

North Yorkshire County Council

Transport, Economy and Environment

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held at County Hall, Northallerton on 14 October 2015 at 10.00 am.

Present:-

County Councillor Andrew Backhouse in the Chair

County Councillors Margaret Atkinson, John Blackburn (sub. for Bob Baker), Andrew Goss, Michael Heseltine, Robert Heseltine, Peter Horton, David Jeffels, Penny Marsden, Bob Packham, Chris Pearson (sub. for Richard Welch), Andy Solloway and Robert Windass.

Other Members present were: County Councillor Don Mackenzie (Executive Member) and County Councillor Helen Swiers.

NYCC Officers attending: Andrew Bainbridge, Team Leader LTP (BES), David Bowe, Corporate Director (BES), Pam Johnson, Team Leader Transport and Development Control (BES), Barrie Mason, Assistant Director - Highways & Transportation (BES), Richard Owens, Assistant Director – Integrated Passenger Transport (BES), Catherine Price, Passenger Transport Integration Manager (BES) and Jonathan Spencer, Corporate Development Officer (Central Services).

Present by Invitation: Phil Jepps, Divisional Manager (Ringway) and John Nicholson, Regional Director (Ringway).

7 members of the public were in attendance.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

82. Minutes

Resolved -

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2015, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

83. Public Questions or Statements

There were no general public questions or statements from members of the public concerning issues not on the agenda.

84. Proposed Reduction in Bus Subsidy

Considered -

The report of the Corporate Director - Business and Environmental Services inviting the Committee to comment on the Council's proposals to reduce the budget for subsidising bus services to £1.5m pa.

The Chairman explained the order of business, the purpose of the item and the Committee's remit.

Richard Owens introduced the report and provided an accompanying presentation, included in the agenda papers, on:

- contracted (subsidised) bus services;
- the options considered;
- the options taken forward;
- the detailed proposals;
- the consultation process;
- the proposed overall strategy;
- the consultation outcome;
- changes following consultation; and
- the Equality Impact Assessment

The Chairman invited the members of the public who had registered to speak to come forward in turn and make their contributions.

Public questions and statements

Bill Breakell read out the statement below:

“QUESTION:

To highlight some significant flaws in the original proposals and the consultation process and to seek reassurance that new proposals which have emerged since the original report will be subject to genuine consultation with users during the next two months.

ORIGINAL PROPOSALS

I find it frustrating that this report talks of bus ‘subsidies’, whilst the county council website speaks of

- ‘investment’ in road maintenance,
- investment in pothole removal,
- investment in broadband, etc.

How much are you saving?

In July 2013 the Council agreed to consult on public transport cutbacks, which could potentially realise savings of £1.1m.

When the proposals were considered by the Executive in January 2014, the total amount of savings had almost doubled to £2m pa. So this year is the consultation really aiming to save half a million pounds, or much more?

The Equality Impact Assessment shows that the proposals will have a negative impact on protected groups of people, especially:

- the elderly,
- the disabled,
- women,
- those on low incomes
- and those living in rural areas.

These are exactly the same groups who were identified as being discriminated against in 2014; the effect on these groups is cumulative. The anxiety you have caused them over the past four months is huge.

The impact assessment shows the proposals are at odds with the Council Plan 2020 which identifies five key targets:

- opportunities for young people;
- tackling loneliness and social isolation;
- transport links;
- economic opportunity for all parts of the county;
- broadband connectivity.

The proposals said again and again that Community Transport would be the answer. But the community transport sector stated very clearly that they have no spare capacity and that volunteer drivers are a scarce commodity.

The proposals demonstrate a complete lack of understanding of passengers and passenger needs.

The implication is that the efforts of the county council are aimed at driving down passenger numbers on supported services and also cutting the use of concessionary passes. So, with regard to the original proposals, you weren't listening.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

Why were some parish councils not consulted at all?

Why no drop-in sessions for communities affected by your proposed withdrawal of all bus services for Goathland for 7 months of the year, or major changes in the Esk Valley? The nearest drop-in sessions were over 30 miles away. Perhaps you didn't want to listen.

REASSURANCE FOR NEW PROPOSALS

Over 60% of the proposals on which we were consulted have been changed. Area Committees have not seen the revisions, neither have other consultees. We don't know what's now on offer. I received revisions for the 31X at 5.30 last night.

The revisions show that passengers for York will have to change buses at Easingwold, ENCTS pass holders won't be eligible on the only service from Kirkbymoorside. And the connection with the 128 service in Helmsley is severed.

In conclusion, the proposals are counter to the aims of the Council as stated in its various policies and programmes, most notably the Council Plan 2020. Each element of service reduction will destroy the ability to travel unless you have private transport or wealth. The proposals take us on a course of reducing sustainability and increasing climate change. But, maybe you don't want to listen."

