

North Yorkshire County Council

County Area Committee for the Harrogate District

7 December 2017

Harrogate Relief Road Review – Progress Report

Report of the Corporate Director Business and Environmental Services

1.0 Purpose Of Report

- 1.1 To provide an update on the progress of the Harrogate Relief Road Review project.
- 1.2 To set out the broad outcomes of the Options Assessment Report (OAR).
- 1.3 To recommend an approach to consultation.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Members will be aware that previous reports to this Committee set out the process of, and progress on, a review of the need for and potential alignment of a Harrogate Relief Road.
- 2.2 The review is considering the possible justification and need for a relief road, alongside a number of potential alignment options for the relief road including the currently adopted (since the early 1990s) preferred route of a Harrogate Northern Relief Road and Killinghall Bypass. The review also considers the case for, and effectiveness of, sustainable transport and demand management measures in Harrogate and Knaresborough and the wider urban area, both as stand-alone measures and as measures complementary to a relief road.
- 2.3 At the request of the previous Chairman of the Area Committee, County Councillor Michael Harrison, Officers will provide a report on the progress of the review at each meeting of the Area Committee. The report requested for the 1 June 2017 Area Committee meeting was not presented due to General Election purdah restrictions.
- 2.4 A Member led relief road review steering group has been established. The purpose of the Harrogate Relief Road Review Steering Group (HRRR SG) is to provide guidance to officers of the County Council throughout the development process. Members of the steering group are County Councillors, Don Mackenzie and Michael Harrison, and Borough Councillor Philip Ireland.

3.0 Recent Progress - Option Assessment

- 3.1 The table below sets out the main stages and programme for the review which was presented to this Committee on 16 March 2017.
- 3.2 As reported at the 16 March 2017 Area Committee, most of the current work that has been undertaken through Q1, Q2 and Q3 of 2017/18 has consisted of information gathering and analysis. As agreed at previous stages of development, during this period there were no interim conclusions reached or decisions made. To date no options have been accepted or discarded. However as set out in section 4 below the OAR now sets out a number of suggestions that it is proposed will not be progressed any further at this time.

Project		Q4 16/ 17	Q1 17/ 18	Q2 17/ 18	Q3 17/ 18	Q4 17/ 18	Q1 18/ 19
Project Management "Setting the scene" Information gathering and baseline development	Project Management and Strategic Support						
	Understanding the current situation						
	Key Stakeholder Engagement						
	Future changes						
	Establishing the need for intervention						
	Defining area of impact / intervention						
	Defining and agreeing objectives						
Scheme Feasibility and Environmental Assessment	Scheme Feasibility Design						
	Environmental Surveys (desktop) and assessment						
	Geotechnical and Flooding Surveys (desktop)						
Option Development and Appraisal	Option identification						
	Initial sift						
	Option development and assessment						
	Initial modelling and appraisal						
	Produce Options Assessment Report (OAR)						
	Decision point (OAR)						
Appraisal Specification Development	Produce initial Appraisal Specification Report (ASR)						
Public Consultation	Public Consultation						
Decision Point	Decision point after public consultation						

- 3.3 At the current time the County Council and its framework consultants WSP are broadly on track with the programme as set out above. There has been some minor programme slippage (as indicated by the green colours on the table above), primarily as a result of having to slightly delay the stakeholder engagement due to General Election purdah restrictions.
- 3.4 Since April 2017 County Council officers and staff from WSP have gathered a wide range of information on matters such as the traffic flows, congestion and environmental issues and constraints, which have formed the basis of the Stage One Report and the Options Assessment Report.
- 3.4 Key Stakeholder Engagement (as highlighted in blue in the table above) took place in June and July 2017. This was a factual data and information gathering process to understand the current issues and potential future opportunities and constraints. Face to face meetings were held with a range of stakeholders, including the

Harrogate & District Cycle Forum, and the Chamber of Trade amongst others. In addition to the face to face meetings a pro forma was distributed to other stakeholder groups to seek their views. All Members of this Committee were offered the opportunity of a face to face meeting or to respond via the pro forma.

- 3.5 The background information gathering, alongside the key stakeholder engagement informed the process of establishing whether there is a case for intervention and the subsequent option identification, development, assessment and appraisal. This forms the basis of the Options Assessment Report, which has now been completed and the details of which are set out in subsequent sections of this report.

