

Report of the Director of Transport, Environment and Planning

YORK LOCAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY

Summary

1. In March 2024 Executive reviewed initial feedback from “Our Big Transport Conversation” – an engagement exercise which took place between November 2023 and February 2024 around 10 transport “Policy Focus Areas” reflecting the council’s four key priorities in the 2023-2027 Council Plan that focus on Equalities and Human Rights, Affordability, Climate and Health and Wellbeing (EACH Priorities). Executive then instructed officers to prepare a Transport Strategy based around the feedback received.
2. Officers are currently looking at the more detailed responses particularly the identification of pinch points for different modes, a first review of this will be presented to Scrutiny at the meeting.
3. This paper outlines the principal areas of activity, in the view of officers, which a new Transport Strategy for York should contain. It is presented to Scrutiny for discussion and comment in advance of Executive in June where more developed proposals will be made.

Background

4. The task of defining a new transport strategy for York – to respond to the Council’s EACH priorities and guide negotiations for transport investment with the new Mayoral Combined Authority (which will become the Local Transport Authority for the York and North Yorkshire area) is significant. The new Mayor is responsible for the statutory Local Transport Plan.
5. Transport, its provision and organisation, can be contentious and because of this a wide ranging engagement has taken place to assess

public views on transport provision in York and the 10 policy focus areas adopted by the new Council Executive.

6. Figure 1 (below) shows an overview of that consultation. The ten policy focus areas or visions which were presented were overwhelmingly endorsed in the engagement. It was clear that the majority wished to improve accessibility, active travel, public transport, reduce car dependency and the impacts of road freight movements on the city, whilst also reducing the environmental impact of transport and looking to improve the amenity of York.
7. Answers to further questions demonstrated that respondents were willing to consider measures such as reallocating road space from private vehicle to sustainable modes to achieve change. The full detail is being worked through and will be published on the open data platform.

Headline results



Thank you to everyone! These are our interim results – more detailed analysis will follow.



1,342
online
responses



50+
events



More than **1,000** people
met in person including
350 children and students



93 hours
of events



More than
100,000
social media
impressions



7 villages were
visited with York
Explore Mobile
Library



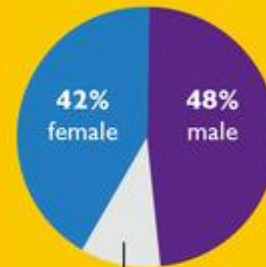
15 libraries displayed
information & had paper
copies available through our
partnership with Explore
York Libraries and Archives

Conversations with interest groups ranging from



- environment and heritage
- disabled residents
- business and tourism groups
- learning disability self advocates
- schools and colleges
- NHS patients
- cycling and walking groups
- bus users
- older people

Online respondents only (ie not the people we met in person)



10% No gender stated

Largest age categories

29% 40-55

26% Over 65s

18% 25-39

18% 56-65

25% identified themselves as having a disability

Support for the 10 policy focus areas



Accessibility
90%



Improve walking,
wheeling and cycling
85%



Shaping healthy
places
85%



Improving public
transport
88%



Safeguarding our
environment
74%



Create a
Movement and
Place Plan
81%



Reduce car
dependency
78%



Improving freight
and logistics
85%



Effective
maintenance
and
enforcement
83%



Monitoring the
transport network
and financing
the changes
81%

8. Officers have considered these findings, alongside technical information, such as the traffic modelling for the Local Plan <https://www.york.gov.uk/downloads/file/8131/ex-cyc-87a-local-plan-modelling-report> and the strategies being followed in other towns and cities in the UK and elsewhere. This work has allowed a distillation of the principal elements of a transport strategy for York which would increase the use of the least carbon intensive and most affordable, healthy and accessible forms of transport. Looking at exemplars in other towns and cities, it is clear that they share common characteristics, principally:
 - a. Sustainable modes are upgraded. This often means providing better facilities for cyclists (for example, segregated cycle lanes) and upgraded public transport through electrifying bus fleets, investing in tram and rail networks, improving bus service frequencies and/ or reducing fares;
 - b. More space is provided in the city centre, where there is most transport activity, to give greater priority to active modes and public transport. This is achieved by reallocating roadspace from general traffic to sustainable modes;
 - c. Removing traffic allows the quality of the streets in the city centre to be improved. Vehicle carriageways are narrowed or removed and clutter like traffic signals and signposts are removed. Reduced wear and tear from motor vehicles mean that roads can be resurfaced in higher quality and more attractive materials;
 - d. In some places, consolidation of surface parking provides sites which can be redeveloped to regenerate areas;
 - e. Noise and air pollution have then fallen in response to reduced traffic levels. Walking, cycling and public transport use increase.
9. A crucial ingredient of successful projects has been careful planning and engagement: in each project local authorities have worked with stakeholders in the town or city to deliver the change. Engagement and co-design has been an important element in reducing the contentiousness of the changes being proposed and ensuring as many people as possible are content with the changes being made.
10. If this is read across to a York context, a number of key ingredients for a new transport strategy can be identified. Very broadly these are:

