

# North Yorkshire County Council

## Harrogate and Knaresborough Area Constituency Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 8 November 2018 at 9.30 am at the Cairn Hotel, Ripon Road, Harrogate

### **Present:-**

### **Members:-**

County Councillor John Mann (in the Chair); County Councillors Philip Broadbank, Jim Clark, Richard Cooper, John Ennis, David Goode, Michael Harrison, Paul Haslam, Don Mackenzie, Zoe Metcalfe, Cliff Trotter, Geoff Webber and Robert Windass

### **In Attendance:-**

County Councillor Andy Paraskos (Member of the Selby and Ainsty Area Constituency Committee)

Officers:- Barrie Mason (Assistant Director, Highways and Transportation), Andrew Bainbridge (Team Leader, Transport Planning, Highways and Transport), Ian Marr (NYnet Project Manager), Daniel Harry (Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager) and Ruth Gladstone (Principal Democratic Services Officer)

Approximately 100 members of the press and public

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

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### **17. Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **18. Minutes**

The Chairman advised that all decisions made at the Committee's meeting on 30 August 2018 had been, or were in the course of being, implemented. He added that he was in contact with Richard Webb (Corporate Director of Health and Adult Services) to identify a process for dealing with County Councillor Paul Haslam's request for the circulation of figures and information regarding future projections for adult social care in the Harrogate and Knaresborough constituency area.

### **Resolved -**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 30 August 2018, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### **19. Declarations of Interest**

In respect of the item of business relating to Harrogate Congestion Study:-

- County Councillor Paul Haslam highlighted that he lived on Bilton Lane in Harrogate. He reported that he had been granted a dispensation, by the County Council's Monitoring Officer (under delegated powers), to enable him to speak at meetings when the Committee is considering business relating to the Harrogate Congestion Study until the date of the next local elections in 2021. However, the dispensation did not permit County Councillor Haslam to vote on such business. The dispensation had been granted because it was in the interests of persons living in the Authority's area and granting the dispensation was appropriate.
- County Councillor Philip Broadbank advised that his brother lived in Forest Moor Road. That did not constitute a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of Harrogate Congestion Study and therefore he was able to speak and vote. However, he wished to announce, for the purpose of transparency, that his brother lived in Forest Moor Road.

## **20. Public Questions or Statements**

Ten members of the public addressed the meeting to ask questions or make statements, all of which related to Harrogate Congestion Study. The questions and statements reflected a variety of different views. Andrew Bainbridge (Team Leader, Transport Planning, Highways and Transport) responded to each question and statement.

The text of each question and statement, together with each response, is set out in the Appendix to these Minutes.

## **21. Harrogate Congestion Study – Options Assessment Report Addendum Findings**

Considered –

The report of Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services which sought comments from Members of the Committee, for submission to the County Council's Executive, for the Executive to take into consideration on 15 January 2019 when it was due to take a decision on which, if any, packages to put to public consultation to tackle the problem of traffic congestion in Harrogate and Knaresborough.

The report included detail of the work undertaken since December 2017 when the former County Area Committee for the Harrogate District had considered this matter. Other content of the report included information about two packages which were emerging as the strongest, namely:-

- Package B – Demand management and behaviour change
- Package E(iii) – Highway operational improvement and sustainable transport, with urban realm improvements plus inner south relief road alignment without a link to Bilton Lane

Barrie Mason (Assistant Director, Highways and Transportation) introduced the report and, together with Andrew Bainbridge (Team Leader, Transport Planning, Highways and Transport), responded to a number of questions from Members.

Members expressed the following comments:-

- All Members who expressed a view about whether the County Council should undertake public consultation on packages B and E(iii) thought that such public consultation should be undertaken. However, they gave differing reasons why they felt that way, namely:-

- Congestion was the issue of greatest concern to many Harrogate residents, particularly in view of the number of new homes which were now being built in Harrogate. Undertaking public consultation would enable the County Council to obtain the views of all residents.
  - The County Council had a responsibility to tackle the problem of traffic congestion and it was therefore correct to ask the public for their views.
  - It was democratically correct for the public to be consulted so that everyone could be asked for their views.
  - Undertaking public consultation on both packages B and E(iii) was necessary, under Department of Transport rules, to secure funding to deliver sustainable options, ie package B.
  - County Council committees had been discussing, for many years, how to tackle traffic congestion in Harrogate and undertaking public consultation now was a way of ruling out, without further delay, road building options.
- Members expressed support for the inclusion of park and ride and bus priority measures within package B. Officers emphasised that any park and ride facilities would have to be part of the overall car parking regime. In addition, park and ride facilities would have to be made more attractive than other modes of transport, ie quicker and/or cheaper, otherwise people would not use park and ride. This might mean taking road space currently used by cars, and giving park and ride buses priority at traffic signals. A Member expressed concern that the County Council might want park and ride facilities to operate at a profit.
  - Several Members expressed a personal preference for package B, rather than package E(iii), due, in particular, to the environmental impact which a relief road would have on the Nidd Gorge. They highlighted, however, that the remedy lay in individuals' own hands. Members commented that package B, ie sustainable measures, would not be easy because such measures would require, for example:- people to get out of their private cars and use public transport; higher prices for parking; a reduction in the number of parking spaces; and creating car parks on green fields at park and ride points.
  - The written material used as part of any public consultation must be well drafted and balanced.
  - Several Members criticised the lack of a detailed map to show the routes of the relief road alignments. They questioned how members of the public could respond to any consultation without knowing the routes. The officers responded that only indicative alignments had been prepared to date, as set out in the report to today's meeting, and that it was not intended, at this stage, to do more detailed mapping or highway design work. The officers explained that the routes were intended to be indicative only and that at least one might not be progressed further. They also explained that, if draft indicative alignments were published, this could lead to potential planning blight and could also lead to unnecessary concern for property owners on or near the potential routes even though they might never be built.
  - County Councillor Paul Haslam (local Member) highlighted that he would be producing his own notes for the Executive to consider. However, in the meantime, he expressed several criticisms of the work undertaken and the content of, and omissions from, the Consultants' report. In particular, he

