asked why the country was not opening up more quickly as it had been reported that we were nearing a "herd immunity" level in terms of COVID 19. Nigel Adams MP stated that the country was beginning to open up, following the "Road Map" outlined by the Prime Minister, but the re-opening had to be monitored carefully at each stage, therefore, a degree of patience was required.
- A Member highlighted the proposed rise in Corporation Tax and suggested that this was badly timed and considered that lowering taxes would be more

appropriate to assist economic recovery. The MP stated that the UK would still have the second lowest Corporation Tax of the G7 countries, even with the rise, however, he hoped the rise was not necessary, but recognised the need for the Chancellor to address the borrowing that had taken place in view of the pandemic.

- It was asked whether any additional funding would be available from Central Government to assist the Olympia Park development. The MP noted that the Government had provided funding for infrastructure in respect of that development but that had not been utilised as yet. A Member noted that there were proposed phased works due to commence, to use that funding, and he would inform other Members of those outside of the meeting.
- A Member highlighted the cessation of the emergency legislation by the Government on 7th May, which would end the ability for Local Authorities to hold formal, virtual meetings, and stated that the MPs support for maintaining the ability to hold such meetings would be welcomed. In response Mr Adams stated that he fully supported the use of virtual meetings and had responded to the MHCLG outlining his support for these continuing.
- It was noted that the new SEND School for the Selby area appeared to have been hit with delays following the appointment of the Trust and it was asked whether the MP could assist in speeding the process up. The Chairman noted that this matter was on the agenda and would be discussed later in the meeting, and he would provide the MP with an update following that. Mr Adams stated that, if he could assist in any way he would.
- A Member raised concerns regarding the predominance and affordability of housing in the area, particularly for those trying to make the initial step onto the housing ladder. He noted that there was a great deal of house building taking place in the Selby District but much of this was out of reach for first time buyers, and asked how the Government could address this position. In response the MP stated that he agreed with the issue raised, but emphasised that house building had to follow the correct planning process, which had been effective in the Selby area and a good community led plan was in place. In terms of affordability Government initiatives were attempting to ease the burden for first time buyers.
- A Member highlighted that while the Constituency area was at the forefront of new house building this was not always matched with the required infrastructure, hence the new Local Plan that had been developed. It was emphasised that constant changes to the planning system did not benefit Local Authorities and a more consistent approach would be welcomed.
- The new traffic light system for international travel, currently being developed, was discussed, and a Member raised concerns that the number of COVID tests required at current prices, would leave international travel only available to the wealthy. In response The MP stated that the system had not yet been completed, and would be introduced on 17th May, with testing and requirements determined in consultation with other countries. He expected the price of testing to reduce as the system was developed.
- A Member highlighted a recent report stating that herd immunity was expected to be achieved shortly, and wondered, as the vaccines did not prevent transmission of the infection, what the incentive was to take up the offer of a vaccine. In response the MP emphasised that while the vaccine was not mandatory it did make sense for people to protect themselves via this method, and would be particularly useful for the re-opening of society, for example in relation to international travel or mass attendance events. It was not envisaged that day to day life would require proof of vaccination but some aspects of life may require that, going forward out of the pandemic.

Resolved:-

That Nigel Adams, MP be thanked for attending the meeting, outlining issues of interest in the Constituency area and for the ensuing discussion with Members.

91. COVID 19 - Update

Representatives of the Executive, County Councillors Carl Les, Caroline Dickinson and Michael Harrison provided a verbal update on the latest position regarding the COVID 19 pandemic and the County Council's response. The following issues were outlined:-