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4.0 Options Assessment Report

- 4.1 The Options Assessment Report (OAR) was produced by WSP and provided in draft form to officers for consideration in late October 2017. Officers made a wide variety of comments and suggestions on the report which was then revised and issued as a final draft in mid-November 2017. The Executive Summary of the report can be found in Appendix A. The OAR and its appendices can be found in Appendix B.
- 4.2 The OAR has been developed in line with Department for Transport (DfT) guidance. The level of detail and analysis presented in the OAR is appropriate to the current state of development of the project and as such, sets out initial concepts based on testing of a variety of interventions.
- 4.3 The OAR is also very closely aligned to, and based on the evidence within, the Stage One Report. The Stage One Report functions as a base line document, and sets out the current position within the study area, (see figure 1 below) using a variety of evidence including previous studies and reports, data sources held nationally and locally (such as traffic data and journey time information), economic, environmental and socio-demographic data, as well as the national and local policy context within the study area. The Stage One Report and its appendices can be found in **Appendix C**.

Figure 1 – Study Area

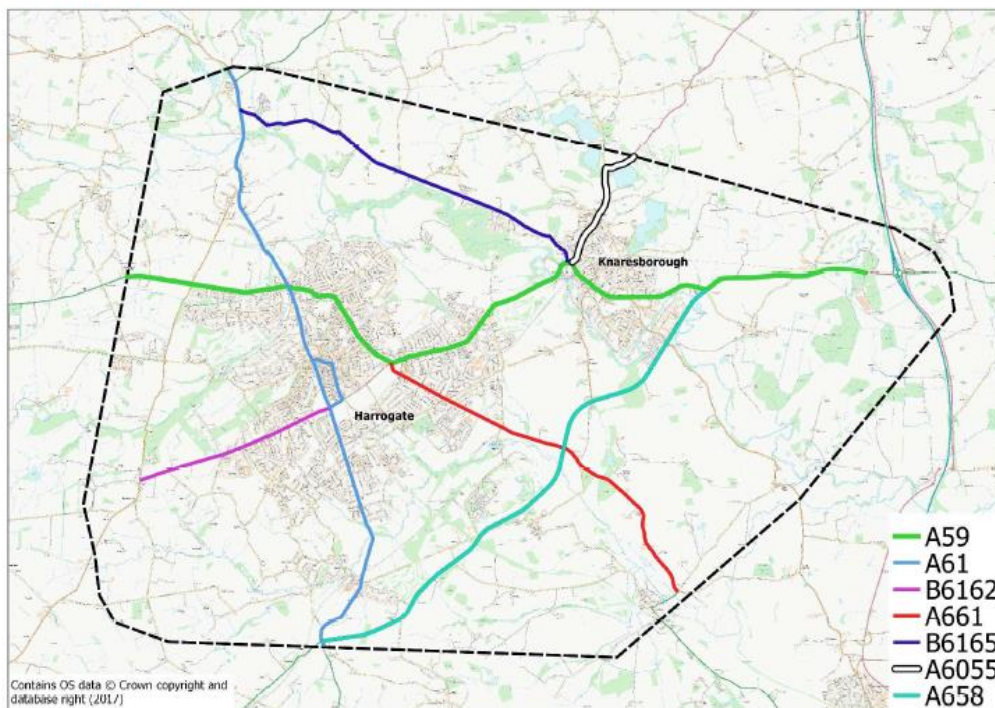


Figure 1 - Harrogate relief road review study area

- 4.4 The Stage One Report sets out the economic context, the operation of the local network, existing sustainable transport provision and use, committed and planned development, and environmental evidence.
- 4.5 The OAR uses the evidence as prepared within the Stage One Report, as the baseline for consideration of possible interventions. Whilst the OAR summarises

some of the evidence from the Stage One Report, the main aim of the OAR is to identify possible interventions which may relieve the congestion and its associated disbenefits, within the study area.