criticised the work undertaken for not taking account of reports which showed that new road building would increase traffic by 10% in the short term and by 20% in the long term. The officers responded that they anticipated that any relief road would be single carriageway. Another Member emphasised that by-passes created more problems in the longer term eg southern Knaresborough was regularly affected by traffic backing-up from the A1.

- A few Members questioned the decision, of the workshop held in May 2018, to give no further consideration to the possible measures of parkway stations and new rail halts. The officers explained that the workshop had felt such measures did not warrant further consideration due to very high costs and deliverability issues which would potentially render delivery unfeasible. In addition, new rail halts would potentially impact on the current operation and timetabling of existing services.
- It was confirmed that any relief road taken forward would include a Killinghall bypass.

#### **Resolved –**

That the comments made by County Councillors during consideration of this item of business be forwarded to the County Council's Executive.

#### **22. A1(M) Junction 47 Improvement – Progress Update**

Considered –

The report of the Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services which provided an update on the progress of the A1(M) junction 47 improvement scheme.

It was reported that works to improve safety and capacity at this junction had been due to commence in spring 2017. However, in early 2017, planning approval had been given for a development at Flaxby Park, to the west of junction 47. As part of the consent, the developer was required to deliver a further package of improvements at junction 47. It had therefore been decided to delay the County Council's scheme in order to explore combining it with the developer works. Following lengthy discussions, agreement had now been reached on the funding profile and the necessary legal agreement was being progressed. The developer funded contribution was due to be transferred to the County Council in January 2019. This would enable detailed design of the combined scheme to commence in February 2019, with a start on site in October 2019 after the UCI World Road Cycling Championship 2019. In the interim, Highways England, due to concerns about backlogs onto the A1(M), were considering the installation of temporary signals at junction 47 until the full scheme was implemented.

Andrew Bainbridge (Team Leader, Transport Planning, Highways and Transport) introduced the report and responded to Members' questions. Members commented that they were pleased that this junction was being improved and that the industrial park was contributing financially to the junction improvements.

#### **Resolved –**

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That a further update be requested for a year's time.

#### **23. Harrogate to York Railway Enhancement Update**

Considered –

The report of the Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services which provided an update on the progress of the project for the Harrogate to York railway service enhancements.

The following information was included in the report:- infrastructure improvements would be made using grant of up to £9.6m approved by the YNYER LEP, together with a further £2.9m agreed in principle from County Council resources, to increase the frequency of the Harrogate to Leeds service and the Harrogate to York service; changes to rail franchises and the consequent introduction of newer more modern rolling stock in place of the old ‘pacer’ trains, together with the introduction, likely from 2019, of 6 additional trains per day in each direction between London and Harrogate; and patronage figures which showed that the Harrogate line had four of the ten busiest stations in North Yorkshire.

Andrew Bainbridge (Team Leader, Transport Planning, Highways and Transport) introduced the report and responded to Members’ questions.

The Chairman advised that County Councillor Paul Haslam had received further information. Andrew Bainbridge offered to arrange for that further information to be emailed to all Committee Members but urged that that information must be treated with caution because it was best information available to County Council officers. However, as the County Council had no direct role or responsibility for rail infrastructure or services, the information did not take account of commercial considerations or Department for Transport plans, neither of which were available to the County Council.

Andrew Bainbridge undertook to contact County Councillor John Ennis after the meeting with regard to County Councillor Ennis’s query relating to the time of the last train from York to Harrogate.

#### **Resolved –**

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That a further update be requested for a year’s time.
- (c) That arrangements be made for the information which has previously been supplied to County Councillor Paul Haslam to be also emailed to all Committee Members.

#### **24. Superfast North Yorkshire – Update**

Considered –

The report and addendum from Superfast North Yorkshire which provided an update on the impact, in the Harrogate and Knaresborough constituency area, of the objective of delivering superfast broadband capability.

