

North Yorkshire County Council

Richmondshire Area Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2016, commencing at 10.00 am at Scorton War Memorial Institute, The Green, Scorton.

Present:-

Members:-

County Councillors Roger Harrison-Topham (Chairman); John Blackie, Helen Grant, Michael Heseltine, Carl Les and Stuart Parsons.

Co-opted Members:-

Clive World (Parish Council Representative).

Ian Hainsworth, Linda Curran DL, Maureen Bursell and Jane Ritchie MBE (Voluntary Sector Representatives).

In Attendance:-

County Councillor David Chance, Executive Member for Stronger Communities and Public Health.

Officers:-

Holly Austin (Business Support), Patrick Duffy (Democratic Services), Chief Inspector Nick Hunter (North Yorkshire Police), Richard Marr (Area Highways Manager), David Pitt (North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service), Sally Caisley (Central Services Directorate) and Gillian Wall (Stronger Communities Delivery Manager - Richmondshire)

There were 4 members of the public present.

Apologies for absence were received from Pat Whelan.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

145. Minutes

Resolved -

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2016, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

146. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at his stage of the meeting, but please see Minute No. 152 (a) (i), below.

147. Public Questions or Statements

There were no questions or statements from members of the public.

148. Stronger Communities

Considered -

The oral report of the Assistant Director - Policy and Partnerships, showing a case study dvd giving details of the programme and its effect on organisations and their communities.

A Member said that he was not happy with one of the examples given on the dvd – the shop at Middleton Tyas - in that it was an initiative that was already in existence. In his view, the Stronger Communities Team should be making a difference by encouraging new and innovative projects, rather than linking into ones that already exist. He stressed that this was not intended as a criticism of the Stronger Communities Delivery Manager.

The Stronger Communities Delivery Manager responded that there is a balance to be struck between working with existing organisations and helping to develop new initiatives.

A number of Members commented that the Stronger Communities Delivery Manager was making a real difference in the Richmondshire District - with both new and existing projects - and complimented her on this.

Resolved -

That the report and case study DVD be noted.

149. North Yorkshire Police Update

Considered -

The report of Chief Inspector Nick Hunter, Operational Commander, Hambleton and Richmondshire, updating the Area Committee on initiatives currently being undertaken within the Richmondshire District by North Yorkshire Police.

Members noted that this would be Chief Inspector Hunter's last meeting as he would be leaving the Force after 30 years' service in the Richmondshire Area.

Chief Inspector Hunter had commenced his career as a Police Constable at Richmond in 1987 and had served within Richmondshire at all ranks, concluding as the Operational Commander. He said it had been an honour and a pleasure to serve the communities within Richmondshire and he thanked everyone who had supported him in helping to make Richmondshire one of the safest places to live, work and visit in the country.

The Chairman and other Members of the Committee thanked Chief Inspector Hunter for the excellent work he had done and for his approach to community policing and wished him well for the future.

One of the Items in Chief Inspector Hunter's report referred to custody provision for Hambleton and Richmondshire. The discussion on this aspect is referred to at Minute No. 152 (a) (iii) below, as it was one of the issues raised by Councillor Blackie.

Chief inspector Hunter highlighted the following aspects from his report:-

- crime levels were comparable to the same period last year and anti-social behaviour had fallen significantly. There were no areas for concern;

- recruitment of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and Police Constables was well under way;

The report also reported back on updates requested at the last meeting concerning parties at the Old Water Works on Reeth Road; door to door sales schemes and a hate incident.

A Member stated that he not received any feedback concerning a hate incident that he had raised until he read the update in the Chief Inspector's report.

The same Member commented that, with crime falling, when would the Police uphold the law in terms of things such as obstruction issues? The tone of the automated voice on 101 calls was not appropriate. It felt as if he was being ordered to "stay on the line". He had 'phoned about a Highways emergency, yet this had not been entered onto the Police System. Therefore, what was the point of using 101?

Chief Inspector Hunter apologised for not having feedback about the hate incident and said he would feedback the concerns raised about the 101 service.

Resolved -

- a) That the report be noted.
- b) That the Committee place on record its thanks to Chief Inspector Hunter for the excellent contribution he has made to policing in Richmondshire.

150. North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service Community Safety Update - Richmondshire

Considered -

The report of Group Manager David Pitt advising the Committee on community safety activities involving North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service that have occurred between 1 April and 31 July 2016 and providing an update regarding other issues within the Richmondshire District.