4.6 Key findings from the Stage One Report

- 4.7 The research and analysis illustrated high levels of congestion on key routes into and out of the study area. Constrained junctions and high volumes of traffic result in journey times which can be as much as 45% longer in the peak hour when compared to the interpeak. In addition average journey speeds reduce during the AM and PM peaks – for example, across the entire length of the routes, the A661 northbound sees the greatest difference with average speeds in the AM peak of 26km/hr compared to 37km/hr in the Interpeak (a 31% reduction). Looking at the route section-by-section, the greatest reduction in speed is experienced between the A658 and Forest Lane (as is also the case with journey time variation) where average speeds reduce by almost 30km/hr (58%) in the AM peak to just over 20km/hr.
- 4.8 The main movements on the local network, in both the AM and PM peak hours, are made up of trips with either an origin or destination in the urban areas of Harrogate and Knaresborough, or those that both begin and end within the same urban area; purely internal trips are generally short in length (an average of no more than 2.6km), are primarily commuting related and are predominantly undertaken by private vehicle. Through traffic, with origins and destinations external to the Harrogate and Knaresborough urban areas, is shown to have little bearing on the local network and generally bypasses the towns altogether by travelling on peripheral routes. Whilst purely external trips are low (7% in the AM and PM peak), trips that either start or end in areas external to the urban areas of Harrogate and Knaresborough make up almost half (45% and 48% in the AM and PM peaks respectively) of all trips. Similarly, trips that are purely internal represent around a half of all trips; 48% and 45% in AM and PM peaks respectively. Consequently, interventions which are designed to improve conditions in the study area must be aimed at these non-through trips. For illustrative purposes, please see below the AM and PM trip movement matrix.

From / To	2015 AM (0800 – 0900)		
	External	Harrogate and Knaresborough	Total
External	7%	24%	31%
Harrogate and Knaresborough	21%	48%	69%
Total	28%	72%	100%

Table 1- AM trip movements

From / To	2015 AM (0800 – 0900)		
	External	Harrogate and Knaresborough	Total
External	7%	22%	29%
Harrogate and Knaresborough	26%	45%	71%
Total	33%	67%	100%

Table 2 - PM trip movements

- 4.9 The average trip length in the study area is short and a high proportion (56% in Harrogate) of those trips are made by private vehicle. However, in Knaresborough, walking accounts for 61% of journeys to work, whilst in Harrogate this falls to 32%.

Within the study area there is a well-qualified and educated population, but a lack of professional and higher paid jobs results in a high proportion of people travelling outside of the district for work. Approximately 60% of the resident population of Harrogate district is of working age; of these 56% are employed in professional and managerial roles, while less than 20% work in the leisure and service sectors, which is at odds with the economic make-up of the district. These data suggest significant volumes of cross-boundary commuting for higher value employment.

- 4.10 The Harrogate Local Plan, currently in draft form, sets out the growth aspirations for the study area. It is the intention of the plan to grow sustainably and to ensure that growth within the plan period can be accommodated through transport mitigation schemes as a consequence of development control policies. However, it is recognised, and was raised by stakeholders as part of the information gathering exercise, that current levels of congestion and consequent delay can be a barrier to investment and economic growth.
- 4.11 The A59, which is a key route through the study area, also provides longer distance connectivity from east to west. Strategic connectivity, particularly for freight, is considered a priority within Transport for the North's work on Strategic Development Corridors, with the A59 being recognised as an important route which currently suffers from a lack of resilience, particularly in the study area, due to congestion. The County Council's Strategic Transport Prospectus notes east to west connectivity as a key priority and lists improvements to the A59, and more specifically within Harrogate, as one of the areas of focus.
- 4.12 Within the study area, and within the wider Harrogate district, the environmental quality is high, and there are significant areas, structures and assets protected by a variety of environmental designations (e.g. The Stray and the West Yorkshire Greenbelt). In addition, there are now three designated air quality management areas within the study area, declared as a result of levels of nitrogen dioxide emissions that exceed permitted limits.
- 4.13 OAR methodology**
- 4.14 The OAR follows the approach set out in the Department for Transport's webTAG suite of documents. WebTAG has been used by the DfT since the late 1990s to provide a consistent and easily understood framework for transport scheme development and appraisal. In order to be eligible for Government funding any assessment must be in line with webTAG.
- 4.15 In line with webTAG, after identifying the problem, as set out in the Stage One Report, the second stage of scheme development is to produce a long-list of possible interventions, or options, and undertake a high level assessment of the ability of the suggested interventions to meet a pre-determined set of objectives.
- 4.16 The objectives for the HRRR are based on the following strategic high level outcomes:
- Support the sustainable growth of Harrogate and Knaresborough in line with national, regional and local policies and plans;
 - Improve the quality of life for all communities;
 - Support sustainable economic growth;
 - Protect and enhance the built and natural environment; and

- Improve east to west connectivity.

In addition to the strategic outcomes a list of 20 intermediate, specific objectives was also developed. The objectives were developed in a workshop which included officers from NYCC and Harrogate Borough Council and consultants from WSP. The suggested objectives were then ratified by the Steering Group.