It was reported that, of the 52,454 premises in the Harrogate and Knaresborough Constituency area, 83% were already covered, or would soon be covered, by the private market ie either Openreach or Virgin Media. A further 13% of premises in the Constituency area had been provided with superfast broadband connectivity by virtue of Superfast North Yorkshire’s work under Phase 1 or Phase 2. The remaining 2,582 (4%) of premises in the Constituency did not currently have access to superfast broadband. Of those, 574 (1%) were currently in the Phase 3 deployment plan. The remaining 2,008 (3%) remained “under consideration”, along with all other properties across North Yorkshire which comprised the Intervention Area but were not yet

receiving superfast broadband. Information about the Phase 3 contract was set out in the report and addendum.

Ian Marr (NYnet Project Manager) introduced the report and responded to Members' questions.

**Resolved –**

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That a further update be requested for a year's time.

**25. Work Programme**

Considered -

The Work Programme for the Committee to consider, develop and adopt.

Daniel Harry (Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager) confirmed that the Work Programme should be regarded as a constantly changing document, being amended following discussion by the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and the Principal Democratic Services Officer to reflect changing circumstances. He encouraged the Committee to act strategically and to avoid receiving reports for information which did not require a discussion at an Area Constituency Committee meeting and instead could be dealt with at a Seminar, by email, or at an informal meeting. He also suggested that, as a rough rule of thumb, the Committee should aim to scrutinise only two items at each meeting.

The Chairman suggested that some of the business currently scheduled for the meeting to be held on 21 March 2019 needed to be deferred or handled in some other way. Suggestions were discussed and agreed and are recorded in the Resolution below.

The Chairman advised that he would consider, outside this meeting, the suggestions which County Councillor Paul Haslam had submitted to him previously and would get back in touch with County Councillor Haslam.

County Councillor Jim Clark suggested that there might be one meeting dedicated to health matters, including the Government's Adult Social Care Green Paper, proposals to local change stroke services, and the consultation on a mental health inpatient hospital build.

County Councillor Geoff Webber suggested that the subject 'building of affordable housing' should be changed to 'building of social housing' and should be deferred to the Committee's meeting on 13 June 2019. He also advised that he hoped to receive information from his organisation soon.

**Resolved –**

- (a) That, of the business currently scheduled for the 21 March 2019 meeting:-
  - Stronger Communities be deferred to a later meeting.
  - The annual session on 'place' be deferred to a later meeting.
  - Harrogate Traffic Congestion Study remain scheduled for the 21 March 2019 meeting.

- Government Adult Social Care Green Paper be either considered at the Committee's meeting on 21 March 2019 or be progressed by email in the event of time constraints.
  - 'Building of Affordable Housing' be changed to 'building of social housing' and be scheduled for consideration at the Committee's meeting on 13 June 2019.
  - The consultation about a mental health inpatient hospital build be scheduled for whichever meeting is held during the consultation period and that it be noted that this consultation might not take place until after the May 2019 elections.
- (b) That Harrogate Hospital Acute Services be added to the Work Programme because the Committee may be invited to comment on such proposals.
- (c) That the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Principal Democratic Services Officer jointly consider suggestions made during this debate and make the necessary changes to the Committee's Work Programme.

The meeting concluded at 12.30pm.

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## APPENDIX TO THE MINUTES

### Item 4 – Questions and statements from members of the public made at this meeting and NYCC officer responses provided at the meeting

#### 1. Councillor Phil Ireland (Harrogate Borough Council's Cabinet Member for Sustainable Transport) - Statement

Thank you chair for the opportunity to speak. In my position as Cabinet Member for Sustainable Transport for Harrogate Borough Council I see and actively promote the opportunities for increasing the mode share of walking, cycling and public transport. To help support this we run the Harrogatecarshare.com liftsharing platform, have worked collaboratively with Transdev on projects to improve the quality of bus services and are contributing a six figure sum to the Otley Road cycleway. We are also looking to launch a car sharing scheme in the district and are actively pursuing the opportunity to deliver a quality, segregated cycle route between Harrogate and Knaresborough amongst other initiatives.

Further improving the networks for walkers, cyclists and public transport users should be a priority both in the short and long term and I would hope the local community sees the importance of this regardless of whether it is intertwined with a relief road proposal or not.

Through our work on developing transport evidence to support the now submitted local plan we have established that a relief road will not be required to deliver the proposed growth for Harrogate District until after 2035. That said; there will be existing highway network issues to solve and the future of travel is uncertain over such a long timeframe. Whilst I would prefer us all to be looking at major transport schemes specifically to support development to 2035 at this time and ensure that any developer schemes are capitalised upon to secure external funding as with the West Harrogate NPIF work. I appreciate the intention to address existing congestion in Harrogate and Knaresborough.

The big question we are all faced with is how to do this? Naturally in my role my inclination is that this could be achieved through sustainable transport measures and it is accepted that a level of demand management will be also required to shift the high volume of short local trips from car to sustainable modes. It is therefore welcoming to see a package based on this scenario tabled for consultation. However, it is also accepted that highway construction is a potential option, an option many do not like but an option nonetheless. The work undertaken so far effectively shows that an inner relief road alignment would only act as corridor relief for Wetherby Road and Skipton Road so at this stage I do hold some reservations regarding the town-wide effectiveness of a relief road.