Executive County Councillor Don Mackenzie said that regrettably the County Council could not ignore the fact that its income was reducing at a rapid rate and it was faced with having to make substantial savings. It was important to ensure that the bus services that the County Council subsidised were providing value for money. Where there was very low take-up of passengers the Council needed to look at a range of other transport options in those areas. This included using its own fleet vehicles where it made financial sense to do so, Community Transport or volunteer car schemes.

Ruth Breakell read out the statement below:

"All bus passengers are real people with real lives; my journeys are just one example. Buses are an integral part of my life, but it is becoming an increasing

challenge for me to participate in a wide range of activities. Travelling distances in rural North Yorkshire are greater than elsewhere and bus services need to reflect this by making connections possible rather than impossible.

My current bus network includes Coastliner services: west to York, not least for the dentist but also for rail connections to London and Eurostar, or further to Leeds with imminent hospital appointments: and eastwards to Whitby and Scarborough.

I use 31X from Kirkbymoorside to York, via Helmsley and Easingwold and 194/31X from Malton via Nunnington to Helmsley. I do voluntary work at Nunnington Hall for The National Trust, and my daughter lives at Norton, Malton.

Health services are dispersed county wide and beyond. In 2005, I was on a waiting list for a new hip. York hospital telephoned me and asked if I wouldn't mind having the operation at Shipley. Anything to get rid of the pain, so off I went by bus (after my day's work in York), changing buses at Leeds to Shipley. Shipley hospital specifically asked for patients to leave cars at home — insufficient parking. Contrast that with this April, when I began a course of breathing exercises at Malton hospital. Although the classes commenced at 11am, I couldn't get there by any bus combination in time, and I would have had to leave early, missing the talk given each week by a specialist speaker to get the 194 back from Malton to Helmsley and eventually a 128 from Helmsley home. In practice therefore, my husband had to drive me to Malton and wait in the car for 2 hours to take me home, totting up 300 miles in the car over 13 meetings, and adding to total car pollution. He couldn't use the time to visit our daughter as she was at work on the appointment days. Other patients attending the same classes explained to the rest of us their difficulties with taxis and community transport schemes.

Linked closely to health, are facilities for keeping hearts and minds active. I try to do my bit as a volunteer gardener, but whereas I used to travel independently, reduction in the 194 bus service leaves me relying on making the journey one way by car. I don't want my husband to spend his time totally providing for my transport needs. However, if bus services are cut further, most of my activities will come to a full stop. NYCC has a history of cutting public services and the figures show that buses have been cut even more severely than NYCC estimated. It is time to redress this imbalance.

Activities engaged in by bus passengers help towards the economic activity of the community. Examples might be in a cafe, pub, shop, garden centre or pharmacy. You can only keep active, join in and enthuse others, if you can get out of the house... buses make a difference, but for how much longer?

Are those who don't drive to be condemned to a virtual life when they could be contributing to the economic and social wellbeing of others? Many drivers don't like to think about no longer being able to drive, but sometimes health issues may bring their independence to an end. Buses are currently an alternative, but for how long?"

Executive County Councillor Don Mackenzie replied that the County Council could not hope to meet 100% of personalised needs for bus services. There would inevitably be some occasions when friends or family members had to be relied upon to provide travel. This did not mean however that any Member of the Executive wished to leave rural communities unsupported. The County Council would continue to support rural communities to the best of its financial ability.

Richard Owens responded that the County Council had provided all parish councils with details of the consultation. He said that he recognised that the situation of

reducing the bus subsidy was certainly not ideal but the County Council's strategy was to ensure that as many communities as possible would still have transport services. It was doing all that it could and had been successful in retaining some of the existing bus services but at a lower cost.

Eden Blyth, representing the North Ryedale Public Transport Group, read out the statement below:

"Bearing in mind the public interest that is being generated by item 3 and the difficulty in reaching the meeting from rural areas by public transport, can your Council explain why this public meeting has been held at 10am on a weekday, ensuring it is inaccessible by most who would want to attend?"

The Chairman replied that no meeting time was going to suit everyone. Council meetings had been held at different times in the past but attendance had not improved significantly. Evening and weekend meeting times tended not to be convenient for other people with family commitments or elderly people who do not want to travel late at night.

The Chairman went on to note that the purpose of the meeting was to review the proposals and a part of this included accessing the results of the public consultation. This included the public comments contained in Appendix 5 of the report. A number of local meetings had been held with communities during the consultation including the drop-in sessions. He acknowledged that this was not ideal for some people but in addition parish council meetings had been held. He said that County Hall in Northallerton had been chosen for the meeting because it was centrally located on the main arterial routes running North to South and East to West in the county.

