

Pannal and Burn Bridge Parish Council and HAPARA

Notes from the meeting with NYC at Northallerton on 8th September 2023

Present: Cllr H West (Chairman P&BBPC), Cllr C Trotter and Mrs J Marlow (clerk)
Mr R Dziabas and Mr D Siddans (HAPARA)
Ward Cllr J Mann
NYC attendees: Cllr K Duncan, Ms A Robinson, Mr K Jameson, Ms T Rathmell

Response to questions posed

Due to one officer's time constraints, we were advised that only one hour would be available to discuss the whole of the package concerning the lack of highway infrastructure for the explosion of housing, commerce and schools on Harrogate's Western Arc. NYC stated that **questions 5-12** would be answered at the drop-in session on Tuesday 26th September when it was anticipated that promoters' consultants would provide the detailed information – although the caveat was made that this was not “set in stone” it being necessary that a cumulative Traffic Assessment is assembled for the whole development and that it might not be available for the session. It was added that no mitigation decisions would be made until the TA was available.

- 1) *Do we have agreement on the scale of the developments in the Western Arc Area ie that the total new dwellings would amount to around 4,000?* NYC's statement over a long period of time had never given recognition to this figure but qualification was made that the Parameters Plan build accounted for approximately 2,500 which, when added to the Otley Road developments – plus windfall – would in fact yield around 4,000 homes.

Confirmation was sought - and received - that the sites contained within the Western Arc area would constitute one of the largest overall “urban extension” developments in North Yorkshire with recognition made that as only approximately 700 of the 4,000 homes having been completed that the current traffic congestion in the locale was set to increase exponentially.

Concern was mentioned that although (junction) mitigation was necessary, in many respects these measures were very likely to *increase* the traffic flow through the area – and particularly via Burn Bridge and Pannal from the Cardale Park site – with vehicles taking the more direct route through the parish. NYC stated that route analysis was also being studied as part of the overall process.

- 2) *What is the likely construction period to complete the Western Arc developments?* NYC stated that the anticipated build projection would be over a period of 10 years, commencing in 2024 / 25 with response made that it is very difficult to change travel behaviour with sustainable (cycle) travel having little to no impact on alleviating road congestion. Emphasis was made that the only effective measure was public transport with the imperative on reliability and permanence of provision.
- 3) *Although a Western bypass has never been requested by the WACG as the BCR for that was deemed inadequate when compared to a northern link road, what calculations have been made for any new complete or partial roadway between Buttersyke and the Western Arc?* NYC stated that traffic modelling work had demonstrated no necessity for a bypass with the Local Plan overview supporting that statement. Concern was reiterated that the current road infrastructure from the Western Arc to the A61 was hardly able to cope at the present time which, with the cumulative build of 4,000 houses, would create an increasingly unbearable strain on “rat run” country roads which are not fit for purpose. NYC said that a change in travel behaviour is necessary with it anticipated that bus travel would be used from the Western Arc to a Harrogate hub from which travel to Leeds would be by bus / train. Response was made that currently Cardale Park exists as a substantial employment centre with the Local Plan provision for expansion by a further possible 50% - additionally, Harlow Carr exists as a huge tourist attraction drawing in visitors to the Western Arc road system. The questions were posed as to what is NYC's strategy? is it to encourage the use of some routes over others? What changes will be made that exert a positive influence over current and future traffic flows? WACG members insisted that however many obstacles are put in their way, people will choose their preferred option by private

car unless “direct route” regular and frequent public transport is available to West Yorkshire and that provision of suitable roads for such public transport should be a prerequisite. Forcing commuters to use Otley Road and then a link to Leeds is unlikely to succeed.

WACG attendees felt frustration that no clear strategy emerged from the meeting with regards to this question – with NYC officers unnecessarily repeating their argument that a Western Bypass was not an option when this route was never advocated by WACG. WACG’s question related to some enhanced infrastructure – or at least some strategy – that would manage / accommodate the considerable trip numbers emanating from the Western Arc to the A61 and the south.

- 4) *What modelling work has been carried out since 2019 to assess and quantify the impact of the developments?* Comment was made that Jacobs’ traffic flow modelling work appeared to make misrepresentation as every link for movement was used which would not reflect a true picture. NYC responded by saying that all trip rates (post-Covid) are being assessed with base parameters made on junction assessment and with future-proof modelling made to take account of forecast / new build development. NYC re-confirmed that pending promoters’ information data, forecast trips are not yet available and that it is a “lengthy and complex process”.

As with Question 3) this was not deemed to be answered in any meaningful way with clarification required along with Questions 5-12 and, presumably, at the Drop-In session.

P&BBPC made reference to the North Yorkshire Council Parish Charter agreed imperatives, stating that a two-way communication process had not happened with regard to the Western Arc. Cllr Duncan said that only two – of some 800 – parish councils had sought and been given a meeting opportunity with NYC adding that in his experience Harrogate town specifically was divided both politically and with regard to sustainable objectives. A more co-operative relationship was sought. The Parish Charter statements from NYC’s website are attached at the end of this report to enable readers to make up their own minds on whether those conditions have been applied. Harrogate town does not currently have a town or parish council therefore probably cannot refer to the Parish Charter.

