

North Yorkshire County Council

County Area Committee for the Harrogate District

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 7 December 2017 at 9.40 am at the Cairn Hotel, Ripon Road, Harrogate

Present:-

Members:-

County Councillor Mike Chambers MBE in the Chair

County Councillors Margaret Atkinson, Philip Broadbank, Jim Clark, Richard Cooper, John Ennis, Michael Harrison, Paul Haslam, Stanley Lumley, Don Mackenzie, John Mann, Stuart Martin MBE, Zoe Metcalfe, Andy Paraskos, Cliff Trotter, Geoff Webber, Nicola Wilson and Robert Windass

Co-opted Members:-

Sandra Doherty (Harrogate District Chamber of Commerce) and Leah Swain (Community First Yorkshire)

In Attendance:-

North Yorkshire County Council Officers: Barrie Mason (Assistant Director – Highways and Transportation, Business and Environmental Services), Andrew Bainbridge (Team Leader LTP, Highways and Transportation, Business and Environmental Services), Nigel Smith (Area Highways Manager, Business and Environmental Services) and Ruth Gladstone (Principal Democratic Services Officer)

Approximately 140 members of the public

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

29. Minutes of the Meeting held on 31 August 2017

Resolved -

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 31 August 2017, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

30. Declarations of Interest

In respect of the item of business relating to Harrogate Relief Road Review:-

- County Councillor Paul Haslam advised that he had a disclosable pecuniary interest because certain options involved Bilton Lane where he lived. However, a dispensation had been granted which permitted him to speak, but not vote, when the Area Committee considered business relating to Harrogate Relief Road Review.

- 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 Relief Road Review and he was able to speak and vote on such business. However, he wished to announce, for the purpose of transparency, that his brother lived in Forest Moor Road.

31. Public Questions or Statements

The Chairman advised that 16 members of the public had given notice to speak at this meeting in respect of Harrogate Relief Road Review. However, only 12 could be accommodated within the 30 minutes allocated at this meeting for members of the public. Those 12 members of the public would be invited to speak whilst the Committee was considering the Harrogate Relief Road Review item of business.

32. Harrogate Relief Road Review - Progress Report

Considered -

The report of the Corporate Director - Business and Environmental Services which:- provided an update on the progress of the Harrogate Relief Road Review project; set out the broad outcomes of the consultant's Options Assessment Report (OPR), and recommended options for putting to public consultation. Hard copies of Appendix B – Tables were circulated at the meeting.

Barrie Mason (Assistant Director – Highways and Transportation, Business and Environmental Services) introduced the report, highlighting the following:-

- The consultant's OAR identified 38 possible interventions which might relieve traffic congestion and its associated disbenefits within the study area. A high-level sift of the 38 possible interventions had resulted in identifying 15 interventions which received the least favourable assessments and these had therefore been removed from the list. The remaining 23 possible interventions had been packaged into four "themed" packages, with a further fifth package of a stand-alone relief road intervention. A further level of assessment had been undertaken using the DfT's Early Assessment Sifting Tool (EAST) to sift-out those options which performed less well. In addition, modelling of five historic relief road potential alignments had been undertaken using the existing Harrogate and Knaresborough Strategic Traffic Model. Of the five alignments, the inner northern route and the inner southern route, both of which linked between the A61 and the A658, provided the greatest level of relief across the highway network. The results of the EAST assessment, in summary, were that the following packages performed better than the other packages:-
 - Package B (demand management and behavioural change).
 - Package E (relief road, highway operational improvement and sustainable transport, with urban realm improvements).

The recommendation of the Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services was that, on the basis of the EAST assessment, packages B and E should be taken forward and presented for public consultation.

- Public consultation was planned for a 12 week period commencing on 21 December 2017. The outcome would be reported to the Area Committee's meeting on 14 June 2018 when Members' views would be sought on the approach for selection of a preferred option/options to be taken forward into development of a scheme Strategic Outline Business Case.

Twelve members of the public spoke at the meeting. The main theme of their contributions was to object to the building of relief roads in particular through the Nidd Gorge and the Nidderdale Greenway. A list of the names of the members of the public who spoke, and a flavour of what each said, is below. The full script provided in advance by each person is attached at Appendix A.

- Borough Councillor Phil Ireland (Harrogate Borough Council's Cabinet Member for Sustainable Transport) emphasised the importance of the public consultation being equitable and also clear about the implications of each proposal. He also advised that the Borough Council's proposed Local Plan suggested that growth to 2035 could be mitigated through a range of junction improvements and was not predicated upon a relief road.
- Malcolm Margolis spoke about the need to protect the Nidderdale Greenway and the Nidd Gorge and to tackle traffic congestion and pollution by reducing traffic through sustainable measures rather than by building more roads.
- Geoff Foxall (Nidd Gorge Community Action and Starbeck Residents' Association) highlighted that it had been proved that new road schemes generated increasing traffic volumes.
- Roderick Beardshall suggested that advancing technology and political will would result in less road space being needed in the future.
- Jemima Parker (Chair, Zero Carbon Harrogate) referred to the consultant's finding that only 7% of traffic congestion was from external through traffic whilst nearly half was local journeys of less at 1.6 miles. She sought clarity about what the County Council was trying to achieve and about the names for the proposals to ensure a fair consultation.
- Allan Smyth advised that the Nidd Gorge was a precious place, used by thousands, to meet, play and enjoy the outdoors, and to escape the pressures of modern life and that it was not a place to put a major trunk road.
- Borough Councillor Val Rodgers (Bilton Ward) said she was disappointed with the consultation process and highlighted that not all residents bought the Harrogate Advertiser or listened to Stray FM or owned a computer.
- Kevin Douglas (Chair, Harrogate District Cycle Action) advised that HDCA strongly supported package B as it did not include a Relief Road option due to the impact on the Nidderdale Greenway. He urged the Area Committee to ensure that sustainable transport and cycling provision in particular remained a high priority in developing the final package for implementation.
- Chris Kitson (Chair, Nidd Gorge Community Action) called a relief road a "destructive, heartbreaking proposal" and wondered why Bilton Fields had failed to secure designation as a local green space. He also questioned why the County Council had conducted a survey of traffic to try to justify a relief road but had not conducted a survey to assess the amenity value of the Nidd Gorge and the Nidderdale Greenway.
- John Branson questioned the County Council's process in producing the packages. He claimed different versions of the report contained "inconsistencies" in the actual figures and gave some examples.

- Keith Wilkinson MBE (Honorary Secretary, Bilton Conservation Group) questioned whether a Harrogate Relief Road was actually a 'bypass-on-the-cheap' to improve Scarborough to Lancashire journeys. He said that the single, small, rural community at Bilton Lane should not be expected to bear the brunt of 40% of Harrogate's urban traffic.
- Tom Hay advised that a relief road was not the answer, that it would not relieve congestion and that the impact on Bilton of a new road was needless.

Andrew Bainbridge (Team Leader LTP, Highways and Transportation, Business and Environmental Services) responded to all the main issues raised by members of the public. A record of what he said is at Appendix B.

The Chairman advised that he was grateful to members of the public for their contributions and to the officers for their responses.

