

# North Yorkshire County Council

## Richmond (Yorks) Area Constituency Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2021, commencing at 10am – held remotely via Microsoft Teams.

### Present:-

Members: County Councillors David Blades, Caroline Dickinson, Helen Grant, Bryn Griffiths, David Hugill, Carl Les, Yvonne Peacock, Karin Sedgewick, John Weighell OBE, Annabel Wilkinson and co-opted member Malcolm Warne.

Other Cllrs Present: County Councillor Gareth Dadd

NYCC Officers: Jayne Charlton (Area Highways Manager), James Peter Farrar (Assistant Director, Economic Partnership Unit), Pam Johnson (Technical Specialist, Development Management, Highways and Transportation), Cathy Knight (Commercial Sector Service Development Manager, Integrated Passenger Transport), Steve Loach and Ruth Gladstone (Democratic Services), Daniel Dobney (Technology and Change) and Liz Simpson (Communications).

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

**All decisions made by the Committee are subject to the procedure set out in Minute 127, below.**

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### 126. Appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman 2021/22

#### Resolved:-

That County Councillor David Hugill be appointed Chairman and County Councillor Yvonne Pearson be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Committee until the county Council elections in May 2022.

### 127. Chairman's Welcome, introductions and apologies

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and read out the following statement:-

Under his delegated decision making powers in the Officers' Delegation Scheme in the Council's Constitution, the Chief Executive Officer has power, in cases of emergency, to take any decision which could be taken by the Council, the Executive or a committee. Following on from the expiry of the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, which allowed for committee meetings to be held remotely, the County Council resolved at its meeting on 5 May 2021 that, for the present time, in light of the continuing Covid-19 pandemic circumstances, remote live-broadcast committee meetings should continue (as informal meetings of the Committee Members), with any formal decisions required being taken by the Chief Executive Officer under his emergency decision making powers and after consultation with other Officers and Members as appropriate and after taking into account any views of the relevant Committee Members. This approach will be reviewed by full Council at its July meeting.

County Councillors Angus Thompson and Heather Moorhouse submitted their apologies.

## **128. Minutes**

### **Resolved -**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2021, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:-

Minute 120 - Stronger Communities: COVID19 Social Isolation and Approach to Community Efforts – The declaration of interest from County Councillor Helen Grant was pecuniary, rather than non-pecuniary as stated.

## **129. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest to note.

## **130. Public Questions and Statements**

There were no public questions or statements.

## **131. Appointments to Local Bodies**

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) enabling appointments to Local Bodies in the Richmond (Yorks) Area Constituency Committee (ACC) area, previously made by the Hambleton and Richmondshire Area Committees, to be extended, in light of the deferment of the planned County Council elections to May 2022.

Resolved:-

- (i) That the committee extends the current appointments to the Category 2 outside bodies that fall within the remit of this committee to the end of the current Council in May 2022, as follows:-

Hambleton Community Action - CC David Blades  
Hartlepool Power Station Local Community Liaison Council - CC Heather Moorhouse  
Safer Hambleton Steering Group for Community Safety - CC Heather Moorhouse  
Safer Richmondshire Community Safety Local Delivery Team – CC Carl Les

- (ii) That the committee extends the current appointments to Category 3 outside bodies subject to the following amendments:-

Appleton Wiske Educational Foundation – CC David Hugill to replace Tim Swales

William Cockin Educational Foundation (Melsonby) – Request CC Angus Thompson to nominate a representative to fill the current vacancy on that body

- (iii) That the representatives on the Preston Education Foundation, Dr Stephen Barclay Tawse and Shona Robertson, be noted, and their appointments extended accordingly.

