

Meeting	Economy, Place, Access and Transport Scrutiny Committee
Date	24 September 2024
Present	Councillors K Taylor (Chair), J Burton, Fenton, Healey (Vice-Chair), Hook, Steward, Merrett, Coles (Substitute) and Wilson (Substitute)
In Attendance	Councillors Kent and Ravilious
Officers In Attendance	James Gilchrist - Director of Transport, Environment and Planning Patrick Looker - Head of Service Finance Ben Grabham - Head of Environmental Services Julian Ridge - Sustainable Transport Manager Michael Howard - Head of Highways and Transport Tom Horner - Head of Active and Sustainable Transport Andy Vose - Transport Policy Manager
Apologies	Councillors Vassie, Ben Burton, Whitcroft

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## **8. Declarations of Interest (17:31)**

Members were asked to declare, at this point in the meeting, any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests or any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interest that they might have in respect of the business on the agenda.

Cllr Wilson declared that she had a non-prejudicial interest in relation to minutes 13 and 14 as she worked for York Bike Bells.

Cllr Merrett declared that he had a non-prejudicial interest in relation to minutes 13 and 14 as a member of the York Cycle Campaign, York Bus Forum, and was previously a member of York Civic Trust when they commented on the Local Transport Strategy and was a member of the Enhanced Bus Forum.

Cllr Jane Burton declared that she had a non-prejudicial interest in relation to minutes 12, 13, and 14 as a member of the York Disability Rights Forum steering group.

## **9. Minutes (17:34)**

Resolved: The Committee agreed the minutes of the 25 June 2024 meetings be signed as a correct record.

## **10. Public Participation (17:35)**

It was reported that there had been 8 registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme. The Committee had also received several written representations that could be found as a supplement to the agenda.

Flick Williams raised concerns relating to accessibility in the city from buses to public toilet provision, in which she highlighted that the Guildhall accessible toilets were not open to the public. She noted that the York Disability Rights Forum was incorrectly listed as being a part of the Public Toilets Stakeholder Group. She also raised her concern that the York Local Transport Strategy was a plan for mainly improved cycling with other bits as add-ons.

Tony May spoke on behalf of the York Civic Trust who had advised on the York Local Transport Strategy. He noted their support for the vision but was concerned about a lack of ambition and wished to see a longer-term implementation plan.

Anna Semlyen noted that car traffic had increased by 26% since the Covid-19 Pandemic and was concerned that current plans would not meet the Council's reduction in car travel targets. She spoke in favour of introducing 20 mph speed limits across the city and highlighted the reduction in deaths and accidents the change has had elsewhere.

Dinah Barry asked that the Committee support a zebra crossing outside the New Earswick Folk Hall. She noted that Haxby Road currently split New Earswick in two for many residents and a zebra crossing would assist residents accessing all areas of their community.

Lynette Mills spoke on behalf of York Cycle Campaign who she noted welcomed the Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan. She noted that the campaign had some concerns about the Local Transport Strategy

implementation plan being only two years and wished to see more active travel targets included to be completed within the timescale.

Niall McFerran spoke on behalf of the York Bus Forum and noted that they welcomed the Local Transport Implementation plan. He noted the need to improve bus services and asked how this would be impacted by recent service provision cuts. He noted the need for more accessibility spaces on buses and recommended the Council explore a regional bus app and full enfranchisement.

Diane Roworth requested that the Council rewrite the Local Transport Implementation plan with the social model of disability in mind which the Council had adopted. She suggested that each scheme should identify its impact on the disabled and how this could be mitigated.

Geoff Beacon spoke regarding the climate emergency and noted his concern that the Council was not willing to inform residents what might be required to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2030. He noted studies which suggested even with alternative options lots of people would still choose to drive therefore policy was needed to encourage people not to drive and choose other forms of transport.

## **11. 2023/24 Finance and Performance Outturn (17:57)**

The Committee considered the 2023/24 Finance and Performance Outturn report. Members asked about a few data points, enquiring whether there was more recent data available, and it was confirmed that this could be expected in the quarter one report scheduled for the Committees October meeting.

The Committee asked whether additional data on housing costs which also included rent increases could be included, it was confirmed that officers would investigate whether this data was available. Members also enquired about the cost of implementing the garden waste collection scheme. Officers confirmed that due to not having a full year of revenue and the implementing of the scheme had meant that the Council had set out funding for this while the scheme gets underway.