Members of the Area Committee discussed which, if any, options should be put to public consultation. During discussion:-

- Area Committee Members commented that any public consultation should commence in the New Year rather than on 21 December 2017 in order to avoid the bank holidays over the Christmas and the New Year period.
- The majority of Members expressed support for putting only package B to public consultation, subject to the consultants firstly working-up a package of specific actions to put to the public as part of the consultation. Reasons cited by Members for favouring that proposal were that they felt that:- the Nidd Gorge was an area of wonderful, outstanding beauty and they were concerned about the impact of a relief road; traffic congestion would reoccur four to five years after any new relief road was built; there was no guarantee that the Government would provide the money for a Harrogate relief road; they felt that a relief road would not address congestion because 93% of journeys were to and from, or within, Harrogate; and a relief road would encourage more traffic.
- A minority of Members did not support putting only package B to public consultation and instead expressed a preference for putting both package B and package E to public consultation. Reasons which they cited were that they felt that:- the electorate deserved the opportunity to be advised of the issues relating to a relief road and to be able to give their views on whether they wanted a relief road; by putting only package B to public consultation, the 18 County Councillors and 100+ members of the public present at this meeting were denying 48,000 households the chance to have their views taken into account on what to do about traffic congestion; Killinghall residents were understood to want a bypass which was part of package E and not putting package E to consultation was denying Killinghall residents the opportunity to say whether they wanted a bypass; sustainable options were not going to be easy and people needed to be realistic and honest; congestion was rising every day and doing nothing was the 'easy option'; and the suggestion that a relief road would ruin the Nidderdale Greenway or destroy Nidd Gorge was a fabrication.
- Co-opted Member Sandra Doherty (Chief Executive, Harrogate District Chamber of Commerce) emphasized the Chamber's view which was that traffic congestion in Harrogate was already preventing economic growth which was important for the town. She believed that consulting only on package B would deny giving the public a choice in the matter and that package E should also go to consultation.

Resolved -

- (a) That the content of the Stage One Report, the Options Assessment Report, and the report to this Committee meeting be noted.
- (b) That it be a recommendation to the Corporate Director Business and Environmental Services – That only package B be taken forward, subject to the consultants firstly working-up a package of specific actions that will be put to the public as part of the consultation.

33. Issue Raised by County Councillor Geoff Webber – New Park Roundabout

County Councillor Geoff Webber advised that the lane discipline at the New Park roundabout had been changed two weeks previously, that there was now restricted convergence distance on the Ripon exit, that there had been several accidents although possibly they had not been reported, and that, of all the people who had contacted him about it, no one liked the new lane discipline. He asked the Highways Officers to review the situation, to keep a record of the accidents that had happened, and to look to returning the roundabout to its original situation. County Councillor Stanley Lumley expressed support for County Councillor Geoff Webber's comments about the danger of the new lane discipline.

Nigel Smith (Area Highways Manager) responded that he was aware of this issue. He reported that the layout had been developed as part of a Section 278 Agreement and the aim had been to improve the flow of traffic in particular on Ripon Road. He acknowledged that, in the first instance, the works had not included all the necessary signs although the contractors had subsequently addressed that. Unfortunately the situation had been somewhat muddled by "persons unknown" involving some other unauthorised changes to the layout and that had had to be rectified. As of this week, there was clear signage in place which reflected the markings on the highways, together with additional temporary signs advising drivers to merge in turn. As far as officers were concerned, the process which had been followed as part of the development was robust. A stage 3 safety audit would nevertheless be carried out during both day and night times to assess and monitor movements at the junction. Officers believed there was sufficient space for drivers safely to merge in turn. Officers recognised that resistance to change was to be expected but suggested that it was important not to further change things to enable the situation to settle down.

Co-opted Member Sandra Doherty (Chief Executive, Harrogate District Chamber of Commerce) highlighted that, when changes were made to junctions, the signage must be correct immediately on implementation of that change. The Area Highways Manager apologized that that had not happened in this case.

Resolved -

That it be noted that the stage 3 safety audit, yet to be undertaken, shall serve as the review requested by County Councillor Geoff Webber.

34. Appointment to Outside Bodies

Considered -

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) asking the Area Committee to appoint the County Council's representatives on the Raikes Foundation. The local Member, County Councillor Stanley Lumley, nominated Hilary Jefferson and Christine Skaife for appointment.

Resolved -

That Hilary Jefferson and Christine Skaife, both from Pateley Bridge, be appointed as the County Council's representatives on the Raikes Foundation (Pateley Bridge) to serve until replacements are appointed.

35. Nidderdale AONB Joint Advisory Committee - Draft Note of Meeting held on 21 September 2017

Resolved -

That the draft note of the meeting of the Nidderdale AONB Joint Advisory Committee held on 21 September 2017 be noted.

36. Area Committee Programme of Work

Considered -

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) inviting the Area Committee to review the work items which had not yet been considered.

The Chairman highlighted that a report had been scheduled for this meeting regarding a highway junction improvement at Knaresborough Bond End (Designated Air Quality Management Area). He asked why such a report had not been submitted to this meeting. Nigel Smith (Area Highways Manager) responded that, following the public consultation, it had been agreed that additional traffic data needed to be collected and a sophisticated traffic modelling exercise needed to be undertaken. This had resulted in a slight delay in concluding the work. County Councillor Don Mackenzie added that the Bond End Steering Group was due to meet shortly to look at the latest officer recommendations. Thereafter a decision would be made in January 2018 with a view to work starting on site in March 2018. The reason why work had to be started and, to a great extent, finished in March 2018 was because the works were being funded by NCIF money which had to be spent during the 2017/18 financial year.

County Councillor John Ennis highlighted that a report about residential parking zones, to include information on parking in the Saints area of Harrogate, had been scheduled to come to this meeting. He also referred to the recent county-wide discussions and policy decisions. He asked for an update report to be submitted to the Committee's meeting on 15 March 2018. The Chairman expressed support for that suggestion. County Councillor Stuart Martin MBE also expressed support for the suggestion and highlighted that residential parking zones would be helpful in Ripon.

In response to a point raised by County Councillor John Mann, the Chairman advised that there were other forums outside the Area Committee, eg Harrogate Community Safety Partnership, at which North Yorkshire Police could report regularly regarding their response to reports of antisocial behaviour arising from cannabis smoking.

Resolved -

That the Work Programme be approved subject to:-

- (a) The removal of the report concerning the Knaresborough Bond End highway junction improvement due to the reasons reported orally at this meeting by County Councillor Don Mackenzie and Nigel Smith (Area Highways Manager).
- (b) The re-scheduling, for the Committee's meeting on 15 March 2018, of the report concerning Residential Parking Zones, to include information on parking in the Saints area of Harrogate.

The meeting concluded at 12:26pm

RAG/JR

APPENDIX A

Harrogate Relief Road Review Notices of Questions and Statements from Members of the Public

1. Borough Councillor Phil Ireland (Harrogate Borough Council Cabinet Member for Sustainable Transport)

Chair, As Cabinet Member for Sustainable Transport at Harrogate Borough Council I thought it would be helpful to outline our position and to highlight some principles that, in our opinion, any forthcoming work should be mindful of.

We are in favour of consultation amongst the public. It is important to ensure that the public have a say on the type of solution that is required to address traffic congestion in Harrogate and Knaresborough and it is essential that local people have an opportunity to comment on such major interventions. What is also incredibly important is that any such consultation is presented in a clear and equitable manner to all proposed options. I do hold some concern that there is a degree of uncertainty around a number of impacts relating to the favoured relief road option. Whilst fully appreciating that work is still at an early stage it is important that members of the public are aware of the broad implications of their decision, particularly around ecology, landscape, potential compulsory purchase and future growth even if this has to provide a relatively high level indication.

Staying with the principle of consultation, the report mentions 48,000 households receiving a postcard detailing the consultation. This suggests that there will be a strong view from those outside the area which may influence the results in favour of a particular option. Careful consideration needs to be given to the views of those in the immediate communities. I am aware of a number of themes around east-west connectivity and emerging Transport for the North thinking which have potential to change the level of through traffic which may or may not benefit the area. Therefore the committee should consider the need for appropriate weight to be placed on those living in the Harrogate, Knaresborough and Killinghall areas.