- 4.17 The long-list interventions was developed based on input from the officer workshop, alongside outputs of previous studies, opportunities established through the Stage One Report, stakeholder consultation, and a review of existing policies, strategies and programmes (further details are contained in pages 15-17 of the OAR).
- 4.18 The long-list of 38 possible interventions at this stage should be viewed as high level concepts and whilst research has been undertaken to understand the possible impact they may have on traffic and vehicle movements, assessment has been based primarily on a qualitative, rather than quantitative assessment. This is in line with DfT guidance.
- 4.19 A high level sift of the long-list was carried out by WSP and cross checked by NYCC officers, with each intervention being assessed against its ability to deliver the specific objectives, and also in terms of its deliverability, interdependence (dependence on other interventions), its indicative cost, and the likely timescales for introduction.
- 4.20 As a result of the high level sift, the 15 interventions that received the least favourable assessment, were removed from the list. At this stage no further work will be undertaken on these interventions. However, as the project develops, it may be that further consideration is given to interventions that had previously been discounted. Details of the discounted schemes, and the rationale behind the assessment can be found on pages 20-24 of the OAR.
- 4.21 Assessment and analysis of data collected through the Stage One Report demonstrates that traffic movements within the study area are complex and that there are a significant variety of constraints on the development of possible schemes.
- 4.22 As a consequence, alongside testing the ability of the existing relief road proposals to reduce traffic, the OAR also considers the ability of packages of interventions to change travel behaviours and reduce congestion. It is understood that where a variety of issues contribute to congestion and high traffic levels, that a range of responses will be required to reduce levels of traffic, and as such a package approach is recommended.
- 4.23 Following the initial sift of the long-list of interventions, 23 possible options remained. These were packaged together into 4 'themed' packages, with a further fifth package of a standalone relief road intervention.
- 4.24 The packages (details of each package are set out in appendix C of the full OAR) were focussed as follows:
- A – demand management
 - B – demand management and behavioural change
 - C – relief road only
 - D – relief road and highway operational improvement
 - E - relief road, highway operational improvement and sustainable transport, with urban realm improvements

The packaging process was a result of considering which interventions would complement others and deliver the highest levels of traffic reduction.

- 4.25 As noted in 4.18 above, the interventions incorporated in the packages are at this stage of scheme development, conceptual, and intended to provide a high level understanding of potential impact.
- 4.26 In order to assess the packages and their potential effect, a further level of assessment was undertaken, using the DfT's Early Assessment Sifting Tool (EAST). EAST considers interventions on a qualitative basis, and scores them against a variety of metrics, in such a way as to allow schemes and interventions of different types to be objectively scored and considered in a transparent and understandable way. This is a fundamental element of the webTAG process.
- 4.27 To allow an objective assessment of the relief road proposals within the EAST, it was agreed by the project team that in line with DfT guidance, a generic relief road proposal would be put forward into the EAST. However, to ensure that the proposal put forward was that which is considered to deliver the greatest traffic relief, modelling of 5 historic relief road potential alignments was undertaken using the existing Harrogate and Knaresborough Strategic Traffic Model.