Group Manager Pitt commented that:-

- the report illustrated the wide range of community activities that the service is involved with, many of which were undertaken in partnership, together with the varied nature of the incidents attended by whole time and retained Firefighters;
- prevention activity continued to be a key plank of the Service's work;
- the recruitment situation in respect of Retained Firefighters at Leyburn and Hawes was improving and efforts continued to engage with employers and local businesses to recruit even more new candidates;
- the new Tactical Response Vehicle (TRV) for Northallerton would be arriving shortly. Training on it would then be undertaken and it would be in active service from January 2017. The vehicle was extremely well equipped. The TRV was one of six that would be introduced across the service. TRVs were slightly smaller vehicles than standard fire engines, but had similar functionality. The main difference and advantage of these vehicles is that they would be crewed with a smaller number of Firefighters and could therefore attend smaller incidents - either on their own, or as part of a response to larger incidents.

A Member referred to decisions that are made about the siting of speed safety cameras. Residents should not have to wait three years from the date they had last

requested speed safety cameras. In response, Group Manager Pitt advised that a local Delivery Group considered issues relating to the Speed Management Protocol. He would arrange for that Group to look into the issue raised by the Member.

A Member said it was clear from the report that a lot of good work was being undertaken. With regard to TRVs, the first of these within the county had recently been delivered and he understood that they were very highly rated.

Resolved -

- a) That the report be noted.
- b) That the Group Manager arrange for the local Delivery Group to look into the issue raised by a Member about the three year wait for requesting speed safety cameras from when an application had not been agreed.

151. Committee Update

Considered -

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) updating Members on the response from the Executive on issues referred from the last meeting of the Area Committee.

Resolved -

That the report be noted.

152. Issues to be raised by Members of the Committee

(a) County Councillor John Blackie

- (i) The NHS Better Health Review of the 24/7 Accident and Emergency, Maternity and Paediatrics Services at Darlington Memorial Hospital and the potential impact on local residents and visitors to Richmondshire, along with the capability of the James Cook University Hospital to respond to a substantially higher level of demand, without additional investment in its facilities or resources, in the event of these services being transferred

NOTE: Co-opted Member Jane Ritchie declared an interest in this Item as she represents Richmondshire on the Clinical Commissioning Group.

A report by Councillor Blackie had been circulated, together with slides which provided data activity in respect of James Cook University Hospital (JCUH); The Friarage Hospital; North Tees Hospital and Darlington Memorial Hospital. The slides were part of a presentation by the NHS in Darlington, Durham and Tees on the Better Health Programme (BHP).

Councillor Blackie stressed that there were grave concerns throughout Richmondshire regarding the potential loss of the following critical care services at the Darlington Memorial Hospital:

- 24/7 Accident & Emergency Services
- 24/7 Consultant-led Maternity Services
- 24/7 Consultant-led Paediatric (Children's) Services

Councillor Blackie stated that these services were under threat. Under one of the options being considered, the only place where 24/7 emergency services would be available would be JCUH.

Councillor Blackie highlighted the following statistics:

- JCUH already deals with 104,809 A&E attendances, 8,033 maternity attendances and 4,543 births.
- Darlington Memorial Hospital deals with 59,318 A&E attendances, 3,917 maternity attendances and 2,167 births.
- North Tees Hospital deals with 70,124 A&E attendances, 4,944 maternity attendances and 3,318 births.

It was clear that the intention of the BHP was to rationalise critical care services; there would be no additional resources.

He had recently chaired a public meeting in Reeth, attended by 50 people and the response to questions about where Consultants would operate from were very “woolly”.

If the proposal came to fruition, Councillor Blackie felt that JCUH would be swamped by the number of people needing to access it and that everyone in Richmondshire would lose out.

Local services at The Friarage had been lost on the basis of promises which had not been kept. For instance, the promise of a daily free shuttle bus service between The Friarage and JCUH had been withdrawn.

He added that public pressure was beginning to have an impact and the distances that would have to be travelled by people in Richmondshire to JCUH, together with the numbers involved, were compelling arguments against the proposals.

Co-opted Member Jane Ritchie said it was her understanding that it would be proposed that services operate from two Hospitals.

Co-opted Member Linda Curran thanked Councillor Blackie for raising this issue, which she felt was important to all communities in Richmondshire.