We will also be seeking some discussion around the highway modelling which has not previously been presented to the steering group or our officers in the level of detail now displayed in the Option Appraisal Report.

The narrative around how the packages of measures have been developed and what is contained in each will need to be very clearly expressed and as an advocate of sustainable travel the understanding of what will be delivered through this component of both options is important. We are keen to see sustainable transport use maximised across the district and measures to achieve this need to be exhausted as far as is realistically achievable not only in the long term, but also the short term.

The last point I would quickly like to make in order to further clarify the borough council position, is that our developing work on transport impacts associated with proposed Local Plan growth suggests that growth to 2035 can be mitigated through a range of, in some cases substantial, junction improvements and is not therefore predicated upon a relief road.

I'm interested to hear what the public thinks in relation to congestion in Harrogate and Knaresborough and look forward to hearing the committee's views.

2. Mr Malcolm Margolis

What would you lose by building the green route over a section of the Nidderdale Greenway, or the blue or yellow route close to and across it? We can all agree that building a new road in this area is certain to change it. Part at least of the Greenway will become less tranquil,

less special, less attractive to the thousands of cyclists and walkers who currently enjoy and value it.

Our Nidd Gorge campaign group held a survey at the Bilton Lane entrance to the Greenway over a mid-October weekend. From 8am to 6pm we counted 1791 people of all ages on the path. No doubt even more were using other sections. We checked to avoid double counting the same people. About 70% were on foot and 30% on bikes. We spoke to nearly 500 of them. 64% said they used it at least weekly. Many came from out of town to go on the Greenway, from Leeds, Bingley, Wetherby, York and elsewhere. The large majority were unaware of the review, and strongly opposed the inner relief road proposals. In all, over 1300 people have signed our petition against them.

The Nidderdale Greenway is the most civilised thing that has happened to our area in recent times. Harrogate has the Stray, the Valley Gardens, the Pinewoods, the Nidd Gorge and the Greenway. I was deeply involved throughout the campaign to create it, and was a member of the Steering Group which worked with Sustrans to make it happen. Your Council spent several tens of thousands of pounds on two bridleway creation orders made necessary in particular by the opposition of one major landowner. Two fellow members of the Steering Group were District Councillors Mackenzie and Harrison, whose support was essential to securing success. Indeed Michael Harrison told me he was passionate about the Greenway not least because he wanted his children to be able to enjoy it. It is extraordinary then that just 4 years later they are contemplating options which include building a road over part of it. The Greenway is fabulous. Don't you think it should stay that way?

A so called relief road should ease congestion for a while, but for how long do you think? Its purpose would be to enable more traffic to move more easily. Studies and common sense show that this would in time induce more traffic, and solve nothing, and future development would add to the problem. But the damage to the Greenway and the Nidd Gorge could never be undone. Surely we have the capacity to protect these special places, and to tackle congestion and pollution by reducing traffic through sustainable measures, not by building even more roads for even more traffic.

3. Geoff Foxall, Nidd Gorge Community Action and Starbeck Residents Association

Relief Roads Don't Work

In a recent newspaper article, Councillor Mackenzie, the county's Executive Member for Highways, stated: ... **'the primary purpose of the Harrogate Relief Road, if we decide that there is a strong demonstrable case for one, would be to relieve congestion on our existing road network.'** The case I am presenting this morning is that relief roads do not work.

The evidence is in a recent *Transport for Quality of Life* study in March this year entitled *'The Impact of Road Projects in England'* by Sloman, Hopkinson and Taylor. This produced substantial evidence against the Harrogate Relief Road being a congestion relief solution.

In its executive summary on the subject of *'generated traffic'* the report concluded that: *'Evidence from 13 road schemes is consistent with the conclusion that road schemes generate traffic. Average increases over the short run (3-7 years) were 7%. Average increases over the long run (8-20 years) were 47%. These were increases over-and-above background traffic growth...'* (page 6)

Crucially for us in Harrogate, in relation to existing road schemes in similar economic areas with similar traffic problems, the study also found that: *'Where a road scheme was justified on the basis that it was needed to cater for current and future traffic in a 'pressure cooker' area with a buoyant economy, it was common for the scheme to be followed by much*

development in car-dependent locations, causing rapid traffic growth and congestion on both the road scheme and the pre-existing road network.’ (page 7)

In our case, part of our pre-existing road network - Bilton Lane, Woodfield Road or Claro Road - will be incapable of funnelling the traffic from Skipton Road to the new relief road at the point of its completion, let alone after substantial development. Your report itself in para 4.31 estimates that Bilton Lane at peak times will have to cater for 1,000 cars an hour – the same quantity of traffic going into Knaresborough along the A59. And, unlike the A59 at Bond End, commuting traffic on Bilton Lane will be meeting head-on with children making their way to two primary schools.

If congestion relief is the primary purpose for a possible relief road, the *Transport for Quality of Life* report is hard evidence that a new road will not relieve congestion in Harrogate or Knaresborough but will actually increase traffic volumes – especially as any of the proposed routes would also act as an improved east-west corridor making the A59 more attractive to additional trans-pennine traffic.

The cheaper and longer term solution can only and must be a range of sustainable transport measures as outlined in your report’s option packages A and B.

4. Mr Roderick Beardshall

Road capacity – future needs

How much road capacity (or road space) will we need in the future? The important word in that sentence is “need”. We should not be asking how much road space we will be capable of filling, if available, but how much we will need. The simple answer is “less than today”. Why do I believe that? It is a combination of increasing political will and advancing technology.

Technology gives us tremendous opportunities in several key areas. For example, **driverless cars** will become increasingly efficient in their use of road space as they interact with their environment including other vehicles. Speeds would be optimised to improve traffic flows and decision making processes would be speeded up compared to the human driver. Another opportunity is the **improvement of efficiency of delivering goods**. Currently, for example, deliveries of internet shopping have added significantly to traffic but this is a relatively new phenomenon which will surely be made more efficient with improvements in computer algorithms and incentives for co-operation between carriers. Technology will make it ever easier to offer **road pricing** in a fair, flexible and transparent manner to give people real choices about their travel options. **Working from home** is also likely to become increasingly attractive partly as a result of improvements in technology.

I mentioned political will. I believe this is increasingly being guided by the realisation that our lives need to be sustainable. That is that we use finite resources such that our grandchildren and their grandchildren can live in a world which is as pleasant to live in and with the same opportunities as our world. This will lead to policies which will shape behaviour in a way that places less demands on land and energy associated with travel. Today’s decision is a part of that process. We can shape our own future, or we can be swept along with the tide. To create the future we need requires inspired civic leadership making the right decisions. Historically, traffic management has been about predicting demand and managing capacity with road building generally considered a fundamental part of the solution. As a solution it is easy to propose but expensive, damaging and disruptive to implement and is inflexible because once in place it is to all intents, permanent. We need to move towards managing demand, which requires more imaginative solutions but solutions which have the potential to be cheaper, more flexible and beneficial to the overall quality of life of a community.

Given the factors which are likely to reduce the need for road space, we must ensure that there is the political will to grasp the opportunity and must ensure that we plan not for today's needs, or even for 6-8 years' time when a new road could potentially be completed, but for 10, 20, 30 or more years beyond that when our children or grandchildren will be raising their children. Road building represents a lose-lose scenario of wasted money and wasted environment. Please let's explore and implement the alternatives.