- The infection rates in North Yorkshire were showing a downward trend and were significantly lower than some of the Local Authority areas bordering the County. However, due to the relatively small populations in the Districts small outbreaks could create large fluctuations in the figures. The Selby District was currently the area with the highest infection rate in the County but that was mainly attributable to a specific outbreak which was being contained.
- The overall number of deaths attributed to COVID reported in the County continued to decrease.
- The reduction in the infection had seen the closure of the Nightingale Hospital in Harrogate and the temporary mortuary at Leeming Bar, with neither having to be utilised at any stage.
- The roll out of the vaccination programme had been incredibly successful and, in North Yorkshire –
 - 373000 had now received at least one dose of the vaccine
 - 97% of Care Home residents had received at least one dose
 - Cohorts 1 to 6 – 96% had received at least one dose
 - The clinically vulnerable – 86% had received at least one dose
- A number of countries were now experiencing 3rd waves of the pandemic and every effort was being made to ensure that this would not occur in the UK, therefore, the re-opening after lockdown was being undertaken extremely carefully.
- The relevant authorities and bodies continued to meet on a weekly basis, including the Police, local MPs, the NHS, etc.
- 23 Community Support organisations had been developed and had been of vital assistance to local communities throughout the County through their coordinated approach and partnership working and further details would be provided later in the meeting under the Stronger Communities agenda item.
- There was confidence that the Government's "Road Map" out of lockdown would be met and businesses and facilities would gradually re-open.
- The LEP was developing plans for economic recovery following the pandemic, with the visitor economy, green economy and developing the appropriate skills to match the plans being key components.
- In terms of other pressures facing the County Council the leader stated that a budget for 2021/22 had just been agreed which took account of the need to maintain services that are currently in high demand while recognising the difficult financial position of many people due to the pandemic. He considered that the promised fairer funding review, by the Government, would hopefully address the inequality of the current funding position for Local Authorities. He also called for the funding position for Adult Social Care to be addressed as soon as possible.
- He noted that infrastructure continued to be prioritised by the County Council and the re-opening of the A19 as quickly as possible was a key priority.

- He had spoken to the Minister regarding the future of meetings, particularly the use of virtual meetings, and had been assured that the Government were considering the issue carefully. The Leader had emphasised the need for embracing new ways of working and building flexibility into the process.
- In response to the issues of LGR and devolution, raised by a Member, the Leader stated that the consultation on LGR was about to come to an end with the Government's decision on the proposals due in the summer.
- It was clarified that any COVID tests taken were tied to the home address of the person taking the test, even if this was undertaken at an alternative address or workplace. Specific workplace outbreaks were dealt with at that workplace, however.

County Councillor Michael Harrison, the Executive member whose portfolio includes Health and Adult Services, highlighted the following:-

- The rate of infection in the Selby area was decreasing and had the fourth best fall in rates of infection for the over sixties in the whole of Yorkshire.
- The vaccination roll out was clearly having an effect
- There were now only 3 care homes with outbreaks of COVID in North Yorkshire – significantly down from 80 – 90 in January.
- 90% of eligible NYCC Staff had been vaccinated
- 90% of care home residents and staff had been vaccinated
- Over 40% of over 50s had now been vaccinated.
- Consideration was currently being given as to whether booster jabs would be provided later in the year.
- Health and Adult Services had undertaken a restructure to mirror the 7 day discharge process of the NHS, to ensure there were no blockages in the system.

County Councillor Caroline Dickinson, the Executive Member whose portfolio includes Public Health, highlighted the following –

- The COVID infection rates continued to fluctuate, therefore, people needed to avoid becoming complacent and remember – hands, face, space and fresh air – to ensure the “Road Map” out of lock-down could continue to be met.
- She outlined details of the vaccine roll out in the Constituency area and vulnerable groups were being engaged. The under 30s were to be offered an alternative to the Oxford Astra Venica vaccine, following well publicised health concerns, however, it was emphasised that the risk was miniscule and far lower than the risk from COVID.
- Testing Sites were available in all the main towns in each District and further sites continued to be added. Free lateral Flow Tests were now available to everyone twice per week to monitor COVID levels.
- Schools have undertaken mass testing and pupils and staff are now carrying out home testing and, where necessary, isolation is then being undertaken.
- Details of how healthy living programmes were being delivered were outlined, including the “Smoke Free” and “Adult Weight Management” initiatives.
- She emphasised that the removal of the restrictions too quickly could lead to another spike in infections, therefore, this was being carried out in a carefully managed way. A Member stated that the “Road Map” was adhered to with restrictions lifted on 21 June. He considered that infection rates were low now, across the country and a balance had to be struck between public health and public liberties. It was considered that the impact from the pandemic would be felt for many years to come.
- A Member, noting that he had already received the two vaccinations, asked whether there was a point to undertaking the twice weekly tests outlined. The

Executive Member stated that she would obtain that information and advise Members accordingly.

- Members paid tribute to the work carried out by NYCC staff during the pandemic and how they had managed to maintain the delivery of services in exceptional circumstances.

