

North Yorkshire Council

Harrogate and Knaresborough Area Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 12th September, 2024 commencing at 10.00 am at Harrogate Civic Centre.

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

Officers present: Melissa Burnham (Area Manager, Highways and Transportation), Jon Clubb (Head of Parks and Grounds), Dawn Drury (Democratic Services Officer), Edward Maxwell (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Rebecca Micallef (Senior Economic Development Officer), Chris Phillipson (Principal Democratic Services Officer).

Other Attendees: 11 members of the public.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

78 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies received.

79 Minutes of the Meeting held on 30 May 2024

Cllr Paul Haslam raised a general point regarding the content of the minutes, which he felt did not always reflect the full scope of the discussion at council meetings. He asked whether appending links to the livestream might be explored to improve access for the public to past meetings. It was agreed that this would be raised as part of the officer working group on working practices, and a written response provided to Cllr Haslam.

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 30 May 2024, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

80 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Lacey declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 6, as a Director of the Knaresborough Chamber of Trade.

Councillors Gostlow and Walker declared a non-pecuniary interest in Items 5 and 6, as members of Knaresborough Town Council.

Councillor Timothy declared a personal interest in Item 8, as a Steward of Trinity Methodist Church, which had been the subject of a consultation about which he raised a question.

81 Public Participation

Two public questions had been submitted:

- By Gia Margolis, in relation to Agenda Item 8: Harrogate Active Travel Update.

- By Hazel Peacock, Dr Jenny Marks, and Ruth Lily, Oatlands & Pannal Ash Road Safety & Active Travel Campaign, in relation to the 20mph implementation in south and west Harrogate, which was not an agenda item.

Statement submitted by Hazel Peacock, Dr Jenny Marks, and Ruth Lily, Oatlands & Pannal Ash Road Safety & Active Travel Campaign.

The statement was read out by Hazel Peacock at this point in the meeting, since it did not relate to an agenda item.

At the last meeting of the Harrogate & Knaresborough Area Constituency Committee on 30 May 2024, NYC Highways Officers provided a helpful update on the “20mph Implementation for South and West Harrogate”. We are grateful for this update and thank officers for the all the work they are doing on the 20mph zone project.

Following a request from Cllr Paul Haslam during the meeting to look at the possibility of a pilot and traffic modelling of 20mph on Hookstone Road and Hookstone Drive - there was lengthy and positive debate amongst the Committee on the reduction in maximum speed limits on these roads within the 20mph zone, from 30mph to 20mph. Following a vote, the committee actioned NYC Highways with producing an “Options appraisal report on the inclusion of Hookstone Rd and Hookstone Drive as 20mph” to be brought to the committee at the September meeting (today).

Can NYC Highways Officers and the committee provide an update on when the report will be presented to the committee and reasons for delay? We also ask for the minutes of the meeting on 30th May to be updated to reflect the debate and actions agreed, relating to this item.

Finally, are officers able to give an update on the consultation programme for the full 20mph zone, including the consultation done earlier this summer on Pannal Ash Road and Green Lane traffic calming?

Many thanks to NYC Highways and Committee Members for their assistance and ongoing support on this project, it is greatly appreciated.

The following response was read out from Heather Yendall (Improvement Manager, Highways and Transportation), and provided in writing following the conclusion of the meeting.

Officers will be presenting a report to November’s Area Constituency Committee regarding the request to consider Hookstone Road and Hookstone Drive for a 20mph speed limit and present an associated options appraisal report. The reason for the delay is due to Officers working on the current proposals for the 20mph areas in Harrogate to identify appropriate traffic calming solutions on those streets which require them. This inevitably will have an impact on the options included in the report that will be presented for the streets discussed at the previous committee and why this report will be presented to the November committee.

As Gia Margolis had been unable to attend the meeting, the statement in relation to Item 8 was provided with a written response following the conclusion of the meeting.

82 Receipt of Petition "to Reconsider the Plans to Require Knaresborough Market Traders to Self-Erect their Stalls, and Preserve a Beloved Local Landmark"

The report was introduced by Edward Maxwell, Senior Democratic Services Officer, advising of a petition which had been received by North Yorkshire Council and asking the Area Committee to consider a response. The petition called for the plans to require Knaresborough market traders to self-erect their stalls to be reconsidered, preserving a beloved local landmark.

As the petition had received more than 500 signatures, it had been scheduled for consideration at the next meeting of the relevant Area Committee. As it was a decision which would be taken later in the year, the options open to the committee were to commission further investigation into the matter; to make recommendations to inform the decision; or to take no further action.

