**Report of Transport, Traffic and Sustainability Focus Group Draft V3**

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**Membership**

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**Background**

The Focus Group has been asked to consider the effects of transport links (or lack of them) and all modes of transport and traffic on the Pannal and Burnbridge parish over a 20-year planning period, starting in 2018. The Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group (NPSG) suggested including at least the following factors in these considerations:

1. Current traffic conditions v old statistics v future needs
2. What effects would extra housing/industry have – from both within and outside our parish?
3. Commuting from within and through our parish
4. Car parking provision – Pannal business park, Pannal Junior Sports FC, Pannal School, churches, etc.
5. Train, bus, cycle, car, commercial deliveries and pedestrian use
6. Traffic control – speeding / parking and enforcement
7. Signage

**Deliverable**

A set of Principles for Traffic, Transport and Sustainability.

Recommendations for the NPSG.

**APPROACH**

Over the last several years, traffic within the parish has visibly increased as people travel further and further afield in search of employment opportunities for themselves and better schools for their children. This has resulted in an unknowable and uncontrollable volume of through traffic using Pannal and Burnbridge as a rat run to reach final destinations. The Focus Group recognised early on in their discussions that such traffic, increased substantially by currently planned and proposed developments in the Pannal and Burnbridge area, as well as developments in other parts of the county will significantly exacerbate what has already become an unacceptable level of disruption to village life at certain times of the day.

Another area of concern is parking. Pannal Station, providing as it does a convenient link to the national rail network through Leeds and York, is used by an increasing number of commuters from both inside and outside of the parish. However, the station has limited parking, and it is not free. Both these factors have resulted in an increasing number of motorists parking their cars on surrounding streets, causing inconvenience to residents and restricting the free flow of traffic. Short-term parking on Main Street to drop off and collect pupils at Pannal School causes additional disruption to residents and to the free flow of traffic at peak times on weekdays, and has been the subject of many complaints. As yet there have been no accidents, but the increased enrolment of children will substantially increase the risk of such. The situation will continue to worsen over the next 20 years as pupil numbers increase with residential developments proposed in the Local Plan. The opening of the Pannal Junior Sports Football Club (FC) will result in similar disruption at weekends as parents and other carers seek parking spots as they ferry their children backwards and forwards for training sessions and other sporting activities.

The Focus Group was also cognisant that, over the term of the planning period, technology such as driverless cars will significantly change the current transport environment.

Considering all of these factors, Focus Group discussions concentrated on those areas with the greatest opportunity for return in terms of maintaining a ‘village’ identity and improving the environment for residents of the parish. These discussions have been encapsulated as Guiding Principles and Supporting Recommendations, and are set out below.

**GUIDING principles**

Within the boundary of the parish:

1. All commercial, industrial, and residential developments must provide sufficient parking and adequate traffic calming mechanisms.
2. Traffic must flow freely and not exceed specified speed limits.
3. Non-resident (i.e. commuter) parking to be restricted to designated parking lots.
4. Restricted access conditions to apply to heavy goods vehicles.
5. Everyone to be encouraged to walk, to cycle or to use public transport as they go about their daily business.

**Supporting Recommendations**

Recommendations fall into three categories – Traffic Control, Parking Provision, and Reducing Private Car Utilisation.

**1. Traffic Control**

These recommendations support Principles 2 and 4: ‘Traffic must flow freely and not exceed specified speed limits’ and ‘Restricted access conditions to apply to heavy goods vehicles’.

***R1. Pro-active expansion of the Community Speed Watch Scheme (CSW).***

This scheme operates in partnership with North Yorkshire Police (NYP). Since its inception in the parish in late 2016, with four sites and a small team of volunteers, CSW has proved effective in ensuring that vehicles travelling through Pannal village adhere to local speed limits. NYP operates a tiered system of follow-up with offenders aimed at discouraging repetition of speeding behavior. Other settlements in North Yorkshire have subsequently adopted the scheme, and this expansion is expected to continue as news of CSW’s effectiveness spreads. Repeat offenders will thus be detected not just within the parish but also over a wider and wider portion of the county. The expanding database of offenders also allows NYP police to take speeding behavior into account when the same cars are involved in other traffic infractions.

The scheme now needs to be deployed far more frequently and across a wider range of sites within the parish, in particular to address concerns raised by Walton Park and Burnbridge residents. Sufficient sites have now been negotiated with NYP, so the pressing need is to increase the pool of volunteers, thereby increasing the frequency of deployments. It is hoped to achieve this by wider advertisement of the schemes success and benefits.

