

North Yorkshire Council

Harrogate and Knaresborough Area Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 28 November 2024 commencing at 10.00 am at Harrogate Civic Centre.

Present: Councillors Andrew Timothy, Chris Aldred, Philip Broadbank, Sam Gibbs, Hannah Gostlow, Michael Harrison, Paul Haslam, John Mann, Mike Schofield, Matt Walker, Robert Windass, George Jabbour and Carl Les.

In attendance: Councillors George Jabbour and Carl Les OBE.

Officers present: Karl Battersby (Corporate Director – Environment), Sean Berry (Head of Sustainability and Environment), Melissa Burnham (Area Manager, Highways and Transportation), Marcin Dane (Principal Regeneration Officer), Dawn Drury (Democratic Services Officer) Edward Maxwell (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Julia Slack (Community Safety and CCTV Manager), John Ward Campbell (Climate Change Business Partner), and Heather Yendall (Highways Improvement Manager).

Other Attendees: Claire Campbell, Martin Christmas, and Jamie Duncan (Environment Agency), Emma Edgar, Charlotte Gill, and Gemma O’Neil (Yorkshire and Humber ICB), Nathan Lawson and Sarah Robinson (Yorkshire Water), Tim Larner, Jemima Parker, and Sunita Soundur (Zero Carbon Harrogate).

Apologies: Councillor Peter Lacey (present virtually).

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

89 Election of Chairperson

The committee Chair, Cllr Slater, was present but unable to chair the meeting, and Cllr Lacey, the Vice-Chair, had given his apologies and was attending virtually. Therefore nominations were sought from the floor to appoint a temporary chair for the duration of this meeting only.

Resolved:

That Cllr Chris Aldred be appointed to the Chair for the duration of this meeting.

Cllr Chris Aldred in the Chair.

90 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Peter Lacey, who was in attendance virtually.

91 Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 September 2024

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2024, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

92 Declarations of Interest

Declarations of interest were made as follows:

Councillor Slater at Minute 95, as the Office Manager of Tom Gordon MP, MP for Harrogate and Knaresborough.

Councillor Harrison at Minute 96, as a partner member of the Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board, and Councillor Walker as an employee of NHS England.

Councillors Gostlow and Walker at Minute 100, as members of Knaresborough Town Council.

93 Public Participation

Three public statements had been submitted:

- By Jenny Marks and Ruth Lily, in relation to Minute 94 (read by Gia Margolis).
- By Victoria Helmore, in relation to Minute 94.
- By Hazel Peacock, in relation to Minute 94.

As Victoria Helmore had been unable to attend the meeting, she was provided with a written response following the conclusion of the meeting.

Statement submitted by Jenny Marks and Ruth Lily

It took a great deal of effort from our campaign, and strong calls from Headteachers, the public and this committee, to get to the point where North Yorkshire Council committed to delivering a 20mph zone in the Pannal Ash and Oatlands area. When this was agreed in December 2023, and announced in the press by Cllr. Keane Duncan as a 'landmark scheme', the delivery phase was begun. At this point we, and the community, felt confident of NYC's commitment to the project and its timely delivery. We trusted that officers would implement the scheme as promised in the 24/25 financial year. Nearly one year on, however, and our trust and confidence have waned. Nothing tangible has been delivered, there have been no changes made on the ground, and the results of public consultation on traffic calming on Pannal Ash Road and Green Lane have been 'set aside', despite broad community support. Timescales and priorities have shifted considerably, and there has been a lack of transparent process and communication. It again feels like we are having to work very hard to call for delivery. Delays and re-consultation pose a reputational risk to NYC, and more importantly a continued safety risk to the community.

NYC have now decided to prioritise delivery of 20mph on streets where speeds are already below 24mph, and so where traffic calming is not needed. NYC has stated that this will deliver 90% of the 20mph zone. However, these are the roads where speeds are already lower, and which are less heavily used by children (who congregate in the largest numbers on the key central roads where traffic calming infrastructure is needed). Changing the speed limit on the signed-only roads will have least impact upon children's safety, and without inclusion of the key, central roads, the impact of the whole scheme will be considerably weakened. So, whilst in terms of length the scheme might be 90% delivered, its impact will fall far short of this. Furthermore, shifting the limited staff resource onto delivering signed-only roads will take their time away from the key central roads, thus delaying their implementation still more. Our view is that the central roads should be given highest priority as these will make most difference to safety.

