

## STATEMENT BY BILTON CONSERVATION GROUP

16<sup>th</sup> March 2017.

Bilton Conservation Group formed on 19<sup>th</sup> May 1982 to protect Nidd Gorge and the Green Belt separating Harrogate from Knaresborough.

This statement seeks clarity on assertions that a Traffic Study has **already** established that the Green Route will divert 'up to 40% of traffic from Skipton Road and 30% of traffic from Wetherby Road'.

Councillor Mackenzie's column 'Transport Talk' in the Harrogate Advertiser has compared the relative effectiveness of the Blue and Green Routes through Nidd Gorge and Bilton.

On 29<sup>th</sup> September in particular he provided a Traffic Flow forecast and map with tabulations showing **minus 40% and minus 30%**, but no supporting data. He went on to say the the Western ByPass option, and I quote, 'is likely to be discarded'.

In the Knaresborough Post on 6<sup>th</sup> October he is reported as stating his preferred route would be the Green Route, and I quote, 'whenever you devise a new route you are always going to run the risk that it will attract further development .....'.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> October he made the case again, and I quote, 'our Traffic modelling shows that the Relief Road Options will bring about big reductions in traffic volumes on existing roads like Skipton Road'.

On 17<sup>th</sup> November 2016 I addressed this committee and put these questions:-

- A) What is 40% of Skipton Road Traffic – 5 or 6000 vehicle movements a day?
- B) what **additional Induced Traffic** would inflate this figure?

These questions remain unanswered.

Meanwhile widespread anxiety and uncertainty in the community is generating opposition and Public Campaigns.

There is a growing prospect of Planning Blight affecting householders and businesses along the Blue and Green alignments:-

HG1 – 3 XX etc, 4 XX etc  
HG3 – 2 XX etc.

As properties come on the market Legal Searches are already identifying this Road Study on the NYCC website which is deterring would-be buyers and sellers.

Perhaps this committee would consider the Public Interest and respond to the following questions:

## SPECULATIVE USE OF PUBLIC FUNDS AT A TIME OF NATIONAL AUSTERITY

Q. Just how is the £600,000 allocated to the study to be spent?

## PREMATURITY

Q. Is it not premature to declare **any** 'preferred route' and **rule out** any option, such as the Western ByPass before the Traffic Study is complete?

## PUBLIC DOMAIN

Q. When will the Traffic Study data and computer modelling underpinning Councillor Mackenzie's claims about '40% traffic relief on the A59' be put in the Public Domain?

The wider Public is entitled to be informed and it is simply unacceptable to make repeated assertions that the Green Route is the only viable option in the absence of the facts of the case.

Must this vital information be left to a Freedom of Information request before the public is allowed to know just exactly what is going on?

Keith Wilkinson MBE

Honorary Secretary

[www.biltonconservationgroup.co.uk](http://www.biltonconservationgroup.co.uk)

*FOOTNOTE: full Post Codes have been omitted from this version of the statement to avoid adding to the anxiety of those householders and businesses already affected. This omission was fully explained to the HRR/LAC meeting on 16/03/2017.*