The basic equipment initially supplied has enabled the scheme to prove its worth, but now needs upgrading. A laser gun with a narrower focus would reduce instances of missing a speeding motorist due to interference from traffic travelling in the opposite direction.

In order to counter charges of vigilantism, the Focus Group also believes it to be essential that the partnership between NYP and CSW is clearly communicated to the motoring community via CSW signage.

***R 2 Ensure free flowing traffic***

The Focus Group support the notion that traffic through the parish should be as free flowing as possible, thus reducing driver frustration and attendant poor and frequently dangerous, behavior. Currently free flow within the parish is restricted by:

* cars dropping off and picking up children from Pannal School,
* by commuter cars unable to find space in the station carpark or unwilling to pay the charges levied
* by traffic backing up at the intersection with the A61 – both out of Pannal and out of Follifoot Road/Walton Park/Drury Lane,
* heavy goods vehicles negotiating the parish’s narrow roads,
* and, by the Pannal Main Street zebra crossing, which as currently positioned on a bend provides a poor view of the road and thus represents a hazard and a risk to public safety.

The following proposals will alleviate the above:

* The introduction of a Park and Stride Scheme for Pannal School coupled with effective schemes to discourage school inflow and outflow parking on Main Street and encourage the approximately 50% of pupils who live within 10 minutes walk of the school to walk to school (see R5 and R8).
* Increased provision of station parking (see R4).
* The introduction of double yellow lines on one side of Pannal Main Street and Crimple Meadows.
* The relocation of the zebra crossing away from the bend to a position further up Main Street towards the junction with Church Lane/Spring Lane, coupled with crossing utilization timings during school inflow and outflow to prioritize free flow of traffic over wait time for school children. The Focus Group believes that the most effective method of achieving the latter is via a human crossing officer (a.k.a. a ‘lollipop’ person).
* Optimization of peak time traffic flows at the parish’s various intersections with the A61.
* That no ‘in-transit’ heavy goods vehicles (i.e. vehicle with a gross mass of 3,500 kilograms) be allowed on any road within the parish. Current signage needs to be relocated so that HGVs are clearly alerted to the restriction.
* That access for other heavy goods vehicles is subject to obtaining prior approval from the Parish Council.

***R3 Introduction of effective traffic calming mechanisms***

Statistics from the CSW scheme demonstrate that consistently some 10% of cars observed are exceeding the speed limit, demonstrating that neither the Main Street speed bumps nor the numerous static speed limit signs are totally effective measures when faced with the challenge of the incorrigible speedster. The Focus Group would like to see newer, more ‘in your face’, calming technology deployed throughout the parish: for example, digital speed signs that detect actual approach speed, and speed cameras, both dummy and real. To this end:

* to complement the CSW initiative, two digital speed signs will be erected at both points of entry to the centre of Pannal village,
* and, all new residential, commercial and industrial developments must provide adequate state-of-the-art traffic calming mechanisms.

1. **Parking Provision**

These recommendations support Principles 1, and 3 – ‘All commercial, industrial, and residential developments must provide sufficient parking and adequate traffic calming mechanisms’ and ‘Non-resident (i.e. commuter) parking to be restricted to designated parking lots’.

***R4 Introduction of Specialist Parking Areas***

The Focus Group recommends that Specialist Parking Areas be provided for the main commuter groups, i.e. station users, school users, and football club users, coupled with a level of enforcement (see R5) to encourage the use of these areas.

With regards to Pannal Station parking, additional parking with access to the station will be provided on the ‘Dunlopillo’ development site, and it is understood that provision has also been made on this site for two mini-football pitches. Given the opening of the FC, it is not at all clear that these mini-football pitches will be well utilized, if at all, and the Focus Group feel that the community would be better served if the area were used for additional station parking.

The Focus Group understands that there was a proposal to allocate a sufficient area behind the church to provide a Park and Stride facility for Pannal School users. The Focus Group further understands that this excellent proposal is now at risk from competing proposals for allotments and affordable housing. Allotments are nice to have, but hardly essential. Thus the Focus Group strongly recommends that priority be given to the provision of a Park and Stride facility for the school. To add weight to the Focus Group recommendation, the group further recommends that the football club use the Park and Stride area at the weekends. Thus, fully utilizing the area 7-days per week.