The Leader of the Council advised that he had recently met with his counterpart at Darlington Council and had discussed the possibility of putting Motions to the two Councils. Darlington are putting a Motion to their Council about this and the Leader said he was minded to do so for North Yorkshire too.

Councillor Blackie moved the following Motion: The Richmondshire Area Committee very strongly support the maintaining and continued improvement of all 24/7 critical care services currently offered at Darlington Memorial Hospital.

On being seconded, the motion was put to the vote and carried unanimously.

Therefore, it was

Resolved –

That the Richmondshire Area Committee very strongly support the maintaining and continued improvement of all 24/7 critical care services currently offered at Darlington Memorial Hospital.

(ii) The Little White Bus Richmondshire Rover Service

Councillor Blackie updated the Committee on this initiative.

The service operated six days a week carrying approximately 500 people, many of whom were on concessionary passes. It was helping people to get about. A fare box was available if people wanted to contribute.

Some parts of the service were not well used so a new timetable was being introduced. It was anticipated that the service would go to Barnard Castle and Ripon to make the best use of the resource. There was a plan in place to bring forward a fresh wave of volunteers, as, without volunteers, the service could not operate.

There was a Wednesday afternoon trip that goes to places that public transport does not – such as Kendall, Hayes Garden Centre in Ambleside.

A Member said the service gives respite to a number of people, providing them with an opportunity to have some time off from, say, caring responsibilities. It provides a personal service but more volunteers and passengers are required. Due to the lack of volunteers, he was currently driving the bus for three days a week which, with other commitments, he would not be able to sustain.

A Member commented that the service can act as an escape valve from loneliness and isolation for a number of people.

Co-opted Member Jane Ritchie mentioned that in the height of the holiday season regular users are sometimes unable to get on the bus, as it is used by walkers, which was unfortunate.

(iii) The Impact of Policing in the Upper Dales of the loss of the Police Custody Suite from Northallerton and its replacement in Harrogate

Councillor Blackie expressed his concern about this. It is 60 miles from Hawes to Harrogate and people are then left to make their own way back to Hawes, when discharged from the Custody Suite in Harrogate.

Councillor Blackie referred to the “blended provision” term that he had heard used. He felt that there would not be any blended provision; in reality, this would become a permanent arrangement. This form of policing did not serve Richmondshire and policing was becoming more remote. Also, there may have been a cut in PCSOs.

Chief Inspector Hunter stressed that PCSOs had not been cut. There had been some vacancies, which were being filled and the first PCSO would be assigned to the Leyburn area.

Chief Inspector Hunter advised that this is a pilot. He was aware that there were some concerns and the pilot would help determine the viability of this. Other areas had gone down this route and it had worked well. Cambridgeshire, for instance, had one Custody Suite covering the whole of the county.

The Police would retain a dynamic ability to put resources to where they were required.

The number of people arrested in recent years had decreased markedly, due to a combination of reduction in crimes committed; the way that the Police dealt with people; and developments such as community resolution agreements, between the offender, the victim and the Police. In addition, a voluntary attendance suite has been built at Richmond Police Station which allows for the interviewing of people without the need to arrest and transport to Harrogate, where appropriate.

The proposal was a blended mix, as there was an agreement with Darlington and Middlesbrough that, if required, they would take detainees.

Having a Custody Suite in Harrogate enabled a “drop and go” culture e.g. the Police Officer concerned did not have to wait at the Custody Suite.

In the majority of cases there is an expectation that detainees will have to make their own arrangements to get home. However, assessments are undertaken with regards to a detainee’s vulnerability and where necessary the police will assist in getting those detainees deemed vulnerable home.

He would keep Members apprised throughout the process. The Northallerton Custody Suite was being kept in a state of readiness.

In response to questions raised by Members, Chief Inspector Hunter confirmed that:-

- there was no cost to the Force arising from the cross border agreement with Darlington and Middlesbrough Police Stations;
- there was close working with the Military Police, which included joint patrols. If an incident solely involved military personnel, then the Royal Military Police dealt with this. If an incident involved a civilian, the Police Force would take the lead.

A Member felt that Harrogate was not the ideal solution for a Custody Suite and that the public were suspicious that this meant people were not being arrested.

Chief Inspector Hunter said that he would relate Members comments to Amanda Oliver, Acting Assistant Chief Constable.

(b) Co-opted Member, Linda Curran DL - The Blue Badge Scheme

Considered -

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) outlining the main provisions of the Blue Badge Scheme and the respective responsibilities of the parties involved.

