



Residents NEWSLETTER

January 2023

Housing matters, what exactly is happening? – Very little it would appear!

As far back as July last year we were given to understand that the West Harrogate Infrastructure Strategy (WHIS) and the Infrastructure Delivery Schedule (IDS) would be made available in October of 2022. HBC and the developers have together been commissioned to complete both studies, which are intended to set out the full infrastructure requirements and measures to mitigate the impact of the developments. It is now January 2023 and neither document has been made available by HBC/NYCC.

HBC tells us that whilst the majority of this commission was carried out in Autumn 2022, the complex nature of it means that it is not yet complete. However, we are assured that officers are prioritising this work. The results of the 'buildability' work have implications for the overarching infrastructure delivery documents, so officers have been unable to complete them at the moment. Whilst these delays are frustrating for all involved, this, we are told, is the nature of strategic projects.

The new target date for key stakeholders (including HAPARA) to be updated is 'before the first of April'. In essence, what we seeking from HBC is clarity in terms of where matters stand with the provision of infrastructure. We appreciate that budgets may well be very constrained over the coming years. However, without a mitigation plan it is difficult to see how infrastructure issues can be adequately addressed. We will report to HAPARA members when we know more.

So far, despite HBC/NYCC promises, nothing of any substance has emerged that convinces us that the councils have any real solutions to the infrastructure problems that currently exist. Much of what we have seen so far relates to process with no real solutions forthcoming. The only slight chink of light is that when the NY Local Plan is developed, there will be a more realistic appraisal of the problems. However, this is not expected to happen for some years, so meanwhile we are likely to have to put up with all the difficulties that arise from a poor infrastructure.

What happens when the new Unitary Authority takes over?

We are not far away from Harrogate Borough Council disappearing and the new North Yorkshire Council unitary authority coming into being on 1 April.

We understand that North Yorkshire Council will be setting up a new Strategic Planning Committee and in addition a set of Area Planning Committees based on Parliamentary Constituency areas (Harrogate and Knaresborough for us). The relationship between the two appears somewhat vague but not in the case of

housing where 500 dwellings remains the threshold. As things currently stand we have sites on both sides of this threshold, for example Windmill Farm (770 dwellings) and Bluecoat Park (480 dwellings) where different bodies will apparently make the relevant planning decisions.

The whole point of the parameters plan requirement is to consider the sites collectively, and that should remain the case with planning decision-making. So, how will the new arrangement work, we ask?

A new local plan?

Residents deserve a clear indication from the new unitary authority as to what effect the decision to adopt an overall Local Plan for the whole of North Yorkshire will have in relation to the Harrogate Local Plan, in particular regarding the west of Harrogate.

Harrogate Borough Council, the planning authority up to 31 March this year confirms that a review of Harrogate's Local Plan will be 'subsumed' into the preparation of the new Local Plan for North Yorkshire. Through the preparation of this new local plan there will be a full assessment of housing and economic need across North Yorkshire. The plan will then identify a growth strategy and available sites to deliver the identified need, taking into account those sites that have yet to be delivered within the current set of adopted local plans.

The timescales for this process have not been indicated, though we are clearly talking years rather than months. In the interim, the local plans for the old districts will of necessity have to provide the basis for planning decisions.

Planning decisions after 31st March 2023

Our belief remains that planning applications relating to sites within the Local Plan should not come before the Planning Committee for determination until the infrastructure studies referred to above have been approved.

Using site H51 (land east of Lady Lane) as an example we have highlighted that planning applications for Gladman (480 dwellings) and Banks (270 dwellings) were validated on 04/01/19 and 24/06/20 respectively. These applications should be re-submitted and residents should have the opportunity to update comments they expressed way back!

The 500 dwelling threshold to be used for future planning decision-making also arises in the current local plan in relation to the provision of plots for self-build properties. Five per cent of plots on sites for over 500 dwellings currently have to be made available for self-build. So, to get round this, developers are applying for just under 500 dwellings or dividing sites up. For instance, H51 (Local Plan yield 690 dwellings) has been subdivided into three with separate planning applications being put forward: one for 480 dwellings and two smaller sites.

In the past HAPARA has sought and received confirmation from HBC that the 5% stipulation applied to the indicative number of dwellings for a particular site NOT the figures associated with constituent planning applications. But will this stipulation remain in the new system?

What is happening with the Western Arc planning applications?