Resolved –

That the Leader and Executive Members be thanked for their update the details of which be noted.

92. Stronger Communities: COVID19 Social Isolation and Approach to Community Efforts.

County Councillor David Chance, the Executive member whose portfolio includes Stronger Communities, introduced the report. He noted that it had been a year since the first lockdown began and it was appropriate to provide a report to all ACCs highlighting the tremendous work undertaken by Stronger Communities during that period. He outlined how the Stronger Communities Team had established 23 Community Support Organisations, to assist with supporting local communities through the pandemic, in only 4 days.

Tom Jenkinson (Stronger Communities Delivery Manager) and Liz Meade (Stronger Communities Delivery Manager) outlined the report, highlighting the following:-

- The Stronger Communities Team developing and mobilising the community support infrastructure in response to the COVID19 (Coronavirus) pandemic.

Community Support Organisation Performance (2020/21)

- Since the mobilisation of the community support model in March 2020, the following activity had been recorded via the 23 CSOs across North Yorkshire, primarily facilitated by approximately 95,000 volunteer hours:
 - Approximately 82,000 contacts;
 - 17,214 prescriptions delivered;
 - 24,724 shopping deliveries made;
 - 32,559 befriending calls and 22,083 phone check ins made;
 - Administered and allocated 1,132 Covid19 Self Isolation Grants totalling £108,775;
 - 4,402 transport requests fulfilled; and
 - 31,876 meals delivered.

Covid19 Related Work

- Defra's Local Authority Emergency Assistance Fund for Food and Essential Supplies
- Support for the NHS Covid19 Vaccination Programme
- North Yorkshire Together Activity Packs
- Capacity Building

Planning for 2021/22

- Independent Evaluation
- Holiday Activities and Food Programme
- Reboot North Yorkshire

Local Area Information

- Details of local initiatives within the Constituency area were outlined.

County Councillor Chance provided details of applications that had been made to the Local Assistance Fund, which had been developed from the emergency funding provided by Central Government. He noted that the funding had been a great help to a large number of people. He also stated that Members had utilised their Locality Budgets to assist with the development of a wide range of COVID related projects.

Tom Jenkinson (Stronger Communities Delivery Manager) and Liz Meade (Stronger Communities Delivery Manager) highlighted the following:-

- Stronger Communities stepped forward to co-ordinate the community sector and volunteers in response to the pandemic at an extremely quick pace. Support was provided by numerous other bodies and organisations.
- The response to the pandemic had been successful and had been well received.
- The focus was now beginning to turn to supporting communities going forward and how to assist groups and people with re-integration as society begins to open back up, to ensure that there was not an over dependence on the services being provided.
- A Member noted that, through his involvement with local volunteer groups, the demand for services was diminishing, and that people were beginning to re-integrate. The Stronger Communities Delivery Managers confirmed that this was the case and volunteers were now assisting more with the re-integration process.

Resolved –

That Executive Member and the Stronger Communities Delivery Managers be thanked for the report and updates the contents of which be noted.

93. Development of Special Free School - Update

Chris Reynolds (Head of SEND Strategic Planning and Resources, Inclusion) presented an update report on the development of a Special Free School in the Selby district highlighting the following:-

In 2019 NYCC was successful in its application to DfE to establish a special free school in the Selby area. The school will be a 100 place 3-19 years school for children and young people with the following complex needs:

- communication and interaction needs (including Autism and speech, language and communication needs); and / or
- cognition and learning needs (MLD/SLD)
- Some children and young people may have related social, emotional and mental health needs

In July 2020 Wellspring Multi-Academy Trust was formally announced as the successful sponsor for the school. The local authority worked closely with both DfE and Wellspring to develop designs for school on the proposed site in Osgodby. This design work is continues to progress and would be subject to planning application processes following the conclusion of the work.

Representatives from NYCC, DfE and Wellspring continue to work towards the goal of delivering the new Special School for children and families in the district. As timelines are finalised more information would be released.