Jackie Fearnley from the Whitby and North Yorkshire Moors Area Public Transport Group read out the statement below:

"We are glad of the outcome of the consultation" [the proposed amendments to the original proposals set out in section 9 of the report] "but for us in Goathland this is now the third time we have had to fight for the retention of a sustainable and predictable means of getting in and out of our village. None of us here, or in the area around now feels we can take for granted these basic services as we feel that this current recommendation is only a reprieve and that we could still face further threats if more cuts were required from local authorities.

We would like to know how secure, and for what period of time, the services in question will be [services 840, DR 18, DR10 and 99]. We are happy to adapt the public transport we have and work around what we have got. But if we have got nothing we have nothing to work with. The bus services connect us to other places including connecting to the rail network and access to other services that we need. We are not against Community Transport schemes that work but we do need reliable, timetabled services for our tourists as well as our local communities.

We are also aware that as a result of the way public transport is now organised, the minute examination of passenger numbers and income generated from particular journeys is far more of an issue than it was before the provision of transport was privatised, when losses on particular routes or at particular times of the year were able to be compensated for by profits in another area. On this occasion a bus company has accepted to run the same timetable but with a lower subsidy, but for them economic judgments could well lead in future to a change in policy."

Executive County Councillor Don Mackenzie replied that it was difficult to know how secure the bus services would be in the future. The County Council's planned savings were on budget but a great deal of the Council's income came from central government. Since 2011 the Council had lost 40% of its income. The results of the next Comprehensive Spending Review would not be known until late in 2015 but the challenge would remain to deliver public services that were better value for money and more efficient in spite of reductions in the government grant.

Keith Jeffrey from the Whitby and North Yorkshire Moors Area Public Transport Group read out the statement below:

"WE WOULD LIKE TO SEEK ASSURANCE THAT KEY POLICIES OF NYCC WILL CONTINUE TO INFORM DECISIONS – IN PARTICULAR THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY, EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND LOCAL TRANSPORT PLANS MADE FOR THE FUTURE.

We want to remind officers and councillors of their duties under their Health and well-being strategy and in the light of the Local Transport Plan. Reliable and predictable transport is absolutely vital for people's ability to access all kinds of services and for them to be able to be as self-reliant and independent as possible.

Buses are a lifeline for people living in rural areas, providing connectivity to other forms of public transport and to travel further afield. There are serious implications if bus services are removed for people without access to a car, including mental health implications. There is no substitute for speaking to someone face-to-face. Solitude is different to loneliness.

Some of my friends use the Whitby volunteer car scheme but a return journey from Whitby to the James Cook Hospital costs £37 return.

It is not just the old who suffer from the withdrawal of bus services but also young people as they miss out on leisure opportunities or have to rely on their parents to drive them.

We could not be here at today's meeting if we had travelled by public transport today.

If the County Council has more funding in the future will the cuts be restored?"

Executive County Councillor Don Mackenzie replied that up until recently he had been Executive member for Public Health so was aware how important it was to tackle rural isolation and loneliness. It was not the County Council's intention to make villages so isolated that young and old people had no choice but to leave. The Council wanted to make sure that they remained viable and this was and would continue to be at the forefront of the work that the Council's Integrated Passenger Transport Unit were doing. In some areas as well, by renegotiating contracts, bus services were being maintained at a higher level than the commensurate level of cut being proposed for the bus subsidy. The County Council was also investing in rail and other public transport initiatives.

Paul Tulloch from the Whitby and North Yorkshire Moors Area Public Transport Group read out the statement below:

"WE AS A GROUP WOULD LIKE TO BE ASSURED THAT WE WOULD BE CONSULTED AT AN EARLY STAGE IN ANY FUTURE PLANS AFFECTING ANY OF THE BUSES IN OUR AREA, AS WE IDENTIFIED MANY FLAWS IN THE CONSULTATION PROCEDURE AND WOULD WANT TO KNOW THAT LESSONS HAVE BEEN LEARNED.

Our group did as much as we could to encourage people to fill in the questionnaires and to provide paper versions to those without access to the internet. Our County Councillor accepted invitations to meetings where we were able to express our concerns and she promised to pass them on. But none of this would have happened if we had not found out by chance what was proposed. The arranging of drop in sessions with a chance to question officers in locations accessible by public transport would have helped the situation as would the reliable sending out of information, with follow up reminders, in plenty of time to village and town councils, who often meet only once a month and are then on holiday in August. This consultation needed to capture the views not only of residents but of those who use the bus to get to our area, where they contribute both through voluntary work (e.g. on the Steam Railway) and by spending their money locally. Information at bus stops and on buses and other places such as Tourist Information, Rail and bus ticket offices would have been an obvious first step in the process.”

Executive County Councillor Don Mackenzie replied that he felt that the consultation had been as wide as possible and conducted in a fair and transparent fashion. The budget set for consultation was realistic and it was important that the Council obtained value for money in the way in which it consulted. In addition to the other consultation methods used, posters had been sent to bus operators to display in their vehicles so that bus passengers.

