

North Yorkshire County Council

County Area Committee for the Harrogate District

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 15 March 2018 at 9.30 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, Michael Harrison, Paul Haslam, Stanley Lumley, John Mann, Zoe Metcalfe, Andy Paraskos, Cliff Trotter, Geoff Webber, Nicola Wilson and Robert Windass

Co-opted Member:-

Leah Swain (Community First Yorkshire)

In Attendance:-

Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust: Dr Ros Tolcher (Chief Executive)

Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS: Sarah Gill (Locality Manager & Senior Operational Lead for Harrogate Vanguard Programme)

North Yorkshire Police: Inspector Penny Taylor

Harrogate Borough Council: Julia Stack (Community Safety and CCTV Manager)

North Yorkshire County Council Officers: Andrew Bainbridge (Team Leader LTP, Highways and Transportation, Business and Environmental Services), David Bowe (Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services), Rachel Bowes (Health and Adult Services Assistant Director – Care and Support), Ruth Gladstone (Principal Democratic Services Officer), Liz Meade, Stronger Communities Delivery Manager for the Harrogate District and Nigel Smith (Area Highways Manager, Business and Environmental Services)

Approximately 50 members of the public

Apologies for Absence:-

Apologies for absence were received from:- Committee Members County Councillors John Ennis, Don Mackenzie and Stuart Martin MBE, Co-opted Member Sandra Doherty (Harrogate District Chamber of Commerce) and from County Councillor David Chance (Executive Member for Area Committees)

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

37. Minutes

Resolved -

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2017, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

38. Declarations of Interest

- In respect of the items 10 and 11:-
 - 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.
- In respect of the item 3, County Councillors John Mann and Zoe Metcalfe each declared that they were Governors of Harrogate District Hospital.
- In respect of item 4, County Councillor Mike Chambers MBE declared he was the Chairman of Harrogate Community Safety Partnership and Harrogate Borough Council's Cabinet Member for Safer Communities.

39. The Health Sector in the Harrogate District – The New Care Model and Community Services Work

Considered –

The presentation by Dr Ros Tolcher (Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust) and Sarah Gill (Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust) which advised of the following:

- A re-cap on the 2014 case for change and subsequent developments.
- An 8 month test which had been undertaken of a true integration of health and social care staff across an area of Harrogate covered by 3 GP Practices (Moss and Partners, Leeds Road Practice, and Church Avenue Practice). The test had involved:- daily huddles between agencies, including GPs, to manage caseload; a single multi-agency assessment document; single multi-agency Agreed Action Plans developed with the person at the point of assessment; and GP led discussions of complex cases. The lessons learned had included the following:-
 - Joined-up, community-based care remained the right approach for Harrogate.
 - Unilateral care planning and delivery was not the most effective solution.
 - Significant investment in shared leadership was critical.
 - Communication and engagement required persistent investment.
 - Attention to cultures and values was necessary for progression.
 - Staff needed to be given the tools to do their jobs.

- Some current “hard truths” were as follows:-
 - The Harrogate health and care system was under extreme pressure.
 - There were high levels of demand and very high hospital occupancy rates.
 - More than acute 4,400 bed-days had been lost due to Delayed Transfers of Care during the current year 2017/18, which represented an increase of 10% compared to 2016/17, and an increase of 32% compared to 2015/16. Only 17% of 2017/18 delays were social care delays.
 - Demographic forecasts suggested a large reduction in acute bed use was required to avoid the inevitable need for more beds which could be neither afforded for staffed.
 - There was an affordability deficit across health and care.
- Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust reported the following:-
 - It had decided to pause the development of new inpatient facilities at Cardale Park.
 - It was mid-way through public and staff engagement sessions to explore and design future model options.
 - It was recognised that the long-term clinical and financial viability of a small stand-alone mental health unit was uncertain.
 - More people in North Yorkshire and in Harrogate were admitted to hospital than the level of need suggested. Similarly, referral and contact rates for young people, adults and older people were some of the highest in the Trust’s area. These situations were influenced by the lack of community-based alternatives.
- The situation as at March 2018 included the following:-
 - National Vanguard funding was due to end on 31 March 2018 and there would be further real-term reductions to available resources.
 - Colleagues in community services were very stretched.
 - Harrogate District Hospital had unfunded beds open to meet demand.
 - Staff had a better idea about what worked and what did not work, and a shared resolve to make improvements.
 - There was a bid for West Yorkshire and Harrogate to become an Integrated Care System with new types of contract based on cost, not price.