## 132. NYCC Response to COVID 19 Pandemic – Executive Members’ Update

The Leader of the Council, County Councillor Carl Les, highlighted the following:-

- He thanked the previous Chairman, County Councillor Angus Thompson, and Vice-Chairman, County Councillor Heather Moorhouse, for their service to the Area Constituency Committee.
- The infection rates in North Yorkshire were beginning to develop an upward trend due, in the main, to the rapid spread of the Delta variant, and it affecting the younger generation.
- Although infection rates were rising, there had not been a significant increase in hospitalisations or deaths.
- Preparations for the future were underway with work commencing on the use of the Levelling Up Fund, with support being offered to the District Council applications. The development of two Countywide transport schemes was also taking place to take account of the second round of funding in the Autumn.
- The Executive had agreed applications to the Community Reward Fund totalling £8.4m.
- Meetings with the Rural Commission were being arranged to consider their recommendations from a recent report. It was expected that these would create challenges for the County.
- The frequency of meetings with the local MPs had now moved to once a fortnight, and was now being utilised to discuss numerous issues of importance locally, rather than just COVID, with excellent dialogue from all involved.
- Planning for the County Council’s response to climate change was being prepared through Overview and Scrutiny before coming to the Executive for the implementation of those plans.
- Evidence has been submitted to the Secretary of State in relation to the “call for evidence” in respect of the use of remote meetings. It was hoped that legislation will be provided to enable remote meetings to be formalised for Local Authorities, as this would offer a greater flexibility for the delivery of meetings, going forward.
- A decision on the submitted plans for Local Government reorganisation in North Yorkshire was awaited.

County Councillor Caroline Dickinson, whose Executive portfolio includes public health, highlighted the following:-

- The aim of the Government remained to relax all restrictions on 21 June, however, this was subject to a review of the current situation, therefore the “Hands, Face, Space and Fresh Air” instructions should continue to be adhered to.
- Cases in education, care and workplace settings were currently low, and it was noted that there were currently no cases in and around Catterick Garrison, with the MoD having measures in place to address the pandemic.
- The rollout of the vaccination process was continuing at a steady pace.
- Schools had been undertaking accreditation through the Living Well scheme relating to health, wellbeing and relationships. In the area 18 schools had been awarded bronze, 22 silver and 11 gold in respect of this. Members were requested to encourage schools in their Division to join up to this scheme, if they had not already. It was requested that a list of schools that had taken part be circulated to enable those not currently involved to be identified.

County Councillor Gareth Dadd, Deputy Leader of the Council whose Executive portfolio includes finance, highlighted the following:-

- The year-end financial position had been better than expected, with an unexpected £9m underspend and additional COVID funding provided by the Government. This would not be a solution to the financial position going forward however, which would only be addressed through increased Council Tax, increased Government funding or

Local Government reorganisation. He emphasised that major savings could be achieved through the proposed one Council reorganisation, which would address the funding situation for the future.

Members discussed the update and the following issues were highlighted:-

- A Member commented on the recent relaxations in COVID restrictions and the benefits this had brought to the hospitality sector. She also noted that the furlough scheme had been of great benefit with employees in a position to recommence work when businesses re-opened.
- The importance of the roll out of the 5G mobile system, particularly for deeply rural areas, was outlined.

#### **Resolved –**

That the Executive Members be thanked for their updated the contents of which be noted.

### **133. Initial Approach to Economic Recovery Following the Pandemic**

James Farrar - Assistant Director, Economic Partnership Unit provided an update on the initial approach to economic recovery following the pandemic, highlighting the following:-

#### **Recap**

##### **North Yorkshire Economy Pre Pandemic**

- A prosperous and diverse economy
- Manufacturing and hospitality higher proportion of employment than the UK average.

##### **Economic Issues for North Yorkshire**

- Low wages in agriculture and tourism
- Pockets of high deprivation, particularly on the coast.
- High average house prices to earnings ratios
- An ageing population
- Outward migration of younger people
- Poor east to west transport links
- Reduced levels connectivity

##### **Sectors at Risk**

- Significantly higher proportions of employment in accommodation and food in Constituency area.