Richard Owens reported that in carrying out the consultation the County Council had closely followed the guidelines produced by Passenger Focus. The consultation had been extensive, involving a range of stakeholders. This was reflected in the number of responses received.

A member of the public who wished to remain anonymous from the Whitby and North Yorkshire Moors Area Public Transport Group read out the statement below:

“It is appreciated that North Yorkshire County Council faces funding constraints but it has choices in how it spends that money. Why give low priority to good value bus services? As far as we are aware the County Council spends less per head on the support of buses than other areas, even though public transport is so vital to rural areas. We would like to be clear that this is one area where we would like our council tax to be spent, pointing out that for many people being able to get on a bus is more important than faster broadband. We do not want funds to be sucked into such schemes as the Northern Powerhouse without the outer rural areas being able to be brought into the picture. It is bewildering that the County Council chooses to spend £21 million on broadband but not £37,000 to maintain our bus service. Without superfast broadband we can still get to work and access our GP and other health services, shop and visit friends. Many residents cannot do any of the above without bus. They need more and better services. This includes improving the timetable. Yesterday I travelled to Whitby on the 12.45pm Coastliner service for an appointment and there was no return bus until 5.30pm. I ask you to put yourselves in my position.”

Executive County Councillor Don Mackenzie replied that it was true that the County Council had choices on how it spent its budget. He believed that the County Council’s support for public services was strong bearing in mind the challenges that it faced in providing these services throughout the county. It was not the case that the County Council had spent £21 million on broadband; most of this funding had come from central government and the European Union. To date the County Council had invested in the region of £5m, which had helped draw down the much larger amount of external funding. Broadband was also vitally important to all members of society and was evidenced by the large number of correspondence that he received on a frequent basis about broadband issues.

Richard Owens said that the level of reimbursement payments that bus operators received from North Yorkshire County Council placed North Yorkshire in the median range nationally. The County Council's level of reimbursement was based on the calculations provided by the DfT's reimbursement calculator tool. The DfT had recommended its use in order to ensure that travel concession authorities did not breach the rule that bus operators should not be over-reimbursed for accepting concessionary bus passes.

Helen Grundy from the Moorsbus Community Interest Group made the following statement:

"We have two of England's largest national parks but commercially operated services run just into the edge of them. This means that these large land masses are inaccessible to people without access to a car including tourists. Therefore how is the tourist economy expected to grow without public transport? I agree that we need to develop quality commercial services but in terms of the bus services to be provided by the County Council's fleet will the County Council be able to invest in new vehicles? There are also limits on relying on volunteers to provide community transport and voluntary car schemes. You have spent public money on the consultation and have now ignored what most people have said. The County Council, as the local authority for public transport, should be playing a more active role in bringing operations together."

Richard Owens replied that the County Council had a fleet replacement programme in place. The County Council always worked with commercial providers but they were not duty bound to listen to us.

There was a short break at this point in the meeting.

The Chairman invited Members not on the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee to speak.

- County Councillor Helen Swiers said that a number of her points had already been made eloquently by the members of public who had spoken at today's meeting. These residents had spoken loud and clear about the importance that bus services have in their lives and the fact that bus services play connect to other transport services. Community transport is not a replacement for the much treasured bus service and we are very appreciative of the revised proposal and the work that officers have put in to securing this. However the local community is concerned that this is only a stay of execution. The concessionary fares scheme was proving to be something of a deterrent to bus operators in providing commercial services. This was because concessionary fares did not bring in the same revenue for the bus operator as a standard fare. However concessionary fare pass holders were prepared to pay and so reform of the scheme was necessary.

County Councillor Don Mackenzie said that the National Concessionary Fare Scheme had led to unforeseen circumstances but at present the County Council's hands were tied by the legislation.

Committee discussion

The Chairman invited Members on the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee to speak.

Members made the following key comments:

- A Member said that it had been his privilege in 2014 to chair the Committee's task group looking into the access needs of communities in North Yorkshire and how these might best be met using a range of transport options. He said that he was pleased that most of its recommendations had been acted upon. The key outstanding one was in relation to continuing to press the government to reform the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme. He went on to note that the County Council had agreed to reduce the amount spent on bus subsidies to £1.5m per annum and so the Committee had to work within those parameters when considering the proposals. There would continue to be a framework of public transport in rural areas which could be built on in the future following this period of austerity. He went on to add though that the inequality in funding between rural and urban authorities was grossly unfair, with the latter getting 50% more funding than rural areas. If a fairer funding formula had been in place such reductions in services would not have been necessary. Unfortunately though Members had to address the situation as they stood today. He recommended that the Committee asked the Executive to accept the report's proposals.
- The present set-up of the English Concessionary Fares Scheme means that transport authorities located in popular tourist destinations, such as North Yorkshire, subsidise the return journeys of pass holders who live elsewhere but who have travelled into the area for tourist-related trips.
- There remains a need to improve the marketing and promotion of bus travel in the county, highlighting the benefits of travelling by bus. In 2014 the task group's report on access to services and transport options had been sent to the Secretary of State for Transport and the Shadow Secretary of State for Transport. There was a case now that the General Election was over for the County Council to heighten the case to government for the funding of rural transport and reform of the concessionary fares scheme. Other rural counties were faced with similar problems too.
- A Member commented that the current period of austerity was not his preference to deal with the economic situation but its impact meant that the County Council had less money and had to cut services as a result. Unfortunately choices had to be made about which services should be cut and by how much. These cuts were not just affecting bus services but also other front-line services. He went on to state that in his view the proposals that had been put forward had arrived at the best possible position and he reluctantly had to support the proposals.
- A Member said that the proposals whilst not having as much of an impact in his division had an impact county-wide and impacted on other services. A key issue was that there was not a national integrated passenger transport policy in place, which inevitably meant that more people had to use their cars. Another key issue was the chronic underfunding of rural local authorities. The government failed to acknowledge that a cut in the bus service in Leeds had a minimal impact but a cut to a bus service in North Yorkshire had a far greater impact. We need to lobby MPs to make a fairer settlement.
- A Member said that he had not become a County Councillor to make cut after cut but felt that the proposals that had been put forward were the best that could have been achieved with reduced funding. He went on to thank Richard Owens and his team for successfully negotiating with Transdev the introduction of a

commercial bus service between Boroughbridge and Harrogate in place of a subsidised service. The timetable for the new service was far better, and the new service would provide a much quicker service and was routed better.

The Chairman summed up the discussion. He noted that all present supported the principle of rural bus services but the proposals that had been put forward represented the best service that could be provided with a reduced level of subsidy. The County Council would still be investing £1.5 million per year in contracted bus services but there were wider issues around fairer funding for local authorities in rural areas that needed to be addressed at the national level.

Resolved -

- a) That the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee broadly supports the proposals in the report, in light of the current financial climate to achieve budget requirements of £1.5 million spend in bus subsidy each year from 2016/17, and taking into account the Equality Impact Assessment.
- b) That the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee is of the view that an essential network service be maintained across all areas of the county and, as part of this, fully supports the County Council working pro-actively with communities to achieve community transport and other local transport solutions.
- c) That the Executive be encouraged to invite Robert Goodwill MP and Andrew Jones MP (Parliamentary Under Secretaries of State at the Department for Transport) for further discussions around government support to rural areas particularly in relation to transport.

85. Ringway Performance 2014/15

Considered -

The report of the Corporate Director - Business and Environmental Services advising Members of Ringway's performance under the Highways Maintenance Contract (HMC) 2012 during the period 1 April 2014 - 31 March 2015 and of the outcome of the Evaluation Panel held on 29 June 2015.

Barrie Mason introduced the report. He reminded Members about the design of the contract and went on to refer to the outcomes of the Evaluation Panel held on 29 June 2015. The key outcome was that the Panel had decided to retain the nine year status of the contract, which meant that the contract's expiration date would remain 31 March 2021.

Barrie Mason went on to refer to Appendix A. 19 out of the 23 Primary Performance Indicators (PPIs) had been met in 2014/15 and 11 out of 19 Secondary Performance Indicators (SPIs) had been met in 2014/15. He then referred to Appendix C detailing the Rectification Action Plans.

Referring to paragraph 2.6 of the report Barrie Mason explained that some of the existing performance indicators had not driven the right outcomes and these had now been amended. Chiefly these related to where performance targets had been set unrealistically high or had been overly bureaucratic. He explained that revising some of the performance indicators would provide a more relevant and robust framework. New working arrangements for minor works were also being implemented. This

should see a better balance being achieved between the work ordered by the County Council and the resources deployed by Ringway to undertake the work.

Barrie Mason concluded by noting that whilst the contractor's performance had been much improved in 2014/15 when compared to the previous financial year (2013/14), it was not yet at the stage of winning back the lost year of the original 10 year contract. However at the same time it needed to be recognised that Ringway had delivered against a substantially increased capital highways programme in 2014/15 due to the additional DfT funding provided to repair potholes. This had been a challenging programme as the funding had had to be spent by the end of that financial year.

John Nicolson said that he was pleased that Ringway was continuing to improve the level of service that it was providing to the County Council. Whilst there were a number of indicators that Ringway had failed to achieve, amongst those were two examples where the target set had been 100% and Ringway had achieved 99%. He said that he wanted to reassure Members that the level of performance was well above the national average regarding responses to highway dangerous defects. The County Council was being provided with a good level of service but Ringway was committed to raise this further.