During the Area Committee’s discussion:-

- Concern was expressed that York might become the preferred location for care, which would cause problems for patients in the remoter locations. This was seen as a particular problem for those needing dementia care. Sarah Gill said that she was aware of the issue.
- Members sought clarification about whether Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust might close all mental health beds in the Harrogate district. Sarah Gill responded that a decision had not been made, but it was a possibility. County Councillor Jim Clark (Chairman of the County Council’s Scrutiny of Health Committee) commented that there had been under-investment in mental health care for 20-30 years previously. He advised that, if Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust did put forward a proposal to close all mental health beds in the Harrogate district, then there would be a strong case for the Scrutiny of Health Committee to make a referral to the Secretary of State. He

also highlighted that, before any such change took place, the Trust must carry out consultation.

Resolved –

That the presentation be noted.

40. Harrogate District Community Safety Hub Evaluation

Considered –

The report and presentation from Julia Stack (Community Safety and CCTV Manager, Harrogate Borough Council) and Inspector Penny Taylor (North Yorkshire Police) which provided an overview and evaluation of the Harrogate District Community Safety Hub.

The following was reported to the Area Committee:-

- The Hub had been set up in September 2016, as a 12 month pilot project, to provide a multi-agency response to vulnerable people and victims of anti-social behaviour across the Harrogate district by aligning operational services of Harrogate Borough Council, North Yorkshire Police and partner agencies in order to improve customer satisfaction, reduce demand, improve the efficiency of all organisations and ultimately keep people safe.
- Information was provided about the pre start considerations, staffing, methods of working, information sharing, case management, IT, changes to working practices, partner engagement, obstacles, and opportunities for the future.
- The Hub had demonstrated that partnership working and a willingness to work in a different way had enabled a sound foundation to be formed and scope to develop further in the future.

During discussion, Members thanked Julia Stack and Inspector Penny Taylor. Members commented that they were pleased that the Hub was operating so well and expressed the view that the work of the Hub was very good.

Resolved –

That the report and presentation be noted.

41. Stronger Communities Progress

Considered –

The report of the Stronger Communities Delivery Manager (Harrogate District) which provided an update on the work of the Stronger Communities programme.

Liz Meade (Stronger Communities Delivery Manager (Harrogate District)) introduced the report and highlighted various work, including the following:-

- Support provided to the five community libraries and two hybrid libraries within the Harrogate district;
- Three 'Inspire' projects which were underway, namely:- an event hosted by Dementia Forward; an 'Opening Minds Confident Conversations' event; and a 'Message in a Bottle' project.

- An 'Achieve' grant of £15,000 awarded to Orb Community Arts based in Knaresborough to support the organisation in increasing the impact of its work across a broader area of North Yorkshire.
- Support provided to North Yorkshire Dementia Strategy, Bilton Youth Centre, Masham lift-share scheme, and girl guiding North Yorkshire west.
- County-wide strategic projects that would benefit communities across the Harrogate district eg North Yorkshire Connect community directory, and a new community based physical activity service.
- Events and networks attended by the Stronger Communities Delivery Manager.

County Councillor Stanley Lumley highlighted that community libraries were a great success but that Nidderdale Plus was facing financial challenges due to the increased service offer the organisation was delivering and that it was essential that the organisation carried on. Liz Meade confirmed the situation as described by County Councillor Stanley Lumley and advised that the County Council's Stronger Communities was offering on-going support, together with grant funding for consultants to work with the organisation to develop a new business plan to support the future sustainability of Nidderdale Plus.

Resolved –

That the report be noted.

42. Appointment to Outside Body – Richard Taylor Educational Foundation

Considered –

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) which advised that County Councillor Paul Haslam wished to stand down from being the County Council's representative on the Richard Taylor Educational Foundation and invited the Area Committee to appoint someone else to replace him.

Resolved –

That County Councillor Geoff Webber be appointed to replace County Councillor Paul Haslam as the County Council's representative on the Richard Taylor Educational Foundation, to serve until a replacement is appointed.

43. A59 Kex Gill Realignment – Progress

Considered –

The oral report of Andrew Bainbridge (Team Leader LTP, Highways and Transportation, Business and Environmental Services) which advised of the progress of work relating to the A59 Kex Gill Realignment Scheme.