##### **Recovery shown through the furlough Scheme**

**Last reported in July 2020 / Feb 2021 / March 2021 (provisional)**

North Yorkshire	88200	45700	40900
Hambleton	11400	5700	5200
Richmondshire	6400	3600	3200

##### **Constituency Area – employment statistics**

##### **Response to Recovery - LEP Plan to Reshape Economy**

- Reshaping York and North Yorkshire to be “Greener, Fairer and Stronger”

- Ten pledges to a Greener, Fairer, Stronger economy
  - All businesses get the support they need
  - People at risk of redundancy or newly employed can access the advice and support they need
  - Training and learning provision has the capacity to meet demand
  - All high streets, city and town centres are greener, fairer and stronger
  - Active travel and public transport usage increases
  - Digital connectivity becomes the catalyst for change
  - New job opportunities are created
  - Young people and those furthest from the jobs market are not left behind
  - New housing adapts to changing needs
  - Enhance and maintain the landscape
  
- Aims of the pledges – protect jobs and businesses, create new job opportunities and reshape the York and North Yorkshire economy to be greener, fairer and stronger.

### **Key NYCC Response Actions**

- Seven strategic areas identified:-
  - Strategic businesses at risk
  - Access to finance/national fiscal measures
  - Training and jobs
  - Strategic infrastructure
  - Place/high street
  - Private investment/innovation
  - Agriculture and fisheries

### **Constituency Area – impact of COVID on local economy and how that is being addressed**

#### **NYCC Plan for Economic Growth**

Refreshed Plan for Economic Growth

Updated 7 enablers

Action Plan to be developed in partnership

Key items include:

- Connected Catterick Garrison and the Shute Road masterplan development
- Roll out of Town Centre Wi-Fi
- 5G MANY

#### **NYCC Projects/ Investment**

Connected Catterick Garrison

Shute Road Redevelopment and Master planning work

5G MANY- Coverdale & Swaledale

£3m investment across North Yorkshire including Wi-Fi in town centres – Including Richmond

A66 duelling NSIP covering Scotch Corner and Stephen Bank to Carkin Moor

A1(M) Scotch Corner and Catterick Central Junction J52 Enterprise Areas

TS business support advice

Instant payment for micro firms from NYCC

EV charging

#### **Public Health in the workplace**

A dedicated team managing Covid 19 in workplaces

Prevention and Managing Outbreaks  
Successfully managed over 33 outbreaks  
Supported over 200 workplaces  
Developed a suite of resources  
Reassure consumers

### **Business growth**

Richmond 950 events – supporting tourism  
Wensleydale Creameries  
Catterick Racecourse Upgrade  
GTEC  
Scotch Corner Retail Park

### **Opportunities**

Enabling a Green Future  
A bumper year for consumer spending  
A1 Corridor Investment  
Freeport  
Levelling Up Opportunity around Catterick town centre

Members discussed the presentation and the following issues were highlighted:-

- A Member noted the issue of a lack of rental property available in the area and the impact that could have on the recovery plans. In response this position was acknowledged, and noted that it was a long standing issue which needed to be addressed alongside the availability of affordable housing. It was suggested that housing availability needed to be a top priority.
- It was stated that a number of businesses, particularly in the hospitality sector, were currently finding it difficult to recruit to vacant positions, with the lack of evening/night public transport being a contributing factor.
- A Member highlighted the economic difficulties being faced by people as the furlough scheme came to an end and suggested that the period of support should be extended to ensure that people could recover satisfactorily without facing financial hardship. In response it was noted that the issue of economic support was also pertinent to businesses, but a balance between support and spending had to be achieved.
- The need to provide affordable housing in the deeply rural areas of the Constituency area was emphasised, particularly to support the retention of young people and families in those areas, and it was suggested that representations to the National Park Authority were required, to accommodate this in their Local Plan. In response it was stated that the issue raised would be acted upon and communications would be made in respect of this. It was emphasised that demand for housing in the area was high, because of the high quality of life and ease of commuting, however, this led to a demand for higher value housing.
- A Member referred to the difficulty being faced in terms of local recruitment, with a local hotel being unable to operate due to a lack of staff. In response it was stated that the difficulties were noted and it was hoped that this would be addressed as communities opened up following the pandemic, however, it was recognised as a risk to the local economy and everything would be done to address the situation. It was recognised that Brexit had affected the availability of staff.
- A Member considered that there had been little information contained within the presentation in respect of the Hambleton District. In response it was acknowledged that this had been an oversight and relevant details would be provided to Members following the meeting.

