

Cllr David Levene Update on Promoting Sustainable Transport in York

Summary

1. This report provides Members of the Economic & City Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the ways that the Cabinet Member is ensuring the Council promotes sustainable transport modes and engages with the public on transport schemes across the city.

Local Transport Plan (LTP)

2. The city's third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) sets out the transport strategy for the city and the measures to be progressed in the short-term (2011-2015), medium-term (2015-2021) and long-term (2021 -2031), under the following strategic themes:
 - Provide Quality Alternatives (to the car).
 - Provide Strategic Links
 - Implement and Support Behavioural Change.
 - Tackle Transport Emissions.
 - Improve Public Streets and Spaces

Council Plan

3. The Council has set 'Get York Moving' as a key priority for the city being delivered under the following initiatives:
 - Expanding Park and Ride Services
 - Improving Bus Services
 - Developing York's Cycling and Pedestrian Network
 - Improving Movement in the City Centre
 - Establishing 20mph Speed Limits in York's Residential Areas
 - Winning Hearts and Minds
4. There are two key elements to promoting sustainable transport in the city: Information and Infrastructure. The Council is working to raise awareness of alternatives to travelling by private car by progressing travel planning (Business, School and Personal) using the latest technology and delivering a one stop transport website for all travel information in the city (itravelyork.info). The Council is also delivering infrastructure improvements to provide advantages to sustainable transport modes where possible.

5. The Council has been successful in obtaining additional funding from central government over recent years to encourage sustainable transport. The key initiatives are the iTravelYork project funded by the Local Sustainable Transport Fund and the Better by Bus initiative funded through the Better Bus Area Fund. Other transport initiatives are progressed using the Local Transport Plan Integrated Block allocation from the Department for Transport and the Council's revenue resources.
6. The Transport Service works closely with the Air Quality team to promote transport measures which encourage non motorised transport modes and the increased use of low emission vehicles. The results of the consultation on the city's third Air Quality Action Plan are currently being assessed.

i-Travel York

7. The i-TravelYork programme commenced in 2012/13 and has been extended through to the end of 2015/16. The programme was focused in the Northern Quadrant of the city from Clifton through to Monks Cross where there are a relatively high number of car based trips. The iTY programme delivers eight different work-streams which together aim to encourage behaviour change in York towards more sustainable and active modes of travel. The following paragraphs outline the elements delivered in each work-stream:
 - Business engagement
 - Personal travel planning
 - Marketing and communications
 - Public transport initiatives – See Better Bus Area
 - Schools engagement
 - Health and active leisure
 - Infrastructure improvements
 - Alternative fuel vehicles

Business Engagement

8. The Council has developed a Business Travel Plan Network with 82 businesses on a network database. CYC has hosted a number of breakfast briefings on a range of topical subjects (including, the Workplace Cycle Challenge, Workplace Personal Travel Planning surgeries etc). 6 events have been run to date.

- Travel Plan implementation: 20 businesses have an approved travel plan with CYC; this is increasing as new planning applications have a travel plan requirement. These are now being administered via the ionTravel management system.
- Workplace Cycle Challenge: This initiative has grown year-on-year. In 2012, 64 organisations participated in the three week challenge. In 2013, 71 organisations participated and in 2014, 82 businesses took part.
- Workplace PTP: In 2014, JMP successfully engaged with 14 businesses in York and ran 29 workplace PTP events at 13 organisations.
- Match funding: Through i-Travel York, CYC has offered match funding to businesses for the provision of cycle parking. Four large businesses in York took this opportunity to improve facilities for their staff (York Science Park, University of York, York Hospital NHS Trust and Aviva) – collectively, 523 new cycle spaces have been provided through this initiative. Additionally, CYC offer the “Park that Bike” scheme to smaller businesses who wish to install cycle parking next to their shops / business – 186 spaces for cycles has been provided through this initiative.