However, to help shape the overall view of the borough council, I am keen to understand the views of the local community on this important issue. Therefore I feel that consultation, on the proviso that people are provided with a good and fair understanding of the implications of both proposed packages – particularly in relation to the likely adverse impacts of a relief road, will enable us all to get a better indication of the views of the local community. We are at a very early stage in the transport appraisal process here and understanding the views of people is vital. I therefore agree with undertaking consultation as long as people are fully aware of the impacts of what they are commenting upon but I currently hold a preference towards the demand management and sustainable travel option package.

#### Response provided by Andrew Bainbridge (Team Leader, Transport Planning, Highways and Transport):-

Thank you, Councillor Ireland for this, and for your previous input on behalf of the Borough Council to the Member Steering Group which has helped guide Officers through this process.

I note that whilst you have reservations about the relief road, as the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Transport at Harrogate Borough Council, you support the need undertake public consultation on this issue.

## **2. Tom Hay (Resident) – Statement and Question**

The report in front of you assesses the economic impact of a wide range of traffic measures. Some are effective, some less so, some would be universally well received, some less so.

But one of these things is not like the others: a new road bypass through an area of huge environmental value.

This site is beloved. It's treasured. It's an irreplaceable asset to the district and beyond, and its benefits have not been, and cannot be, captured by the report. As last year's report made clear - and this year's doesn't claim otherwise - the road wouldn't relieve overall congestion, but would just relocate some of it. Trading a couple of old blackspots for some new ones, it says, would offer a medium return on economic investment.

What isn't quantified, or even addressed, is the effect of the road's other core aim, which is to create a better east-west traffic link. A big flashing welcome sign saying: Harrogate and Knaresborough is open for through-traffic. Come along. Bring your friends.

Tackling congestion with something that actively encourages more cars is pretty short-sighted. In fact, short-sighted would be an improvement - as it stands, you're being asked to judge this blind.

It's well-established that big new roads bring new traffic - indeed, this new road would be built with the express intention of attracting it - yet you haven't been provided with any prediction of the long term congestion impact that would have. That information would directly affect the one and only claimed benefit of this road, so without it, there's genuinely no way to make an assessment. WSP's positive economic analysis may be possible only because that data is missing.

And that's not the only thing missing. The public is about to be asked to judge a project whose greatest costs have simply not been calculated.

These costs are environmental and human. Not only are they are not properly assessed in the report, they are barely even mentioned.

Why's it a problem to discount them?

Apparently raising a child costs about £200,000. As a Bilton resident with two children, a tenfold increase in traffic could be great news for me, economically. If one of my kids got mown down, I'd be quids in. I could buy a holiday home in Spain.

Telling the public to make a choice on economic effects alone is like asking a doctor to diagnose someone by looking at their Asda receipts. It is, to put it bluntly, mental.

I was at the BES meeting last year where David Bowe specifically briefed Andrew Bainbridge and his team to establish what the road's impact would be on Nidd Gorge and the Greenway. Given that's the principal concern of pretty much everyone who opposes the road - which, it bears repeating, is pretty much everyone, full stop - I have to agree with Mr Bowe that that information is key. Where is it?

What we have is a bypass which offers a medium (not a high) return on investment, if - and only if - its environmental and human costs are not considered. And if - and only if - its long term impacts on attracting traffic to the area are blindly assumed to be zero.

And if - and only if - its economic value is raised by packaging it with a ton of great ideas that everyone likes. Judged on its own merits, the road has a BCR of between 0.1 and 0.8, which the DfT deems as "poor".

That is very shaky ground for a very expensive project. And it's massively misleading for the public.

One direct question for Mr Bainbridge. Last year you mentioned that a new data tool allows you to group public consultation responses by area. Would that allow 2000 opposition responses from Bilton and 50 favourable ones from Pannal to be summarised as a score of: Bilton 1, Pannal 1?

**Response provided by Andrew Bainbridge (Team Leader, Transport Planning, Highways and Transport):-**

Thank you for your comments Mr Hay.

I can assure you that full and detailed consideration will be given to all the potential environmental and social impacts as well as the traffic relief and economic benefits of all the options at the appropriate stage.

The Council is following the required Government process for assessing these types of schemes and we are currently at a relatively early stage and the level of investigation is appropriate to the current stage of development. I do however acknowledge that there are environmental and social impacts and should either of the packages be progressed further more detailed investigation of both the benefits and impacts will be undertaken.

In response to your direct question, what I actually referred to was that, by collecting the post code of respondent, it would allow decision makers, in this case the Executive, to take account of whether these were responses from people directly impacted by proposals or from potential users of the proposals. There is no suggestion that there is a tool available that would group responses and give any numeric weighting to these.

I duly note your objection to any relief road proposal and your concerns about any public consultation.

**3. Councillor John Moretta (Substitute for Councillor Anne Holdsworth) (Killinghall Parish Council) – Statement**

The question for the County Council is how to tackle congestion in the Harrogate and wider area. A considerable amount of time has gone into early work looking at options, and there has been representation from a number of groups across the district, including Killinghall Parish Council. The fact that this item is on the agenda of both Harrogate & Knaresborough Area Constituency Committee and Skipton & Ripon Area Constituency Committee is a demonstration of the wider impact congestion has. The Council is now seeking views on whether to go out to consultation on measures, and what those measures might be.

