

# North Yorkshire County Council

## Executive

12 October 2021

### Area Constituency Committee Feedback

#### 1.0 Purpose of the Report

To bring to the attention of the Executive key issues considered at recent meetings of the Area Constituency Committees.

#### 2.0 Skipton and Ripon Area Constituency Committee on 2 September 2021

- 2.1 The Rt Hon Julian Smith MP was unable to attend the meeting due to other commitments. He is hoping to be able to attend the December meeting.
- 2.2 The committee received public questions relating to the closure of Skipton High Street on market days and why existing arrangements could not be extended on an ongoing basis to support local businesses.
- 2.3 The committee considered a report from the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner on priorities for the committee area. The Commissioner answered questions from the committee concerning the use of ANPR systems to help target anti-social behaviour and noise pollution from some motorbikes, how the recruitment and retention of on-call firefighters could be better supported, what was being done to improve the 101 service, community funding to help tackle crime and disorder, rural crime and the endangerment of wildlife and the greater use of existing police powers to tackle poaching and hare coursing.
- 2.4 The committee received an update on the operation of the Council's permit scheme for work on the highways by utilities companies. This was a 6 month follow-up to the presentation to the committee on 11 March 2021. The committee were particularly concerned about the national consultation on the use of 'flexi-permits' and what this would mean for the ability of the Council to co-ordinate works on the highways, should it be implemented.
- 2.5 County Councillor Carl Les and other Executive members present gave updates on key issues arising in their portfolios and answered questions posed by the committee.
- 2.6 Representatives from the Craven Youth Council were present and raised a number of priorities for committee members to consider, including young people's mental health and wellbeing and climate change mitigation.

#### 3.0 Richmond (Yorks) Area Constituency Committee – 8 September 2021

- 3.1 The Committee considered a report from the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner on priorities for the committee area. Issues raised by Members included the noise created by motorcycles in local communities, new regulations in relation to travellers, VAS for local communities, visible policing, partnership working and 20mph zones in local villages.

- 3.2 An update on the county Council's response to COVID 19 was provided by Executive Members County Councillors Gareth Dadd, David Chance and Andrew Lee. Issues raised by Members included rates of hospital admissions, the combination of flu jabs and COVID booster jabs and reintegrating people into society following the pandemic to ensure they begin to become less reliant on services. County Councillor chance also provided an update on the settlement of refugees from Afghanistan.
- 3.3 A presentation on the findings and recommendations following the study by the Rural Commission was provided. Issues raised by Members included the need for additional housing in rural areas to ensure that local people had an opportunity to remain there and the provision of full banking services in rural areas,
- 3.4 An update was provided on the development of the North Northallerton Bridge, and it was noted that the project had progressed with the bridge structure beginning to be put in place.
- 3.5 Members agreed to set up a task and finish group in relation to flooding in the Constituency Area.
- 3.6 An urgent item was agreed in relation to the fire at the Bilsdale Transmitter which had left many communities without TV or radio. Members agreed to contact Rishi Sunak MP with a view to resolving this matter as soon as possible, and to consider compensation for those adversely affected.

#### **4.0 Harrogate and Knaresborough Area Constituency Committee on 16 September 2021**

- 4.1 The committee considered a presentation from the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner on priorities for the committee area. The Commissioner answered members' questions, which sought his thoughts about prosecuting people for Class A drugs and whether employers should be encouraged to test employees to identify drug use; tackling littering in villages; liaison with town and parish councils; increased numbers of police officers in North Yorkshire; changes in the nature of crime; provision for people having a mental health crisis; recruitment of more retained firefighters; the different types of local projects for which funding could be applied from the PFCC; tackling prisoner illiteracy; and enforcement of 20mph speed limits. The committee thanked the Commissioner for his very interesting and informative presentation and encouraged members to respond directly to two consultations that the Commissioner is currently conducting.
- 4.2 Executive members present gave updates on key issues arising in their portfolios and answered questions posed by the committee.
- 4.3 In accordance with the County Council's Petitions Scheme, the committee considered a petition entitled "Remove the barriers blocking Beech Grove and Lancaster Road, Harrogate and stop this proposed LTN". The petition was presented to the meeting by the petition organisers. A statement from the Chair of Harrogate and District Cycle Action, which urged the committee to reject the action requested by the petition, was also presented to the meeting. The committee noted that the Beech Grove Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) had been introduced as an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order and was a very modest step towards carrying out what had been sought by the vast majority of respondents to the Harrogate Congestion Study Public Engagement carried out in 2019, namely, to introduce a system of better facilities for walking and cycling in Harrogate town centre and also to encourage people out of their cars and instead walk, cycle or use public transport. Following debate, the committee decided that the action requested by the petition should not be taken in order to allow this Experimental Traffic Regulation Order to continue to allow the public opportunity to object/comment.