A representative for the petitioners opened the discussion in accordance with council procedure rules, making a five-minute statement, during which it was argued that the implementation of new stalls would have a catastrophic impact on the viability of the 700-year old market, seriously affecting the town's economy. The petitioners argued that the expected £30,000 in savings would be offset by the loss of an estimated 20 traders and their £1,500 annual fee. It was asked that the ongoing discussions between North Yorkshire Council and Knaresborough Town Council be allowed to continue without the threat of the reforms being enacted while they were still ongoing.

The petitioners argued that Knaresborough was affected by unique circumstances, such as its limited space precluding the use of vans, the strong wind which often affected the market place, and the serious impact on the Christmas market.

North Yorkshire Council was urged to:

1. Carry out a full economic cost-benefit analysis to assess the impact of an anticipated loss of traders.
2. Refrain from making a final decision until the conclusion of discussions between North Yorkshire Council and Knaresborough Town Council.
3. Carry out a consultation fully involving the community and market traders, and place its findings at the forefront of the ongoing discussions.

Following the petitioner's statement, the Chair explained that members had 15 minutes to discuss and agree on a course of action. During the discussion, members raised the following points:

- The exact annual subsidy, mentioned in the report as being "in the region of £25,000 and £35,000", was questioned.
- The scale of the proposed savings were questioned, when compared to the serious possible effects on the market.
- While the need for investment to grow the market was acknowledged, some members highlighted the need for saving decisions to be made centrally.
- Members considered the possibility of referring the matter for consideration by Overview and Scrutiny, or on endorsing the three proposals suggested by the petitioners, but in both cases this was acknowledged as being a lengthy process that might delay the decision unnecessarily, without taking into account the views of traders and residents.

Resolved:

That the committee make recommendations to the decision maker, and that the recommendation should be that:

- a) the discussions between North Yorkshire Council and Knaresborough Town Council should continue at pace;
- b) no final decision on the implementation of the proposals be made until the discussions be completed.

83 Economic, Regeneration, Tourism and Transport Project Development Fund for the Area Committees

Rebecca Micallef (Senior Economic Development Officer) presented a report updating the committee on projects to which funding had been allocated from the Economic, Regeneration, Tourism and Transport Project Development Fund. The projects had now been formally approved and work was under way to deliver these. A more detailed update on the delivery of these projects would be provided at the next meeting.

Members heard that following the previous endorsement of projects at the 30 May 2024 meeting, £30,000 remained in the fund which needed to be spent by March 2025. The report also included Project Scoping Forms for three further projects, and sought endorsement for two which would use the remainder of the fund by the specified date.

Two amendments to Item 6, Appendices 1a and 1b were highlighted to members, after clarification was sought over references to Knaresborough Town Council taking over the operation of the Land Train if the feasibility study were successful. It had been clarified that the Town Council had not made any such decision to do so, and had not been asked to take over the scheme in the long term. An apology to Knaresborough Town Council was made for the misunderstanding and the inadvertent reference made in the initial version of the report, which had been corrected and republished prior to the meeting. The new versions highlighted that further work would be needed with partners to explore the future operation of the land train, and no decisions had yet been made.

During the discussion, members began to explore alternative options for installing air quality monitoring devices at Starbeck level crossing, allowing air quality particulates to be measured in real time rather than averaging over a longer period. Officers confirmed that the existing monitoring for NO₂ does conform to standard government air quality monitoring guidelines, however, should more funding be available, additional monitoring devices would provide a wider range of air quality information, such as particulates monitoring and the ability to see peaks in concentrations. It was agreed that the ANPR sensors should be the priority within the budget currently available through the AC fund.

Members also discussed the proposed funding for the Knaresborough Land Train feasibility study, including the appetite for operating such a scheme in Knaresborough. Cllr Lacey, in his capacity as an Executive Committee Member of the Chamber of Trade which was involved in commissioning the initial feasibility study, reported that feedback in response to a questionnaire had highlighted significant support. Members also questioned the route and were keen to ensure the vehicle would have the capacity to travel up the steep hill from Waterside to the town, and that adequate consideration was given to ensure pedestrian safety. It was reported that professional advice from a traffic management company would be sought to ensure the route was safe and efficient.

Resolved:

That the Committee:

- a) Note the progress on the previously approved projects as outlined in the report;

- b) Endorse the Project Scoping Forms for the following projects:
- i. Knaresborough Land Train Feasibility Study; and
 - ii. Starbeck and Belmont Level Crossing, with delivery of two traffic measuring sensors only;
 - iii. Note the Project Scoping Form for Harrogate Station Mural Artwork but not allocate AC funds to support this project, as there is likely to be other funding available.
- c) Request that the agreed Scoping Proformas are presented to the Corporate Director (Community Development) for the relevant projects to be funded from the Harrogate and Knaresborough Area Committee budget allocation.