Linda Curran, Co-opted Member, had requested that this Item be placed on the Agenda.

A report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) had been circulated, which outlined the background to this Item and the main agencies involved and their respective responsibilities.

Appended to the report was information on the scheme which is submitted to applicants in North Yorkshire.

Linda Curran commented that it was understandable that the result of a customer survey was high as the Blue Badge Scheme was probably the best value and made a huge difference to holders.

She asked about the difficulty of applying and what was being done to help applicants. She also asked about eligibility as some people, in trying to be positive about their condition, would not get a badge, even though they really needed one. The form requires a lot of detailed information and a complicated

list of ID documents. Were applicants offered information about groups like Advocacy, Age UK, etc., who could help them to fill in forms?

Linda Curran also asked about anomalies where Blue Badge Holders parked on and blocked pavements, which was not allowed, but no action was taken to stop this and, on the other hand, parking in loading bays resulted in a parking ticket. There was a need for consistency from parking wardens and reinforcement of rules to Blue Badge Holders.

She asked about the abuse of Blue Badges and what action was taken to check up on this. Do the figures for Blue Badge Holders equate to the number of people showing statistically in the area of having ill-health/disability? Also, do the numbers of accessible parking bays in our towns fit with the number of Blue Badge Holders?

A Member pointed out that as there was no three hour restriction in Richmond Market Place the bays were occupied all day and this resulted in a shortage. He said that he would take this up with the Highways Section.

Sally Caisley, Service Delivery Team Leader in the Central Services Directorate, outlined the main elements of the scheme, which was administered by the County Council.

As parking charges increase the number of incidents of abuse of Blue Badges had increased.

The County Council has moved towards encouraging people to discuss their application over the 'phone. This enables more information to be gathered, which can assist people in their application.

A Member said that as GP Practices were on private land, there was no requirement upon them to make provision for Blue Badge Holders. As the Highways Section did not put any limit on parking bays designated for Blue Badge Holders, people were parking all day and inconveniencing other residents and traders.

The Member added that he was aware of a person who had a medical need for a badge for two months, yet the badge lasts for 36 months. Were on-going checks undertaken to ensure that the recipient continued to require their Blue Badge?

Sally Caisley advised that some badges were issued automatically by the Government. For example, if people were in receipt of Disability Living Allowance and were receiving benefits in relation to their mobility, the County Council would not then reassess applicants. Other people were asked to provide medical evidence. This did not have to be via a GP, as had previously been the case. It could be via a Consultant, Walk-in Centre or Hospital.

There were no temporary badges – they had to be permanent.

People must wait 12 weeks after surgery to see if they require a Blue Badge, as their mobility may have improved following the surgery. She asked the Member who had raised the issue of someone continuing to have a badge when there was no medical need, to advise her of the detail following the meeting.

Resolved -

That the report be noted.

153. Appointment to Outside Body

Considered -

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) asking the Committee to consider a nomination for a vacancy on the Atkinson and Clarke Educational Foundation.

The Chairman, as the local Member for the area in which the vacancy had arisen, advised that he was nominating Mr. Grahame Shepherd.

Resolved -

That Mr. Grahame Shepherd be appointed to the Atkinson and Clarke Educational Trust.

154. Richmondshire Highways Office - Update

Considered -

The oral report of the Area Highways Manager.

The Committee welcomed Richard Marr, Area Highways Manager. Richard had recently taken over responsibility for highways issues in Richmondshire from Nigel Smith.

The Area Highways Manager advised the Committee that he took the approach that if the Highways Section was doing something then it would be done to the best of their ability and if something could not be done he would let people know why.

The Chairman said he was pleased that Coverham Bridge had now re-opened. Ideally, he would like to have had more notice so that he could have advised people of this.

A Member said that he had had a productive meeting with the Area Highways Manager and that he was pleased that the snarl times at Gallowgate Junction no longer seemed to be an issue.

A Member referred to issues regarding winter gritting of the Buttertubs Pass and thanked the Area Highways Manager for having attended a meeting about this.

A Member passed a petition, signed by 231 people, to the Area Highways Manager. The petition concerned a broad range of issues.

155. Work Programme

Considered -

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) presenting the current Work Programme and inviting Members' comments.

Resolved -

That the report be noted.

The meeting concluded at 12.25 p.m.

PD