5. Jemima Parker, Chair of Zero Carbon Harrogate

I congratulate the team at WSP on their thorough and professional report, that has moved the conversation on from a single simplistic, but ineffective, solution for our traffic issues to a more comprehensive and creative review of transport. Their figures reveal that only 7% of vehicle movements causing traffic congestion are from external through traffic, while nearly half are short local journeys of less 1.6 miles (page 13).

As WSP identifies putting in place the infrastructure so that we have choices for these short journeys can radically reduce traffic and bring a raft of other social, environmental and economic benefits. Improved both physical and mental health from active transport, improved air quality and lower carbon emissions. Transdev, are giving inspiring leadership here and showing us what is possible. Zero Carbon Harrogate are working with Harrogate Borough Council to bring a Car Club to Harrogate. Local residents could reclaim their street spaces and strengthening communities. Providing safe pedestrian routes and segregated cycle routes to schools would allow our young people to develop independence and provide substantial cost and time savings for working parents. And the healthy Spa and heritage brands of our towns can be developed.

Councillors, the report leads me to ask you two questions?

Firstly, what are you trying to achieve?

The five packages before you have been assessed against the "Harrogate *Relief Road* Strategic Objectives" (page 40). Despite this Package B, a range of sustainable transport measures scored the highest, ranking first or second in all of the nineteen metrics that were assessed (first thirteen times and second six times) (page 58). And Package A also scored well even against these "relief road" criteria. Yet this low cost high impact, option has been dropped.

If each evening my husband rated the meal I had cooked comparing it to burger and chips, I might begin to think he was fixated with burger and chips. What are your objectives for a forward thinking transport plan for Harrogate and Knaresborough?

Secondly, how will you ensure a fair consultation for these transport proposals?

What are you going to call it so that the name of the consultation does not bias the public response? Including "relief road" in the title gives a bias towards packages C, D and E. What will the packages be called? Currently package B's name does not capture the richness of its 22 components, whereas E has all 13 elements well covered in its name, as I have highlighted in the attached table.

Sustainable transport measures need to catch up in press coverage, which until now has been dominated by a road solution for our transport issues. Package B is a more subtle and complex "meal" than burger and chips, like a sophisticated three course dinner, and as such will need additional explanation for the public who may be less familiar with the terminology and concepts and how they will bring greater benefits to help our beautiful towns thrive.

Packages B and E compared

- Green highlights differences
- Note the title of each package. Package B includes all the elements of E (except a relief road) and therefore must also include “Highway Operational Improvement Measures, Sustainable Transport Interventions and Urban Realm Improvements”

<p>B - Demand Management and Behavioural Changes</p> <p>22 components</p> <p>A1: Variable Messaging A2: Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) - public transport A3: Area wide signage strategy - potentially including tourist, HGV and wayfinding signage A4: Publicity campaigns and incentives for more sustainable travel A5: Improved digital provision - Open Harrogate website and app, gamification/sustainable travel challenges A6: Personalised journey planner</p> <p>B1: Extend pedestrianisation of Harrogate central core (potentially peak time only - controlled by rising bollards) B2: Traffic Management/Low Emission Zone B4: Area wide travel planning - workplace travel plans, event management B7: HGV ban at peak times/loading restrictions B8: Town centre 20mph speed limits/zone B9: Car sharing B10: Car clubs (Electric vehicles) B11: Work with schools to ameliorate the impact of school run (e.g. encourage sustainable school travel, review start/end times etc.)</p> <p>C3: Network optimisation C4: Area wide signal strategy review</p> <p>D1: Area wide review of car parking management, supply and charging and development of area wide strategy</p> <p>E1: Bus/rail station interchange development and public realm improvements E4: Focus on new developments providing sustainable transport options E11: Improved access to stations</p>	<p>E - Relief Road, Highway Operational Improvement Measures, Sustainable Transport Interventions and Urban Realm Improvements</p> <p>13 components</p> <p>A1: Variable Messaging A2: RTPI - public transport A3: Area wide signage strategy - potentially including tourist, HGV and wayfinding signage</p> <p>B1: Extend pedestrianisation of Harrogate central core (potentially peak time only - controlled by rising bollards) B7: HGV ban at peak times/loading restrictions B8: Town centre 20mph speed limits/zone</p> <p>C1: Harrogate Relief Road C3: Network optimisation C4: Area wide signal strategy review</p> <p>E1: Bus/rail station interchange development and public realm improvements E11: Improved access to stations</p> <p>F1: Implementation of the Cycling Infrastructure Plan for Harrogate, Knaresborough and surrounding area</p> <p>G1: Area wide public realm strategy</p>
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F1: Implementation of the Cycling Infrastructure Plan for Harrogate, Knaresborough and surrounding area	
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G1: Area wide public realm strategy	
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6. Mr Allan Smyth

One in three of us will be affected by mental illness at some point in our lives, that in turn affects us all.

It is well known that a brisk walk, or just being outdoors can bring an improvement in our state of mind, exercise, air, daylight, space, or just the time to think, uninterrupted by technology or that angry sound of traffic, can all help to clear our minds, we all need that place of solace and peace, out amongst nature, where we can just be, a place where the wonders of this world and all its beauty can fill our hearts with joy and empty our minds of distress, for a moment, just long enough to remember who and what we are.

Thousands of us use Nidd Gorge for these very reasons, some alone, some with friends and family, bonding under the big sky, dreaming by the gentle flowing water, smashing a time trial in muddy trainers, or perhaps just walking off Sunday lunch, throwing sticks and balls for our four legged friends, these are things that make us happy and content, careless in the moment, without purpose or goal, knowing that the unchanging landscape is there is enough, unchanging apart from the seasons.

Daily I walk my dogs among the trees, grass, bugs and birds, I might meet a friend or someone new, but that matters not, I am there to be me in the great outdoors, I meet people both local and even from other continents, drawn by the lure of Nidd Gorge's promise of something exceptional and unique to each visitor. But I also know people who would not wish to be anywhere busy or where they might have to communicate, that would be too painful, but in Nidd Gorge, so close yet so far away from it all they can reflect, refocus and hopefully move on. My words cannot express the experience of other people's mental health issues, that is their own battle, one that often starts without them noticing as the pressures of modern life build like straws on a camel's back, being in a place like Nidd Gorge is an essential tool in helping them find themselves before they are lost.

Nidd George is not the place to put a major trunk road, or development, barriers which would keep away those of us who perhaps have nowhere else to feel at one with everything that they hold dear.

I ask you to consider very carefully the impact of such a scheme on the nature of what is quintessentially, the gem of a Spa Town with a reputation for being somewhere to relax and recoup.

Thank you.

7. Harrogate Borough Councillor Mrs Val Rodgers (Bilton Ward)

I am disappointed with the options for the relief road proposed by NYCC.

My concerns are regarding the consultation process and how the County Council intend to contact the people affected by the routes chosen.

I would have thought and hoped that the council would deliver information to residents affected by the route. You can't assume that everyone buys the Harrogate Advertiser or

listens to Stray FM or indeed owns or searches a computer for information.

8. Kevin Douglas (Chair, Harrogate District Cycle Action)

Harrogate and District Cycle Action (HDCA) welcomes the Consultant Report on the Relief Road Review being made public and being presented to the Area Committee today.

We are pleased that there are some key facts identified which I am sure the Committee will support. The key ones are:-

1. The identification that the main movements on the local network are made from trips with origin or destination in the urban areas: purely internal trips that are short in length and are primarily commuting related
2. That through traffic, with origin external to Harrogate and Knaresborough has little bearing on the local network and generally by-passes the Town altogether
3. That there is no one single measure that will address the issue but the solution must be made up of a package of measures. This approach will also allow some interventions that may be less costly and less complex to be delivered early in the process for quick wins.
4. That Sustainable Transport Options, including cycling and bus usage, could make a significant impact on reducing congestion and improving air quality.

