

# North Yorkshire County Council

## Executive

26 September 2017

### Feedback from the Area Committees

#### 1.0 Purpose of the Report

To bring to the attention of the Executive specific issues considered at the recent meetings of the County Council's:-

- ◆ **Richmondshire Area Committee - 30 August 2017**
- ◆ **County Area Committee for the Harrogate District - 31 August 2017**

#### 2.0 Richmondshire Area Committee - 30 August 2017

##### 2.1 Membership

The Committee formally appointed the following Parish/Town Council Representatives as Co-opted Members of the Committee until the first meeting following the Annual Council Meeting in 2018:-

- Michael Barker
- Angie Dale
- Ian Hainsworth
- Alan Simpson
- Clive World

##### 2.2 Public Questions or Statements

Barbara Gravenor (on behalf of Richmondshire Sustrans Rangers) addressed the Committee, advising that the Richmondshire Sustrans Rangers plan to hold a public meeting in order to form a Richmondshire Cycling Forum.

She added that, despite attending meetings with the Highways Agency for Non Motorway Users for the past two years, they had failed to obtain any provision for cyclists in regards to the upgrade of the A1 between Leeming and Barton. The Sustrans realise that they need to represent a greater number of cyclists and members of the public who are potential cyclists in Richmondshire and through this Forum they hoped to open a dialogue between cyclists and politicians to enhance the provision for cycling at the grass root level in Richmondshire.

The Area Highways Manager responded that Highways England were now making some provision around Scotch Corner. He welcomed the formation of this Forum and would be happy to work with it.

##### 2.3 Items raised by Members of the Committee

###### Matrix Boards

Councillor Thompson advised the Committee of the issues faced by Parish Councils who feel that they are being held back in this important issue by the County Council.

Several Parish Councils would like to purchase their own Matrix Boards in an attempt to curb drivers speeds, but have been informed that they can only get them from the County Council by applying to join the Temporary Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) Scheme.

The Area Highways Manager advised that the County Council was bound by Government Guidelines on this issue, which were clear. Permanent VAS can only be sited in areas with a high incidence of accidents. The proliferation of VAS has been shown to lessen their impact on driver behaviour.

Councillor Thompson moved the following Motion, which was approved:-

It is a recommendation to the Executive:-

That the County Council re-think its stance on Matrix Boards, so that Parish Councils are able to purchase their own Matrix Boards.

It was also agreed that an update be provided to the next meeting of the Committee on the deliberations of the Transport, Environment and Scrutiny Committee, who will be considering this matter and that that Scrutiny Committee be advised of the points made at today's meeting.

#### The NHS in Richmondshire

Councillor Blackie provided an update on this matter, which he had raised at previous meetings. He had now become aware of a further incident, concerning the lack of Ambulance provision for a cancer patient.

The Leader advised that the matters raised by Councillor Blackie would be considered initially by Scrutiny of Health Committee, who would then arrange to feedback to the Area Committee.

Councillor Blackie also referred to the proposals to close two Mental Health Wards at the Friarage Hospital.

The Committee approved the following Motion by Councillor Blackie:-

It is a recommendation to the Executive:-

That Richmondshire Area Committee strongly oppose proposals to close two Mental Health Wards at the Friarage Hospital and ask that its views be put to the Executive, Scrutiny of Health Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Board at the appropriate time.

#### Green Lane from Skelton to Helwith Bridge

Councillor Blackie circulated a number of photographs that illustrated the adverse impact of drivers using this area, despite there being a Traffic Regulation Order in place. People were roaring through the area with a total lack of concern for the damage they were causing.

At the request of Councillor Blackie, a local resident, Oliver Leatham, addressed Members. Mr. Leatham informed the Committee that the drivers behaviour was dangerous as, for instance, horses could rear up. The track had not been touched by the County Council since 1979. Therefore, he asked that it be closed or downgraded to a Bridleway.