- a. To achieve an objective of shift in peoples' behaviour to using sustainable transport modes more it would be necessary to upgrade these modes so that they are safer, better quality, more reliable and in some cases more affordable. Fear of increasing congestion in York – assessed either through public perception in Our Big Transport Conversation – or more technical assessments using the city's transport model – has historically been a significant barrier to improving sustainable modes, but the consultation suggests this may be changing.
 - b. As such, alongside already committed investment to improve bus services (through York's Bus Service Improvement Plan) and the identification of improvements to active travel routes, there is a need to significantly enhance York's transport network for sustainable modes. There is a question of how this could be done, where and when.
 - c. There is an opportunity to respond to the engagement through a number of "Quick Win" projects. These could focus on smaller measures which do not require additional funding. An example could be adjusting traffic signals so that pedestrians, cyclists and bus services are given greater priority.
 - d. Community engagement is essential, this will continue as we deliver the projects such as those to improve bus service performance particularly in central York. This will include identifying appropriate mitigations for groups who are adversely impacted by measures as well as elements of co-design to maximise the benefits to sustainable modes of the changes which will be made. Ultimately decisions will need to balance both city wide and immediate resident perspectives.
11. In the medium term it is clear that there may need to be significant further changes to transport systems in York in order to deliver the views expressed in Our Big Transport Conversation and respond to identified technical issues such as clusters of road accidents, air quality management areas, congestion and CO2 emissions. Some UK authorities (for example, Glasgow) are producing "Movement and Place" plans which seek to balance the tensions between "Movement" (ie of traffic) and "Place" (ie places where people live or work but are adversely impacted by traffic flows, air and noise pollution), and this approach was endorsed by 81% of the respondents to Our Big Transport Conversation. As such, a further key ingredient of York's new Local Transport Strategy will be to produce a "Movement and Place Plan" for the whole council

area. It is proposed by officers that discussions commence with the York and North Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority about the role they might play in developing this Plan, reflecting the importance of York in the YNY sub-region.

12. The Movement and Place Plan will guide many things, including:
 - a. Delivering the 10 Policy Focus areas by identifying specific projects as endorsed by the consultation on Local Transport Strategy.
 - b. Identifying and deciding the role transport networks play depending on their use/locality and the places they pass through.
 - c. Defining a “Shaping Healthy Places” programme – responding to the support of this by 85% of respondents to Our Big Transport Conversation
 - d. Considering transport as part of regeneration, forward planning and facilitator of new development and economic growth around York, including links to central York, master planning and highway design that is appropriate to the place be that a village centre, the outer ring road, a distributor road or outside a school.
 - e. How best to manage tensions between movement and place where these are currently most acute – for example, parts of the inner ring road and its approaches (such as Gillygate) where air quality is poor/ there are existing Air Quality Management Areas.
13. Scrutiny members are asked to either consider these broad recommendations by officers – and request further work on the proposals for the new York Local Transport Strategy, or suggest alternative approaches which they feel better reflect the EACH priorities and feedback received through Our Big Transport Conversation.

Consultation

14. This report is informed by the consultation/ engagement in Our Big Transport Conversation, with Annex A of the report providing more detail from the consultation. Other results from the consultation are shown in the Annex to the March 2024 Executive report (<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/b39149/Annex%20B%20Our%20Big%20Transport%20Conversation%20Summary%20Report%20Thursday%2014-Mar-2024%2017.30%20Executive.pdf?T=9>)

Options

15. Members are asked to either endorse the broad approach recommended by officers or propose an alternative approach.

Council Plan

16. The EACH priorities expressed in the Council Plan are central to the engagement in Our Big Transport Conversation and guide the recommendations of this report.

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Report Approved

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Date 13/05/24

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

For further information please contact the author of the report