Andrew Bainbridge reported the following:-

- Good progress continued to be made. The work was broadly on track with the compressed programme suggested by the Department for Transport. The target construction date was in the year 2019/2020.
- Environmental surveys were now underway, complete, or planned to start at an appropriate point in the year. Many would commence in the forthcoming month. These surveys would ensure the County Council had the fullest understanding

of the environmental conditions, which was critical given the numerous environmental designations in place within the scheme area.

- The very high level of environmental protection designation on parts of the gill posed a significant risk to delivery. The County Council continued to mitigate this risk by working closely with its consultant's environmental specialists, partners within Natural England, the AONB and local environmental groups, to ensure the optimum alignment was determined.
- Ground investigation work concluded on 16 February 2018. A series of trial pits and bore holes had provided samples which would confirm the conditions on the northern slope of the gill.
- The County Council was expecting to be able to determine a preferred route by 31 March 2018 based on the data collected through the GI and environmental surveys and studies, and the Capita structural stability report. A more detailed report on the preferred route would be brought to the Area Committee's meeting to be held in June 2018.
- A structural stability report prepared by Capita, on behalf of the County Council, had concluded that, whilst there might be options to reduce the risk of land slip in the area, these would only be effective in the short term and the only long term viable solution was to realign the A59 to the north of the gill.
- Land interest questionnaires had been issued to all landowners and tenants within the scheme study area and approximately 65% had been returned. This was considered to be a good response rate, and analysis of the responses suggested no causes for concern with regards to the County Council's understanding of the land ownership in the area.
- The latest scheme cost estimate ranged between £24m to £33m, excluding 44% optimism bias. 44% was the standard optimism bias figure at this stage of scheme development. The County Council's Executive had approved a local contribution of £4.95m at its meeting on 14 November 2017.

County Councillor Stanley Lumley emphasised the importance of the route to the Nidderdale community.

Resolved –

That the report be noted.

44. Annual Road Casualty Report

Considered –

The report of the Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services which set out the County Council's Annual Road Casualty Report.

Nigel Smith (Area Highways Manager) introduced the report and highlighted various figures, including the following relating to the Harrogate district:-

- Killed - In total 6 people (all adults) were killed in 2016 in the Harrogate district, against 5 fatalities (all adults) recorded in 2015. The fatalities were 4 car drivers and 2 riders of powered two wheelers (PTW).
- Killed or seriously injured - The number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) was 123 in 2016, an increase from 116 in 2015. In terms of road user

groups, the number of KSI casualties had decreased for pedestrians (-5), pedal cycle (-2), goods vehicles (-1), and other vehicle types (-1). The number of KSI had increased for car occupants (+12) and PTW (+4).

- Casualties - The total number of casualties reported to the police in 2016 was 625, down 5% on the previous year (658). The greatest decrease was in the number of car occupants (-12). Decreases were also seen in the number of goods vehicles (-10), other vehicles (-10) and pedestrians (-8). Increases were seen in the number of pedal cyclists (+6) and PTW (+1).
- Child KSI casualties – In 2016, child KSI casualties reduced by 2 (-40%) from 5 in 2015 to 3 in 2016. The 3 KSI child casualties were 2 pedestrians and 1 pedal cyclist.
- Cyclists - In Harrogate district, 57 cyclists (including 2 children) were injured, against 51 (including 2 children) in 2015. This increase differed to the decrease in the number of cyclists KSI in 2016 (19), down from 21 in 2015.
- Pedestrians – In 2016, the number of pedestrian casualties decreased by 16% to 51. Pedestrian KSI also decreased. There were 2 child pedestrian KSI casualties reported in 2016, down from 3 in 2015.
- Powered two wheeler (PTW) – The number of PTW casualties had increased by 2% to 65 in 2016. An increase was seen amongst PTW KSI (28) which was 4 more than the 24 recorded the previous year.
- Road collisions - A total of 436 road collisions, which resulted in someone being injured, were reported to the police in 2016, 22 more than in 2015. This was an average of 36 collisions per month or 9 per week.

County Councillor John Mann expressed thanks for the improvements made at the Harrogate Road/Burn Bridge Lane junction on the A61, which was second highest on the list of collision cluster site locations within North Yorkshire.

Resolved –

That the report be noted.