## Resolved –

That Mr Farrar be thanked for the informative presentation, the contents of which be noted.

### 134. Highways Update

Jayne Charlton, Area Highways Manager, provided an update on highways matters including the introduction of a new In-house, Highways operator, a separate stand-alone 'Teckal' company, North Yorkshire Highways. She highlighted the following:-

- A series of events had been held to launch North Yorkshire Highways, commencing on 3 June 2021.
- The service provided to the public would be no different apart from the logo change which would be visible on highways' vehicles.
- Staff had been provided with an opportunity to ask questions in relation to the service change and how it would affect them. It was emphasised that the staff had outlined their desire to provide an improved service, going forward.
- The service would build on existing relationships to enhance the highways service provision.

Following the initial presentation Members undertook a discussion and the following issues and points were highlighted:-

- A Member asked whether the public would be able to see an improved service following the transition. In response it was stated that the transition had been seamless, therefore, initially, there would not be a demonstrable difference to service provision, however, every effort would be made to improve the service provision, going forward.
- It was noted that there were large numbers of signs from the former contractor around the area. In response it was stated that this had been taken account of with the former contractor having been provided with an order to remove these as soon as possible.
- A Member asked whether the "in house" nature of the new service would enhance communications and connectivity. In response it was explained that North Yorkshire Highways was a stand alone company which would provide services to the County Council, but would also be utilised by the private sector, however, with this being based within the County Council it was expected that this would improve communication and liaison.
- Several Parish Councils had asked whether further grass cutting would be provided, going forward. In response it was stated that, initially, this had been carried out by the former contractor, however orders were in place for North Yorkshire Highways to undertake grass cutting and this would commence shortly. Some cuts were being prioritised in respect of where visibility splays were affected.
- A Member referred to the spraying of weeds in gulleys, noting that the procedure had not been effective in the previous year and asked how this would be addressed. In response it was stated that this would be starting shortly, however, the service was restricted in what could be used for weed spraying, which affected the effectiveness of this procedure.
- It was asked how the placement of tables and chairs on pavements could be controlled, with this practice becoming more predominant for the hospitality sector, as restrictions began to be relaxed. In response it was stated that this issue would be addressed through liaison and consultation with the District Council, who had the authority to issue the appropriate licenses. The safety of pedestrians and road users was taken account of during the application process. Action was being taken against those that were carrying this practice out without the necessary licences being in place.

## **Resolved –**

That Jayne Charlton be thanked for her update, the contents of which be noted.

### **135. North Northallerton Bridge – update**

Pam Johnson, the project co-ordinator for NYCC, updated Members on the progress of the project. She outlined the following:-

- The project was progressing well
- The barriers for the bridge, a key part for completion, had now been ordered. These were expected to be delivered in early August.
- The overall programme had slipped slightly with the completion of the bridge expected in January 2022, although efforts were being made to try and complete it this year.
- Once the bridge was completed safety checks would be undertaken before it was opened up to traffic.
- Once open appropriate signage would be erected to encourage traffic away from the centre of Northallerton.
- Work was continuing to address the flooding issues on the A684. Solutions have been developed and discussions were taking place between the developer and the landowner. It was noted that the Highway Authority were ready to undertake the flood prevention work as soon as the developer gave the clearance. The design of the scheme was outlined and it was clarified where the drainage outlet pipe would be positioned.