Personal Travel Planning

9. A total of over 15,000 households in the northern area of the city have been contacted through the PTP project over the first 3 years of the project. The majority of 2014 engagements were from residential PTP in the New Earswick, Huntington, Earswick, Haxby and Wigginton areas of the Northern Quadrant, with 2,936 households participating as a result. Additionally, 1,912 participated at 21 community events, given a total of 4,848. ‘Participation’ involves signing up for travel information, taking a personal ‘challenge’ to try something new, or joining the online club MyTravelYork.
 - 20% of respondents completed their challenge
 - 17% increased their levels of walking
 - 17% increased their levels of cycling
 - 13% increased their levels of bus use
 - 16% are using their car less

Marketing and Communications

10. One of the main elements of the i-Travel York project is the provision of a single website for all travel information for the city. The itravelyork.info site includes information on all transport modes and provides a journey planner which shows options for travelling within and around the city. The site also provides access to Bus and Cycle network maps and provides advice on driving options including car sharing and electric vehicles. In addition the site provides information on diversions for roadworks and incidents including access to the Council's twitter account @york_travel which provides the latest information for travellers in the city.
11. A popular cycle festival has been run for the last 5 years in Rowntree Park most recently linked to the Sky Ride which had over 10,000 participants in 2014 - double the 2013 number of participants. Specific marketing campaigns have included Bike Belles which is a bespoke cycling project to engage women in cycling. Between 14th February and 26th June, a total of 27 events were held, engaging a large number of women.
 - 400 women were actively engaged in the Bike Belles project
 - 2,000 women were indirectly engaged through social media interactions

School Engagement

12. We work with schools within the city to reduce the impact of the School Run and encourage more active travel modes. Most schools in York have a travel plan but there is no longer a statutory obligation on schools to keep them up to date. We work closely with School Services when there is new building works or a new school is planned.
13. In addition Walk to School weeks are run in the Autumn and summer terms, and the Big Pedal takes place in March. Participation is good, with typically 28 primary schools taking part in walk to school weeks. The Sustrans Big Pedal event typically sees 16 – 18 schools taking part.
14. As part of the Safe Routes to School programme over the last 10 years the Council has provided 20mph zones outside most schools in York and improved walking and cycling routes.

Health and Active Leisure

15. The LSTF project promotes healthy activities across the city such as leisure walks, adult cycle training and maintenance sessions including Sky Ride Local sessions.

Alternative Fuelled Vehicles

16. The Council has engaged with the taxi trade on benefits of low emission taxis and created one of the UK's first 'Low Emission Taxi incentive schemes'. There are currently over 30 hybrid/electric taxis on the streets of York as a result of this incentive scheme. Following support from City of York Council, Streamline Taxis has become the first taxi service in York to operate low emission vehicles with 10 new hybrid taxis and one electric taxi.
17. The Council has also worked with local bus operators to promote the benefits of low emission buses. There are now 8 full electric buses in operation in York including a full electric Park & Ride site at Poppleton Bar. A second Park & Ride site will also convert to electric shortly. The Council has also helped to provide the world's first full electric double decker City Sight Seeing bus. A further 5 are planned to be converted.
18. The UK's first 'Pay as You Go' publicly accessible electric vehicle recharging network accessible by mobile app, swipe card or voice recognition software has been installed in York. There are 17 dual headed standard chargers and 5 rapid chargers at city centre car parks and Park&Ride sites. 10 EV charging points have also been installed at York hotels and 6 at commercial developments.
19. Hybrid and electric cars have been successfully integrated into the CYC pool vehicle fleet partnering with City Car Club resulting in a reduction in CYC 'grey' fleet mileage by 34%

Better by Bus

20. York has been at the cutting edge of developing attractive bus services, with the express intention of bringing about mode shift from car, for many years. The prime historic example of this is York's Park & Ride network, which now features six sites, 3,500 parking spaces and carries 4 million trips per year, perhaps eliminating as much as 5,000 car trips in the city per day.

It is viewed as an exemplar system by many towns and cities seeking to develop a park and ride service of their own.

21. Provision of priority for bus services on the highway, to reduce reliability and reduce journey times, has always been difficult in York owing to the limited road space available – particularly in the city centre.