- 5) How many trips in total are forecast to be generated:
 - a) Based on the full WA area 4000 dwellings + employment?
 - b) Based on the WHPP area only?
- 6) What proportion of trips generated by the Western Arc developments are forecast to be to/from:
 - a) Harrogate town and the east?
 - b) The south including Leeds and West Yorkshire?
 - c) The north and west?
- 7) How many of these trips are forecast to be by
 - a) Car?
 - b) Bus?
 - c) Cycle?
 - d) Walking?
- 8) On what basis have mode choices been made regarding
 - a) Routes, frequency and long-term reliability of bus services?
 - b) Attractiveness of cycleways for peak hour journeys?
- 9) Regarding car journeys, which routes will experience very high demand?
 - a) What assessment has been made of the environmental impact?
- 10) Which routes, if any, will be ‘traffic calmed’, i.e., with active deterrents?
 - a) What further pressure on other routes?
- 11) What will be the effect on traffic congestion?
 - a) Queue lengths at critical junctions
 - b) Tailbacks
- 12) Apart from changes at junctions, what is being proposed on roads between junctions
 - a) New/reconstructed roads? As demanded in some replies from parishioners
 - b) Road widening to accommodate traffic volumes, bus routes?
 - c) Provision of pedestrian footways?

d) Provision of segregated cycle lanes?

13) *What local knowledge has been sought on a) Identifying danger points, tricky manoeuvring locations? b) Incidence of non-injury accidents? c) Impacts on local residents? d) Driver behaviour?* NYC commented that there is considerable familiarity with the area with accumulated knowledge fed into the process and that a balanced perspective is always sought on inevitable impact to residents. It was affirmed that neither P&BBPC or HAPARA had ever objected to the developments but the Western Arc is one of the largest in North Yorkshire, situated on green fields on the edge of Harrogate and which has the weakest of infrastructure bases with safety for pedestrians, cyclists, horses and motorists a major concern. NYC indicated they can only work on statistics involving accidents with serious injury or death. No other reports of accidents can be considered as they are not recorded by the emergency services.

Similarly, this question was not answered.

14) *By how much will overall carbon emissions be reduced under current proposals?* NYC stated that with national policies supporting and determining carbon reduction this will be translated in the main by transfer to electric vehicles and more energy efficient homes.

15) *What road safety assessments have been made specifically on existing narrow lanes, for example Lady Lane/Hill Top Lane /Hill Foot Lane, Yew Tree Lane, Whinney Lane, Burn Bridge Road/Lane?* NYC stated that input will be made from the road safety auditor results in addition to traffic consultants having regard for local roads and with some widening incorporated but it was stressed that mitigation is determined by changes in driver attitude with associated modelling making some predictions.

As with the majority of questions posed, no satisfactory or informing detail was provided – only an inconclusive overview.

16) *How will the proposed junction modifications be apportioned to upcoming planning applications and why should they be part of applications for specific sites anyway?* Received planning applications are considered in addition to S106 allocations which are CIL compliant when relating to development. Applications which go before the Planning Committee will have S106 consideration. In response to query regarding apportionment of the M&S junction, NYC consider that it could be via a shared “roof tax” formula.

17) *What proportion of the total infrastructure mitigation works is to be funded by developers through S106 or other mechanisms?* Undertaken through planning negotiations, taking account of the potential cost and inclusive of potential mitigation measures with inclusion of elements from other schemes. NYC stated that the latest figures indicate a sum of around £30million for highways measures, generated from S106 contributions.

18) *Will surplus funding from the abandoned Station Gateway project be used for highway improvements between the Western Arc, Pannal and the A61?* The Station Gateway decision is currently rescinded.

19) *Why does Park and Ride not feature in any proposals?* The Harrogate Transport Programme will include Park and Ride within WSP consultant considerations.

P&BBPC stated they represented similar views and concerns of both Beckwithshaw and North Ripton Parish Councils and that there had been no suitable comments from NYC regarding criticism of some of the junction mitigations proposed, eg NYC insisted that bi-directional operation along with a footpath over the existing Burn Bridge Road bridge would present no problems but this had been unanimously opposed by parishioners.

In conclusion of the meeting, WACG members felt the generalities expressed by NYC attendees did not in any way effectively respond to the questions supplied in advance of the meeting. Aside from Questions 5 to 12, which will be addressed at the Drop-In session, no detail or specifics were given to the remaining questions. The fact that there is no overarching NYC strategy in address of the current infrastructure

problems and – more alarmingly – in anticipation of the completed developments is of grave concern and particularly so given the length of time that NYC states has been “a lengthy and complex process”. It was very much felt that NYC’s (is this the overarching strategy?) reliance on changing driver behaviour in favour of sustainable travel by cycle / public transport is heavily flawed.

The meeting concluded at 2.10pm. Thanks are expressed to those officers who stayed on for another 40 minutes for further discussions beyond the one-hour period.

Jane Marlow
Clerk
12th September 2023

Please see below inclusion regarding a Parish Charter detail:

The Parish Charter lays out how North Yorkshire Council and the parish sector will work together in partnership – the extract of relevant parts from the NYC website follows (with highlights in bold added by P&BBPC):

- *promote an active democracy to ensure all members of every North Yorkshire community are able to have a say in our future and to help develop a shared vision, identity and sense of belonging*
- *welcome all feedback and aim to act quickly and efficiently to address issues within their power*
- *respect and promote the role of both elected and co-opted councillors as representatives of their communities through positive communication, leadership and engagement, all undertaken to high ethical standards*
- *give importance and recognition to issues and ideas raised at each level of local government*