Members made the following key comments:

- A Member referred to PPI RM08 (Highway Dangerous defects) and said that it was still a concern that Ringway had not met the target but he appreciated that performance was improving. He went on to note that in relation to the suite of SPIs regarding client satisfaction, two thirds of those had not met their targets. Barrie Mason replied that in relation to responding to dangerous defects within 24 hours, performance had fallen below the target of 100%. However in the financial year 2015/16 to date actual performance was above 99%. The target for this PPI was now set at 99%. The target had been revised because it was felt that 99% was a more realistic level of performance. Phil Jepps confirmed that the performance in the financial year to date was 99.74%. Barrie Mason said with regards to client satisfaction the client was North Yorkshire County Council. Client satisfaction measures were collated from the results provided by the local managers in the Highway Teams assessing services. He was pleased that the County Council was a demanding client and regular meetings were held between the Council and Ringway to see where improvements could be made to increase client satisfaction. He went on to note that client satisfaction surveys were no longer included in the suite of PPIs but would still be monitored for management purposes. This was because PPIs needed to be measured on an objective and quantifiable basis.
- A Member commented that the findings in the report did not reflect his experience of works being carried out in his division. He asked for representatives of Ringway and the County Council's Highways Section to meet with him in his division to discuss why works that were due to have been carried out had not been done so and which organisation was responsible for the delay. Barrie Mason and John Nicholson replied that representatives from NYCC Highways and Ringway would attend and the client team would take the lead on this issue.
- A Member mentioned that a number of road markings on minor rural roads were worn but he was pleased to see that the target relating to gully emptying had been achieved in 2014/15. He went on to mention that he had been asked to report that the complementary measures for Malton town centre had not yet been installed following implementation of the Brambling Fields junction on the

Malton bypass. This included the HGV weight restriction on County Bridge. Barrie Mason replied road marking was a performance issue for the industry as a whole. Additional resources had been allocated locally and performance monitoring of road markings had been widened to not only include roads where surface dressing had taken place but also to pick up road marking issues elsewhere for example yellow lines. With regards to the Brambling Fields complementary measures, no decision had been taken on their introduction as it was agreed by the Ryedale Area Committee that further monitoring was required. A report would be received by the Ryedale Area Committee in the near future providing details of the latest monitoring.

- A Member referred to ongoing complaints from residents in his division about faded road markings and potholes not being filled. He asked for clarification on the criteria for both. Barrie Mason confirmed that for road markings a set percentage had to have faded before they would be repainted and for potholes the depth needed to be at least 40mm before a repair would be carried out. It was necessary to have such criteria in place in order to ensure that the budget, which was finite, was used fairly across the county.
- A Member referred to two of the performance targets relating to street lighting (SPI PCS13: client satisfaction schemes/PPI SL02: achievement of programme – street lighting cyclical maintenance). He queried why there had been a decline in performance in 2014/15 in comparison to 2013/14. In response, Barrie Mason referred to the rectification action plan for PPI SL02. Performance had failed on a technicality due to the calculations used not corresponding to the specific PPI definition. This flaw had not been picked up until the end of the year when it was too late to affect the end of year result. In relation to SPI PCS13, in the year to date for 2015/16 client satisfaction had improved but this was not to say that further improvements could not be made.
- A Member sought clarification on which organisation was responsible for the performance of sub-contractors and enforcement. Phil Jepps replied that this responsibility sat with Ringway. Ringway took any complaints seriously that it received about the standard of work undertaken by sub-contractors. Barrie Mason mentioned that the County Council did not have a specific inspection target itself but did carry out works inspections. Ringway was responsible for self-checking the work and subcontractors were required to go through an approvals process.
- A Member commented that she was pleased with the timeliness of works carried out in her division. It would always be the case that potholes would occur but the key thing was that emergency repairs were being carried out, which in her experience was the case.

Resolved -

That the report and appendices be noted.

86. Local Transport Plan 2016-2046 (LTP4) - Update

Considered -

The report of the Corporate Director - Business and Environmental Services updating Members on the progress of the Local Transport Plan (LTP4), which shall be implemented from April 2016.

Andrew Bainbridge introduced the report. He referred to paragraph 3.1 of the report detailing the results of the first stage of public consultation. The results to the online consultation showed that people rated highway repairs as the most important highways/transport-related service that the Council provided, followed by gritting and snow clearance. The focus was on maintaining the network first and foremost before highway improvements.

Parish councils and other stakeholder groups had been consulted on the proposed LTP4 objectives as set out in section 4 of the report and to ascertain if they agreed with the 'Manage, Maintain, Improve' (MMI) hierarchy. Referring to section 5 of the report he noted that of the responses received to date most had agreed with the MMI hierarchy and that the proposed objectives were in line with their own priorities and concerns. Given the limited number of responses and the lack of a clear ranking from all respondents the County Council was not proposing to adopt a formal hierarchy of objectives for LTP4.