***R5 Discourage parking outside of Specialist Parking Areas***

The introduction of double yellow lines down one side of Main Street and Crimple Meadows has already been recommended as a way to improve traffic flow through Pannal village. This would also discourage on-street parking by station, school and FC users. However, the Focus Group believes that in addition to this, a more pro-active scheme, similar in nature to CSW, is required to effectively manage both on-street parking and parking in specialist parking areas. We have called this scheme ‘Parking Watch (PW)’. Like CSW, PW will rely on volunteers from the community to periodically patrol the streets and note down parking offenders (number plate and offence). By working in conjunction with Harrogate Borough Council (HBC), PW could potentially be a source of additional revenue. People may well feel more inclined to volunteer if there is some tangible benefit to their community. The scheme could also patrol the Park and Stride facility to ensure it is used by ‘authorized’ users. This would likely require the issuing of permits by the school and the football club, possibly only to those who live outside of a 10-minute walk to these facilities.

***R6 All new developments to provide sufficient parking***

Inadequate public transport outside of urban areas is resulting in an increase in the number of cars per household. A further increase in cars per household comes from the current trend for young people to remain living in the family home after they enter the workforce. The latter situation caused by unaffordable housing. The Focus Group believes that these trends are likely to continue over the next 20 years. The Focus Group has looked at the Parking Standards for Development issued by North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) and come to the conclusion that the standards do not reflect these trends, and are therefore inadequate. It therefore recommends that different standards be applied throughout the parish (see Appendix). *(If other members of the FG agree with these sentiments then we need to agree the standards that should apply to the parish – I will forward the NYCC document I found via Google – given the date of the document I am not sure if it is a published document or not.)*

1. **Reducing Private Car Utilisation**

The following recommendations support Principle 5 – ‘Everyone to be encouraged to walk, to cycle or to use public transport as they go about their daily business’.

***R7 Introduce measures to increase train utilization***

The proposed residential development in the Draft Local Plan will result in a significant increase in population, of which a large percentage will either be of working age or students *(an additional 1050 persons based on 350 additional houses and an average of 3 per household*). Both groups need to find cost effective, convenient methods of transportation to their places of work and study. The proposed business park offers a further opportunity to increase the traffic through Pannal station. The parish is lucky to have a station, and even more so to have such an attractive station, and the FG seeks to encourage its greater utilization. However the current capacity and frequency of the rail service from the station is already under strain at peak times (*does anyone know if is this statement true? Is a study needed to support the statement?)* and the FG consider it to be totally inadequate to cope with the planned increase in parish residents, let alone the impact of other commercial developments in the area. Rolling stock needs updating, trains need to be more frequent and have more capacity, and station facilities need improving. Convenient and easy access to the platform for those with a disability is also required. The FG would also like to see greater use of technology throughout the local rail network to reduce the cost of travel, and so encourage train use, in particular for regular commuters. In the absence of such improvements, private car utilization will continue to inexorably rise. A marketing campaign to communicate improvements to local residents will also be required.

*Malcolm volunteered to contact the train operator to find out their plans for the station, so that they can be included in this section. N.B. Feedback received from Malcolm’s discussions with Brian Dunsby has not yet been incorporated into this section of the report.*

***R8 Pupils living within 10 minutes walk of the school should walk to school***

The Focus Group is actively discouraging the transportation of pupils to Pannal school by private car with its recommendations regarding double yellow lines and the introduction of a PW scheme. It is actively encouraging walking by its recommendation to relocate the zebra crossing to a safer location. However the FG recognizes that this will likely be a long battle given people’s entrenched attitudes. And so, the FG would like to see its recommendations supported by other community and school initiatives, including consideration of issuing Park and Stride permits only to those pupils who live greater than a 10-minute walk from the school. (*Do we know what school initiatives are already in place – do they for example have a competition for the form that reduces car use the most, or some form of recognition to the pupils who most regularly walk to school?)*

***R9 Provision of a regular bus service***

The Focus Group were split with regards to the provision of a regular bus service, with some feeling that this is unnecessary if the train service were improved, and others feeling that a service is needed. Bus operators terminated a regular bus service some time ago as poor utilization made it uneconomical. The service was replaced with an on-demand service that also is poorly utilized. There was some debate about the possibility of rerouting an existing bus service through the village, possibly for every second or third trip, for example, the airport bus. Members did agree that only a single-decker bus was suitable for such a service. Given the lack of consensus it was agreed that this matter should be put to the wider community.

***R10 Encourage cycling, but not on footpaths***

While accepting in principle the desirability of encouraging cycling, the Focus Group agreed that cycling was only safe within the 20 m.p.h. zone and on existing cycleways. Cycling on footpaths must be discouraged with appropriate signage.