These findings are welcomed and it is hoped that Members will carefully consider these key findings when deciding how to progress to the next stage.

Whilst the report recommends the consideration of 2 Packages (Band E) I am pleased that the implementation of the planned Cycling Implementation Plan is included in both packages, which indeed it should be as it was one of the highest scorers in the type of intervention that best fitted with the agreed objectives. It scored higher than the Relief Road Option(19 against 17) as well as it likely being a significantly lower cost option and would, I am certain, score well in any cost benefit analysis undertaken.

I do hope that Members have noted this assessment and that the Cycle Infrastructure Plan implementation will be taken forward in whatever Package is finally progressed and will form an early intervention and be one of the 'quick wins' mentioned in the report. Evidence from the Nidderdale Greenway shows that where traffic free provision is made it is highly successful and well used by locals and visitors alike.

Given the widely differing make up of the two Packages HDCA strongly supports Package B as this does not include the Relief Road option which given the indication for an inner route would have a major and catastrophic impact on the Nidderdale Greenway – one of the most well used cycleways in Yorkshire and whilst it is recognised this is mostly used for leisure cycling it provides an excellent route for the development of skills and confidence which, with the right infrastructure, will encourage more people to cycle to work and school.

Given at this stage that Members are being asked to take forward two packages I would urge Members to ensure that Sustainable transport and Cycling provision in particular, remains a high priority in developing the final package that is implemented to tackle this problem

9. Chris Kitson (Chair, Nidd Gorge Community Action)

Is it significant that NYCC conducted a traffic survey (during a period of major delays and roadworks on the A59) that seem to justify an inner relief road through Nidd Gorge, but have

yet to conduct a survey to ascertain the amenity value of Nidd Gorge and The Nidderdale Greenway to local people and visitors enjoying the threatened area?

As part of the public consultation process are you going to conduct your own survey of recreational users of the area?

On Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th October, I spent 20 hours, alongside other members of Nidd Gorge Community Action, surveying the weekend users of The Gorge and The Greenway, passing through the Bilton Lane gateway.

Whilst the headline figure was the 1791 people recorded over the weekend, using just this one entrance to Nidd Gorge, for recreational activities, the abiding memory was of the diversity of users enjoying this area.

From regular local dogwalkers accessing Bilton Fields and Nidd Gorge, to the multitude of cyclists heading to and from Nidderdale and beyond, the steady flow of people was unrelenting from morning until night.

During peak hours, from mid-morning to late afternoon, the number of social groups enjoying the area was remarkable: families with young children learning to ride bikes; families with old children having a catch-up; groups of friends having a social afternoon out; walking groups returning to a favourite walk or trying out one of the top-ten walks in the country according to The Guardian and The Times; cycling clubs using one of the best traffic-free routes in the country to access the now world-famous Tour de France countryside; holidaymakers heading into town with children on bicycles from the campsite at Ripley; and crucially, people with physical mobility problems accessing green spaces and clean air in wheelchairs and mobility scooters.

Malcolm Margolis has called the opening of the Nidderdale Greenway the most civilised thing to happen in Harrogate for a long time and he is right. I have lived here all my life, since 1968, and I can't remember a more civilised change in our town; probably because I wasn't around when protection for The Stray was secured or The Valley Gardens was opened.

I can understand why councillors are keen to associate themselves with the opening of The Greenway; we would all like to be remembered for civilised acts of great public benefit. Unfortunately, by continuing to pursue a course of action that would destroy Nidd Gorge and The Nidderdale Greenway, whatever the motives, the Relief Road Steering Group and this committee will not leave such a legacy to future generations.

As part of the £500,000 relief road study, WSP, in the recent engagement process, were made aware, by the Bilton Conservation Group, of the 35 years of voluntary human effort that has gone into making Nidd Gorge the fantastic recreational amenity and wildlife habitat that we all love today. Nidd Gorge Community Action furnished them with the survey figures, confirming its popularity with the public and amenity value to the community. Yet this information still made no difference to the Steering Group and this destructive, heartbreaking proposal is still before us on the table today.

In the recent draft town plan consultation process conducted by HBC, Bilton Fields failed to secure designation as a Local Green Space despite ___ out of 598 respondents to the public consultation asking for it to be so. Apparently it does not merit designation. For this to happen it needs to be *demonstrably special to a local community; to hold a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of its wildlife.*

For me and everybody else who loves this area, Nidd Gorge ticks all these boxes. My question: for the committee here today; the steering group; and the executive is this...

What criteria does Nidd Gorge and The Greenway have to meet before it receives the respect, recognition and protection it deserves from our borough council and our county council?

Thank you.

10. Mr John Branson

The figures in the latest report do not tie up with those previously published. For example 4.28 (page 7) says that the inner southern alignment (with a link to Bilton Lane) is forecast to result in reductions of traffic of 48% on Skipton Road and 45% on Wetherby Road. However, the previous figures, still shown on the web site variance map, are 40% on Skipton Road, and 20% on Wetherby Road. Why are they different?

Also the map in 4.28 is the same as the one on the website and those previously published. These are misleading because it is only by looking at the map on page 156 that you are made aware of the other interconnections planned apart from Bilton Lane. Why have these maps and, particularly, the web site not been brought up to date?

The answer to the web site question "How this will affect Bilton Lane?" is that it is likely to increase traffic on Bilton Lane, and as part of the options appraisal and preferred route development process, a detailed assessment of how these options will impact on Bilton Lane will be **completed**."

But has it? 4.31 (page 8) says that... the figures at this stage are intended to be illustrative, and as proposals for interventions progress, a more detailed and fuller modelling exercise **will be** undertaken..., that is, it has not been completed.

In the Options Assessment Report, the EAST Results for one of the recommended packages, Package E (Table 6 Page 184) only deal with items in a general way. For example: "Improve Air Quality: Wider air quality improvements through discouragement of driving into/through the town and promotion of alternative more sustainable modes reducing overall car travel."

There is no mention of a future busy road passing existing schools and what the expected increase in pollution will be. Perhaps it is covered by the next statement: that there are "Benefits to Air Quality Management Areas from relief road but offset by new impacts elsewhere". It seems that increasing pollution levels for children are dismissed as just one of the unfortunate "new impacts". You give yourselves a high score of 4/5 for this.

We are looking at spending £100M on a road, and to have any confidence in the decision making process, the minimum I would expect, is that somebody is responsible for making sure that all the documentation published has been carefully checked for consistency and to explain the reason for any changes. This has not been done.

Note 1: The reductions quoted in this HRRR are the average of the figures for both directions given in the table in para 4.32.

11. Mr Keith Wilkinson MBE (Honorary Secretary, Bilton Conservation Group)

Bilton Conservation Group formed on 19th May 1982 to conserve Nidd Gorge and the Green Belt protecting Knaresborough from Harrogate.

We are grateful for WSP's 315 page Progress Report into Harrogate's traffic problems.

Perhaps we should remind ourselves of the objectives of this £400,000 exercise.

Para 4.16

“The objectives for the Harrogate Relief Road Review are based on the following Strategic High Level Outcomes:-

- 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.”**

There is no reference to a ‘Harrogate Relief Road’ to divert the A59 through Nidd Gorge – plans already considered and abandoned in 1986 and 1996; but there is a clear objective “to improve East – West connectivity”. Is this so-called ‘Relief Road’ in fact a ‘Bypass-on-the-cheap’ to improve Scarborough to Lancashire journeys?