Killinghall village has long been blighted by motorised vehicles. As far back as the early 1920s, minutes of the Council show that discussions were held about the provision of a bypass. As many of you probably sit in the traffic through Killinghall know, it never got one. Plans were drawn up and dated 1934 along with those for a Ripley Bypass by the West Riding County Council.

If a relief road was built then the provision of a Killinghall Bypass would be an integral part of it. Without a relief road then Killinghall would lose any chance it might have of getting relief from traffic by provision of a bypass.

To be clear – the only realistic chance Killinghall has of getting a bypass, a bypass they have been waiting for patiently for 90 years, is as part of a wider relief road option.

It might be that the options that include NOT building ANY road would work, and if it did, then the 25,000+ vehicles that drive through our village would not exist. It might be that the wider public would prefer a sustainable transport package of measures to the building of a road – so let's ask.

I am led to believe that if you discount an option without good reason then the result is that the remaining option will be struck out by government. In essence, if you proceed to consult without both options on the table, then both will fail in the end.

Please do your duty to the wider public and ask their views on whether they would support the building of a road, alongside sustainable transport provision, or whether they would support sustainable transport provision only.

**Response provided by Andrew Bainbridge (Team Leader, Transport Planning, Highways and Transport):-**

Thank you Councillor Moretta for your comments on behalf of Killinghall Parish Council.

I note the Parish Council's long standing desire for a Killinghall Bypass and your support for a public consultation to be undertaken on the packages.

**4. Jemima Parker (Zero Carbon Harrogate's Chair) - Statement**

Firstly, can I commend this Committee for its strength of leadership at last year's December meeting, concerning the congestion review. Your vote almost unanimously in favour of only progressing with Package B demonstrated your strategic thinking for modal shift in our urban areas facilitated by investment in sustainable transport infrastructure to tackle current congestion issues.

In October this year another report was published that affects us all and has significant bearing on our local choices. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) made it clear that, if we are to limit global average temperature rise to below 1.5oC, we require "rapid, far reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society". We must reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by 45% by 2030, just 11 years from now and get to zero by 2050. Dates all within the time frame of the transport choices being considered today.

This is not some nice number the IPCC have plucked from the air. They represent our best chance of preventing unthinkable human suffering and the opportunity to create a viable future in our beautiful Yorkshire for your children, my children, our grandchildren.

I commend the WSP team for so explicitly highlighting the limitations of the Benefit Cost Ratio figures. Economic growth is not everything.

I would like to draw your attention instead to the estimated greenhouse gas reduction figures on page 30 in table 17 of the report. Here the difference in the packages is marked. Package B outperforms the best of the Package E by 800%.

The IPCC charged us all with achieving the rapid transformation of our society. Today you have the opportunity to again show your leadership in pressing for the best from these two packages to enable Harrogate and Knaresborough to benefit from leading the way in the transition to a low carbon economy.

**Response provided by Andrew Bainbridge (Team Leader, Transport Planning, Highways and Transport):-**

Thank you Jemima for your comments and your very constructive input to the County Council's Engagement Group meetings. I note your support for Package B primarily on the grounds of greenhouse gas reduction.

**5. Mr Keith Wilkinson MBE (Bilton Conservation Group's Honorary Secretary) – Statement and question**

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Bilton Conservation Group was founded on 19th May 1982 to conserve and enhance the Nidd Gorge and protect the Statutory Green Belt between Bilton and Knaresborough in the face of major development pressures facilitated by diverting the A59.

At that time developers were offering to fund the building of a deviation of the A59 through Bilton Fields on the alignment of what today we are calling the 'Green Route' or Eiii to enable exploitation of the land separating the small township of Knaresborough from Harrogate.

Their offer of funding depended on a *quid pro quo* from the Local Authority by way of exceptional permission to allow mass housing to take place in the Statutory Green Belt. This speculative adventure became known at the time as the 'Starbeck New Town' proposals.

2018

We are grateful for WSP's latest 243 page Progress Report into Harrogate's traffic problems.

Perhaps we should again remind ourselves again of the ultimate objectives of this half million pound exercise.

- Support the sustainable growth of Harrogate and Knaresborough in line with National, Regional and Local Policies and Plans.
- Improve the Quality of Life for all communities.
- Support Sustainable Economic Growth.
- Protect and Enhance the Built and Natural Environment.
- Improve East – West Connectivity.

The Congestion Study concludes that the following A59 packages should be discarded:-

3.24

DISCARDED

E(i) = that version of the Green Route (Harrogate Inner South), which involved traffic feeding on/off Bilton Lane. \* "...in the context of the significant impact of additional traffic that such a route would have on Bilton Lane. It is therefore unlikely that such a link would be recommended as the way forward."

E(ii) = the Blue Route (Harrogate Inner North) which ran parallel to Nidd Gorge before turning south-east near Bilton Hall. "...low' value for money.....should be discarded at this stage."