HBC planning officers have confirmed the status of those sites within the Western Arc of Harrogate as follows:

- **Windmill Farm (H49)**: There is a current planning application by Anwyl and Redrow under consideration by the local planning authority for the majority of the allocation.
- **Bluecoat Park (H45)**: There is a current planning application by Homes England under consideration by the local planning authority for the majority of the allocation.
- **Lady Lane/Whinney Lane (H51)**: separate applications from Banks and Gladman, are still under consideration by the local planning authority. Extensions of time have been agreed between the applicants and the relevant case officer. We understand revised and updated information will be provided by the applicants in due course. These will then be put out to public consultation.
- **Castle Hill/Whinney Lane (H70)**: The northern part of the allocation is partly completed and partly under construction. We anticipate a planning application on the southern part in due course.
- **Former Police College, Yew Tree Lane (H36)**: The application by Homes England for 200 dwellings was approved with a decision notice issued in December 2022.

In December a group of residents with properties bordering the old Police College and HAPARA representatives had an on-site meeting with the developers, Countryside Properties.

The residents were seeking adjustments to the current layout to minimise impact on existing property. We now await specific information relating to the final site layout and other matters. Two issues yet to be clarified relate to the route to be undertaken by site construction traffic and details of the proposed cycle way along the old avenue.

- **Rossett Green Lane**: Preparatory work has been undertaken around the access to this development of 13 dwellings. At this stage we have no further information in terms of construction timetable.

It is essential that when development commences vehicles are parked on site rather than the carriageway as was the case during construction of adjacent housing which caused considerable inconvenience to both road users and local residents.

OTHER PROJECTS

Otley Road Cycleway

The response to the consultation on phase 2 (Cold Bath Road – Beech Grove) which finished on 12 December 2022 is still being analysed. NYCC tell us that a report will be put to the council on 10 February and will be made public.

In terms of Phase 1 (Harlow Moor Road – Cold Bath Road) we are aware that the relevant safety report appears to confirm many of the concerns expressed by cyclists, pedestrians and residents.

The fact that the report highlights a need for more signage, tactile paving and bollards serves to confirm our belief that a cycleway in this environment was a bad decision. A well-designed cycle path should be designed so that it operates safely without the need for so many signs and street clutter.

NYCC have recently told us that feasibility work is under way for phase 3 (Harlow Moor Road to Beckwithshaw) considering a shared use option and a segregated option. We understand that developer funding is required for part or all of this section.

Whinney Lane: Residual issues after Stonebridge development

At last year's AGM we highlighted the continuing activity we were undertaking to resolve outstanding issues associated with housing developments along Whinney Lane.

Some matters have been resolved while others continue to be followed up:-

THESE HAVE BEEN RESOLVED

- Sections of uneven tactile paving close to the Pannal Ash Roundabout have been replaced/repared.
- The clanging noise associated with a highway inspection chamber has been rectified.
- Warning signs for pedestrians using the ginnel through to Beckwith Road from Whinney Lane have been erected.
- The hedge running from 34 Whinney Lane to the public right of way that was encroaching on the path has now been cut back.

SO FAR UNRESOLVED

- The replacement hedge opposite Ashby Place due to be planted Nov/Dec 2022 has not yet been done. HBC have been requested to go back to Stonebridge to ascertain when this will finally be carried out.
- NYCC are in contact with Stonebridge regarding the non-illumination of several of the lighting pillars below the new roundabout.

Public Transport and the no 6 bus

The deteriorating picture of bus service provision in North Yorkshire is extremely concerning as it not only affects daily life for residents now, but also the matters we have been discussing above relating to the scale of new developments on the West side of Harrogate and the ability to provide them with a decent bus service. In particular, we are concerned about proposals to reduce the coverage of the no 6 service in our area,

We will be making urgent representation to Transdev and NYCC to clarify the situation and also in any forthcoming discussions with the team working on the various infrastructure studies referred to earlier in this newsletter. The transport assessment now, more than ever, needs to be realistic in assessing the scope for public transport to reduce car trips from the 4000 new dwelling in the Western Arc.

We hope to report more on this later.

Spring meeting - a date for your diary

We are planning to hold our Spring Meeting on Wednesday 19 April in the Green Hut, Harlow Avenue commencing at 07.00pm

A guest speaker from the NYCC Stronger Communities Team will be coming along to share an overview of the new unitary authority's development and her work with communities.

Reminders and an agenda will be distributed ahead of the meeting.



New members

Some years ago, HAPARA undertook a new member programme and it is now becoming clear that focus needs to be given to attracting new members to the Association.

This very important issue will be included as an agenda item for the Spring meeting. In the meantime, it would be extremely helpful if you would actively promote HAPARA to your friends and neighbours whenever possible.

Prospective new members can sign up on line using the HAPARA website <https://hapara.org/> and then clicking on the 'Contact HAPARA' section. Likewise we would be happy to answer queries via email info@hapara.org or membership@hapara.org