

North Yorkshire Council

Harrogate and Knaresborough Area Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 25 September 2025 commencing at 10.00 am at Harrogate Civic Centre.

Present: Councillor Peter Lacey in the Chair, and Councillors Hannah Gostlow, Chris Aldred, Philip Broadbank, Sam Gibbs, Michael Harrison, Paul Haslam, Andrew Timothy, Mike Schofield, Monika Slater and Matt Walker.

In attendance: Mayor David Skaith (Mayor of York and North Yorkshire) and Councillor Carl Les OBE.

Officers present: Melisa Burnham (Highways Area Manager), Jon Clubb (Head of Parks and Grounds), Heather Lagan (Senior Flood Risk Engineer), Edward Maxwell (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Jennifer Norton (Assistant Director Legal Operations), and David Piercy (Senior Flood Risk Engineer).

Other Attendees: Six members of the public.

Apologies: Councillors John Mann and Robert Windass.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

14 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were noted from Councillors John Mann and Robert Windass.

15 Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 June 2025

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2025, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

16 Declarations of Interest

Councillors Hannah Gostlow and Matt Walker declared non-pecuniary interests in Minutes 19 and 20, as members of Knaresborough Town Council.

Councillor Andrew Timothy declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute 19, as a member of Harrogate Town Council for an area which bordered Knaresborough and which was mentioned in the report.

17 Public Participation

The following statement was submitted to the Committee, and read out by Hazel Peacock:

We are delighted to see the delivery of Phase 1 of the 20mph zone in southwest Harrogate and wholeheartedly welcome it. We give particular thanks to Heather Yendall, Melisa Burnham and Alan McVeigh for all their work.

The most significant 20mph zone in the county with 200 streets, it aims to create a safer environment for the 4,000 schoolchildren attending the schools in the area and the wider community.

Support for the full, approved scheme (both phases 1 & 2) came from right across the community, residents, parents, cross party politicians and the local MP Tom Gordon. It was supported by 13 Headteachers and educators, many of whom had called for safer streets for many years well before the campaign. We sincerely thank all those involved.

Seeing school children make their way to primary and secondary schools at the start of September (some for the very first time) along streets with reduced speed limits of 20mph was great to see. We look forward to seeing this soon across the essential Phase 2 area as well.

Putting the schools and community at the heart of the scheme, to give young people a safe environment to make their way to and from school, to meet with friends and after school clubs will have significant impact to both safety and wellbeing. This will encourage independence and activity, as well as improving the overall feel of the local area for everyone's benefit.

Data from TfL research shows a pedestrian is five times less likely to be killed at 20mph than at 30mph, with a 34% reduction in people killed or seriously injured on roads after implementing 20mph speed limits. The number of children killed in road accidents fell by a 75% following the implementation of 20mph limits. This is an important reminder of the positive impacts of speed reduction.

We look forward to your ongoing support to achieve the timely delivery of the remainder of the scheme through Phase 2, to create the much-needed safer environment for the 5,000 school children attending Harrogate Grammar School, Rossett School, Rossett Acre Primary School and Ashville College.

This full 20mph scheme is significant not only in size, but because the rest of the region is looking to Harrogate to see what is possible by way of positive change for other schools and communities.

We will continue to collaborate with partners on this next phase, and in future discussions with NYC and the different agencies, about enforcement and improvements for other areas to bring safer streets and environments across our communities.

Thank you.

Officers acknowledged the statement, and the Chair also noted the support of the Area Committee for delivery of the schemes.

18 Attendance of the Mayor of York and North Yorkshire

David Skaith (Mayor of York and North Yorkshire) provided an update on his activities, current projects, and matters of significance to the Harrogate and Knaresborough area. Key priorities included improving rail and bus connectivity, particularly through the White Rose Agreement and a York-Harrogate-Leeds corridor study. A £540 million investment fund has supported housing, transport, and business innovation, including £19.9 million for brownfield development and a £10 million High Street Fund. Over 1,100 homes have been delivered, half of which are affordable. A strategic partnership with Homes England was signed to address housing delivery barriers. The Mayor also holds Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner powers, with new plans developed. Support for micro-businesses and alignment of skills with industry needs were also highlighted.