REMAINING PACKAGES

B = a list of 26 sustainable measures (making better use of existing infrastructure, promoting alternative modes of transport, car-sharing initiatives, Park & Ride, synchronising traffic lights, school 'walking buses' instead of unnecessary car journeys, staggered working patterns, working from home etc. etc.) (*circa £44.5M*).

E(iii) = Package B, + a version of the Green Route (Harrogate Northern Inner Option) to rear of Tennyson Avenue as described above, but WITH NO LINK ONTO/OFF BILTON LANE

(because of the observation above\* *(the official prediction was that linking Bilton Lane to the Green Route would divert at least 1000 vehicle movements an hour along this narrow country lane).* (circa £108.5M+).

NYCC will decide which, if any, of these options will be put out for Public Consultation in 2019, with a view to making a Business Case and securing Central Government funding for what is described as part of an 'MSN' (Major Strategic Network) linking Lancashire to the East Coast; an alternative to the M62 corridor.

This new road will do little to relieve Harrogate's perceived congestion and is more likely to exacerbate it with INDUCED TRAFFIC.

Such Public Consultation will probably take place after the Public Inquiry into Harrogate's Local Development Plan (LDP) which was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in Bristol on 31st August 2018.

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Bilton Residents may, initially, feel relieved that E(iii) Green Route would not link into Bilton Lane, but of course that raises the question how that would be achieved? Would the new road be sunk in a deep cutting behind Willow Wood, through Bilton Fields, under the Nidderdale Greenway to Bilton Beck Farm and continue at that low level under Bilton Lane? or would it be elevated to fly over all this area on its way to bisect Harrogate Golf Course?

Are these the unknown factors which may explain why the costings of this major highway are so vague, incomplete, and flexible?

"HARKNESSBOROUGH or KNARESGATE?"

Such a new road would, as was feared when it was first mooted in the 1980s, open up all the Statutory Green Belt between Bilton and Knaresborough for development. At that time of course developers offered to pay to build the road in return for permission to build thousands of houses – is history about to repeat itself at the cost of merging Harrogate & Knaresborough forever?

**Response provided by Andrew Bainbridge (Team Leader, Transport Planning, Highways and Transport):-**

Thank you for your comments Mr Wilkinson and for your input to the County Council's Engagement Group.

Firstly I would reiterate what has been said at previous committee meetings on a number of occasions that the primary purpose of this study is to address local traffic congestion.

Additionally, the County Council has not yet made any decision on what, if any, option to progress with, so to suggest that it intends to submit a bid for funding for an alternative to the M62 is incorrect.

The results of any public consultation would help inform the County Council's decision on what option, if any, to relieve local congestion should be developed further.

I note your concerns about the relief road and its impact on the Nidd Gorge area as well as your concerns about how it might ultimately lead to development on the green belt.

**6. Murray Trantor (Resident) - Statement**

Thank you for the opportunity to present my case for a Harrogate Relief Road, or at least full consultation on the possibility of a relief road. I have lived in Harrogate for the last 30 years

and am now living in the town centre. I offer the following views partly based on three and a half years' experience of driving a Harrogate taxi.

There are many people who suggest that a solution to Harrogate's traffic congestion problem lies in convincing people to get out of their cars. I applaud this sentiment. Undoubtedly this would help ease the problem but in my view it is very far from a realistic solution. There is no safe cycling route along the length of the Wetherby Road and Skipton Road. We can pretend we are extending the cycling network around Harrogate but the addition of cycle lanes on narrow congested roads only serves to increase the danger to both cyclists and motorists. Money would need to be spent in constructing proper cycleways and all the paths across the Stray would need to become joint use.

Many people blame the school run as the cause of the problem. Undoubtedly, the traffic congestion in the peak hours does decrease during the school holidays and it is true that the vast majority of schoolchildren in Harrogate live within reasonable walking distance of their school. However, the school run, or lack of it, does not explain the stationary traffic throughout the day including weekends, on Wetherby Road from the Kestrel, across Woodlands junction, through the Empress roundabout, down Skipton Road to as far as the New Park roundabout. Some of this may be the oft miss-quoted "90% of the journeys are local" but I suspect that a lot of the traffic, particularly the coaches, farm vehicles with trailers and HGVs, is traffic coming off the A1 trying to get to Skipton and places further west. What other route would they use, Knaresborough High Street?

I believe much of the local traffic on this road is caused by the fact that Skipton Road is the only outlet to and from the Knox, Bilton, Woodfield, Regents and Claro Road estates. Motorists who know Skipton Road's reputation rat run through the town centre to avoid it causing unnecessary traffic and congestion there also. An inner relief road, according to the original traffic study, would reduce the traffic flow on Skipton Road by 40% in 2035 compared to the do nothing option.

Despite recent and planned extensive growth in Harrogate, we have not enjoyed any major investment in road infrastructure since the building of the Southern by-pass over 25 years ago. We are enduring heavy congestion now and there are 16,500 new houses in the pipeline. Arguments against the relief road because of increased pollution don't really hold up as, by the time this road is built, there will be only zero emission cars on the road. Similarly, I believe the effect on the Nidd Gorge itself has been greatly exaggerated. There is room for both the Nidderdale Greenway and a relief road.