The extensive urban expansion on the West of Harrogate will put additional pressure on roads in the area, which is already heavily congested. Measures proposed to mitigate for the increase in traffic caused by this development currently centre mainly around allowing increased flow of traffic through junctions. Proposed active travel infrastructure is limited. A new 'spine road' between Whinney Lane and Lady Lane will take traffic from more than 900 new houses, as well as an 80ha 'employment' zone. This is likely to mean in excess of 500 vehicles per peak hour travelling on Whinney Lane, which leads directly into the 20mph zone and onto roads used by 5000 school children, and which have already been identified as needing traffic calming. Development is continuing at pace with heavy vehicles using these roads and houses being built and occupied. Pressure of traffic is mounting, and our communities are being put at greater risk. This development increases the need for a fully implemented 20mph zone in South and West Harrogate, and yet this implementation is not being treated with urgency by NYC.

All of this calls into question NYC's commitment to the timely and complete implementation of the 20 mph scheme.

- To make our children and communities safer and healthier, we want:
- The 20mph zone to be implemented as soon as possible and in full, with priority given to the roads with most risk attached: those with speeds over 24 mph and high numbers of schoolchildren.
- Traffic calming and change of speed limit on the faster roads to be recognised as key to the successful delivery of the scheme, and to be prioritised accordingly.
- Hookstone Drive and Hookstone Road to be part of the 20mph zone.
- Opportunities to improve infrastructure for active travel and reduce traffic to be taken and used to their fullest extent to help mitigate the effects of massive urban expansion.

Our question is: Can the senior leadership team at NYC demonstrate that they are putting their weight behind the full and timely delivery of the 20mph scheme, resourcing and prioritising it properly?

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

The delivery of any change in speed limit is dependent on the outcome of a Traffic Regulation Order and timescales on this can vary due to the complexity of the proposal or what is received during consultation. Additionally, some streets require traffic calming and thus require informal consultation prior to any formal advertisement to ensure the community and key stakeholders are supportive of proposals.

Officers have shared the timeline in the report for implementing the previously agreed 20mph limits in the area for both signed only streets and those streets requiring calming. Members have previously received this information and the reasons why the delivery has been split into two stages. Officers are committed to providing the best solution with the necessary measures to reduce speeds so the community is left with compliant speed limits in the areas proposed for installation.

Statement submitted by Hazel Peacock

The inclusion of Hookstone Road and Hookstone Drive in the 20mph scheme for south and west Harrogate is a question of priorities and political will.

We ask the committee to support their inclusion and to urge decision makers Councillors Les, Duncan and Chief Executive Richard Flinton to prioritise child and community safety with the implementation of the full 20mph scheme and inclusion of these two roads without delay.

We urge members to request a full EQIA to assess the impacts of 20mph vs 30mph for those with protected characteristics (including Age, pregnancy and disability) considering both the positive and negative impacts, as is the Public Sector Duty outlined in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

The options appraisal report appears to have serious factual omissions; it does not follow LGA government guidelines and discounts the safety risks flagged in the EQIA for pedestrians.

The EQIA screening form states “as no change to the current speed limit of 30mph is proposed officers are not making anything worse by altering the status quo”. This “do nothing approach” and shirking of responsibility is more than questionable particularly considering the collision on 17th January at school pick up time which resulted in the serious injury of a pedestrian, which, it could be argued along with several of the other collisions listed, could have been avoided or reduced in severity through lower speeds.

Significantly, the views and repeated concerns of all stakeholders including 13 local head teachers, community and residents, 900 petition signatories and the local member Cllr Mann’s application in 2023 are ignored in the report as well as the statements submitted to officers in April 2024 following a site visit where they acknowledged the safety issues.

The pinch point acknowledged in the EQIA is a footpath by Crimple Beck Bridge 109cm in width (which doesn’t meet standard) where there is a footpath on one side of the road only so narrow it forces pupils and other pedestrians into the road which is used by buses, HGVs and cars. It is also an issue at Rayleigh Road. The risks posed and the protected characteristics of its users warrant a full EQIA. No signage is in place as the report suggests.