Andrew Bainbridge referred to paragraph 5.6 of the report detailing the nature of the comments received including concerns. In connection with this he referred to paragraphs 5.7 to 5.9 of the report and Appendix 2 relating to a letter from Harrogate Borough Council disagreeing with the 'Manage, Maintain, Improve' hierarchy and to recommend instead the introduction of a three to five year 'local investment plan' for key economic centres in the county. He referred to the reasons set out in paragraphs 5.8 and 5.9 as to why this would not be the best option, noting that the MMI hierarchy had been in place since the start of LTP3 in 2011 and during that time the County Council had still been able to invest £3m for schemes in the Harrogate and Knaresborough urban area.

He went on to note that the consultation on the draft version of the LTP document (phase 2 of the consultation) would commence in November.

Members made the following key comments:

- A Member asked what if any projections there were for the levels of car ownership over the next 30 years, the life of the LTP4. Andrew Bainbridge replied that the projections indicated that car ownership would grow at the same rate in the next 30 years as it had done in the last 10 years. LTP4 took account of this.
- Referring to paragraph 5.9 of the report a Member noted that if the funding formula was changed as Harrogate Borough Council was requesting, Harrogate and Knaresborough would receive less funding than had been the case. He went on to state that he disagreed with Harrogate Borough Council's position as there had to be a rolling programme of highway maintenance and improvement across all parts of the county. There was a need for the County Council to work closely with the planning authorities and developers to draw down additional funding for investment in the highway infrastructure. Andrew Bainbridge responded by noting that overall the planning authorities were currently working to 15 year timescales but the County Council was encouraging them to plan on a 30 year timescale in order to dovetail with the life of the LTP. 30 years was the typical timescale for infrastructure projects from conception to completion.

Resolved -

That the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee supports the final objectives and thematic topics proposed for LTP4.

87. Proposals for Revisions to County Council Guidance on Transport Issues including Standards for Parking for Developer Funded works within North Yorkshire

Considered -

The report of the Corporate Director - Business and Environmental Services informing Members of the options for the County Council in respect of its guidance on transport issues which is no longer in line with current national policy. The guidance set out in 'Transport Issues and Development - A Guide' covers a range of issues including parking standards, travel plans and transport assessments; informing Members of the decision taken by the Corporate Director - Business and Environmental Services on 3 July 2015 and seeking Members' comments on the proposal to seek the approval of the Executive to withdraw a substantive part of the County Council's document 'Transport Issues - A Guide' which no longer complies with national planning policy and to retain some elements as an interim position prior to seeking approval from the Executive.

Pam Johnson introduced the report and sought comments from the Committee in advance of the report being presented to the Executive. She noted that the proposed revisions if approved would apply to new residential development coming forward. The preferred approach was to adopt option C set out in the report. This would provide the opportunity to withdraw outdated guidance and establish interim standards to address the key issue of residential parking. It would enable more appropriate standards to be applied to the high volume of residential development currently coming forward for approval. A formal review of the full standards could then be undertaken including all the appropriate consultations.

Members made the following key comments:

- Previous national planning policies had sought to reduce people's reliance on travelling by car but such policies had clearly been inappropriate for rural areas. The reality is people are reliant on cars in our rural county and the number of cars owned by households is increasing. People were habitual by nature and unlikely to switch to other forms of transport. The introduction of minimum rather than maximum parking standards would be the right step to take.
- With reference to paragraph 2.4, a Member commented that integrated garages in new homes were too small. Therefore the proposal to only count garages as a parking space if they were of a minimum size of 3 x 6 metres was to be welcomed. On a related point he went on to refer to Appendix C (car parking dimensional requirements) and commented that the size of parking spaces for today's average family car was insufficient. Pam Johnson said that the measurements set out in Appendix C for a 'standard' car parking space were based on the national standard and so the County Council was not looking to increase the size. The majority of developers made car parking spaces of 2.4 x 4.8 metres.
- There should be more consistency in the size of car parking spaces. Pam Johnson replied that the County Council could not apply the standards for car parking dimensional requirements to existing car parks owned by third parties. However the County Council would be able to instruct developers putting in new car parks to use the minimum specified size.
- Minimum parking standards for residential development should be broadly welcomed. However there was the risk that it could encourage even higher

levels of car ownership and cause more parking problems to arise on residential streets from commuters, rather than those same commuters using public transport.

Resolved -

That the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends to the Executive that:

- (a) The 'Transport Issues and Development - A Guide' save for Appendices B, C, D and F (as amended) be withdrawn.
- (b) As an interim measure, a revised Appendix A which will detail the revised minimum parking standards as set out in the report at paragraphs 5.3 to 5.7 be adopted.
- (c) The Corporate Director - Business and Environmental Services takes all necessary steps for a full review of parking standards; a full review of the requirements for Transport Assessments and a full review of the requirements for Travel Plans in conjunction with the local planning authorities within North Yorkshire.
- (d) A further report following the conclusion of the review be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

88. Review of North Yorkshire County Council's Residents Parking Scheme Policy

Considered -

The report of the Task Group asking the Committee to discuss and note the information in the report of the Task Group's review of North Yorkshire County Council's Residents' Parking Scheme Policy attached at Annex A to the report and to consider the recommendations to the Executive set out on page 26 of the Task Group's report.