Resolved:

- i. Noted the finance and performance information;
- ii. To include data on rent prices in Finance and Performance monitors if available.

Reason: To ensure expenditure is kept within the approved budget.

## **12. Public Toilet Provision: Update Report (18:22)**

The Committee were joined by Martin Fearon Managing Director from Healthmatic who are contracted by the Council for the management of its non-park toilets.

Officers outlined that the Council's current public toilet provision. It was confirmed that the Council has the powers to provide toilet provision in the city but there was no duty to provide this provision. Officers outlined investments at places such as Coppergate and Silver Street that had taken place in recent years and work underway at Acomb Front Street, it was noted that the Council was awaiting round 3 of Changing Places funding which could be bid for to further improve provision.

The Committee enquired with Martin Fearon and Officers who the contract with Healthmatic had performed for both the Council and Healthmatic. Martin Fearon noted from Healthmatic's perspective the contract had performed well with its aim to maintain the same level of provision as well as protecting the Council from rising costs. Offices agreed that the contract had performed well. They noted that the challenge was always to get the balance right between provision and quality.

Members discussed the Council's stakeholder group on public toilets. The Executive Member for Environment and Climate Emergency confirmed that the stakeholder group was a better way to report issues with provision which was outside of the Healthmatic contract such as event provision. Members discussed the Take a Seat Campaign and considered how the Council could promote the campaign and publicly acknowledge businesses currently signed up.

Members enquired about the cost of the Healthmatic contract and how much was generated through charging to use public provision. Martin Fearon confirmed that the contract was £79,000 and they made about £75,000 from charging at public toilets. He confirmed that the money generated from charging did not cover the cost of maintaining provision. The committee discussed what improvements were possible at public provision. It was confirmed that there was a lot of options if funding was available. It was noted that small cosmetic changes could have low-cost options, however, substantial layout changes which upgraded things such as toilets and sinks could be quite expensive. It was also noted that damage to provision was not uncommon, and provision needed to be considered with this in mind.

Late night and nighttime provision were discussed, it was confirmed that while possible to open for longer hours there was several challenges. It was noted that both the Police and the Council's Community Safety team had safety concerns related to late openings. There was also an increased cost to maintaining a 24-hour provision in both operating costs and increased maintenance costs due to increased levels of expected vandalism. Martin Fearon noted that there was a growing trend across the country to reduce opening hours which had seen a reduction in recorded vandalism.

The Committee also discussed provision in the city for disabled residents and visitors. Members highlighted that the accessible toilets at the Guildhall were not open to individuals not visiting the Guildhall, they noted that the Guildhall was not managed by the Council but requested that the Council seek a way with the University of York for this provision to be made available. Members also enquired about whether the Council had representation on the Stakeholder Group from people with medical conditions such as crohn's disease to ensure provision was meeting people's needs. The Committee also raised some concerns relating to access to public provision for the visually impaired and officers confirmed that they would review how the visually impaired could access accessible toilet provision in the city.

Resolved:

- i. That the Committee supports the Council bidding for round 3 of Changing Places funding when funding becomes available to fund improvements to public toilet provision;
- ii. That the Executive Member for Environment and Climate Emergency explore how to improve access to public toilets for the visually impaired;
- iii. That the Council ensure that the stakeholder Group on Public Toilets include representation from individuals with health conditions such as Crohn's disease.

Reason: To ensure the city has sufficient public toilet provision.

### **13. Local Transport Strategy Implementation Plan 2024-2026 (19:07)**

Councillor Coles left the meeting at this point.

Officers introduced the report, they confirmed that the Implementation Plan is meant to outlined what the Council needs to do to achieve the vision set

out in the Transport Strategy. They confirmed that the Council did not currently have funding for everything outlined in the plan, however, unfunded schemes were included to allow the Council to progress them if future funding becomes available.

The Committee enquired as to why the implementation plan covered only two years and whether a longer-term implementation plan could be produced. Officers explained that the proposal for a two-year plan was due to the work on the Movement and Place plan which when completed would outline a lot of the longer-term schemes to be implemented and this current plan allowed the Council to have a plan in place while to the Movement and Place plan was developed.