45. Public Questions or Statements

The Chairman advised that two members of the public had given valid notice to speak at this meeting in respect of the Harrogate Congestion Study Update. Those two members of the public would be invited to speak whilst the Committee was considering that item of business.

46. Receipt of Petition - “Save Nidd Gorge and the Nidderdale Greenway – Listen to the Harrogate Area County Councillors and remove the inner relief road package E from the public consultation process”

Considered –

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) which:-

- Advised of the receipt of a petition containing 2,314 signatures. The petition asked for the Area Committee’s recommendation, for the removal of the inner relief road package E from public consultation, to be supported.

- Advised that the Area Committee's recommendation, together with this petition, had been considered by the County Council's Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services (BES) and the BES Executive Members on 15 December 2017. The Corporate Director BES had decided, amongst other things, to develop further the sustainable transport elements of both packages B and E and to develop further the alignments of the Inner Relief Road.
- Invited the Area Committee, after it had heard a presentation of the petition from the petition organiser, to discuss the petition and agree a response.

The petition organiser, Mr Chris Kitson (Chair of Nidd Gorge Community Action), spoke for five minutes to present the petition to the Area Committee. A copy of his speaking note is at Appendix A to these Minutes.

Members discussed the petition. County Councillor Richard Cooper said that, for probably the first time in 18 to 19 years as an elected Councillor, he felt that he had been ignored. He explained that he felt that way because the reasons put forward now for proceeding were different to the reasons put forward at the Area Committee's previous meeting. Also he was unhappy about inaccurate comments which had been made about the reasons why he had voted as he had at the previous meeting. Other Members commented that they too felt ignored and queried why the decision had been made by an officer rather than a democratically elected County Councillor. A Member commented that, when the consultation was started, he hoped that the route of a relief road would be very clearly defined as that would focus residents' minds.

David Bowe (Corporate Director – BES) advised that he was incredible sorry if the Area Committee felt like it had been ignored because that had certainly not been the intention and not what had happened when the decision had been made on 15 December 2017. He advised that his role, in making the decision on 15 December, was to represent the County Council's Executive and that he had delegated authority to make the decision. The decision he was making was primarily about consultation, although it might appear to the Area Committee it was to keep the line of the relief road. He commented that, if the intention had been to ignore the Area Committee, the public consultation would have gone ahead in December, as had been presented to the Area Committee. Instead, the Area Committee's comments had been entirely taken on board in making a decision on 15 December. He emphasised that the decision he had had to make on 15 December, in conjunction with the two BES Executive Members, was either to progress with any form of congestion relief for Harrogate, or not. He had had, in taking on board the Area Committee's comments, to come up with a way of moving forward a congestion approach for Harrogate. He could have decided to report directly to the Executive in autumn 2018 but instead had decided to come back to the Area Committee with more information.

David Bowe emphasised that his goal was not to deliver a relief road. His goal was to deal with congestion. He advised that he had received, over many years, numerous complaints about traffic congestion in Harrogate and that there was very little the County Council could do without having a major impact and major investment. The key challenge was a relief road. He explained that, if the public were to say, en masse, that they did not want a relief road and did not want any other option either then effectively the County Council had done absolutely everything it could to mitigate congestion in Harrogate.

David Bowe advised that the issue around funding was absolutely crucial. This was in the context of officers dealing with officers rather than politicians dealing with politicians nationally. He explained that the assessment of funding opportunities for initiatives of this scale, which might be either a relief road or major sustainable transport improvements, were effectively decided by civil servants using a formula and in competition. All highways monies which the County Council gained from Government

were now in competition. In doing that, the County Council had to comply robustly and compete against other Councils to get whatever money was on the table. If the County Council was to gain funding for sustainable transport solutions in Harrogate, the County Council had to table something which would absolutely, and robustly, nail every other option. Civil servants would ask, for certain, "Why didn't you do the other thing?" and question the other opportunities, which clearly included a relief road. The County Council required that robust evidence in order to remove a relief road and therefore be able to stand alongside other Councils who were competing for funding.