## **5.0 Scarborough & Whitby Area Constituency Committee on 17 September 2021**

- 5.1 The Rt Hon Robert Goodwill MP attended the meeting. He welcomed the decision on the Local Government Review and the opportunity for Scarborough to have its own Town Council, and suggested consideration should be given to extending its boundary to include some of the adjacent parish council areas. He expressed concern about the large number of children in the Scarborough area who were unable to access an NHS dentist, and noted the time it took to train as a dentist. He suggested that to meet the national requirement, more needed to be encouraged in to the profession, and the disincentives for those at the top of the profession needed removing to retain them. He was pleased to note the ongoing work to encourage newly qualified doctors to work at Scarborough Hospital and the investment in Whitby hospital, but wanted to see more clinics taking place from that site so that residents did not need to travel. Finally, he welcomed the additional joint funding bids underway by the County Council and the Borough Council, and the possibility of a new Park & Ride site on the A171.
- 5.2 The Committee also received an overview of the Chief Medical Officer's second Annual Report 2021 on Health in Coastal Communities, which presented an analysis of the health and wellbeing of England's coastal communities and its relevance to the Scarborough and Whitby area, including case studies of work that were currently underway for the themes in the report i.e. Health and wellbeing in coastal communities; deprivation and health; mental health; migration and demography; health services and medical workforce; economy and employment; education; and housing.
- 5.3 Members welcomed the report as it shone a light on the benefits of living in a coastal community as well as highlighting the ongoing issues faced for residents living in the Scarborough & Whitby area. They agreed that while North Yorkshire was seen as a good place to live, where health outcomes were good etc, that perception did not reflect the true picture for the whole county. In particular, they noted that over 85% of the most deprived population in North Yorkshire lived in Scarborough, taking account factors such as income deprivation, child poverty, health status, housing quality and crime.
- 5.4 They were therefore pleased to note the ongoing work with NHS partners to develop coordinated plans through Local Care Partnership focussed on areas of deprivation, through collaboration with local communities and residents to reflect their priorities for reducing inequalities. They also noted the already strong established relationships with statutory and VCS organisations with local communities that could be built upon to better understand what was important to them and their families in order to improve health and wellbeing.

## **6.0 Thirsk & Malton Area Constituency Committee on 1 October 2021**

- 6.1 County Councillor Robert Baker was appointed Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the municipal year.
- 6.2 The Police Fire and Crime Commissioner attended the meeting to provide an overview of his first four months in post, and to highlight his priorities. Members welcomed the range of new initiatives designed to deliver those priorities, and took the opportunity to raise a number of issues which included, speeding through rural villages, and the need for robust vetting for the recruitment of new officers.
- 6.3 A Police Officer from North Yorkshire Police's Rural Taskforce also attended the meeting to provide an annual update on the Taskforce, which highlighted the current issues within the Thirsk and Malton constituency area and provided a breakdown of the statistics for the different types of crime recorded. They were pleased to note that NYP's Rural Watch Scheme, facilitated through social media was working well, allowing rural communities to

contact and receive feedback from NYP to report suspicious behaviour in their communities.

- 6.4 The Committee received their annual update on Schools, Educational Achievement & Finance. The wide-ranging report provided information on the schools across the area and their status; School standards and attainment; Exclusions; Special Education Needs; Schools Finance; and planning of school places.
- 6.5 They discussed the high number of fixed term exclusions and their underlying causes, and queried the potential correlation between the SEND figures and the number of exclusions. They also expressed concern about the quality of elective home education and the possibility of safeguarding issues for those children taught at home, and received reassurance that there was a locality officer in place in each area focussing on those issues. Finally, the committee noted the fall in pupil role numbers and recognising the link between pupil numbers and school budgets welcomed the introduction of sparsity funding which would benefit smaller more remote schools. It was confirmed that due to a change in the way distance from home to school was being measured, a further 80 schools across the county would now be eligible for that funding.

## **7.0 Recommendation**

- 7.1 That the Executive notes the report and considers any matters arising from the work of the Area Constituency Committees detailed above, that merit further scrutiny, review or investigation at a county-level.

Barry Khan  
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