The report projects the consequences for Bilton if the A59 is diverted through Nidd Gorge:

Bilton Lane

‘*Viam Magnam Antiquam Biltonam*’ – ‘The Great, Ancient Bilton Road’ through Knaresborough Forest.

This country lane has two primary schools; Bilton Grange at the A59 junction and Richard Taylor, a church, community centre, and cricket field.

At peak flow in 2017 it carries **100** vehicles an hour and is regularly congested. A single parked car can hold back a lorry and block all movements.

The WSP Study projects unavoidable increases of vehicle movements on Bilton Lane in the order of **1000 vehicles an hour at Peak Flow!** 1000 vehicles an hour on Bilton Lane equates directly with the present peak of **924** vehicles an hour on the A59....

Bilton Lane is struggling at present. To increase Peak Flows ten-fold would, inevitably, generate rat running on side roads through the Housing Estates: Crab Lane, Church Avenue, King Edward’s Drive, Hall Lane, Tennyson Avenue & Woodfield Road. Some of those roads already have 20 mph speed restrictions.

So much for the objective of “Improving the Quality of Life for all communities”!

The report acknowledges the severe impact the Blue and Green Routes would have on the amenity of Nidderdale Greenway by bisecting it.

It further recognises the irreversible Environmental Impact the routes would have on Nidd Gorge. This Site of Importance for Nature Conservation has been restored by HBC, Woodland Trust and thousands of volunteers since 1982.

The General Public is so concerned that they have photographed and recorded the many life-forms here which will form a report as part of the Public Consultation Exercise.

That exercise in January **must** enable the widest Public Awareness of the nature and irreversible consequences of diverting the A59 through Nidd Gorge.

This single, small, rural community should not be expected to bear the brunt of 40% of Harrogate’s Urban Traffic.

12. Tom Hay

(Note: Tom Hay was aware that his script would take longer than 3 minutes to read out at the meeting and he therefore intended to say only as much as he was able in his allocated 3 minutes.)

Flawed public consultation (we don't have the info we need)

This public consultation would be deeply flawed. The two most controversial elements – the two which are the most likely to attract public opposition - are both incomplete.

(1) The possible route of the relief road has not actually been detailed. The council's report has combined the former green and blue routes into a single vague route with a rough start and end point but no defined path. The public cannot make a meaningful decision about the costs and benefits of this road if it does not know where it is going to be.

(2) There has been no decision on whether Bilton Lane will be connected, and barely any information about the impact if it did – apart from the 10x traffic increase. The report says: "As proposals for interventions progress, a more detailed and fuller modelling exercise will be undertaken." So what exactly are we being consulted on? Will our homes and schools be exposed to a 10 times greater risk of traffic accidents? A 10 times increase in air pollutants? A 10 times increase in noise pollution? Or won't they? We have no idea of the impact of this aspect of the project, nor even whether it will happen. How are we supposed to make any sort of a meaningful public response to that?

It is easy to support a project in principle, but objecting to it requires specific details. The public has been denied the key details it requires to make meaningful objections. Proposal E is therefore completely unfit to be put forward for public consultation. It would be little more than a sham.

The council's own report says a relief road is not really beneficial, and would just move traffic problems elsewhere

Remarkably, the council's own report actually says that a relief road: "...is not expected to provide large benefits to the town centre. Costs will be relatively high. There are environmental concerns with this package on its own. Any benefits that can be provided through reduction of traffic and congestion on key routes will be largely offset by impacts elsewhere."

In fact, when the same report assesses the overall impact of the two different traffic plans, B and E (E being the relief road), the assessment is almost identical. Apart from the part where it is explained that E has a negative aspect: the relief road.

Here's what it says about B: "Strong fit with objectives and wider government policy. Larger economic benefits expected through improved efficiency of the network, reductions in congestion and public realm enhancements. Large environmental benefits are expected also through enhanced use of sustainable travel modes."

Here's what it says about E: "Strong fit with objectives and wider government policy. Larger economic benefits expected through improved efficiency of the network, reductions in congestion, reliability of travel and public realm enhancements. This will also improve the attractiveness of the town centre. Environmental benefits are expected through enhanced use of sustainable travel modes, although some adverse impacts will result from the implementation of the relief road element."

The benefits of Plan E are, essentially, those of Plan B - with the added adverse impact of a relief road. A relief road which, when assessed independently of other measures, would offset any benefits by creating problems elsewhere. So why is this option even still on the table?

The council's objectives

The council has five key objectives for this project. Two of them are directly contravened by Plan E, including the Bilton Lane link.

- 1) "Improve the quality of life for all communities" – does this not include Bilton, whose community would be flooded by a 10x traffic increase, affecting health, safety, noise and quality of life? Does the unsullied existence of Nidd Gorge not improve the quality of life for all of the Harrogate district residents who use it to relax, unwind, socialise and exercise?
- 2) "Protect and enhance the built and natural environment" – it is hard to see how a road through Nidd Gorge would protect or enhance the natural environment.

The council also has a series of more specific objectives for the project. A larger number of these are directly contravened.

"SPO-05 Improve the safety of Non-Motorised Users (pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians)" – does exposing the network of residential roads between Woodfield Road and Bilton lane, with their primary schools, playgroups and elderly accommodation, count towards this aim?

"SPO-08 Reduce levels of pedestrian severance" – bringing a 10x traffic increase to Bilton Lane, and a consequential rise of traffic on its connecting roads, will sever a whole community.

"SPO-09 Contribute to improvements in air quality" – a laudable goal, though reducing air pollutants on some roads simply to relocate them to a residential area, where the schools and homes are so close to the roadside... is that really the right way to go about this?

"SPO-14 Reduce noise and vibration in residential areas" – or rather, relocate the noise and vibration from 1000 vehicles at peak time to the large residential area of Bilton.

"SPO-16 Contribute to the improved health of local residents" – this should rightly be a priority, which is why it's concerning to see little hard evidence presented in the report which shows that diverting traffic onto Bilton Lane would improve the health of local residents. Sadly Harrogate Borough Council's air quality monitoring falls short of national guidelines and overlooks certain particulates (e.g. PM2.5s). It also covers just a handful of key spots. If it was more complete, perhaps evidence could be presented that a certain percentage reduction of traffic would be sufficient to make the air safe for nearby residents to breathe. But no evidence has been presented to that effect. We need no evidence, however, to know that increasing the traffic by a factor of 10 on Bilton Lane will increase air and noise pollution for a large number of residents and several schools and playgroups. This is unlikely to be something which improves their health.

Nidd Gorge

The environmental costs surrounding a road through Nidd Gorge are obvious. This is a well-used and much-loved area of natural beauty which is important to locals and visitors alike.

Traffic - general

The report states: "This would however lead to significantly more traffic using Bilton Lane in the morning peak hour with it carrying over around 1000 vehicles per hour compared to approximately 120 per hour currently." That is a 10x increase in traffic. A rise of 1000%, fundamentally changing the status of this residential road to a major artery into town.

This road features two primary schools, two playgroups, a youth club and many, many homes.

Traffic – pollutants

That means a 10x increase in vehicular pollutants (nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter (PM10s, PM2.5s)). Much of the UK is in serious breach of the World Health Organisation's air quality guidelines.

In March this year, the Mayor of London said cars should be banned from roads near schools in order to reduce air pollution. Camden council and the City of London have already banned traffic from some roads around schools. Increasing the traffic tenfold outside Bilton's primary schools is the wrong decision at the wrong time.