The Area Highways Manager responded that the land remains a public highway. The County Council would be seeking an 18 month closure, during which time options would be discussed with local residents and other stakeholders.

It was agreed that a report back be made to the Committee.

#### Boundary Commission for England – Proposals for Richmondshire

Councillor Blackie circulated a copy of this document. He had submitted a response to the consultation, an outcome of which could mean that Members would not be representing the same communities that they do currently.

### 2.4 **Service Updates:**

#### Stronger Communities

The Stronger Communities Delivery Manager for Richmondshire reported that:-

- work was continuing with community libraries to consolidate and strengthen delivery;
- Volunteer recruitment would continue with an autumn campaign by Colburn, Richmondshire and Catterick Community Managed Libraries, featuring “Give it a Go!” sessions led by volunteers for people to try out volunteering in a Library and regular “Books, Bakes and Volunteering” Sessions led by volunteers at Leyburn Community Library. She said she would appreciate it if Members could help promote these sessions;
- The new Stronger Communities Investment Prospectus was one of the initiatives launched at Richmond Library in July. Another was North Yorkshire Connect, a demonstration of the new Community Directory.

A Member raised two concerns:-

- He understood the procurement in respect of the new branding had “failed” and would have to be re-done. He asked the Clerk to find out who was responsible.
- With regard to the Summer Reading Challenge, whilst at the Tourist Information Centre, he heard staff turning away children and not allowing them to sign up because Richmond Library “had met its quota”. He requested an explanation for this.

NOTE: A response to the Member has subsequently been provided on both of these issues.

#### North Yorkshire Police

Among the issues highlighted were:-

- The excellent response to the Police Cadet Scheme in Richmondshire.
- A further event took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> July in respect of Project Servator. This is a scheme that deploys teams of officers to disrupt criminals and terrorists in crowded places. There were 85 members of local businesses and the military community who attended. Businesses were encouraged to review local security and procedures. Excellent feedback about the Event had been received.

A Member commented that the removal of the yellow ‘phones from outside Police Stations and Community Offices made it harder for people to report crime. Inspector Gee responded that these ‘phones are now very old and no longer meet stringent security requirements and are, therefore, being removed. Most people now use mobiles and the Police had now installed door bells at all Stations to alert Officers inside if a member of the public calls. The Leader advised that these issues can be feedback through the Police and Crime Panel.

Members also referred to continuing issues with 101 (The Police Non-Emergency Number). Inspector Gee advised that the national increase in calls to 101 is being

researched both locally and nationally to ascertain why the Service is experiencing an increase of approximately 20%.

#### North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service – Community Safety Update

The Chairman noted the Water Safety Presentation made to Richmond School and hoped that this would be rolled out to other schools.

#### Richmond Highways Office – Update

The Highways Manager updated the Committee on developments and responded to Members queries on a number of matters, including the mix of gravel to salt in salt bins; the 30 mph speed limit at Marne Barracks and gritting in Eppleby.

### **2.5 Vulnerable, Exploited, Missing and Trafficked Children**

The Group Manager, Safeguarding, updated the Committee on this work.

She provided an update on the changes that had been made and, in particular, that the VEMT process is now co-ordinated through the Multi Agency Screening Team. The report contained information on:-

- Domestic Violence/Abuse
- Missing from Home and Care
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- VEMT Practitioner Groups

### **2.6 Appointment to Outside Bodies**

The Committee resolved as follows:-

- That Graheme Shepherd be appointed to the Atkinson Clarke Educational Foundation.
- That the following people be appointed to the vacancies on Richmond School Trust:-

District Councillor Lorraine Hodgson, Mr Keith Hall, Mrs J Walker and Councillor Clive World.

- That the following people be appointed to the vacancies on Yorebridge Educational Foundation:-

Peter Annison, James Hodgson and Martin Fleming.

