Background

We are seeking your views about the impact of congestion in Harrogate and Knaresborough.

Harrogate and Knaresborough have complex traffic issues that result in high levels of traffic on the local network. The complexity of the area’s traffic issues means they are unlikely to be addressed by a single solution so, for illustrative purposes, we have developed two indicative packages which combine a range of measures. At this stage these have not been fully defined or developed.

- Core Interventions in both packages
- Demand Management & Travel Behaviour (Package B)
- Major infrastructure improvements (Package E)

A lot of local journeys are made within the towns by car
Almost half of the trips being made at peak times both start and end within Harrogate and Knaresborough. These trips are short (less than 1.6 miles on average), are generally commuter trips and are mostly made by car; switching these short trips to more sustainable modes would make a big difference to the level of congestion on the roads.

Levels of cycling are low
Cycling is a great alternative to the car for short trips, yet levels of cycling in Harrogate and Knaresborough are low. Accident data shows a relatively high number of pedestrian and cyclist casualties; if cycling can be made safer and more convenient there is potential to encourage more people to travel by bike.

Bus use is low
Despite premium bus services offering comfortable seating, phone charging and Wi-Fi, bus use is already low and is decreasing year-on-year.

There are air quality issues
High traffic flows, and resulting slow moving traffic, are a key contributor to air quality issues in the area.

The number of cars on the road is expected to increase
Planned development means that the local population is expected to increase significantly, and this will mean more people travelling on local roads. Smaller scale local improvements will help to address the direct impact of this development but, in the longer term, extra traffic will add to congestion, delays and longer journey times.

Congestion is impacting the economy
There is an aspiration to grow Harrogate’s economy, particularly high value sectors. It could be difficult to attract developers to an area that is difficult to get to because of congestion; this would have repercussions for growth and diversification of the economy.

Doing nothing doesn’t mean nothing changes
Housing and employment growth will continue - locally, regionally and nationally – and national traffic forecasts suggest that traffic will grow by between 17% and 51% by 2050. Similarly, traffic and congestion in Harrogate and Knaresborough are very likely to continue to worsen.

If no subsequent Package is adopted, the County Council would continue to promote similar smaller measures as we have in recent years. This will mean incremental improvements to traffic and congestion management, but not anything more substantial than that.

For further information please visit: www.northyorks.gov.uk/harrogate-congestion-engagement
Core Interventions (both packages)

Providing better information

**Variable Message Signs (VMS)**
Signs located at the roadside informing drivers of disruptions, congestion, or incidents. Can also display information about events, car parking availability and road closures.

**Key benefits**
- Help reduce delays and congestion
- Better management of incidents
- Divert traffic away from disruptions
- Reduces unnecessary journeys

**Potential issues**
- Need for physical infrastructure
- Maintenance and installation costs
- Potentially unsightly
- May distract drivers

**Real-time information**
Real-time information gives up to date travel information via apps, websites, or fixed displays. For public transport users, these can provide arrival times, delays and other important messages.

**Key benefits**
- Ensures travellers are better informed
- Improves quality of public transport services and potentially increased usage
- Reduces unnecessary journeys

**Potential issues**
- Buses may need modification to provide this information (costly)
- May not be possible on all public transport services/buses

Better public transport facilities/access

Creation of more modern transport facilities in Harrogate and Knaresborough, through improvements to bus and rail stations in Harrogate and at adjacent stations. Improvements to bus and rail stations could include:
- Better footways and lifts
- Better pedestrian and cycle access
- Improved cycle storage
- Improved accessible toilet facilities
- Better signage and tactile pavements for visually impaired users

**Key benefits**
- Better access to train and bus services
- Encourage walking, cycling and public transport use
- Improved gateway - more attractive to visitors and residents

**Potential issues**
- Construction work may cause disruption to drivers and public transport services
- Higher cost than some other options

Improved cycling provision

Making cycling a more attractive way of getting around, especially on shorter journeys by:
- Introducing better cycling infrastructure (lanes, signs, parking)
- More cycle opportunities (schools/workplaces)
- Promote cycling as a great choice on short journeys

**Key benefits**
- Encourage more cycling and sustainable travel
- Reduce air and noise pollution
- Improve safety for cyclists
- Improve health/wellbeing of residents and visitors

**Potential issues**
- May give road-based traffic less priority
- On-street works may cause temporary disruption
- Less road space for vehicles

For further information please visit: www.northyorks.gov.uk/harrogate-congestion-engagement
Core Interventions (both packages)