In response to questions from Members, the following topics were discussed:

- **Integrated Transport and Ticketing:** The White Rose Agreement is central to developing integrated bus networks across borders. Challenges remain, but investment has begun, including extending the £1 fare for under-19s. Cross-border inconsistencies in pricing and disabled pass access were raised and are under review.
- **Rail Infrastructure:** The York-Harrogate-Leeds corridor study will assess proposals for new infrastructure and investment, including proposals such as a station at Claro Road, and upgrades to the single track between Knaresborough and York. The need to improve east-west connectivity across the region was identified.
- **Park and Ride and Local Congestion:** Park and Ride schemes, including potential for Harrogate and Knaresborough, were discussed. Starbeck level crossing and general traffic congestion were raised as key local concerns which had a significant impact on the community. The presence of York as a key hub for rail innovation was also highlighted as being able to support any potential upgrades which could reduce down time at Starbeck level crossing.
- **Crime and Community Safety:** Drug-related crime, county lines, and child exploitation were discussed. Operation Tornado and Operation Magic were cited as active responses by North Yorkshire Police. Emphasis was placed on prevention, early intervention, and the importance of reporting to inform resource allocation where Members noted specific areas of concern. The importance of engagement with youth initiatives and drug and alcohol awareness partnerships was highlighted.
- **Business Support and Innovation:** The Business Innovation Fund, particularly its exporting grant, was highlighted. The Mayor reported that Growth Hub has supported over 90 local businesses since April, with over 700 engaged region-wide. Concerns about support for small businesses affected by roadworks in Harrogate were noted, and while there were no funds or powers to directly support affected businesses, the Mayor highlighted support available from the Growth Hub.
- **Skills and Education:** The Adult Skills Fund was discussed, including a £400,000 allocation to Harrogate College, with further increases expected. Alignment of skills provision with local industry needs remains a priority, as many skills were suited to employers and sectors based outside North Yorkshire.
- **Governance and Collaboration:** The Mayor highlighted how the Combined Authority works collaboratively with constituent councils, citing the work undertaken by transport teams as an example of local knowledge fusing with the advocacy of the Combined Authority for funding and investment. Area Committees were encouraged to contribute local insight and help shape regional plans, and it was noted that this would form the first in a series of annual updates to the Area Committee.

Resolved: That the updates be noted, and the Mayor be thanked for his attendance.

19 **Devolution of Knaresborough Market to KTC**

Jon Clubb (Head of Parks and Grounds) provided an update on the proposed devolution of Knaresborough's weekly charter market to Knaresborough Town Council (KTC), as part of North Yorkshire Council's double devolution pilot. The business case submitted by KTC outlines plans to enhance the market's role in the community, introduce digital booking systems, and maintain stall setup services via local contractors. Financial, legal, and operational implications were addressed. Devolution proposals were expected to be cost-neutral to NYC, however the impact of staff redundancy costs, road closures, and lost

income to NYC were outlined in the report. Subject to Executive approval in October, transitional support and lease arrangements for storage facilities are being considered to enable a smooth handover.

Members welcomed the report and commended the work of officers and KTC in progressing the devolution of the market. The proposal was described as a historic opportunity to empower the town and revive its chartered tradition of local self-governance. The importance of partnership, local stewardship, and the market's role in the community were emphasised, with support expressed for the Executive to approve the transfer.

While enthusiasm was evident, concerns were raised regarding the financial risks to the Town Council. A proposal was made for North Yorkshire Council to provide a clear post-decision timeline to aid planning, and share the last 12 months' data on traders. The slow pace of wider double devolution was noted, with challenges in delivery discussed. Members also acknowledged the efforts of local traders and the Chamber of Trade in supporting the initiative. Officers agreed to provide the requested information and continue their close working with KTC on this issue.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

20 Section 19 Investigation Report on the 6 May 2024 Flood Event in Knaresborough

Heather Lagan (Senior Flood Risk Engineer) and David Piercy (Senior Flood Risk Engineer) presented the Section 19 Flood Investigation Report, prepared in response to the severe flooding in Knaresborough on 6 May 2024, which affected over 50 homes and businesses. The event saw 54mm of rainfall in just 35 minutes, exceeding the monthly average and representing a 1-in-516 year storm. The investigation confirmed that the intensity far surpassed design standards for drainage infrastructure and highlighted key areas of flood risk. While some blockages were identified in smaller drains, the overall drainage systems were overwhelmed. The community's response was commended, and officers sought comment on the report ahead of its formal approval.