David Bowe advised that officers were currently seeking specifically to establish a more accurate conclusion or even get to a point where robust evidence was acquired in order to remove the relief road. He advised that he would not take that decision personally and that any such recommendation would go to the County Council's Executive for decision. An alternative to going to public consultation in order to establish a robust position was to do a benefit cost ratio analysis of a relief road. To do that, a lot more work was needed and more money had to be spent. In summary, the argument was, if officers did an assessment of a relief road, and the score landed at below 2.0, then there was a robust reason for not taking forward a relief road. If the score came over 2.0, then officers would report back to the Area Committee that definitive information saying "here are the outcomes of the study, there's the evidence that we've got, do you want to go to consultation on all those options?" If the Area Committee's answer was "no", the situation would be reported to the Executive for decision. David Bowe acknowledged that the previous report contained less information than could have been provided.

In response to a Member's question, David Bowe advised that there was good reason why the route of a relief road was not specific, namely, if a line was to be drawn on a plan, the County Council would immediately receive blight claims which it did not want because the relief road might not actually be built. Therefore the relief road had to be generic.

David Bowe concluded that, in the feedback he had received from the Area Committee, the one thing that he was shocked about, and he was very apologetic about, was that the Area Committee felt that it had been ignored. He asserted that the Area Committee was absolutely not ignored.

Resolved –

That this Area Committee accepts and notes the petition and recognises that it is unable to do anything more given the decision made by the Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services on 15 December 2017.

47. Harrogate Congestion Study – Update

Considered –

The report of the Corporate Director - Business and Environmental Services which provided details of the approach to, and timescales for, the latest phase of the Harrogate Congestion Study.

Andrew Bainbridge (Team Leader LTP, Highways and Transportation, Business and Environmental Services) introduced the report, highlighting developments subsequent to 15 December 2017. The developments included the following:-

- The work previously referred to as "Harrogate Relief Road Review" had been re-titled "Harrogate Congestion Study" to reflect more accurately the broad range of analysis that was being undertaken.

- Officers had been working with the County Council's framework consultants, WSP, to determine an approach to delivery. An outline programme of work was currently being finalised. The programme would facilitate analysis of each package to allow a greater level of understanding of its ability to effect congestion reduction and more detailed development of the sustainable transport measures. Small technical 'task and finish' groups of County Council officers and WSP staff would work-up a series of possible specific interventions, consistent with packages B and E. These would be costed and, wherever possible, assessed quantitatively to provide an understanding of the traffic relief that might be delivered.
- WSP had been asked to undertake further assessment work on potential alignments of inner relief road options. This would allow a more detailed estimate of costs to be developed, and consequently, alongside more detailed traffic modelling, it would permit the calculation of a benefit to cost ratio. Should the benefit cost ratio for the inner relief road be under 2.0 (the generally accepted ratio for successful applications for funding of capital projects), a report would be submitted to the County Council's Executive on whether to proceed with any further development of the scheme. Otherwise, further development work on both options B and E would continue and a report would be submitted to the Area Committee's meeting in November 2018.
- Due to additional work being undertaken on option development at the current stage, the programme for this work had been revised. The project Steering Group, which included elected Members, would continue to meet to consider progress and outputs from the study. In addition, a Congestion Study Engagement Group was in the process of being established with the aim of performing an advisory function and to check and challenge the development approach proposed by the project working group (NYCC/HBC officers and WSP) and to make suggestions and bring a business view and local insight to the process. A report would then be submitted to the Area Committee in November 2018 setting out the results of the analysis and the potential next steps.

The Chairman invited the two members of the public, who had given valid notice, to address the meeting. They were:-

- Malcolm Margolis on behalf of Zero Carbon Harrogate who expressed thanks to the Area Committee for its decision of 1 December 2017 and to the County Council for changing the name of the review. He also put forward an argument for the inclusion of Package A in the forthcoming public consultation. He advised that Zero Carbon Harrogate were running public workshops about traffic congestion solutions and would feed their views into the County Council's consultation process. He also expressed the hope that composition of the Congestion Study Engagement Group would reflect that WSP had given top ranking to sustainable transport solutions. A full copy of the statement from Malcolm Margolis is at Appendix B to these Minutes.
- Shan Oakes of Harrogate and District Green Party who posed 10 questions which she suggested County Councillors should consider. She commented that these were fundamental questions to identify what was important in people's lives and should make it easy to know what to do about traffic congestion. A full copy of the statement and questions from Shan Oakes is at Appendix B to these Minutes.

Members questioned David Bowe (Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services) about membership of the Congestion Study Engagement Group and were advised that this had not yet been confirmed. David Bowe emphasised, however, that the Engagement Group needed to represent all appropriate users, including sustainable

transport groups, public transport providers, business etc. He also clarified that members of the Engagement Group would not be voting, and the purpose of the Engagement Group was to feed information, at a point in time, into the process.