Note:

Following the conclusion of this item, the Committee rose for a short break at 11:25am, returning at 11:45am.

84 Update on the Gully Cleaning Schedules in the Harrogate and Knaresborough AC Area

Melissa Burnham (Area Manager, Highways and Transportation) presented a report updating the Committee on the gully cleaning schedule in the Harrogate and Knaresborough area.

The report highlighted the introduction of a risk base approach and data-led gully cleaning programme called Kaarbotech. Following a trial which concluded in July 2023, an interim programme had been introduced between September 2023 and April 2024. The new 2-year gully programme began, where crews focused only on those areas which required attention, improving the efficiency of the programme. The team also retained the capacity to raise reactive orders, where reports showed that some areas might need intervention ahead of their next scheduled clean.

Since April 2024, the team had attended 4,065 gullies out of the approximate 39,000 recognised gully assets across Harrogate and Knaresborough, with a further 93 non-programmed cleans taking place. Currently the outer wards were being worked on, with a return to the Harrogate urban area planned for later in September.

Members sought further information on the reactive system for flagging and re-attending serious blockages, and officers reported that second visits could be programmed in for such cases. Where this was insufficient, specialist equipment could be hired to deal with individual cases. Members also asked if they could have access to the schedule, to allow them to answer resident's queries about when a gully was next programmed for a clean. Officers agreed to investigate this and report back directly to members. The likelihood of increased severity and occurrence of severe weather events due to climate change was also highlighted, and the need for efficient communication to and from residents when such events took place.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

85 Harrogate and Knaresborough Active Travel Update

Melissa Burnham (Area Manager, Highways and Transportation) delivered a report updating the committee on progress on delivery of active travel schemes with Harrogate and Knaresborough, including information on budget allocation, funding sources, and

updates up to the present date which were set out in detail in the report.

Members expressed concerns around funds which had been spent on consultancy fees, particularly in the light of the slow progress on the delivery of some schemes. It was requested that project completion dates also be complemented by confidence levels and realistic assessments of the viability of meeting these targets. In response, officers highlighted the requirement to balance maintenance demands with delivery, often under severe resource constraints. The recruitment of a full-time improvement project delivery manager was likely to improve the situation, with good progress having been made since the last update in the May meeting. Often it was not possible to include specific target delivery dates until the completion of consultations. Harrogate and Knaresborough was one of the most challenging areas due to an active and wide-ranging programme of active travel works. While consultants were sometimes used where unavoidable, active recruitment was ongoing to fill vacant posts and reduce this spend.

Members also highlighted possible modifications to some schemes, where a quick and cheap option was available to make rapid progress and deliver “quick wins”. Suggestions included:

- a) The implementation of a 20mph zone on Victoria Avenue – since the centre of the road was currently being used for car parking, it would have relatively little additional impact on traffic flow.
- b) The renaming of York Place Car Park in Knaresborough to Town Centre Car Park, to highlight its use for visitors and reduce the use of the High Street for parking.

Officers agreed to consider these proposals and highlighted that alternatives were always considered to improve delivery of schemes.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

86 Appointment to Outside Bodies - Position Statement

Edward Maxwell (Senior Democratic Services Officer) presented a report updating members on the current position regarding appointments to Outside Bodies in the Harrogate and Knaresborough area. The report highlighted the recent review of Outside Bodies which had taken place, where the Council ceased to formally appoint to some bodies, but that members could still serve on in a personal capacity. In addition, some bodies still invited Executive Members to serve on their boards, but this was an invitation rather than a formal council appointment.

Members discussed the report and clarified the status of a number of bodies where there was a continued council presence, and officers highlighted that the process around Outside Body appointments was not final, and that a review of the position may take place in 2027, following the next council elections. It was agreed that the information provided by officers would be circulated to members.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

87 Work Programme Report

The committee considered the latest version of the Work Programme, and heard an update from the lead members of Working Groups on activities undertaken since the last meeting.

Resolved:

- (a) That the Work Programme be approved, subject to an invitation being extended to Harrogate Youth Council to attend and give its feedback to recent consultation for children and young people;
- (b) That the work of the committee's Working Groups since the last meeting be noted;
- (c) That the Water Quality Working Group be dissolved, and its membership and remit taken on by the Climate Change Working Group.

88 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next ordinary meeting of the committee, on Thursday 28 November at 10:00 am, was noted.

The meeting concluded at 12.40 pm.