For something more solid, this is from Harrogate Council's Air Quality Report 2017: "Local authorities are expected to work towards reducing emissions and/or concentrations of PM2.5 (particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 2.5µm or less). There is clear evidence that PM2.5 has a significant impact on human health, including premature mortality, allergic reactions, and cardiovascular diseases. HBC does not undertake any monitoring of PM2.5, and has not undertaken any specific measures to reduce concentrations of PM2.5."

In summary, these pollutants, considered harmful to health by the World Health Organisation, are not being monitored. What reassurances can the council give us, then, that a 10x increase in traffic will not harm our health?

Traffic – accidents

It means a 10x increase in the risks of injury and death for pedestrians, many of whom will be primary school children, walking along the road and crossing it at the exact times when traffic is at its peak.

In 2015 in Great Britain, there were 5,700 reported child casualties in road accidents at the start and end of school (between 7:30 and 8:59am or between 3:00 and 4:59pm). Almost 3,000 of those were pedestrians - children on foot who were hit by cars.

Source:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/568484/rccgb-2015.pdf

Traffic – noise

It means a 10x increase in vehicular noise pollution, which directly impedes children's ability to read, remember and learn.

"About 20 studies have found effects of either aircraft or road traffic noise on children's reading abilities and long-term memory" - The Independent, Feb 2016.

From a 2011 study: "it is apparent that disturbances in teaching learning process due to road traffic noise was common ... road traffic noise has a plausible effect"

From a 2003 study: "The results showed that both road traffic noise and meaningful irrelevant speech impaired recall of the text. Retrieval in noise from semantic memory was also impaired."

Impact on other roads

Opening a route out of Harrogate to the east of Bilton will not only affect Bilton Lane. It turns Woodfield Road into a route out of town too: exposing another primary school and hundreds more homes and elderly flats and bungalows to a massive increase in traffic.

And then there's the huge web of connecting streets between Bilton Lane and Woodfield Road, like the already single-file only King Edward's Drive. Imagine the chaos of Skipton Road emptying a quarter of its morning traffic into this network of thin, cramped residential streets and out through a single hole at the other side, increasing the local traffic volume by 1000% in the process.

(End)

APPENDIX B

Responses of Andrew Bainbridge (Andrew Bainbridge (Team Leader LTP, Highways and Transportation, Business and Environmental Services) to the main issues raised by members of the public regarding the item of business “Harrogate Relief Road Review”.

Note: Andrew Bainbridge was interrupted several times, by members of the public, whilst providing the following responses.

Andrew Bainbridge stated:--

I'll start with a generic response because there have been many questions, statements and comments about the Nidd Gorge and the Nidderdale Greenway. I'll cover all of them at the start.

There have been many statements about the impact of a potential relief road on the Nidd Gorge and the Nidderdale Greenway. To be clear, the County Council accepts that any inner relief road would have an impact on the Nidd Gorge and the Nidderdale Greenway. This does not necessarily mean, as has been said by some people, not today but in the press, that it would mean the closure of the Nidderdale Greenway or the total destruction of the Nidd Gorge. An inner route could potentially avoid a direct impact on the Nidd Gorge totally. And whatever route could be put forward could accommodate the Nidderdale Greenway. However, I do accept that it would change the character of the Nidderdale Greenway.

Our work to date has also demonstrated that an inner relief road would bring traffic benefits to the town centre and these are demonstrated in the Committee report and in the Options Appraisal Report.

I wish to make it clear that the decision being sought today is not about whether to build an inner relief road. What we are seeking is the Committee's views on whether we ask the people of Harrogate and Knaresborough for their views about an inner relief road and alternative packages. We are not asking about whether we adopt an inner relief road. If the Committee agree a relief road should be included in the public consultation, we will do so. If it is included, there will be sufficient information because we are following the Department for Transport process to allow people to take a view on the concept of a relief road. As we develop a case further, and if a relief road, following the consultation, is taken further, a Strategic Outline Business Case will be developed and this will look in more detail at the pros and cons of a relief road or any other package. This is the standard and necessary process which the Department for Transport require us to follow. We are actually consulting at quite an early stage here. This is one of those cases where we will be condemned if we do and condemned if we don't. We want to consult at a concept stage. If we waited until we had developed detailed alignments for an inner relief road, we would get criticised that we had made the decision and that it was just a public information exercise. We want to hear the views of people of Harrogate and Knaresborough on these 2 packages.

Andrew Bainbridge responded as follows in respect of other issues raised by individual members of the public:-

- Response to Borough Councillor Phil Ireland (Harrogate Borough Council's Cabinet Member for Sustainable Transport):-

As is made clear in the report, the process we are following is the standard Department for Transport process. As we move through the process, we will be discarding a number of options and we will work in more and more detail on those options that remain.

With regard to Councillor Ireland's comments regarding the 48,000 households mentioned in the report - that is the area in which we intend to deliver information to every postal address. That, in broad terms, covers the study area as shown in Figure 1 in the Committee report. It covers the urban areas of Harrogate and Knaresborough and the surrounding villages of Killinghall, Beckwithshaw, Spofforth and out towards the A1 and junction 47 Allerton Park area.

I'd make the point that, if and when we commence the public consultation on 21st December, and as yet no decision has been made, we will be seeking partial post codes from people in their responses so that we can analyse the responses on a geographical area. That will allow us to find out what the views of people in Bilton are or what the views of the people of Starbeck are verses what the views of the people of Leeds who want to travel to Harrogate. That will allow us to provide information to Committee Members and the Executive when they take a final decision so that they know, and can reach their own balanced view, on the different consultation responses from different areas.

- Response to Mr Malcolm Margolis:-

I have covered the points regarding the Nidd Gorge and Nidderdale Greenway already.

Considering the issue of induced traffic, that is a well-known and extensively researched effect. However, it nearly always seems to be put forward as a fundamentally bad thing. That is not necessarily the case. People don't make trips just for the sake of making a trip. If some of the induced traffic from a new road is allowing people to access work, whereas before they couldn't, or for allowing visitors to come to the town, whereas before they were discouraged, is that necessarily a bad thing? A new relief road, by providing more capacity, will inevitably lead to some induced traffic, but this could easily be the case with sustainable transport measures by freeing-up road space for extra traffic by moving local people onto bikes.

- Response to Geoff Foxall (Nidd Gorge Community Action and Starbeck Residents Association):-

Mr Foxall makes comments about the recently published CPRE report. As you would expect, I have looked and read this in some depth. I do not here intend to give an in-depth critique of the report. What I would say is that it is not necessarily directly relevant to Harrogate Relief Road because the schemes that are considered in the report are not really urban relief road type schemes. Most of the schemes considered are trunk road schemes that are village bypasses or are making single carriageway into dual carriageway. There are also some methodology issues with the report

In my response to the previous question, I did acknowledge that a new relief road will lead to some induced traffic and Mr Foxall raises that issue. But looking especially at Bilton Lane, any relief road option could, or could not, be linked to Bilton Lane. We could build an inner relief road option that does not link directly into Bilton Lane. We do accept there will be a very significant traffic increase in Bilton Lane. And that is specifically why we are intending to include this level of detail in a public consultation – so we can get the views of people and road users of Bilton and the wider Harrogate and Knaresborough area so that, using post code analysis, elected Members can take a balanced view on the different views. All we are asking is whether we should consult on a possible link into Bilton Lane.