The options appraisal report does not appear to follow the process outlined in HMT and the Local Government Association workbook for Option Appraisals, which states it’s a technique for reviewing options and analysing the costs and benefits of each and ensuring informed decision making by ensuring a process that requires key objectives are identified and the different ways they can be achieved described, and, that, the pros and cons of options are to be considered in terms of the financial and non –financial. The NYC report does not follow this process.

Substantial features of the roads are also omitted in the report, with no mention of Oatlands Infant School and Junior Schools (attended by over 500 pupils aged 4 – 11) or St Aidan’s Secondary School (both roads are key routes for pupils, their families and staff). Neither is there mention of the 893 passengers who use Hornbeam Park Train Station each day (many of whom are school pupils) nor the 23,000 customers of the largest standalone M&S Food Hall in the UK each week. The features and characteristics of the roads are a key consideration.

The decision making for Hookstone Road being made on less than one week of speed and flow data during a “non neutral month” (December) without any seasonal adjustment factors as is practice is also questionable.

Vehicles not people are being prioritised and the safety, needs and wants of the community ignored. The delay of the 20mph scheme and rejection of 20mph on

Hookstone Road and Drive puts the safety of children and the wider community at continued serious risk. We urge members to call for the inclusion of Hookstone Road and Hookstone Drive as 20mph.

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

As outlined in the report, Hookstone Drive and Hookstone Road do not meet the requirements of North Yorkshire's Policy for implementing a 20mph speed limit. Officers enact the policy set by Members. The roads in question serve a key function in the overall network hierarchy accommodating high vehicle volumes and provide a key link between Wetherby Road and Leeds Road, two major arterial routes in and out of Harrogate.

There will be an opportunity for further review of the route in question in line with a county wide review of speed limits. If there has been any change in behaviour on this route as a result of developments or other projects being implemented in the area, then this gives a further opportunity for the consideration of any potential reduction in speed limit.

At this time a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required for the context of this report, the report has assessed the existing situation but is not proposing any change to this Area as part of this report. The report is for information only, with a recommendation to note the information.

94 Options Appraisal for 20 mph Request on Hookstone Road and Hookstone Drive, Harrogate

Heather Yendall (Improvement Manager) presented a report outlining the options which had been considered by Officers following a request from the May 2024 meeting, to carry out an options appraisal into whether a 20mph speed limit could be implemented on Hookstone Road and Hookstone Drive in Harrogate.

The report outlined that, under the existing 20mph policy, a reduction for Hookstone Road and Hookstone Drive was not proposed, and it was proposed that Officers instead focus on delivery of the wider scheme in Harrogate. Following the implementation of this scheme, a future review could then be carried out to take account of the changes in traffic patterns and determine whether a change on Hookstone Road and Hookstone Drive might be appropriate.

Members discussed the report and highlighted the need for better communication of the risks of excessive speed, particularly around high-risk areas such as schools and busy pedestrian areas. The existing work of voluntary and community organisations to educate and inform drivers was acknowledged, and the importance of communicating effectively given the high use of private cars by residents, and the high proportion of journeys which both began and ended in Harrogate, was also considered. Given these patterns, it was suggested that campaigns which focussed on local workplaces might have a higher impact.

While members felt that there were specific areas of Harrogate which still required a 20mph zone, for which there was public support, it was recognised that the existing policy needed time to be implemented and there would be opportunities to give specific feedback at future policy reviews.

Resolved:

- a) That a public information campaign be explored, to educate drivers around the

risks of speeding in high-risk areas.

- b) That the report be noted.

95 Local Community Safety Update

Julia Slack (Community Safety and CCTV Manager) presented a report updating the committee on Community Safety Hubs, CCTV, and the wider strategic Community Safety Partnership work.

The committee discussed the future attendance of North Yorkshire Police (NY, including the frequency of attendance and what information members would require from such visits. It was suggested that an annual joint update, including the Community Safety Team and an NYP officer, would be appropriate and could cover a discussion of annual crime statistics for the area. This would allow for detailed scrutiny and local questions which might not otherwise be appropriate for senior officers to answer at Police, Fire, and Crime Panel.