Priorities have been provided on some key routes eg. Tadcaster Road but other measures such traffic signal priority at junctions away from the city centre have been installed.

22. The space limitation also means that minor incidents have disproportionate effect on network capacity. The Better Bus Area project is funding Bus wardens on the ground to assist in resolving incidents quickly and Network Management Officers who monitor the city's CCTV and adjust traffic signal timings remotely. Both these actions reduce the impact of incidents and improve the capacity of the highway network for all road users.

23. In 2013 the Council set up a "Bus User Group" to represent York's bus passengers. This meets every two months, with members chosen to be representative of the bus using public (e.g. a range of ages, socio-economic status etc). We have also implemented a new "fault reporting system" with bus users able to report any faults they come across on the network (e.g. a missing timetable) through postcards carried on buses or a smartphone app. We have also undertaken a range of other consultative activities, including Bus User Surgeries in York city centre, attending ward and parish meetings and talking to special interest groups such as York Older People's Assembly, York Youth Council and York Blind and Partially Sighted Society.

24. The Council is currently working to deliver a transport smartcard in 2015. This will initially carry the park and ride ticket products and "All York" multi-operator products, with discussions underway with York's bus operators to ensure the card also carries some of their own products. We have also worked with Transdev to promote the Unibus smartcard, through providing the cards in freshers' welcome packs.

25. Working with Network Rail, East Coast and York Pullman the Council has provided a bus passenger enquiry point at the Rail Station.

This currently handles 2,000 enquiries a month and now sells a range of bus tickets, especially more expensive products such as season tickets and long distance tickets (e.g. to the North Yorkshire Coast).

26. The Council has installed around 50 real time information screens around the city. Most of these are in the city centre, but more recently screens have been fitted in district and village centres (e.g. Haxby, Dunnington and Acomb) and at large trip generators (e.g. York University, College of York St John, York District Hospital, York College). We have also developed a real time bus information smartphone app, as well as the UK's first multi-modal journey planner to include park and ride (see www.itravel.york.info) for more information.
27. More recently, effort has been focused on improving the city's general bus provision to mirror the high standards of the Park & Ride operation. This is viewed as a necessity, given the importance of bus services in the future as the key mitigator against potential increases in traffic congestion and as a delivery agent for other key CYC policies. Reliable, reasonably priced bus services are a very important facilitator of mobility in the labour market (Social Exclusion Unit, 2003). This has led to the following initiatives in York:
 - The Better Bus Area (BBA) programmes, which have sought to improve facilities for bus users across the city by, for example, improving stops and shelters, devising new, easy to read, timetables at all bus stops, electronic real time screen in the city centre and mobile apps providing real time next bus information.
 - Work by the bus companies themselves to better serve York, for example, FirstGroup reduced all their bus fares by 25-30% in Summer 2013 and bought in a new, York-based, management team replacing a previous management of the York operation from Leeds
 - Through the Green Bus Fund York now has one of the largest fleet of electric buses in the UK, with programmes in place to use electric buses for two of York's 6 park and rides, 2 non park and ride services and a complete conversion of the tour bus fleet to electric buses
 - A re-energising of the city's Quality Bus Partnership, particularly through the most recent round of the Better Bus Area programme, whereby York's bus operators have agreed to surrender some of their fuel duty rebate to CYC, so that it

can be spent on measures to improve service reliability. York is the only authority, outside the UK's 8 core cities, to have enacted this form of governance and funding for the bus network.

28. The programme to improve bus services in York kicked off in earnest in 2012, so it is relatively early to evaluate its success or otherwise. Initial indicators, however, are encouraging.

Particularly:

- The bus operators, CYC's private sector partners in delivering the bus network, have responded well to CYC's efforts to improve services. Bus companies are engaged through the Quality Bus Partnership and have assisted CYC's initiatives. An example of this is a recent exercise to lop trees which struck buses across York.

An open top tour bus was provided by Transdev, free of charge, tree surgeons were hired by CYC, funded by the fuel duty the operators have reassigned to CYC, and FirstGroup provided supervisory staff for the operation. The outcome of the operation has been that bus companies can now use double decker buses on some routes which were previously barred to them because of the risk of tree strikes, which has allowed a much needed increase in capacity on at least one frequent city route.

