

Harrogate Congestion Study Engagement Group – meeting one.

Attendees:

Keith Roebuck	Transdev Plc
Jemima Parker	Zero Carbon Harrogate
Cllr. David Goode	Knaresborough Town Council
Cllr. Phil Ireland	Harrogate Borough Council
Kevin O' Boyle	Taxi trade representative
Brian Dunsby	Harrogate Chamber of Trade
Kevin Douglas	Harrogate Cycle Action Group
Ian Williams	York and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce
Keith Wilkinson	Bilton Conservation Group
Malcom Bingham	Freight Transport Association
Rebecca Gibson	NYCC - Project Manager
Andrew Bainbridge	NYCC - Project Director
Sam Raine	NYCC - Assistant Project Manager
Andy Cairns	WSP - Project Manager
Allan McVeigh	NYCC - Network Strategy Manager

Apologies were received from:

Cllr Don Mackenzie	NYCC
Cllr. Michael Harrison	NYCC Cllr
Carolyn Frank	Federation of Small Businesses
Craig Temple	Connexions
Kevin Jeffery	Youth Voice Executive
Rupert Douglas	Sustrans
Town Council Clerk	Killinghall Parish Council
Chris Kitson	Nidd Gorge Community Action

The meeting facilitator was Ian Fielding, Assistant Director of Waste, Transport and Countryside Services at NYCC.

Andrew Bainbridge and Andy Cairns made introductory presentations setting out the history of the project to date, the latest progress and the process of option assessment, in developing a major transport scheme business case.

The presentations are attached to the email.

Following the presentations, group members were asked to give their views on two elements of the option assessment: Need for Intervention, and Packages B&E – Content and Evidence Base

The points raised during those discussions were notes as follows:

Need for Intervention

- Clarity on process was welcomed. In the move towards possible public consultation, there is a need to ensure that the public are provided with clear and readily understood information which is more 'rounded'.
- Please can the information on the NYCC website be updated to be more representative of the current study.
- Felt that there is a blurring of lines between Cllr Mackenzie's views and the official position of NYCC.
- Seen as a 'road v no road' debate with no understanding of the packaging of the options.
- It is important to carry out a scene-setting/information sharing exercise in advance of the public consultation, to ensure that the work being undertaken is understood.
- View that some of the public think that the sustainable measures can only be delivered alongside a relief road, not as part of a no-relief road package. Therefore, a feeling that people are 'over a barrel' and no debate is possible – i.e., if you want money spending on sustainable travel, it has to be alongside investment in a relief road.
- The 'branding' of sustainable travel options is not recognised by the public as package B.
- Has to be recognition by the public that uptake of sustainable travel is to an extent their decision - the council can put everything in place but cannot do it for them. This needs to be better communicated and there needs to be an improved sharing of views.
- Must be better communication of the use of evidence based interventions.
- Use of the correct terminology to ensure a positive impact is critical, for example, the Options Assessment Report talks about HGV bans, which would be viewed very negatively by the haulage industry. But service delivery plans, which would look at improved consolidation and use of efficient and smaller vehicles in town centres, would be viewed more positively. However, must be said that the majority of logistics companies are already consolidating and working as efficiently as they are able to.
- Need to consider the longevity of the project and where we want to be in 2030/2035. Visual materials really help the wider public to grasp this and see what the future might look like and carbon forecasts also help with this.
- Felt that there were mixed messages in terms of the overall strategy. Is it about easing congestion, or improving the economy, or connectivity or sustainability? The public need a clear picture about what we are trying to achieve.
- With regards time horizons, has ULEV/automation/new mobility been factored into our planning? Also, has modelling taken account of this and also other external factors such as local growth/housing developments etc?
- Quantifying and incorporating 'new mobility' is critical.
- Use of the word sustainable - sustainable transport is not compatible with business efficiency, walking is not an option for business. School travel and poor integration of signals are all contributors to this. Integrated travel systems are needed to ensure that traffic keeps moving.
- What consideration has been given to sustainable access to new communities (e.g. – those being proposed on the A59 corridor?)
- Should be cautious in setting mobility and business against the environment and sustainability – the two are not mutually exclusive. The government's clean growth strategy very clearly binds the two together.
- The time period for determination of the Harrogate Local Plan is relevant for this project.

- Noted that the current local plan does not base growth on any requirement for a relief road, and modelling has shown that the mitigation measures proposed in the Local Plan will keep traffic at a level similar to current flows, but that additional housing growth on the A59 will inevitably impact on the network, in particular in Knaresborough and how this is managed will be critical.
- Again, reiterating that business growth and the environmental protection is not an 'either/or' situation.
- Businesses are already working more effectively and aiming to be more sustainable. And would be helpful to see a strong lead from local authorities on sustainability such as ULEV, electric vehicles, charging points etc.

Packaging of interventions

- Is terminology right?
- Access to stations – more parking is the critical issue here, but is hard to deliver due to land.
- Difficulties of accessing stations by bicycle and more generally with interchange and connectivity between modes.
- Lack of an NYCC cycling and walking strategy means that active modes are rarely given the priority they need in order to make them truly more attractive. Means that they are often missed, or the 'poor relations' through the development planning process and only incorporated as an afterthought.
- Should we be asking the public whether there should be a change in policy emphasis (away from car to sustainable modes)?
- Interchanges, park and ride and home zones could all be reintroduced to the packages as possible measures.
- Critical that park and ride is considered in tandem with parking control and also home zones to give them the greatest chance of being beneficial.
- Rail based park and ride should also be a key component.
- For bus based park and ride to be successful it must be part of an investment programme which also delivers bus priority.
- Issues are currently caused with traffic flow, due to newer buses not being compatible with previously delivered bus priority measures (i.e., bus boarders, laybys etc) and this means that buses regularly stick onto the carriageway, impeding the flow of the other traffic.
- Consideration must be given to policy change.
- With regards park and ride, the potential new housing at Greater Hammerton and Flaxby must be part of any viability assessment for park and ride. And park and rail must also be a key consideration.
- Traffic operates better when traffic signals are not working.
- The 'dropping well' traffic island impedes the flow of traffic and is an issue for taxis.
- Signal coordination is critical.
- Integration between modes must be delivered.
- Multimodal ticketing isn't listed as a measure - this is being rolled out by TfN, albeit that delivery into the provinces will be less of a priority than in the cities.
- Traffic management may deliver reductions in emissions of NOx and PM10, but carbon emissions will not reduce unless mode shift occurs.