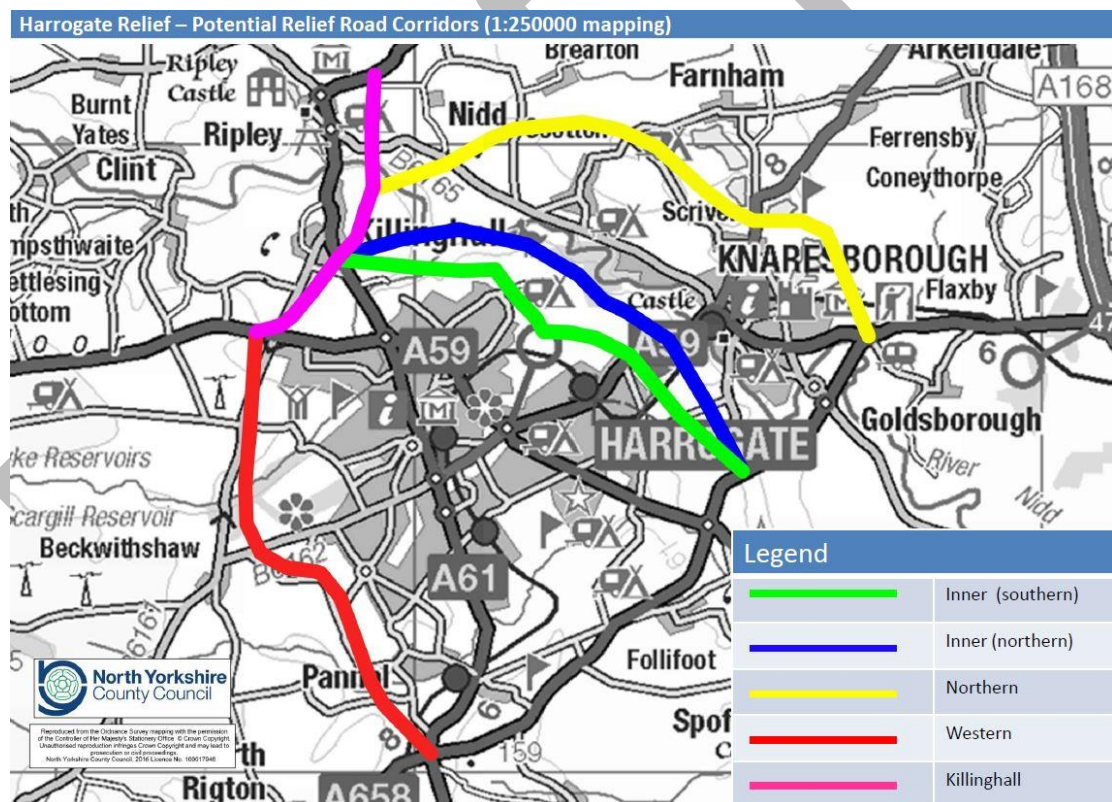


Figure 2 – potential relief road options

- 4.28 This modelling, which looked at current and future year flows (design year 2035) demonstrates that of the 5 alignments (northern, western, inner northern, inner southern (with Bilton Lane connection) and Killinghall) the inner northern and inner southern routes provided the greatest level of relief across the network. For example the inner southern alignment (with a link to Bilton Lane) is forecast (against the do minimum scenario) to result in a 48% reduction in traffic on the A59 Skipton Road and a 45% reduction on the A661 Wetherby Road. The inner northern and southern also provide approximately 40% relief on High Bond End in Knaresborough.

- 4.32 The EAST assessment, whilst detailed, considers a large variety of metrics within the DfT's 5 case model – that is the strategic, management, economic, commercial and financial cases. The EAST scoring was undertaken by a multi-disciplinary team of specialists from WSP, and then was cross checked by NYCC officers.
- 4.31 The outputs of the EAST assessment can be seen in appendix F of the OAR. In summary, the results of the EAST assessment were that package B (demand management and behavioural change) and package E (relief road, highway operational improvement and sustainable transport, with urban realm improvements), performed better than the other packages. Package A, performed next best, and of all the packages is likely to be the lowest cost option. Packages C and D performed the least well overall.
- 4.32 On the basis of the EAST assessment it is recommended that packages B and E are taken forward and presented for public consultation. The decision on which options to consult on will be taken by the Corporate Director of Business and Environmental Services at a meeting with the BES Executive Members on 15 December 2017.

5.0 Public Consultation

- 5.1 Public Consultation is planned for a 12 week period commencing on 21st December 2017. Officers have been working with specialists from the County Council's Communications team and, along with input from the project team and the project Steering Group, have developed a comprehensive and effective plan for public consultation.
- 5.2 The aim of the public consultation is to gather views on the packages which have scored the highest (B and E), and to understand the level of support for all interventions. Officers hope to reach a wide range of stakeholders and the public by employing a variety of approaches and formats to ensure that there is a high level of knowledge of, and engagement in, the consultation. In order to effectively promote the public consultation, distribution of an introductory postcard to 48,000 households and a variety of online, printed and broadcast media have been planned.
- 5.3 The consultation will include seven public exhibitions around the study area, in addition to a comprehensive online presence which will provide opportunities for online completion of survey questions and to submit more general comments. Details of the exhibition venue and times can be found below:

Date	Venue	Time
Wednesday 17 th January	Old Swan Hotel, Harrogate	12:00 – 19:30
Saturday 20 th January	Best Western Hotel, Bond End, Knaresborough	10:00 – 16:00
Tuesday 6 th February	Old Swan Hotel, Harrogate	12:00 – 19:30
Friday 9 th February	Killinghall Village Hall	12:00 – 19:30
Friday 2 nd March	Best Western Hotel, Bond End, Knaresborough	12:00 – 19:30
Saturday 3 rd March	Old Swan Hotel, Harrogate	10:00 – 16:00

- 5.4 A media briefing with local and regional media and press is planned for 27th November 2017, and it is intended that a number of further press releases will be issued during the consultation period to ensure a high level of engagement.
- 5.5 Responses will be tracked throughout the process to ensure the highest levels of engagement from all residents including traditionally under-represented groups.