## **Resolved –**

That the update report be noted

### **136. Digital Demand Responsive Bus Service**

Cathy Knight – Commercial Sector Service Development Manager, Integrated Passenger Transport updated the Committee on plans to introduce a Digital Demand Responsive Service within the County from 1 July 2021 for a trial period of up to 12 months. highlighting the following issues:-

- A digital demand response service was to be introduced within the county from 1 July 2021 for a trial period of up to 12 months. A map of the trial area was provided
- The service would be supported digitally. Software for devices would be available on the customer and driver side:
  - Passengers would be able to book and pay for a journey using an 'app' (a software application). However a telephone booking channel and payment on bus would be available. Digital booking and payment contribute to the longer term sustainability of such services.
  - The drivers would receive their routes based on advance or real-time bookings. The most efficient route in each case is calculated depending on the passengers' pick-up and destination points and are communicated to the driver on a device similar to a 'sat-nav'.
- The software would prevent bookings for journeys being made where they could be made on existing commercial services to ensure the financial stability of these services was not put at risk. There are five subsidised services in the trial area and the software would prevent bookings on one of these that was partially routed in the

trial area. However, the software would allow bookings to be made on four subsidised services that were wholly in the zone. A map of these supported services was provided.

- The service would operate on demand and have flexible routing, but as it would be a public transport the vehicle would be shared by customers unlike taxis, which are a more private form of transport and not usually shared. In practice this would mean:
  - The software may divert the vehicle from direct journeys to pick up or drop off different passengers (unlike a taxi).
  - Passengers may need to wait to be picked up (where as taxi is usually 'instant' pick up).
  - The service would operate from bus stop to bus stop (unlike a taxi).
- There would be limitations in the software on the maximum diversion and wait time. It may also be possible that not all journey requests could be met 100% of the time. However the fares charged would be similar to local bus fares. There would be a flat fare of £1.20 (£0.65 child) and ENCTS passes accepted.
- The provision of the bus service would be by the Integrated Passenger Transport internal fleet and the Customer Service Centre would manage the telephone channel. A third party supplier would be used to deliver a digital booking and software for devices on the passenger and driver side.
- A comprehensive marketing campaign would target customers in the pilot area to raise awareness of the service and how to access it. In addition, 'How To' videos and FAQs would be developed for members of the public using the app. A series of 'roadshows' would be undertaken with staff spending time at key locations in the trial area to promote the service and explain to potential passengers how to make bookings.
- Once the service had started Members (within the trial area) would receive regular updates by email highlighting some or all of the following:
  - Patronage/usage levels
  - Popular locations
  - Any challenges and how they were being addressed
  - Indicative customer feedback (rate my ride star rating)
  - Details of any ongoing promotions

The following issues were raised by Members during a discussion of the report:-

- It was clarified that busses would be booked in advance on the day of travel and could not be booked days in advance.
- The Leader of the Council welcomed the pilot project indicating that it correlated with the Government initiative "Bus Back Better" He highlighted the importance of available public transport to the local economy. He stressed the need to ensure that busses were not travelling around North Yorkshire empty, and hoped that this project would be successful and could be rolled out across the whole of the County
- It was noted that a video, outlining how to use the service was available, and it was asked that this be circulated to Members.
- A Member noted that the software was compared to a sat nav and asked whether this could direct the busses along routes that were inappropriate. In response it was stated that the software prevented this from happening.
- Members welcomed the initiative and hoped that it proved to be successful allowing it to be rolled out further.

**Resolved –**

That the report be noted.

**137. Work Programme**

Considered -

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

It was noted that Members were invited to identify issues for inclusion in the Work Programme outside of the meeting and inform the Clerk accordingly.

The following issue had been requested for consideration at a subsequent meeting and would be included when the various representatives were available:-

- Further consideration of flooding issues and flood prevention work in the Constituency area with invites extended to the NFU, the Environment Agency and the relevant Internal Drainage Boards to assist with the discussion

**Resolved -**

That the Work Programme be noted and updated to reflect the additional items requested.

**138. Next Meeting**

**Resolved -**

That the next scheduled meeting of the Area Constituency Committee would take place on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> August 2021 at 10am.

The meeting concluded at 12:05pm.

SML