- Reliability across the network is improving. The DfT's recent statistical bulletin on service reliability shows that reliability for "frequent" (ie every 15 minutes or more often) services in York is amongst the best for UK urban areas. For non-frequent services reliability has increased from 68% being "on time" in 2009/10 to 84% in 2013/14.

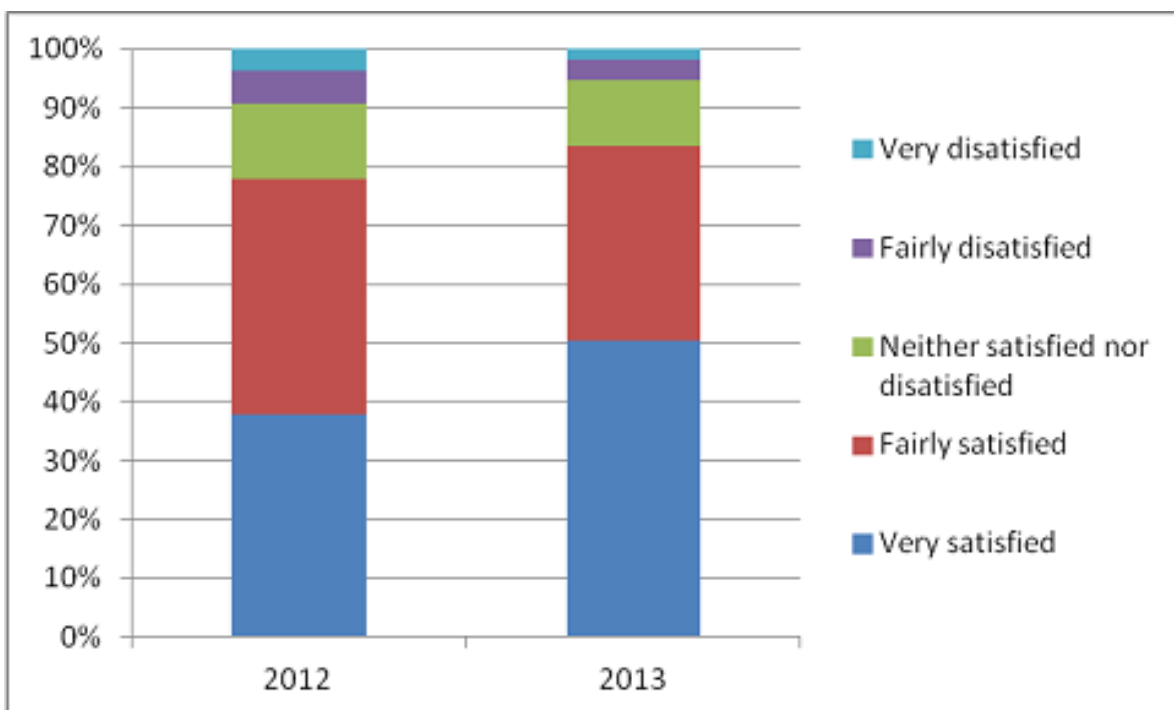
29. Passenger satisfaction is also improving. Passengers on York's buses rank them amongst the best in the UK according to surveys made by Passenger Focus, the UK's independent watchdog for bus and rail services.

30. Between September and December 2013, Passenger Focus interviewed over 1,000 passengers on York's Park & Ride services, First's city services and Transdev's services. The research showed that, compared to 18 other local authority areas surveyed by Passenger Focus last year, York's buses were:

- Considered best value for money of all the areas surveyed
- Considered in the best condition for all the areas surveyed

- In the top quarter of all areas for many aspects of the service, including satisfaction with bus stops, comfort and safety of vehicles.
- The city’s bus drivers were also ranked in the top quarter of areas for their welcome and helpfulness, smooth driving and appearance.

