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Meeting	Economy, Place, Access and Transport Scrutiny Committee
Date	26 November 2024
Present	Councillors K Taylor (Chair), B Burton, Healey (Vice-Chair), Hook, Steward, Vassie, Merrett and Waller (Substitute)
Executive Members in Attendance	Councillors Kent and Ravilious
Officers Present	Julian Ridge – Sustainable Transport Manager Tom Horner – Head of Active Travel and Sustainable Transport Ben Grabham – Head of Environmental Services Rebecca Copley – Business Manager, Environmental Services Jodie Dunn – Environmental Services Officer
Apologies	Councillors J Burton, Fenton and Whitcroft

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#### **24. Apologies for Absence (17:30)**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr J Burton, Cllr Whitcroft, and Cllr Fenton. It was noted that Cllr Waller was present as substitute for Cllr Fenton.

#### **25. Declarations of Interest (17:30)**

Members were asked to declare at this point in the meeting any disclosable pecuniary interest or other registerable interest they might have in respect of business on the agenda if they had not already done so in advance on the Register of Interests. None were declared, although in relation to agenda item 5 (Travel to School) given that the report referred to parking near schools, Councillors Taylor and Waller noted in the interests of transparency that they lived next to schools.

#### **26. Minutes (17:32)**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 22 October 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to the following amendment:

- That resolution ii. to minute 21 (City centre access: reviewing the implementation), be amended to read:  
'To recommend that the Executive explore all possible options to ensure blue badge access to the city centre during the period of the Christmas market, including reviewing the layout of future Christmas Markets.'

## **27. Public Participation (17:33)**

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

## **28. Travel to School (17:33)**

The committee considered a report setting out the current approach to home to school travel in York and inviting members' views on options available to make journeys safer, increase active travel, and reduce congestion and air pollution around school sites.

Officers provided an overview, and in response to members' questions it was noted that:

- Options included a programme of data collection, promotion of sustainable transport, enacting School Streets schemes and capital measures, although funding would need to be found for this work. These were used in conjunction by some local authorities and in other European countries where there was more active travel.
- At present there was a light programme of school engagement although levels varied and were often dependent on there being a staff member with an interest in active travel. Granular data collection would provide information from all schools on the interventions they would appreciate; currently only partial information was available from individual schools.
- There were no current plans to bring back mobile camera vans. If ANPR equipment was installed as part of a School Streets scheme there was a six-month period before enforcement was permitted; fines could potentially cover the cost of investment but this would be case specific. Traffic enforcement was by consent and care would be needed in the introduction of any fines.

- School travel plans in place under section 106 agreements were monitored through Planning; it was suspected that those done outside these agreements would have lapsed. Funding for a Sustrans school travel plan officer had expired in 2021. Bikeability training was offered in every school, if not always taken up by all pupils.
- Where schools had a wider catchment where car sharing was appropriate this option could be promoted although school-specific information was needed.
- Several members emphasised the need to focus on successfully delivering a small number of tangible, practical schemes. The Executive Member for Transport noted that she would welcome members' views on what should be prioritised and deprioritised within transport budgets and suggested that a task and finish group might consider this once there was greater clarity around funding.
- Members agreed that school travel should be a priority, and noted that while prioritising the smaller number of secondary schools could be more efficient than concentrating on the larger number of primary schools, working closely with the latter could help ingrain active travel habits earlier in childhood.
- A review of capital projects would be undertaken to remove those which were not matched to funding, this would entail difficult choices but would help deliver a several schemes more quickly. This process would be informed by the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. Funding would then be pursued, and feasibility work would need to be done carefully. An anticipated structural shift in ways of working would see a move away from issues being raised and added to a longlist, to evidence-based thresholds for action akin to the system used in highway maintenance.
- With reference to spreading journeys across the day, traffic peaks were settling after being quite dynamic over the last few years; York was unusual in having a morning peak of 7am-8am, rather than 8am-9am, which suggested this was pre-school traffic, whereas the school afternoon peak was now often higher than the traditionally evening commute peak.
- The current transport funding landscape was uncertain, although there had been successes on bidding for funds for specific kinds of projects such as bus electrification. Multi-year funding settlements would ease some challenges. The Mayoral Combined Authority was a possible source of funding, and it was anticipated that Mayoral transport powers would be expanded in forthcoming legislation, and work was already being done with the Combined Authority on projects including EV charging.