The Chairman of the Task Group, County Councillor Bob Packham introduced the task group report.

He noted that the task group had concluded that the automatic exclusion of all areas that have a certain level of off-street parking from being eligible for a residents parking scheme means that the Council is not able to use the full set of tools to tackle parking problems there. There are good reasons why priority for residents parking schemes is given to streets where most of the properties do not have off-street parking nearby. Residents living there are more likely to struggle to park near to their home in the face of competition for parking from non-residents. However it could also be the case that in some areas where at least half of the properties have access to off-street parking, residents could be struggling to park some or all of their vehicles within a comfortable walking distance to their home. Arising from the findings of the review therefore, the recommendations in the task group's report were intended to provide more flexibility in the policy by introducing 'exceptions criteria'. Existing and new safeguards could be put in place to ensure that residents' parking schemes did not spread in an unplanned way, and would continue to be based upon the actual parking needs of an area rather than a desire for exclusivity by those living there.

Jonathan Spencer suggested that the wording of recommendation 1 (b) on page 26 of

the report be reworded to: *“There are concentrations of residents with health and mobility difficulties living in the area needing medical and care visits, especially if it is difficult for them to walk around the area, for instance because it is hilly.”* This would relate better to areas where people with mobility difficulties are likely to live, and over a consistent period.

He noted that in respect of recommendation 1 (c) relating to the impact of new development in a residential area, NYCC Highways had pointed out the difficulties that there might be in forecasting in advance of a development being built whether residents would struggle to park all or some of their vehicles within a comfortable walking distance of their property. An option could be to write into a Section 106 agreement that, if found to be required upon completion of the development, the developer would be expected to pay for a residents parking scheme if the County Council felt that it offered the best solution and had the support of most residents.

Jonathan Spencer went on to note that County Councillor John Ennis, Member for Harrogate Oatlands Division had asked for the report to make reference to the fact that parking problems on some of the streets bordering the existing residents’ parking schemes near to Harrogate District Hospital were not just caused by visitors and staff to the hospital. They were also linked to the parking displacement from the two secondary schools nearby. Cllr Ennis believed therefore that a comprehensive solution was required for the area as a whole.

The Chairman commended the work of the task group, noting that it was refreshing to see an investigatory style of work. Account had been taken of other local authorities’ policies nationally and the report pulled out the salient points and findings of the review.

Resolved -

That the report of the Task Group including the recommendations to be presented to the Executive be approved subject to the amendments listed above.

89. Work Programme

Considered -

The report of the Corporate Development Officer inviting the Committee to:

- (a) Note the information in the report.
- (b) Confirm, amend or add to the areas of the work shown on the Work Programme schedule attached as Appendix A to the report.

Jonathan Spencer noted that in advance of the Mid Cycle briefing meeting held on 15 September Committee Members had received a report for their comment on the Right to Challenge Parking Policies – Petition Scheme.

At the meeting Group Spokespersons had suggested the following:

- The threshold for the minimum number of signatories needed to sign the petition (where the issue relates to a whole village, town or district) should be nearer to 5%, rather than 2% as proposed;
- A condition is inserted into the petition whereby if a scheme had been in place for more than five years it would not be possible to trigger a review;
- There should be a review period for the policy.

Jonathan Spencer went on to note that the proposed scheme would be considered by the Executive on 17 November 2015 and invited comments from the Committee. Jonathan Spencer mentioned that at the mid cycle briefing Group Spokespersons had discussed the preparations being made for the committee meeting in January on fracking. Group Spokespersons agreed with the Chairman of the Scrutiny of Health Committee that rather than have two separate meetings a joint committee meeting be held instead. The meeting would be held on Friday 22 January 2016 in place of the Committee's scheduled meeting of Wednesday 20 January 2016. As part of the preparation for the meeting the DCLG national advisor team for large planning applications had offered to provide a Members Seminar on the responsibilities of the Planning Authority and the Environment Agency in respect to planning. A date would be arranged shortly and all Committee Members were encouraged to attend.

Resolved -

- (a) That the items listed in the future Work Programme schedule be agreed.
- (b) That the Group Spokespersons' suggestions for amendments to the proposed Right to Challenge Petitions Scheme be approved by the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and included in the report to the Executive.
- (c) That the change of meeting date of the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee from 20 January 2016 to 22 January 2016 be noted.

The meeting concluded at 1.45pm