Members also raised several specific areas of concern including anti-social behaviour and Knaresborough Castle, and the loss of CCTV at Knaresborough House. The challenges with securing funding for CCTV as a non-statutory service were discussed, against a backdrop of rising costs and a continuing need for investment. While some grant funding was likely to be available as part of York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority grant schemes, these would be short-term and limited to specific projects, meaning they would not provide stability and funding for schemes to support the nighttime economy.

Resolved: That:

- a) The report be noted.
- b) That the committee suggest annual joint attendance with NYP and the Community Safety team, and request that following feedback from the other Area Committees, this be agreed by the respective Chairs and Vice Chairs.

96 Urgent and Emergency Care in Harrogate and Knaresborough

Gemma O'Neil (Humber and North Yorkshire ICB – Deputy Director, North Yorkshire Place), Emma Edgar (), and Charlotte Gill () delivered a presentation on Urgent and Emergency care pathways in the Harrogate and Knaresborough area. The presentation set out the local ambition of delivering the right care at the right time, avoiding unnecessary hospital attendances and admissions. This included work on avoiding admissions, optimising in-hospital patient care and flow, and effective discharge processes to ensure safe departure from hospital and into onward care. The rising demand and complexity of care was highlighted, along with positive indicators of system health and performance for Harrogate District Hospital.

Members thanked the attendees for their work contributing to the positive picture, and the time taken to deliver the presentation to the committee. The committee discussed the stroke care pathway, which was changed in 2018 to divert stroke patients to either Leeds or York. Members were informed that on 2 December, a new stroke pathway would be implemented which would divert all stroke patients to York, and agreed to attend a future meeting to discuss performance indicators for this new approach.

The approach to end of life in Harrogate was also discussed, along with the relationship between the hospital and St. Michael's Hospice in Harrogate which was close and productive, as the hospital provided clinical support for St. Micheal's, and discussions were ongoing about how this would continue and extend to the new Herriot Hospice in the former Lambert Memorial Hospital in Thirsk.

Resolved: That the presentation be noted.

97 Update on water quality of the River Nidd

Members heard a joint presentation from representatives of the Environment Agency, Yorkshire Water, and Shaun Berry (Head of Sustainability and Environment), outlining the results of the Bathing Water Quality results for the River Nidd for 2024, which had been announced on 26 November.

Following the designation of the River Nidd at the Lido, Knaresborough as a Bathing Water Status by DEFRA in May 2024, Knaresborough, samples were taken over the summer by the Environment Agency (EA). The results for the first year were Poor, with high levels of E. coli and Intestinal Enterococci. The EA's role and next steps were outlined, including the requirement to continue monitoring the site, gather more information and develop a plan to improve the quality, and communicate this to the Local Authority and the public. Potential issues which might impact the water quality were outlined for future investigation, including water company discharges, non, mains sewage from residential properties, and runoff from agricultural sites into the river.

Yorkshire Water (YW) provided a further presentation outlining the Storm Overflow Discharge Reduction Plan, where water companies would only be permitted to discharge from a storm overflow in cases where they can demonstrate there is no local adverse ecological impact. Assessing the results, YW highlighted that elevated samples in May, July, and September aligned with periods of high rainfall, and there were encouraging results on dry days with settled conditions. YW highlighted the forthcoming investment in the region of £1 billion in storm overflows planned for Asset Management Period 8, running from 2025 – 2030, and the current storm spill reduction schemes were summarised. YW highlighted the partnerships they were engaged with, including EA and NYC.

Shaun Berry (Head of Sustainability and Environment) provided additional context regarding NYC's role and actions, including ongoing work with Natural England and Yorkshire Dales River Trust to identify sources of pollution and continue to monitor the situation.

Members thanked officers from all agencies for attending the meeting at short notice and discussed the results. Agencies emphasised their commitment to work towards improving the bathing water quality at the Lido. NYC officers were requested to ensure that the signage which the LA is responsible for providing contained as much information and context as possible, within the constraints of the budget provided by DEFRA. The importance of the Local Plan was also emphasised, to ensure the wider effects of agricultural and residential development were recognised. YW agreed to provide specific feedback to members after the meeting on questions which required further research, which would be passed on to all members. The committee acknowledged the challenges which had been outlined, but asked agencies to recognise the local impact of poor water quality on the community, and the urgent need for improvement.