31. The chart below shows overall passenger satisfaction assessed across a number of aspects of the bus service, between Spring 2012 and Autumn 2013. As can be seen, there is a significant increase in passengers who are “very satisfied” (from 38% to 50%) and a decrease in those who are either “Very dissatisfied” or “fairly dissatisfied” (from 9% to 5%). This data set covers a period before many of the improvements to services made through BBA had taken effect, and more surveys are programmed to capture the effect of these additional measures.



- Passenger numbers are increasing. Between 2012/13 and 2013/14 passenger numbers in York increased by 300,000 passenger trips, or 2%. Whilst not, in itself, a tremendous increase it should be seen within the context of a 4% fall in North Yorkshire and 7% fall in East Riding over the same period. Furthermore, the Poppleton Bar Park & Ride, investment in electric vehicles and improvements to passenger information are not captured in the data as they took place after March 2014.

To further put the increase in context, it broadly corresponds to 1,000 extra passengers per day, or a reduction of 60,000 car trips in York across the year (approximately 20% of new bus trips are modal shift from car (DfT stats)).

- The improvements in York are being recognised at a national level, through two study visits to York by senior DfT staff and favourable coverage in bus industry magazines and newspapers (for example, see <http://www.route-one.net/industry/operations/funding-helps-york-build-better-bus-services/>).

32. The changes so far represent a substantive gathering of momentum for York's bus network, but there is still much to do. Whilst reliability has improved, the speed of bus services, particularly in the peaks is relatively slow, which is likely to be suppressing use of the service.

As such, there is a need for greater, and imaginative bus priority measures, particularly in the city centre and on the immediate approaches to the city centre (for example, Fishergate, Blossom Street, Clarence Street etc). There is significant scope for greater adoption of electric vehicles in fleet, to both reduce particulate pollution in York and improve the attractiveness of the service.

Public Engagement

33. Transport schemes and interventions are generated from analysis of evidence such as accident statistics by Council officers and requests from the public e.g. resident parking schemes. The public are consulted for most schemes on the highway. For changes which require a permanent Traffic Regulation Order (e.g. parking restrictions) there are statutory notification processes to follow.

Transport Projects

34. The Transport Service delivers a large number of projects each year to enhance the environment for travellers in the city. The public are consulted on all of the significant schemes which are progressed. The extent of the consultation process depends upon the size, complexity, impact, location and funding source of the project.

35. A staged approval approach is taken to minimise abortive work and to ensure that funding is focused on the most acceptable final design. The aim for future schemes is to improve the consultation process by engaging with the public at an earlier stage in the development of projects so that they can be more fully involved resulting in the delivery of better overall schemes. This will enable local residents to co-design schemes, which affect their local environment, with the assistance of highway engineers to ensure that they meet acceptable design standards.
36. For many large transport projects (where there are realistic alternatives) currently we progress a one or two stage public consultation process to ensure that a solution which addresses local concerns is delivered. Where there are a number of realistic and affordable alternative solutions initial consultation is undertaken on a number of concept designs/principles to enable an acceptable option to be confirmed. Following the determination of a preferred approach further design is undertaken to confirm the engineering design layout. A final stage of consultation is undertaken on the outline design to ensure that local concerns have been addressed where possible.
37. Various different consultation mechanisms are used to ensure that acceptable designs are progressed: Leaflet distribution, Public meetings, Exhibitions, On-line consultations.
38. The key elements of the current consultation process for different types of schemes are shown in the following flow charts.

Large Complex Projects (Constrained Sites, Multiple Solutions)

- Problem Identification
- Feasibility Study
- Preparation of Concept Option Designs
- Stage 1 Consultation
- Preferred Option Determined
- Outline Design Prepared
- Stage 2 Consultation
- Final Design Approved
- Detail Design Prepared
- Construction

Smaller Simple Projects (Unconstrained Sites, Single Solutions)

- Problem Identification
- Feasibility Study
- Outline Design Prepared
- External Consultation
- Final Design Approved
- Detail Design Prepared
- Construction

Minor Projects (e.g. Pedestrian Dropped Kerb Crossings)

- Problem Identification – e.g. Prioritised Public Requests
- Review of site location
- Construction

Highway Regulation

39. The Council acts as the Highway Authority for the city regulating access and use of the Public Highway. There are statutory processes set down, principally in the 1980 Highways Act, which identify how the Council can make changes to the highway. A number of the most common items are identified below.