In conclusion, I strongly favour giving at least the businesses and residents of Harrogate and Knaresborough a chance to air their views on an inner relief road through a widespread consultation and ask for your support in this.

**Response provided by Andrew Bainbridge (Team Leader, Transport Planning, Highways and Transport):-**

Thank you for your comments Mr Trantor. I note your comments in support of a relief road or, as you say, at least giving the businesses and residents the chance to air their views.

**7. Mr Chris Kitson (Nidd Gorge Community Action's Chair) - Statement**

11 months ago, when this committee voted overwhelmingly to remove the relief road from any public consultation process - due to its potential environmental and social impact, and doubts about its effectiveness in tackling congestion - you were overruled, and as some councillors even suggested, ignored, by the BES Executive a week later.

In overruling you - our democratically elected representatives - at the BES Executive meeting on Dec 15<sup>th</sup>, David Bowe said that it was clear that more detail was needed before consulting the public on any congestion relief measures.

Faced with your opposition to the road and our petition, presented at the start of the meeting to *Save Nidd Gorge and The Nidderdale Greenway* and uphold your recommendations, David Bowe gave four clear instructions to his transport planners:

One of the instructions was specifically:

*'...to give a much more refined location of where the road will be and identify the general impact it would have on Nidd Gorge and the Nidderdale Greenway.'*

In the intervening 11 months, in a time of great austerity and biting cuts to public services, North Yorkshire have spent tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of pounds producing a 243 page addendum report that fails to mention Nidd Gorge or the Nidderdale Greenway once. London Greenway is mentioned twice, but not Nidderdale Greenway or the Gorge.

Regarding the Engagement Group meetings: At the second meeting, on 26<sup>th</sup> June, I asked Rebecca Gibson (North Yorkshire Transport) and Andy Cairns (WSP) how their teams were progressing with work on a more detailed route and was told that work was currently underway and more information would be provided at the third Engagement Group meeting in September.

At the third meeting, when I asked if we would be provided with more a more refined route location, I was told that there must have been a misunderstanding, because it wasn't part of their remit to provide more route detail at this stage.

This is not what we were promised by David Bowe.

..and just in case of another misunderstanding I have a transcript of his comments...

They have spent 11 months trying to cost the uncostable for a Benefit/Cost Ratio which will mean absolutely nothing to the general public, but they can't give the public any further information about the road and its impact on Nidd Gorge and the Greenway. How are the public supposed to make an informed decision based on this 243 page gobbledygook?

At the second engagement group meeting I presented our questions and challenges to the NYCC team regarding the road, yet nowhere are they reflected in the report, because the second meeting was not minuted, allowing our challenges to be sidestepped and disappear from the public record.

Particularly the unanswered question of induced east-west traffic and why it hasn't been modelled and factored into the predicted traffic figures. When this road is built it will soon appear on SatNavs as the preferred route from Yorkshire to Lancashire. What effect will this have on overall traffic volumes coming through Hgte and Knares? On congestion? On our greenhouse gas emissions? On our air quality? Or on the holy grail of the BCR?

The public is yet again about to be consulted about a road it knows nothing more about than at this time last year; whilst you, as a committee, have had your wishes ignored, your authority downgraded, by being only able to provide comment, and your impact further diluted by the council giving equal weight to the comments of the Skipton and Ripon Area Committee.

Since your informed intervention last year, the NYCC Executive have given themselves all the power in this process, whilst at the same time claiming on their website, in their best doublespeak, that *'the area constituency committees have been established as part of the council's drive to devolve decision making.'* In their desire to drive their major east-west, development highway through our communities they are making a mockery of the democratic process.

North Yorkshire are not doing what it says on the tin.

**Response provided by Andrew Bainbridge (Team Leader, Transport Planning, Highways and Transport):-**

Thank you for your comments Mr Kitson and for your input to the County Council's Engagement Group.

You state that Mr Bowe instructed officers:

*'...to give a much more refined location of where the road will be and identify the general impact it would have on Nidd Gorge and the Nidderdale Greenway.'*

And you have interpreted this to mean that we would be producing a detailed alignments for the relief road options.

The actual recorded Decision Record setting out Mr Bowe's instructions to officers is as follows:

1. *to further develop the sustainable transport elements of both Packages B and E to identify the potential locations and impacts of the different measures;*
2. *to further develop the alignments of the Inner Relief Road to help identify the potential benefits and impacts (including on the Nidd Gorge and Nidderdale Greenway);*
3. *to prepare an initial economic analysis (BCR) for the Inner Relief Road;*
4. *to undertake pre-consultation engagement with local businesses and representative groups through an Harrogate Congestion Engagement Group;*
5. *to take a further report to the Area Committee prior to deciding on the future consultation options.*

This is the recorded decision and, as such, what officers have worked on. All of the above have been completed.

Item 1 is fully covered in the OAR Addendum.