### **2.7 Work Programme**

The Committee reviewed its Work Programme and, among other things, agreed that “Changes to Healthcare Provision in Richmondshire” be added to the Programme.

## **3.0 County Area Committee for the Harrogate District - 31 August 2017**

### **3.1 Appointment of Area Committee Co-opted Members**

The Committee appointed Leah Swain of Community First Yorkshire and Sandra Doherty of Harrogate District Chamber of Commerce as non-voting Co-opted Members, to serve until the Committee’s meeting which follows the Annual Meeting of the County Council in 2018.

### 3.2 Harrogate Relief Road Review - Progress

The Committee noted progress of work concerning the Harrogate Relief Road Review. The Review is considering the justification and need for a relief road, alongside a number of potential alignment options for the relief road including the currently adopted preferred route of a Harrogate Northern Relief Road and Killinghall Bypass. The review is also considering the need for, and viability of, potential sustainable transport measures in Harrogate and Knaresborough and the wider urban area, both as stand-alone measures and as measures complementary to a relief road.

The key information reported to the Committee's meeting was as follows:-

- Information gathering and analysis was currently taking place. Face to face meetings had been held with a range of stakeholders, a pro forma had been distributed to other stakeholder groups to seek their views, and all Members of the Area Committee had been offered the opportunity of a face to face meeting or to respond via the pro forma. During the information gathering and analysis, no interim conclusions will be reached or decisions made and no options will be accepted or discarded.
- At the Area Committee's meeting on 7 December 2017, a report will be presented which gives a detailed overview about whether a case for intervention, to address congestion issues in Harrogate and Knaresborough, has been identified and, if appropriate, the various options available. The report to the meeting on 7 December will also, if appropriate, outline the potential options on which the County Council intends to undertake public consultation and will seek the Committee's views on whether those are the correct options for consultation.
- Public consultation is currently planned to take place from mid December 2017 to mid February 2018. Thereafter, a decision will be taken on the potential next steps with the project.

Three members of the public addressed the Committee's meeting to express views and/or seek clarification of information. Responses were provided at the meeting.

### 3.3 A59 Kex Gill Realignment - Progress

The Committee noted progress of work on a scheme to realign the A59 at Kex Gill and proposals for public consultation. The A59 is a key trans-Pennine route between Skipton and Harrogate which has a long history of land instability and movement of land above the A59 to the west of Blubberhouses at Kex Gill. The County Council wishes to develop a business case to enable it to submit a bid for funding to the DfT for the delivery of a realigned route.

The key information reported to the Committee's meeting was as follows:-

- Key objectives for the alignment had been identified and a first draft of a document setting out consultation information had been produced. Both were submitted to the Committee.
- Sixteen potential alignment options had been developed for the diversion of the A59 at Kex Gill. Using the DfT's Early Assessment Sifting Tool, 12 of the 16 potential options had been discounted. The four which remained formed the 'Consultation Corridor' which was reported to the Committee.

- The current cost estimates ranged between approximately £33m and £40m. However, there was a small risk that the final scheme cost could be up to £57m.
- Public consultation on the proposed Consultation Corridor alignment would take place between late August and early October 2017 and include three consultation events to be held within the scheme study area and opportunities to respond to the consultation via paper and on-line questionnaires.
- Alongside the work on consultation, officers were progressing technical aspects of scheme development, including ground investigation, environmental assessment, and discussions with key landowners and statutory bodies.

During Members' discussion, the following clarifications and comments were provided:-

- The upgrade to Kex Gill was not expected to generate or attract significant volumes of additional traffic. At this stage, due to environmental constraints, officers were not sure whether the route would be a single carriageway or whether it would have a climbing lane for the uphill area.
- A realignment was supported by local residents.
- The DfT had given an informal indication that it expected the County Council to find any cost above £40m. The County Council was already expected to find a local contribution of around 15% in any case.
- The situation in 2016, when the A59 was closed at Kex Gill for eight weeks following land movement, causing enormous disruption to the travelling public and harm to local businesses, must never happen again.