Creating better places and managing traffic

**Better places to live, work, shop**

We are committed to creating better places to live, work, shop and visit. This includes:

- Providing an environment that encourages walking, cycling and use of public transport
- Prioritising pedestrians and cyclists in the centre of Harrogate to reduce congestion
- Making the town centre more attractive to visitors and businesses
- Limit HGV access to central Harrogate (peak periods)
- Implementing 20mph zones / home zones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key benefits</th>
<th>Potential issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ A more pleasant place to live, work and visit</td>
<td>△ Reduced access for cars to town centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Reduces traffic and congestion</td>
<td>△ Reduced access for HGVs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Improved air quality</td>
<td>△ Potential impact on business deliveries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Improves town centre access for non-motorists</td>
<td>△ Requires disruptive on-street works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Encourages more walking and cycling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Improves road safety</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Review of traffic lights and crossings**

Opportunity to change traffic light settings in Harrogate and Knaresborough to reduce waiting time at traffic lights. Changes to traffic light settings may include increased bus priority (longer green light time) and better traffic control during incidents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key benefits</th>
<th>Potential issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Improve traffic flow and reduce congestion</td>
<td>△ May disadvantage vehicles if pedestrians and cyclists are given priority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Reduce journey times</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Encourage greater public transport use, walking and cycling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Improve air quality and reduce noise pollution by reducing ‘standstill’ traffic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Improve road safety</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Re-thinking how we use our road space**

Reallocating road space to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key benefits</th>
<th>Potential issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Encouraging more sustainable forms of transport</td>
<td>△ May mean longer car journey times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Tackles air quality and noise pollution</td>
<td>△ May reduce overall network capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Improves attractiveness of the area</td>
<td>△ Less road space for non-public transport vehicles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Creates more open space</td>
<td>△ On-street works may cause temporary disruption</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Re-thinking parking in Harrogate**

Reducing the amount of town centre car parking locations and reviewing parking charges. We may need to reduce the amount of car parking or change prices to discourage parking in the town centre.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key benefits</th>
<th>Potential issues</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Encouraging more walking, cycling or use of public transport</td>
<td>△ May mean longer car journey times</td>
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For further information please visit: www.northyorks.gov.uk/harrogate-congestion-engagement
Package B: Demand management and travel behaviour

Includes CORE INTERVENTIONS and measures aimed at managing travel demand and changing travel behaviour:

- Travelling by car is convenient, but roads in Harrogate and Knaresborough weren’t designed for the number using them.
- While some journeys need a car, some shorter journeys could be made by sustainable modes, such as walking, cycling or public transport.
- Behaviour change measures aimed not only at re-moding trips but also removing them and re-timing them.

- Fewer car trips will mean less congestion, fewer delays and improved air quality.
- Generally doesn’t involve major infrastructure projects – allowing for faster delivery.
- Likely that Package B would have a lesser impact on traffic flows than Package E, as they stand currently.
- Due to the complex multi-modal modelling that would be required, it is not possible to present detailed analysis for either package at this stage.

For further information please visit: www.northyorks.gov.uk/harrogate-congestion-engagement
Harrogate congestion engagement

Package B: Demand management and travel behaviour

Information and changing behaviour

**Changing behaviour**

People tend to make journeys in a particular way out of habit. Changing how you travel is daunting if you don’t have the necessary information. This measure would provide this information, but also explain the benefits of a change.

- Personal journey plans could be offered to residents, schools and workplaces.
- Can a journey be made in a more sustainable way, and if so, how?
- Providing information to give confidence to travel without a car (e.g. walking distances and times, public transport locations and times, plus the total door-to-door duration of the journey).
- Using advertising, marketing, incentives and information to encourage people to consider their way of travelling

**Key benefits**

☑️ No requirement for new infrastructure
☑️ No disruption for road users
☑️ Low or no capital cost
☑️ Potential to reduce car trips and congestion

**Potential issues**

⚠️ ‘Light touch’ - needs complementary measures to maximise effectiveness
⚠️ Long term campaign
⚠️ Relies on people's willingness to change to their behaviour (could be limited)
⚠️ Significant time involved

**Sustainable transport at new developments**

Moving house or starting a new job is a good opportunity to change travel behaviour - before habits form. Two parts to the proposed measure:

- Making walking, cycling and public transport use as easy as possible:
  - Providing bus services to new developments, improving footways, providing cycle parking or setting up a car-share service
- Providing a travel information pack:
  - Information on travel options, supported by incentives such as a bus voucher, cycle training or priority parking spaces for car sharers