Item 2 has been completed out with the OAR addendum and details will be reported in the final report to The Executive in January. For Members' information, I have circulated an early draft of the likely text that will be added to the Draft report to Executive. I would ask Members to note that, as set out in the first paragraph, it was never the intention at this stage to publish the routes as they are still indicative only and at least one or potentially both of the options may not be progressed any further. Publication of the draft indicative alignments could lead to potential planning blight claims against the County Council and could also lead to unnecessary concern for property owners on or near the potential routes even though they may not ever be built.

Item 3 has been completed out with the OAR and is not published as it has been done for internal comparative purposes only as the County Council has already discounted a relief road only option from the current process. It is however worth noting that the BCR for a relief road only is significantly higher than for any of the packages.

Item 4 was completed through the Engagement Group which many of today's speakers attended.

Item 5 is happening today.

We do accept Mr Kitson's point that the BCRs will be less meaningful to the general public than they will be to transport planning professionals, or Government. However, this is not a public consultation and reports such as the OAR, and addendum to that, are not really intended to be public facing documents. Whilst we try wherever possible to make them transparent and readable, they are in essence a technical document intended to set out, in this case, the relative performance of various interventions, at a conceptual stage.

#### **8. Mr Keith Broad (Resident) - Question**

The role of the civil engineering consultants, WSP, is very important. Is their brief to find the best route to build a by-pass around Harrogate or the best way to relieve traffic congestion? Obviously many would see the difficulty they would face if their final conclusion was that there was no need to build a by-pass; because their very being exists to build more highways. The implication is that they would struggle to convince the public of their independence or their desire to adhere to the council's reduced pollution strategy especially if part of the plan is to use Bilton Lane, next to two primary schools, as an access to a possible by-pass.

#### **Response provided by Andrew Bainbridge (Team Leader, Transport Planning, Highways and Transport):-**

Thank you for your comments Mr Broad.

To clarify matters, WSP's brief is to look at ways of relieving traffic congestion in Harrogate and Knaresborough and not specifically to look at routes for a bypass.

WSP are a large, international, multi-disciplinary engineering and professional services firm. They have a vast experience of all aspects of transport planning and engineering and indeed are often regarded as one of the leading sustainable transport consultancies in the country. They also have a large and well respected environment, sustainability and ecology team. They are not, as has been suggested, highway builders and as such should be seen as independent consultants.

However I note your concerns about their independence.

#### **9. Pat Ki – Question**

Can NYCC assure me that any public consultation would include a precise, detailed map of the favoured route showing exactly which roads, land etc would be impacted in order that residents are able to make an INFORMED choice?

#### **Response provided by Andrew Bainbridge (Team Leader, Transport Planning, Highways and Transport):-**

Thank you for your comments and question about detailed route alignments.

A detailed map of the route alignments is not available at this time for the reason I have already discussed. The possible consultation next year is not about detailed alignments of routes, but principles of how to address congestion in Harrogate and Knaresborough. However I can assure you that, prior to any specific route being adopted as a 'preferred route', a consultation on the detailed alignment would be carried out. This is normal practice countrywide for this type of scheme.

#### **10. John Branson (resident) – Statement and Question**

The Department for Transport's National Transport Model (ref 1) says that congestion can be measured as changes in average speed or in average delay per mile, and is dependent on the overall level of traffic relative to road capacity (VCR).

Unfortunately this report does not give any indication of the effect of the interventions on congestion as defined above.

The Harrogate Relief Road Report Stage 1 (ref 2) dealt with congestion in the above terms, and it seems I was expecting too much from the congestion study for it to evaluate the effect of the proposed interventions on these Stage 1 figures.

The Options Assessment Report gave detailed figures of traffic volume changes from the models for the relief road in tabular form (ref 3), and I had hoped that the reduction in congestion (e.g. VCR) would have been presented similarly. This does not seem to be difficult as the model developed to test the Harrogate Local Plan was used, and this already gives, for example, (ref 4) VCR figures for a number of road junctions in Harrogate.

The reason for this not being done may be that it is not due to take place now, but will be dealt with in the future. In that case, why was it necessary to model the road options in detail for the Relief Road?

It is difficult to see how decisions can be made on the options available if all the preliminary work has not been done. Time was found to set out a financial case but none to complete a technical evaluation.

Correct interpretation of the modelled figures is important as intervention C5 – Highways – has the assumption (ref 5) that in package E the relief road (C1) will be built to redirect traffic, reducing traffic in Harrogate centre. This does not seem to be supported by the figures in the Relief Road Options Assessment (ref 3) because, by adding together the traffic flows on the town centre roads, there is a reduction of 1.3% for the inner north and 2% for the inner south. Very small for the cost of the road!

**Response provided by Andrew Bainbridge (Team Leader, Transport Planning, Highways and Transport):-**

Thank you for your comments Mr Branson and for attending some meetings of the Engagement Group.

In developing the Options Assessment Report last year, the Congestion Study used the standard Department for Transport Webtag approach. Following the concerns expressed by the Area Committee last December, the Corporate Director agreed to carry out an additional level of analysis. This is actually taking the scheme development a step further than is normally undertaken at this stage. However this additional work is also being undertaken in line with the standard DfT approach.

*(End)*