Resolved:

- a) That the update be noted.
- b) That a meeting of the Climate Change Working Group be convened as soon as possible before the next full committee meeting, to examine this area in further detail.

98 Climate Change Activity in the Harrogate and Knaresborough Area

John Ward-Campbell (Climate Change Business Partner) presented a report summarising the range of climate change projects currently under way in the Harrogate and Knaresborough area, and outlining the support being made available for capital and revenue projects being delivered by community groups.

Members asked about the Harrogate Car Share scheme, and how the membership and takeup could be improved. Officers reported that signage on the main routes into Harrogate was the main way of communicating the scheme, and efforts to engage with employers and highlight it for commuters had achieved positive results in the past. The total business mileage which was accumulated in staff commuting and travelling around the county, and which was reported in the 2024-25 Q2 Quarterly Performance Report was discussed. This was the first time this metric had been reported on, and officers were now monitoring from this baseline and working to reduce it in line with the commitment in the Climate Change Strategy, including by fleet decarbonisation as part of the ongoing transformation programme. Shaun Berry also commented that this figure had been incorrectly reported in the Q2 Quarterly Performance Report as being 13 million miles, but was in fact 8 million miles.

The importance of community engagement was also highlighted, and officers drew attention to the circa £1m of funding which had been made available as part of the Decarbonisation Theme of the Shared Prosperity Fund, and support had been given to Zero Carbon Harrogate, the North Yorkshire Climate Coalition, and other community groups to deliver such projects in the community. Officers also agreed to follow up and provide further specific information regarding electricity supply issues to real-time bus displays in the area, which had in some cases not been functioning for some time.

Resolved: That the update be noted.

99 Zero Carbon Harrogate Update

Tim Lerner (Vice-Chair, Zero Carbon Harrogate) presented a report outlining the activities of Zero Carbon Harrogate (ZCH), including some of the issues and challenges they currently face. The statistical base for their work was presented, which highlighted how Harrogate's emissions were above the UK average, but below North Yorkshire's. Statistics for Harrogate District's emissions for 2021 by sector showed that the largest emissions were from transport (34%), agriculture (26%), and domestic (20%). The need for a close partnership was emphasised, with ZCH looking to provide independent advice and guidance to help the area work towards reducing its emissions.

The work of the retrofit programme was discussed, including recent work to deliver training programmes to members of the construction trade. The rate of assessments which led to retrofit programmes was also discussed, with relatively few homeowners using the assessments to undertake a retrofit, and the benefits of such schemes in improving heating efficiency of residences was also highlighted, against a national backdrop of some lack of awareness of the programme. ZCH highlighted their reliance on comparatively short-term grants, which made longer-term strategic planning difficult.

Members thanked ZCH for their work and for the need to build a constructive relationship with NYC. It was agreed that ZCH would be invited to future meetings of the Climate Change Working Group to continue to develop contacts and communicate clearly on future challenges and opportunities.

Resolved: That the report be noted, and ZCH be invited to future meetings of the Climate Change Working Group.

100 Economic, Regeneration, Tourism and Transport Project Development Fund for ACs

Marcin Dane (Economic Regeneration and Development Officer) presented a report

updating the committee on projects which had previously received an allocation of funding. An updated project scoping form was also presented for the Starbeck Level Crossing Project, as further changes had been made to the project following its previous approval at the September 2024 meeting of the committee.

Resolved:

- a) That progress on the previously approved projects be noted.
- b) That the updated Project Scoping Form for the Starbeck Level Crossing Project be approved.
- c) That the updated Scoping Proformas be presented to the Corporate Director (Community Development) for the relevant projects to be funded from the Harrogate and Knaresborough Area Committee budget allocation.

101 Work Programme Report

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.

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

- a) Additional meetings of the Climate Change Working Group, to consider water quality and to meet with ZCH.
- b) The provision of feedback to the Community Safety and CCTV Team requesting an annual joint update alongside North Yorkshire Police, to include a presentation of annual crime statistics.
- c) That colleagues from the Harrogate District Foundation Trust be invited to return to future meetings of the AC on an annual basis.

102 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next ordinary meeting of the committee, on Thursday 20 March 2025 at 10:00 am, was noted.

The meeting concluded at 2.15 pm.