The following issues and points were raised during a discussion of the report:-

- Members highlighted that there was a large section of the community opposed to the siting of the school at Osgodby which had been demonstrated via a very well attended public meeting on this matter. It was suggested that the school would have been better sited in central Selby and that the location was chosen over other suitable sites for financial reasons.
- A number of Members noted that the site in Osgodby had not been identified in the Local Development Plan for this development. Members noted that this matter had been raised with NYCC and hoped that those representations had been taken account of.
- A Member noted that a consultation process had identified this site as being the most suitable for this school in the District.
- It was emphasised that the development of the school would still need to go through the appropriate planning process, which would include further consultation on the suitability of the site – The Chairman reminded Members that, if they were members of the Planning Committee, they should take care so as not to outline their stance on this matter as it could preclude them from taking part in the meeting when the application was determined.
- A Member noted that a number of people in that area were in favour of the school being sited there, but were reluctant to speak out due to the animosity of those against. The Chairman noted the need to determine a balance of public opinion on such issues, and ensure a well-balanced decision was made.
- Members asked that they be kept updated on the progress of this issue.

Resolved –

That the officer be thanked for the report, the contents of which be noted, together with the issues raised during the discussion and further updates be brought to subsequent meetings of the Committee.

94. A19 Rebuild and Repair – Update

James Malcolm (Area Highways Manager) and Sharon Fox (Area Highways) provided an update regarding the current situation in relation to the rebuild and repair of the A19 following extensive damage to the road resulting from flooding earlier in the year. The following issues were highlighted:-

- The contractor was now working seven days per week on site, following concerns raised previously, and additional machinery and staff had been brought in. Every effort was being made to complete the project ahead of schedule.
- The site works had been divided into 3 sections, with the central section expected to be completed by 19th April.
- Details of the work that taking place were outlined together with the flood prevention work utilising the large rocks that were being delivered to the site.
- There had been some flooding on the site since the previous report to the Committee but this had not caused any significant damage.
- Details of the community work and involvement of the contractor, in the area of work, to assist relationships with the local community, were outlined.

- The completion date was still expected to be June 2021 but the enhanced working was expected to bring that forward and further updates would be provided to Members as these details emerged.

Following the initial update the following issues and points were raised during a discussion with Members:-

- A Member suggested that if the work had been carried at the same level as now at the beginning of the project, the completion date would have been much sooner. In response the Area Highways Manager stated that initial work had to be prioritised due to the potential for further flooding in some parts, therefore the flooding prevention work had to be put in place. The increased work on the site could only take place with the increase in daylight hours and better weather but full advantage has been taken of these changes.
- A Member considered that the material on site could have been moved more quickly had it taken to nearby, local sites, such as the quarry at Fairburn. In response it was emphasised that the removed material belonged to the contractor and it was for them to dispose of it accordingly, with it being transported off the site for recycling or to appropriate waste facilities.
- The co-opted Member thanked the Area Highways Manager for the extensive work he had carried out on this. He asked whether the Area Highways Manager considered there were aspects of the project that could have been done better. In response it was stated that, ideally, the whole project would have been undertaken during the summer months in a single phase, allowing advantage to be taken of longer daylight hours and better weather, increasing the ability to undertake additional work, without having to prioritise specific areas. It would have also been advantageous to have contracted the work earlier, but there would have still being a dependence on the land being available, and in a suitable condition, for the work to be carried out.
- The Chairman stated that he was pleased to see the work had increased on the site. He noted that the closure of the A19 had created a huge impact for the surrounding communities and he urged that every effort be made to complete the project as soon as possible.

Resolved-

That the Area Highways Manager be thanked for the update, the contents of which be noted, and updates on the project continue to be fed back to Members directly and via the various communication channels available.

95. Work Programme

Considered -

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) providing details of the Work Programme for the Area Constituency Committee to consider, develop and adopt.

It was noted that the Work Programme had altered significantly due to the COVID 19 pandemic and Members were asked to provide details of any issues that they may wish to be added to the Work Programme, going forward, and were advised that they could also provide details of issues they wished to consider outside of the meeting. It was expected that issues related to the pandemic would feature in forthcoming meetings.

Resolved -

- (i) That the development of the Work Programme be ongoing;
- (ii) That the contents of the report be noted.

96. Future Meetings

It was likely that this would be a virtual meeting held on the Microsoft Teams platform, but, should face-to-face meetings have returned, a suitable venue would be utilised and Members would be informed accordingly

Resolved -

That the next meeting of the Committee be held on Friday 11th June 2021 at 10am

The meeting concluded at 11.45am.

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