5.6 A full report on the outcomes of the public consultation will be prepared and brought to the Area Committee meeting on 14 June 2018 for Members' consideration. At that stage Members will be asked for their views on the approach for selection of a preferred option / options to be taken forward into development of a scheme Strategic Outline Business Case.

6.0 Finance

The scheme development work is being funded from existing approved budgets. At present there are no identified additional funding requirements. However should a preferred option(s) be taken forward to the Strategic Outline Business Case development stage and then be provisionally approved for funding from DfT or another funding body, then an appropriate local contribution will need to be identified.

7.0 Equalities Implications

7.1 Consideration has been given to the potential for any adverse equalities impacts arising from the recommendations of this report. It is the view of officers that the recommendations included in this report do not have an adverse impact on any of the protected characteristics identified in the Equalities Act 2010 (Appendix B). However, it is worth noting that any preferred option(s) would require a full Equalities Impact Assessment to be carried out.

7.2 The County Council will ensure that any consultation material published adheres to all relevant equalities requirements and legislation. The Communications team are supporting the project team in providing accessible versions of materials and ensuring that all consultation materials meet Plain English standards.

8.0 Legal Implications

8.1 At present no legal implications have been identified. As the relief road review continues, detailed discussions will take place with the County Council's legal department in respect of the legal implications of ensuring that the public consultation exercise and subsequent implementation of any identified options is properly carried out.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 It is recommended that Members of the County Area Committee for the Harrogate District:

- i) note the content of the Stage One Report, OAR and this committee report.
- ii) recommend to the Corporate Director of BES that packages B and E are taken forward and presented for public consultation

DAVID BOWE
Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services

Authors of Report: Rebecca Gibson and Andrew Bainbridge.

Background Documents:

None.

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Initial equality impact assessment screening form (As of October 2015 this form replaces 'Record of decision not to carry out an EIA')			
This form records an equality screening process to determine the relevance of equality to a proposal, and a decision whether or not a full EIA would be appropriate or proportionate.			
Directorate	Business and Environmental Services		
Service area	Highways and Transportation		
Proposal being screened	Harrogate Relief Road review OAR and consultation proposals		
Officer(s) carrying out screening	Rebecca Gibson		
What are you proposing to do?	To consult the public on proposals for schemes to alleviate congestion in Harrogate and Knaresborough		
Why are you proposing this? What are the desired outcomes?	To give members of the public the opportunity to comment on the options being proposed.		
Does the proposal involve a significant commitment or removal of resources? Please give details.	No.		
Is there likely to be an adverse impact on people with any of the following protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, or NYCC's additional agreed characteristics? As part of this assessment, please consider the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent is this service used by particular groups of people with protected characteristics? Does the proposal relate to functions that previous consultation has identified as important? Do different groups have different needs or experiences in the area the proposal relates to? If for any characteristic it is considered that there is likely to be a significant adverse impact or you have ticked 'Don't know/no info available', then a full EIA should be carried out where this is proportionate. You are advised to speak to your Equality rep for advice if you are in any doubt.			
Protected characteristic	Yes	No	Don't know/No info available
Age		✓	
Disability		✓	
Sex (Gender)		✓	
Race		✓	
Sexual orientation		✓	
Gender reassignment		✓	
Religion or belief		✓	
Pregnancy or maternity		✓	
Marriage or civil partnership		✓	
NYCC additional characteristic			
People in rural areas		✓	
People on a low income		✓	
Carer (unpaid family or friend)		✓	
Does the proposal relate to an area	No		

where there are known inequalities/probable impacts (e.g. disabled people's access to public transport)? Please give details.			
Will the proposal have a significant effect on how other organisations operate? (e.g. partners, funding criteria, etc.). Do any of these organisations support people with protected characteristics? Please explain why you have reached this conclusion.	None		
Decision (Please tick one option)	EIA not relevant or proportionate:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Continue to full EIA:
Reason for decision	The work being proposed is primarily around disseminating information and offering opportunities for consultation - there is no reason for the work programme to cause any negative impact on anybody from within the protected characteristic groups.		
Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)			
Date			