#### 3.4 **Bond End, Knaresborough - Highway Junction Improvement at the Designated Air Quality Management Area - Progress**

The Committee noted progress of work regarding improvement of the junction at Bond End, Knaresborough. This junction is within a Designated Air Quality Management Area.

The key information reported to the Committee's meeting was as follows:-

- Public consultation was undertaken between 9 January and 10 February 2017 and the results had now been discussed by the Bond End Steering Group.
- Given the popularity of two particular options, it had been agreed that further work was required to assess those two options in further detail.
- Survey data had been collected and was now being collated. Modelling work was also currently being undertaken to analyse air quality under both options.
- A final recommendation would be submitted to the next meeting of the Area Committee.
- Due to the Elections, the implementation date has slipped a little. A start on site is now scheduled for January/February 2018.

A local resident addressed the meeting to highlight that, under one of the two options being looked at in detail, it would be dangerous or impossible for her to get out of her

driveway. The officers provided a response at the meeting, advising that designs would be safety audited at detailed Design Stage when access points in this area would be taken into consideration.

### **3.5 Flooding – Action Taken following Boxing Day 2015 Flooding**

The Committee noted, and paid tribute to, action taken by the County Council associated with the Boxing Day 2015 flooding events in the Harrogate District.

The key information reported to the Committee's meeting was as follows:-

- Formal investigations had been undertaken at various locations including four within the Harrogate District. Comprehensive reports had been produced, giving a detailed précis of the specific causes of the events in each location and setting out the consequent recommended action. Appropriate progression of the recommended actions had been agreed by all appropriate Risk Management Authorities.
- Whilst formal investigations were not appropriate to all separate flooding incidents experienced on Boxing Day 2015, nevertheless, all reported flooding had continued to be investigated proportionately by the County Council's Flood Risk Management Team or referred to the appropriate Risk Management Authority.
- The County Council had administered the central government property level resilience grant scheme which had made grants available of up to £5,000 to property and business owners affected by the December 2015 storm events for the purpose of undertaking property resilience works. Just over £1m of property level resilience work had been enabled throughout North Yorkshire by the scheme, of which approximately £400,000 had been delivered in the Harrogate District area.

During discussion, Members highlighted that many areas across the District had experienced flooding on Boxing Day 2015 but a formal investigation had not be necessary. They commented that this was due, in part, to work carried out previously by the County Council, the Environment Agency and because residents understood what they needed to do to protect themselves against flooding.

### **3.6 Community First Yorkshire**

The Committee noted and thanked Leah Swain (Chief Executive of Community First Yorkshire) for her presentation about the work of Community First Yorkshire. Members commented that it was clear that Community First Yorkshire had a forward looking and innovative programme and that Members looked forward to working with, and supporting, Community First Yorkshire to deliver for local communities.

During the presentation, Leah Swain highlighted that Community First Yorkshire was an independent charity, formed from a merger of Rural Action Yorkshire and North Yorkshire and York Forum. It worked across North, South and West Yorkshire and had successfully tendered to secure a grant from the County Council and NHS North Yorkshire to provide capacity and capability support for social enterprises, voluntary and community organisations, and for volunteering support for individuals and volunteer involving organisations. Leah Swain also highlighted the range of support which Community First Yorkshire could provide and the way in which staff worked which gave scope and head room to look at new innovative ways of doing things.

#### **4.0 Recommendations**

- 4.1 That the report be noted.
- 4.2 That the County Council re-think its stance on Matrix Boards.
- 4.3 That Richmondshire Area Committee strongly oppose proposals to close two Mental Health Wards at the Friarage Hospital and ask that its views be put to the Executive, Scrutiny of Health Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Board at the appropriate time.

Barry Khan  
Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services)

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18 September 2017

**Background Documents:** the published agendas for each of the meetings identified in the headings in this report