**Key benefits**

☑️ Unlikely to cause disruption to road users
☑️ Relatively low cost
☑️ Potential to reduce car trips
☑️ Improves town centre access for non-motorists
☑️ Encourages more walking and cycling
☑️ Improves road safety

**Potential issues**

⚠️ ‘Light touch’ - needs complementary measures to maximise effectiveness
⚠️ Relies on people’s willingness to change to their behaviour
⚠️ Potential impact on business deliveries
⚠️ Requirement for council staff time

For further information please visit: www.northyorks.gov.uk/harrogate-congestion-engagement
Harrogate congestion engagement

Package B: Demand management and travel behaviour

Managing traffic

### Traffic management zone

Addressing congestion successfully may mean not only encouraging sustainable travel, but also discouraging car use. A traffic management zone would charge car drivers using certain roads, monitored by cameras. A similar scheme in Durham City has seen traffic decrease by 85%.

The charge may cover the cost of the scheme, or be higher with funds invested in sustainable travel options.

At this stage, the roads subject to this charge have not been identified, but would likely be limited to Harrogate town centre. New signage would mark the location of the charging zone.

**Key benefits**
- Improved air quality and public health
- Reduced congestion in town centre
- Encourage walking, cycling or public transport use
- No significant new infrastructure required

**Potential issues**
- Delivery access for businesses
- Maintenance and administration costs
- Congestion in other areas may increase

### Travel plans

A travel plan is a package of actions intended to encourage sustainable travel. Developed for businesses, housing developments, schools or other organisations – they can reduce car journeys by 20% where applied successfully.

School travel plans focus on reducing cars on the school run, as well as education - offering the potential for this behaviour to continue into adulthood. Travel plans could include incentives, such as discounted public transport tickets, journey plans and bespoke travel information.

**Key benefits**
- Low cost option
- Help reduce congestion particularly during morning and evening peak times
- Can reduce impact of large events

**Potential issues**
- Reliant on businesses, schools and residents supporting Travel Plans
- Reliant on other measures to ensure effectiveness (e.g. campaign to encourage behaviour change)
- No physical improvements included (e.g. to walkways)
- Significant time involved (full time role)

Car sharing and car clubs

Car sharing effectively reduces car trips by people travelling together.

Option also includes electric car clubs – permitting hire as an alternative to car ownership (locations to be confirmed – potentially housing estates and town centre).

Car sharing would be encouraged through a promotional campaign and by working with businesses.

**Key benefits**
- Improved air quality and public health
- Potential to reduce congestion, particularly at peak times (car sharing is usually by commuters)

**Potential issues**
- Relies on support by businesses/adequate promotion
- Cost to implement and maintain a car club
- Reliant on other measures to ensure effectiveness (e.g. campaign to encourage behaviour change)
- Relies on people's willingness to change their behaviour

For further information please visit: [www.northyorks.gov.uk/harrogate-congestion-engagement](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/harrogate-congestion-engagement)
Harrogate congestion engagement

Package E: Major infrastructure improvement

Includes CORE INTERVENTIONS as well as a series of major infrastructure changes:

- May be necessary to make major changes to help people and goods to move more easily around Harrogate and Knaresborough now and in the future.
- Major changes require considerable investment and can result in compromises and impacts, especially environmental impacts, that are felt elsewhere.
- The measures in Package E consider more substantial changes, including major infrastructure.
- Initial modelling suggests Package E would have a significantly greater impact on traffic flows.
- Due to the complex multi-modal modelling that would be required, it is not possible to present detailed analysis for either package at this stage.
**Package E: Major infrastructure improvement**

**Bus priority improvements**

Buses can help to reduce congestion, and improve air quality, because they are:
- Efficient users of road space (can carry up to 80 passengers)
- Effective at moving people into a town centre – where many trips begin and end

To encourage use, services need to be:
- Frequent
- Reliable
- Convenient
- Allow comparable journeys to car

Bus priority measures could include:
- New bus lanes
- Improvements to bus stops and shelters
- Smart traffic signals that reduce delays by offering longer or early green lights to buses

**Key benefits**

- Improves bus journey times and reliability
- Makes bus travel more attractive, encouraging use instead of car trips - reducing congestion
- Improves safety for pedestrians and cyclists through less road traffic
- Improved air quality and better town centre environment, with fewer cars

**Potential issues**

- May negatively affect some car journey times as buses gain more priority
- Reduced or restricted road space for other vehicles
- Requires on-road infrastructure changes which may cause temporary disruption
- May require reallocation of green space as well as highway

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For further information please visit: [www.northyorks.gov.uk/harrogate-congestion-engagement](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/harrogate-congestion-engagement)
Some people will always need to use their car, especially from rural areas. However, door-to-door journeys can cause significant congestion, especially closer to town centres.