Members welcomed the Section 19 Flood Investigation Report but raised concerns regarding its scope, timing, and engagement. It was noted that flooding in areas such as Plompton Drive and Hookstone was shown on the map but not referenced elsewhere in the report, prompting calls for broader geographic recognition. Questions were raised about the adequacy of public engagement, particularly with displaced residents, and the need for clearer communication and equitable access to support such as council tax relief. Members emphasised the importance of acknowledging the human and community impact of flooding, including the strain on local infrastructure and wellbeing, and requested that this be reflected in future reporting.

The potential for water attenuation measures, such as water butts, was discussed, with members urging Yorkshire Water to consider wider implementation as a quick and cost-effective intervention. Concerns were expressed about the report's treatment of blocked gullies and historical flooding patterns, with repeated incidents cited in 1999, 2006, 2021, and July 2024. The classification of Park Avenue as low risk was challenged, and calls were made for a review of flood mapping and maintenance regimes. Members highlighted the need for clearer communication around private responsibilities, particularly regarding soakaways, and welcomed proposals for public information campaigns. Officers acknowledged the feedback, clarified technical aspects of gully design, and confirmed that the report remains in draft form, with opportunities to incorporate recommendations and improve dialogue with elected members.

Resolved: That the Area Committee note the report, and make the following recommendations to the Executive Member ahead of the decision:

1. Commission a Strategic Infrastructure Plan for Knaresborough as a full review of surface water and sewer flood risk mapping for the town, ensuring it reflects observed impacts and provides a reliable basis for future planning. This should inform a dedicated planning document, drawing on Section 106 funding where appropriate (similar to the West of Harrogate Plan) to ensure the drainage network meets current needs and that future development does not worsen flood risk.
2. NYC produce a Prioritised Gully Inspection & Maintenance Plan for Knaresborough, with particular attention to Halfpenny Lane and other high-risk locations where gullies were non-operational during recent flooding. Findings and improvements should be reported back to Area Committee as part of the six-month progress review.
3. Support Knaresborough Town Council in developing a communications plan for residents, providing guidance on flood prevention and resilience measures, clarifying maintenance responsibilities, and signposting local reporting routes and support services.
4. Review the Section 19 Report through the Transport, Environment, Economy, and Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee, recognising the need for a holistic approach by NYC in its roles as Lead Local Flood Authority, Planning Authority, and Highways Authority. This should serve as a case study to strengthen processes and policies for managing future flood events across North Yorkshire.
5. Come back to the Area Committee and Knaresborough Town Council with a six-month progress review.
6. Include an assessment on the impact of the flooding event on the local community.

The Harrogate & Knaresborough Area Committee further proposes that the Executive write to Yorkshire Water and the Environment Agency, to request that they:

1. Undertake an urgent audit of all sewer assets in Knaresborough, ensuring asset transfer and mapping records are complete and up to date, and share this data with NYC's Lead Local Flood Authority.
2. Review maintenance and inspection regimes for key sewers, particularly those on Queen's Road and St Margaret's Gardens, to prevent recurrence of known blockages.
3. Work jointly with North Yorkshire Council to develop the Strategic Infrastructure Plan for Knaresborough (as mentioned above), with clear timelines and defined responsibilities.
4. The immediate installation of water butts where possible be considered to improve water attenuation.

21 Committee Work Programme

Edward Maxwell (Senior Democratic Services Officer) presented the latest version of the committee's work programme, including items for consideration at future meetings, and an update of informal and working group meetings held since the last meeting.

Councillor Aldred, as Chair of the Station Gateway Working Group, provided a verbal update on the scheme, noting that the recent legal challenge had been dismissed. Subject to confirmation of funding from both the West Yorkshire and North Yorkshire Combined Authorities, a report is expected to go to the Executive in October seeking approval to appoint North Yorkshire Highways as the contractor. The scheme, is anticipated to begin in the new year, avoiding disruption over the Christmas period.

Emphasis was placed on the importance of ongoing liaison with local businesses throughout the delivery phase.

Resolved: That the Work Programme be approved, subject to the following amendment:

- a) The addition of an item to monitor and comment on Planning Enforcement matters of significance to the Harrogate and Knaresborough area.

22 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next ordinary meeting of the Committee, on Thursday 27 November at 10:00am, was noted.

The meeting concluded at 12.00 pm.