- Response to Mr Roderick Beardshall:-

Mr Beardshall makes some very salient comments about future technology. We are very aware of future technology issues. Some studies have suggested that

automated vehicles could reduce traffic congestion by in the order of 5% or 6%. Some of the studies are also showing that automated vehicles could increase traffic congestion because people who don't have access to a private car at the moment, for example 13/14/15/16 year olds, would probably be able to use and access automated vehicles, so there might be more traffic produced as a result of automated vehicles. Similar affects could come from other technological advances. So the impact of future technology, if and when, is still uncertain.

However what is certain is that if we don't continue to consider development of a relief road, we will not be able to bring in a relief road within the next 10 to 20 years. However, if we continue with the development of a relief road and, in 5 to 6 years, the potential benefits from technology show that it will not be needed, we don't need to continue with the development of that relief road. There will be some abortive costs incurred, but we wouldn't have to continue with it if that future is as technologically advanced as we all hope.

- Response to Jemima Parker (Chair of Zero Carbon Harrogate):-

Jemima Parker makes comment about the naming of the study. The name, at this early stage, came from how it originated which was a review of an existing relief road option, ie the Harrogate and Knaresborough Northern Relief Road and the Killinghall Bypass, which was approved by the County Council as a preferred route in the early 1990s. The study commenced as a review of the need for, and alignment of, that relief road. When we move into the public consultation phase, if it is approved, we will not be calling it the Harrogate Relief Road Public Consultation. We're already looking at some of the material. It will be called the Harrogate Congestion Consultation because that is what we are aiming to address.

Jemima Parker presents the case for the sustainable transport approach to relieving congestion in Harrogate and that is one of the options we are today recommending that we consult on. But I remind you that what we are not recommending here today is that we build a relief road. We are asking the Committee for their views on which options we should consult on. We have not started the consultation yet. If it is approved, it will start on 21st December and will run for 12 weeks through to the middle of March. So this is about agreement for a consultation, not a relief road.

The arguments for and against a relief road, or the sustainable transport question, are there. We have got them reasonably clear in the report although we recognise that, by its nature, it is a very long document. It is a very complex issue. One of the fundamental questions we've got to ask the people of Harrogate and Knaresborough is whether they will change their own travel behaviour. Whilst the County Council can provide for people to change their travel behaviour, the County Council cannot require people to change their behaviour. We can provide for, and we can encourage, but if sustainable transport type options are going to be the successful solution, the people of Harrogate and Knaresborough, and those travelling through and into Harrogate and Knaresborough, have got to adopt those options. It is not a case of that the County Council can make them.

- Response to Mr Allan Smyth

Mr Smyth puts his comments extremely well. I made my comments about Nidd Gorge in my opening remarks. We accept that an inner relief road would have impacts on the area of the Nidd Gorge. We are asking the Committee today whether to consult on a route which affects the Nidd Gorge.

- Response to Harrogate Borough Councillor Mrs Val Rodgers (Bilton Ward)

There is information in the report about how we would conduct the consultation. We are committed to making sure that everyone in and around Harrogate and Knaresborough is aware of the consultation. Should the consultation be approved, as well as advertising in Harrogate Advertiser and on Stray FM, we will have slots with the Harrogate Adviser, Stray FM and Radio York for publicity. Also we will be using something that was very successful in the recent Kex Gill consultation and that is a very short, sharp road sign by the side of the road so that, as people travel, they see that we are undertaking the consultation and there is a very short web address and email that will be open up if/when we commence the consultation so that people can see information on it. Finally, we will be putting out, to 48,000 addresses, an information leaflet telling people of the consultation. If the consultation is approved, that will be delivered by the Post Office starting in January. I wish I could guarantee that absolutely every single one of those 48,000 addresses will be hit, but there will be a margin of error. I'm sure that somebody somewhere will not get their leaflet, but we want as many people as possible in Harrogate and Knaresborough to be aware of this consultation. We're not trying to marginalise any groups. We want anybody to be able to respond.

- Response to Kevin Douglas (Chair, Harrogate District Cycle Action)

Mr Douglas, as a member of Harrogate and District Cycle Action, understandably makes a strong case in favour of providing more cycling infrastructure. That is a key element of either of the two packages that the officers are today recommending for consultation. I am a cyclist so I personally take a keen interest that these are part of the package.

I wouldn't however want Members to get the impression that we are standing still on cycling in Harrogate until we know the outcome of this work. We have implemented quite a few measures in recent years. Also Members will be aware that we were successful in our West of Harrogate NPIF bid for about £3.5M. One of the measures that will be introduced in the next two years, as part of that, will be an off-road cycle track adjacent to Otley Road. We are doing things for cycling as we go along rather than waiting for any congestion consultation.

- Response to Chris Kitson (Chair, Nidd Gorge Community Action)

Mr Kitson comments on the value and importance of the Nidd Gorge and the Nidderdale Greenway. I would just re-iterate that we do acknowledge that an inner relief road will have significant impact on the Nidd Gorge and that is what we want to ask people about. Do the people of Harrogate feel that the impact on the Nidd Gorge is outweighed by the traffic benefits? That is part of the consultation.

In response to Mr Kitson's question "as part of the public consultation exercise, are you going to conduct your own survey of recreational users of the area" - we will probably not be doing that as part of any public consultation exercise. It would be undertaken at a point in the near future. We also have a vast array of information from the Nidderdale Greenway supporters so we have a lot of information from yourselves anyway.

In response to Mr Kitson's second question "what priority does the Nidd Gorge and the Greenway have to meet before it receives the respect and recognition and protection it deserves from the Borough Council and our County Council" - unfortunately I cannot answer that question because this is not a Committee of the Borough Council. Protection undertaken by the Borough Council would have to be raised with the Borough Council. The relevant officer from the County Council is not

here today. The question today is whether we've made the case for consulting on something which impacts on the Nidd Gorge. The County Council is not the authority that would put any landscape protection on the Nidd Gorge.

- Response to Mr Keith Wilkinson MBE (Honorary Secretary, Bilton Conservation Group):-

Mr Wilkinson speaks about the impact of a relief road on the Nidd Gorge. I reiterate the point that we very much recognise that there would be an impact on the Nidd Gorge and that is one of the issues we wish to consult on.

- Response to Mr John Branson:-

Mr Branson makes a number of points which officers recognise. As has been made clear from the start of this process, which was in autumn 2016, as we move from the very early stages through to a final state for a final scheme, the process we undertake is to move off the agenda those schemes and options that are not going to meet our objectives of addressing congestion. At the earliest stage, when there is insufficient information so, inevitably, as we move to a more and more detailed stage, information is refined. The information which Mr Branson refers to, which has been on the website for the last week and a half at least, has now been flagged as background information from earlier stages. As we go through, we will refine and refine information down to a greater level of detail.

- Response to Tom Hay:-

As I have already explained, information is refined further down the line we go. I do not accept that the consultation is deeply flawed because we have not presented enough information. We have presented suitable information here, and the consultation will present suitable information for people to take a view on whether the concept of an inner relief road, or the concept of an inner relief road linked into Bilton Lane, should be taken any further. I make the point that if we were to follow directly the Government's process, we would not, at this stage, even be consulting on a link into Bilton Lane. We would be consulting on much more of a conceptual approach. As we recognise it is a very controversial issue, and if the people of Harrogate and Bilton don't want us to progress on that, that is something that Members can take into account post consultation.

With regard to Mr Hay's statement "The County Council's own report says a relief road is not really beneficial", I would disagree with that. The WSP report does recognise that a relief road on its own isn't the answer, but that a relief road with other elements of sustainable transport type measures would have significant benefits and that is one of the options that we want to consult on.

Andrew Bainbridge commented that he had now responded briefly to the main issues and could have continued for hours to respond to every point which had been raised by members of the public.