The Committee discussed how accessibility was being considered within the implementation plan. Officers confirmed that the Council was applying equal weight to the Inclusive Mobility Department for Transport Document as it did to LTN120 and confirmed that they would clarify this within the report, as well as review the documents to ensure they complied with the Social Model of Disability. Officers confirmed that with the city centre sustainable transport route they planned to go out to consultation in January 2025 on who requires access to the route.

Members discussed the plans need to ensure that the Local Transport Strategy made approves across the city including outside of the city centre. It was noted that the plan as well as the Movement and Place plan would seek to deliver across the city. An important area to this that was discussed was access to bus travel. Officers noted the Council had taken action to stabilise the network and the task now was to grow patronage. Improving the use of park and ride sites were discussed with the proposed creation of multimodal hubs.

Members enquired about the Council seeking powers from central government regarding traffic enforcement powers. Officers noted that the government had granted enforcement powers that are held by the police to some councils around traffic offenses, however, the Council had been unsuccessful and were seeking an opportunity to reapply. Members suggested that the Council might seek the support of the combined authority in lobbying for these additional powers of enforcement.

The Committee discussed the monitoring of accident data. Members enquired as to whether the Council could monitor slight as well as sever accidents when monitoring road safety. This data Members believed could provide useful data in determining the success of schemes in reducing danger on roads. Officers noted that there were challenges in collating data on slight or near miss accidents as these were often under reported but

agreed that they could review whether it was possible to collate and include this data when monitoring road safety.

The implementation of 20 mph speed limits across the city was discussed. The Committee proposed that the implementation plan should seek to implement 20 mph where appropriate across the whole of the city and surrounding villages. They noted that there was evidence from elsewhere showing the success of 20 mph. The Executive Member for Transport informed the Committee that the Council would be going out to consultation and would ask residents which roads they believed shouldn't be 20 mph and therefore hoped this would assist the Council in establishing where 20 mph could be implemented across the city.

Resolved:

- i. That the Committee requested that Officers reviewed the Local Transport Strategy Implementation Plan 2024-2026 to ensure it followed guidance from the Social Model of Disability and that it gave equal weight to the Department for Transport's Inclusive Mobility Guidance as it did to LTN120;
- ii. That the Committee recommended that the Local Transport Strategy Implementation Plan be expanded to a longer-term implementation plan, while acknowledging the role the Movement and Place plan will have in the planning of the implementation of the Local Transport Strategy;
- iii. That the Committee recommended that monitoring road safety include data on slight incidents as well as severe;
- iv. That the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee write to the Mayor of York and North Yorkshire asking that the Mayor support the Council's request to Government for Highway Enforcement Powers to be granted to the Council;
- v. That the Committee recommended that the consultation on the rollout of 20 mph speed limits be included within the Local Transport Strategy Implementation Plan 2024-2026, with a view to deliver a rollout of more 20 mph speed limits across the whole of the city and surrounding villages where appropriate.

Reason: To support the delivery of the Local Transport Strategy.

#### **14. Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan: Networks & Prioritisation (20:37)**

Officers introduced the report and outlined that the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan would provide an evidence base for the Council

when setting out its priorities, identifying new and existing routes for active travel modes of transport, prioritised areas for improvements, and provide data when seeking investment to fund active travel projects.

Members discussed the plan and the strategic route proposals. They enquired as to how a strategic route was determined if it did not cover the whole length of a road. Officers noted that they had attempted to identify the primary core flow of cyclist traffic when it came to a strategic cycle route and welcomed suggestions for where else might need to be included. Members suggested that Councillors be contacted to provide feedback in relation to their ward.

The Committee also asked that officers seek to include the monitoring of all incidents data and not only sever incidents, officers agreed they would look into incorporating this data. Members also asked about Network Rail exploring the possibility of rerouting a public right of way in Copmanthorpe and whether the original location could be retained. Officers noted that they could investigate including something regarding the current route within the plan.

Resolved:

- i. That the Committee recommended that the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan: Networks & Prioritisation plan be shared with Ward Councillors for feedback on their local areas;
- ii. That the Committee recommended that monitoring road safety include data on slight incidents as well as sever;
- iii. That the Committee recommended that officers include the current public right of way rail crossing location in Copmanthorpe within the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

Reason: To support the Council in completing the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

## **15. Work Plan (20:48)**

The Committee considered its work plan for 2024/35.

Resolved:

- i. Noted the Committee work plan.

Reason: To ensure the Committee maintains a programme of work.



Cllr Taylor, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.31 pm and finished at 8.52 pm].