Waiting Restrictions

40. Requests by the public for changes to waiting restrictions (e.g. yellow lines) are reviewed on an annual basis. Any objections, following advertisement of the amendment to the Traffic Regulation Order, are formally considered. The final decision on the proposal is determined by the Cabinet Member responsible for Transport.
41. The Annual Review for 2014 covered 101 requests and included 48 recommendations for changes to the TRO across 15 different wards. These changes were advertised in November/December 2014.

Residents' Priority Parking Schemes (ResPark)

42. Any requests for changes to existing ResPark schemes are reviewed and approved in the same way as the waiting restrictions. If there is demonstrable demand for a new ResPark scheme then a formal consultation is undertaken. In order to proceed with any scheme, over 50% of households have to respond with over 50% of these in favour of a scheme.

Speed Limits

43. Requests for changes to speed limits can be made via a form available on the Council website or in other ways. In a similar way to waiting restrictions, these requests are now being collected together and considered all at once on an annual basis. Requests for changes to speed restrictions are much less common than requests for changes to waiting restrictions.

Traffic Signs

44. Requests for changes to traffic signs which do not involve legal changes (e.g. new warning or information signs) are summarised by officers on a pro-forma, added to a folder and considered together on a quarterly basis.

Speed Review Process

45. The Council receives many complaints about speeding vehicles from a number of sources including residents, elected members and representatives of local groups, such as resident associations. To help manage this, a data led method of assessing all speeding issues in York has been developed.

Speeding issues are assessed against a number of criteria in a partnership approach with the North Yorkshire Police (NYP) and North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service. Following receipt of the complaint each site is processed by NYP and scored against the criteria to determine the most appropriate resolution.

46. The following data is reviewed:

- a. Injury accident record** - based upon North Yorkshire Police data, for the preceding three years, and prioritised on severity using the standard categorisations of fatal, serious, or slight. Officers use a points scoring system to rank sites as high or low. This is based on a slight casualty receiving 1 point, with a fatal or serious casualty being weighted at 4 points. A total points score of 6 or more is need for the site to be given a “high” ranking.
- b. Speed data** - collected using automatic counting equipment and conducted over a period of at least 24 hours, but usually 7 days X 24hrs.

47. Sites are categorised as indicated in the following table and funding prioritised against other schemes in the Council’s Capital Programme. It should be noted that casualty information is separately analysed annually across the city and funding allocated on a priority basis out of the Local Safety Scheme budget where engineering measure are appropriate.

Category	Speed	Casualties	Priority	Treatment
1	High	High	Very High	Speed management measures
2	Low	High	High	Casualty reduction measures
3	High	Low	Medium	Speed management measures, if funds available.
4	Low	Low	Low	Speed Indicator Scheme (SID) scheme, bin stickers etc.

20mph Limits

48. The Council has a policy to deliver 20mph speed limits in residential streets. The signed-only 20mph programme’s primary objective is to make an investment to:

- Improve the local environment of neighbourhoods for residents;
- Promote more considerate driving (20mph becoming the ‘new normal’ for residential streets);
- Encourage more walking and cycling;
- Increase *confidence about safety* in York’s neighbourhoods.

49. Slight reductions in the mean speeds have been recorded on roads where 20mph limits have been introduced in York. It is anticipated that reduced speeds will help to meet the objectives of the scheme identified above.

Traffic Congestion Commission

50. A Traffic Congestion Commission is proposed to be set up to investigate options for addressing congestion issues in the city.
51. The objectives and protocols for the establishment of the commission are currently being developed with group leaders. The current expectation is that a report identifying the commission's remit and governance will be presented to the Cabinet in the near future.

The commission would commence work shortly afterwards with a final decision on the recommendations made by the Council in September/October 2015.

Cllr David Levene

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