Members asked whether the Relief Road would definitely be included in a public consultation. In response, David Bowe advised that it was not definite that the Relief Road would be included in a public consultation. He added that, if the Relief Road did not achieve a benefit cost ratio of 2.0, it would not, in his opinion, be included in the consultation. He surmised that, subject to the conclusions of the technical team, if the Relief Road achieved a benefit cost ratio of more than 2.0, it would be classed as a robust solution to congestion and therefore the civil servants would expect the Relief Road to be considered in the process. Consequently, the Relief Road would come to the Area Committee, as part of a package and with more detail, together with information from the Engagement Group and the recommendation from the Steering Group. The Area Committee would then take a view and that view would be submitted to the Executive for decision on that occasion.

Members questioned David Bowe about that process which he had just described. They suggested that that process was likely to produce the same Area Committee view as it had reached in December 2017. David Bowe explained that the primary objective for him, his staff and, he believed, the County Council was to attempt to address congestion in Harrogate. He advised that elected Members were completely shackling him to do that if, without robust evidence, they took out the Relief Road option. He suggested that, if Members wanted him to solve congestion through sustainable transport measures, they should allow him to follow the process because then he would be able to go to civil servants with a robust case for funding for sustainable transport measures. The civil servants would then see that the County Council had robustly checked all other options and had ruled them out. David Bowe added that, if that process was not followed, the only funding which would be available for sustainable transport measures would be a small amount from existing County Council budgets.

County Councillor Paul Haslam sought confirmation that the Relief Road was nothing to do with connectivity and turning the A59 into a M62 equivalent. Andrew Bainbridge responded that the work was primarily to address traffic congestion in Harrogate but, in turn, would have some benefits in terms of longer distance connectivity. He emphasised that it was not, and never had been, part of a plan to upgrade the A59, from the A1 across to Lancashire, to anything resembling the M62. Andrew Bainbridge highlighted that that had been made clear, and had been in the public domain, since 2016 and also in a number of previous reports to this Area Committee.

County Councillor Paul Haslam advised that, having read the reports which talked about doing a benefit cost ratio, he suspected that officers had already done a benefit cost ratio. Andrew Bainbridge provided an absolute assurance that officers had not got an indicative benefit cost ratio for a Relief Road.

County Councillor Michael Harrison:-

- thanked David Bowe for attending this meeting and commented that he had found it very useful to hear about the context of the process;
- commented that he had heard the strong message that, if Harrogate was serious about getting significant funds for any kind of congestion relief for the district, whether that be for sustainable transport measures or road building, a process must be gone through;
- commented that he had also heard that, if Members shackled the Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services at this stage, then their decision was actually to do nothing;

- commented that he appreciated David Bowe's apology to the Area Committee for Members feeling ignored; and
- proposed that the Area Committee note the report.

Other County Councillors seconded and expressed support for County Councillor Michael Harrison's proposal.

Resolved –

That the report be noted.

48. Area Committee Programme of Work

Considered –

That report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) which invited the Area Committee to review its Programme of Work.

It was highlighted that, at a meeting of the full County Council in May 2018, proposals to re-focus Area Committees were due to be considered which, if approved, would affect this Committee.

County Councillor Geoff Webber highlighted that the booking of the Ripon Spa Hotel for the Committee's meeting in November 2018 would need to be changed if the County Council, in May 2018, approved proposals relating to Area Committees.

County Councillor Paul Haslam asked for an update report about work on Harrogate Congestion Study to be submitted to the Committee's next meeting. Other Members expressed support for that proposal.

Resolved –

That the Programme of Work, as set out in the report, be approved, subject to:-

- (a) The County Council's decision in May 2018 regarding proposals relating to Area Committees.
- (b) The inclusion of an update report about work on Harrogate Congestion Study being submitted to the Committee's next meeting.

49. Next Meeting

Thursday 14 June 2018 at 9.30am at the Cairn Hotel, Ripon Road, Harrogate, subject to the County Council's decision in May 2018 regarding proposals relating to Area Committees.

RAG

Statement to HAC (15/3/18) in support of petition to
Save Nidd Gorge and the Nidderdale Greenway

Good morning,

Thank you for inviting me to make a statement in support of the petition to Save Nidd Gorge & the Nidderdale Greenway.