A Park and Ride facility allows car use for most of the trip, but bus use closer to town. This can:

- Reduce traffic on the busiest parts of the road
- Deliver environmental benefits
- Act as a popular transport alternative for visitors

Further work is needed to identify the location of the Park and Ride facilities. Recent studies suggest the most effective locations to be on the routes shown in the map:

- The A59 on the outskirts of Harrogate and Knaresborough
- A661 Wetherby Road
- Dunlopillo (Pannal)

Providing a dedicated Park and Ride (like in York) would likely be very expensive – so using existing bus services would be more cost effective.

Bus priority improvements would ensure the Park and Ride is effective and attractive, making trips into the town centre quicker than by car.

**Key benefits**

- Relieves congestion and reduces traffic on the busiest sections of key roads
- Encourages more use of public transport
- Improves air quality and environment in the town centre by removing cars
- Improves safety for pedestrians and cyclists due to reduced traffic
- Provides an alternative for visitor parking

**Potential issues**

⚠ High cost measure would need to generate enough revenue to operate
⚠ Potential loss of green space
⚠ Requires physical infrastructure that might cause disruption
⚠ Reliant on bus priority measures - difficult on a constrained network

For further information please visit: www.northyorks.gov.uk/harrogate-congestion-engagement
Package E: Major infrastructure improvement

Relief road corridor

An outer northern relief road, and Killinghall bypass, was first proposed in the 1990s as a potential means of addressing congestion issues. Over the last two years, as part of this study, further work has been done to establish the level of benefit different new road options could bring for Harrogate and Knaresborough.

The aim of a new road would be to relieve congestion in the towns and on the key roads that lead into them. Transferring traffic onto an alternative route would release space on the road to create a better environment and improve safety for cyclists and pedestrians. It would also improve bus journey times on key routes, increasing the chances of people choosing these ways to travel.

Initial work suggests an ‘Inner Southern and Killinghall Bypass route without a link to Bilton Lane’ would be most effective in reducing traffic, potentially by up to 30% on some key roads in the town including:

- A59 through Knaresborough;
- A59 from Empress Corner to New Park Roundabout;
- A661 in the vicinity of Woodlands junction;

Other options including a Western and a Northern bypass were also considered as part of this study but were rejected at an early stage as they did not provide sufficient congestion relief to justify their cost.

No detailed design work has been undertaken at this stage but we have identified a corridor along which a new road could be created. A route in this corridor is felt to represent the best balance between the congestion relief benefits and the environmental and other impacts. It is very important to note that the corridor shown is indicative, and shows only possible new junctions and the approximate route a road could follow between them.

Further development work and consultation would need to be undertaken if this route is progressed further. Detailed traffic modelling, Environmental Impact Assessments and much other work would also be needed to inform the decision-making process and any bid for funding.

Key benefits

☑ Relieve congestion on the busiest roads, improved and more reliable journey times
☑ Improved road safety and air quality on existing routes
☑ Supports economic and housing growth
☑ Frees up road space to create a better environment for residents, workers and visitors
☑ Improved pedestrian and cycle links
☑ Provides additional road space and therefore resilience

Potential issues

⚠ High cost
⚠ Environmental and landscape impacts
⚠ Loss of green space and impact especially in the Bilton Fields Area
⚠ Air quality and noise impacts
⚠ Redistribution of trips will increase traffic on some existing roads
⚠ Does not actually reduce overall trips and may even attract some new trips
⚠ Does not address short, internal trips

For further information please visit: www.northyorks.gov.uk/harrogate-congestion-engagement
Have your say

Now you have read about the options, please complete our survey

We want to know whether you think congestion is a problem, whether it affects you, and what measures you would be prepared to support to help reduce it.

We all contribute to congestion, so we all need to be part of improving the situation. Everyone has a stake in making the roads easier to use, safer and healthier for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians.

We want as many people as possible to fill in our survey and are keen to know what all members of the community see as the issues.

Please go online to:
www.northyorks.gov.uk/complete-survey