Resolved:

- i. To encourage the Executive Member and officers to prioritise the successful delivery of a smaller number of tangible and timely schemes.
- ii. To encourage data gathering from individual schools to understand what they wanted and inform a longer-term view.
- iii. That it was the committee's view that school travel should be a priority, both in the developing transport plan and in bids for funding.
- iv. That the committee would support an approach for a strategic bid for Mayoral Combined Authority funding taking in both capital and revenue aspects.

Reason: To support the ambition of making travel to school safer, increasing active travel, and reducing congestion and air pollution around school sites across York.

## **29. Update on Recycling (19:09)**

Members considered a report outlining existing recycling practices and performance in comparison to nearby local authorities, including recommendations for further work to increase recycling rates across York.

Officers provided an overview and in response to questions from the committee it was noted that:

- As the city grew there were limited options for expansion at York's two existing recycling centres; household waste would be considered by the project board looking at options for a green energy park, whilst expansion or relocation of the operating depot currently situated at Hazel Court could also be considered.
- It remained important to separate recycling; it was acknowledged that residents in certain areas had had waste mixed in the past due to a vehicle limitation, this was no longer the case. While it could appear that recycling was being mixed, in practice crews used separate assistance bins for different materials.
- It was suggested that clear communication about what happened to the recycling residents put out for collection should be included in the consultation, and noted that work was underway with Web Services to improve communications including around the process after collection. Officers would follow up on an offer of support with video production. The Christmas waste calendar would be ready

imminently; campaign materials were being finalised and would be communicated to members.

- Replacement boxes and lids for kerbside recycling were available for free and could be collected from household waste sites.
- Currently some communal bins were serviced by the commercial waste round for operational reasons. The government's upcoming recycling reforms presented an opportunity to reduce co-mingling of recycling in the Council's commercial and communal collections, although some details around the implications for business waste and producer labelling responsibilities were still awaited. Waste Services would look to ensure all businesses were supported to understand what the changes would mean for them.
- The majority of the Council's commercial waste customer base were microbusinesses, including many in the city centre who other providers would not service due to physical limitations; bag collections were used in these cases.
- Garden waste collection would be extended to several newer housing developments in 2025, including Langley Gate and parts of Germany Beck which had not previously had this option.
- East Riding of Yorkshire Council, which performed very highly for recycling and composting, collected food and garden waste together all year round and employed a two-strike enforcement system to limit contamination. York's approach focused on encouragement rather than enforcement with fines used as a last resort, although the enforcement function was under consideration as part of the budget process.
- Evidence from a trial of city centre recycling bins in Leeds suggested that without staff directing their use, around 80% of recycling collected was contaminated.
- Members enquired about the feasibility of collecting all household waste and recycling together on a fortnightly basis rather than alternating weeks; the current collection system had been designed to maximise operational efficiency but this option could be considered in an upcoming exercise in round optimisation.

Resolved:

- i. To support the list of recommendations given at paragraphs 12.1 to 12.13 of the report.
- ii. To request that consultation on recycling options be linked to education around what happened to materials during and after collection.
- iii. To request that consideration be given to the feasibility and comparative cost of collecting all household waste and recycling together.

- iv. To request that the Council encourage the government to set out enforcement measures for compliance with waste regulations, and to encourage the Council to continue to work with small and microbusinesses to encourage them to recycle.

Reason: To support the ambition of increasing recycling rates across the city.

### **30. Work Plan (20:05)**

Members considered the committee's work plan for the remainder of the municipal year.

Resolved: That the chair and vice-chair liaise to consider suitable items for the committee's upcoming meetings.

Reason: To keep the committee's work plan updated.

Cllr K Taylor, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 8.06 pm].