This petition was hastily organised after the last HAC on 7th December 2017 when it quickly became apparent that the result was too good to be true and that the democratic will of this committee was not binding.

You recognised that any Inner Relief Road would be environmentally and socially damaging, wouldn't work as a solution for congestion relief and probably wouldn't receive government funding – and you voted by 14 votes to 2 to have it removed.

When we were informed that your collective decision could be overruled by an unaccountable, 3 man BES Executive, that, as usual, included the Executive Member for Highways - who appears to be both judge and jury at every stage in this process - this petition To Save Nidd Gorge & the Nidderdale Greenway was started; asking Carl Les and David Bowe of NYCC to... and I quote...

'Listen to the Harrogate Area County Councillors and remove the inner relief road package (E) from the public consultation process.'

At the BES meeting, this 3-man executive were good enough to acknowledge the concerns of this committee, but still thought it necessary to keep the road on the table in order to:

- (1) comply with DfT guidelines for funding, a questionable judgment in itself according to The Campaign for Better Transport...and
- (2) they were now, also, suddenly concerned that they would be consulting the public with too little detail about the route of a road and the actual implications of sustainable measures, demand management and behavioural change.

This again calls into question the judgement of the people organising this process, because, until the setback of the Harrogate Area Committee vote, they were ready to consult the public with vague information and must have had the leaflets ready to deliver to the 48000 households a few days later. What would the public have been asked, armed with this vague information and how influential and environmentally damaging could the result have been? I shudder to think. So thank you to all of you councillors here today who recognised the risk and voted against the road and what I think was North Yorkshire's plan to fast-track it through to completion.

But, despite your considered and well-articulated intervention and the 2300 signatures on the petition (at the time of the BES), the threat hasn't been lifted and we are back here today because the democratic will of this locally elected, accountable and representative committee has not prevailed.

At this point I feel that I have to defend the wording of the petition that is titled **Save Nidd Gorge & the Nidderdale Greenway** because Councillor Mackenzie has publicly responded saying it is *"badly-worded"* that its *"claims are wrong"* and that he is *"not setting out to destroy the Nidd Gorge...because in his words... Nidd Gorge is a relatively narrow, steep-sided river valley. There is certainly no question that we are going to be putting a road into the Nidd Gorge."*

This is not news to any of us that have been campaigning 'To Save Nidd Gorge and the Nidderdale Greenway' we have always known that the road wouldn't run into the gorge itself. It is the damage and destruction the road would do to the wider conservation and recreational area that has been the dynamic behind our call to action.

At the BES meeting Andrew Bainbridge said that no decision on an alignment had yet been made and that at the time of the meeting the road could go

"almost anywhere in that development gap between Harrogate and Knaresborough."

But in reality, as we have said throughout the campaign, at the Bilton end, to be an inner relief road, rather than an outer one, it has to be squeezed in between the housing of Bilton and the river. A space of no more than 350m at its narrowest and currently occupied by Bilton Fields - a beautiful wild approach to the spectacular Nidd Gorge itself and also a green and tranquil setting for the hugely popular Nidderdale Greenway.

We would like to know if this the space where Coun Mackenzie believes - as stated in his recent 'The Way Ahead' article in the Harrogate Advertiser - that ...

"there is plenty of room for the Gorge, Greenway and road to co-exist" - with the road being 200m away from the treeline of Nidd Gorge at its closest?

If this is the case, then this petition is not 'badly worded', as he claims, because Bilton Fields are part and parcel of Nidd Gorge for its thousands of visitors. When you enter the area at the Bilton Lane entrance, the big information board welcomes you to "Nidd Gorge", well before the Greenway leads you along to Bilton Fields.

A major east-west highway running adjacent to the Greenway along this stretch, cutting across it 200m before the viaduct and then cutting across Bilton Fields towards the A61 would completely destroy the beauty and tranquility, ruin the recreational experience for visitors to Nidd Gorge and destroy the valuable wildlife habitat provided by the Greenway corridor and Bilton Fields.

Councillor MacKenzie will no doubt accuse us of exaggeration here, but just this week, on Tuesday evening, I witnessed the barn owl hunting over the hedgerows of Bilton Fields and the Greenway, very close to where the A59 bypass will have to cross the Greenway.

This barn owl was not there by accident, it was there because this is a conservation area created by the vision and effort of people. To state that there is plenty of room here for co-existence with a major east-west highway shows utter contempt for the dedicated work of Bilton Conservation Group who have carefully managed these fields since 1982 to enable this bio-diversity to occur. A road through here would be an environmental crime and an insult to their dedication and industry.

So this petition To Save Nidd Gorge and The Nidderdale Greenway, with 3000 current signatures, will keep running until David Bowe agrees to remove the relief road package, E, from the public consultation process, and the threat from this destructive road is gone... once and for all!

If you haven't signed it I urge you to do so.

In his summary, at the BES meeting, after receiving the petition, David Bowe publicly stated that:

“If we ever got to a stage where we were in a position to commission and build a relief road it would certainly never destroy or adversely impact Nidd Gorge itself in any significant way”

If he is true to his word, the dream of an inner relief road must be abandoned. It can't be built **without** adversely affecting Nidd Gorge.

Thank you.

APPENDIX B

Statements and Questions made to the Area Committee in respect of the Update on Harrogate Congestion Study

From Malcolm Margolis on behalf of Zero Carbon Harrogate

Firstly can I thank you on behalf of Zero Carbon Harrogate for overwhelmingly voting in favour of a sustainable transport future for the area. The following week the BES Executive decided nevertheless to keep a relief road on the table and direct WSP to do more work on the potential alignments, as well as on the sustainable measures.

Secondly, can I thank you for changing the name of the review to Congestion Study. This better reflects the issue we face.

Thirdly, I would like to bring to your attention an error in WSP's report. It ranked Package B first or second in all 19 metrics, and ranked Package E first or second in 17. When we checked we found Package E was actually first or second in only 13 metrics, largely thanks to the sustainable measures included. We asked for this to be corrected. Sadly, Andrew Bainbridge refused and said the paragraph would instead be deleted claiming surprisingly that this would avoid confusion. On the corrected scoring Package A avoided a road, scored virtually as well as E, and was the cheapest of all, while E was the dearest. There's a very strong case which we ask you to consider, to recommend including Package A in the consultation.

WSP found that Package C, a relief road, was the least effective solution. In 2010 HBC's Arup local transport study stated: 'A large scale road building programme is unlikely to be required. A more efficient solution would be to reduce the demand for travel.' Why employ expensive consultants and then ignore them? Why continue to include a road option when you've been told there are more effective, greener, cheaper and quicker options available?

Almost all the councillors who have been involved with this process agree that only sustainable transport solutions should be pursued. Many Bilton and other residents agree that this is the only viable way to tackle congestion, as well as Knaresborough Town Council, Starbeck Residents, Zero Carbon Harrogate and others. The consultation must be fair, and the resurrection of the road against your wishes is in our view a cause for concern, as is the fact that many of the 48,000 homes to be consulted will have little opportunity to explore the alternative options and many may not have even heard of the Nidd Gorge. To try to address this Zero Carbon Harrogate have started to run public workshops about traffic congestion solutions to allow the general public to have their voice heard. We will feed their views into your consultation process. We still wait to learn who will be invited to join the Engagement Group. WSP gave top ranking to sustainable transport solutions and we trust that the make-up of the Engagement Group reflect this?

From Shan Oakes of Harrogate and District Green Party

I want to ask councillors to ask themselves a few questions which might help make this decision easier. They are fundamental questions about what is important in our lives...questions which, if answered honestly, should make it easy to know what to do – about this (and most things).

Can a finite planet sustain infinite growth? Do we want ever-increasing 'growth' at the expense of our quality of life and our health? Should we continue on a suicide mission to supposedly beat all other nations in the GDP race....and if we do, at what point should we stop? Isn't it

time for a re-evaluation of our 'growth' -fuelled frenzy? Is it good to have traffic getting ever thicker and faster, or is it best to have peaceful tree-filled places where we can walk and breathe fresh air and have space to play? Do we think that forcing our transport to travel ever faster will actually improve the decision-making of our entrepreneurs? If we really want to support local business, why should more and faster traffic help? What is it that we REALLY want, and how best should we try to achieve it? Do we give the alternatives to conventional solutions (in this case additional roads) a proper chance to prove themselves? What is it that's really driving us down the 'growth' (or 'relief road') route when it flies in the face of so much that we deeply value? Let's consider a real benefit cost ratio please.