

Economy and Place Policy and Scrutiny Committee

10 July 2019

Executive Member for Transport Priorities for 2019-2020

Climate emergency and local transport

As a lifelong transport campaigner it is an honour to be taking on this challenging role at a time when our council along with about 100 others has committed to slowing climate breakdown by rapid cuts to carbon emissions. Whether or not we achieve zero carbon by 2030, early wins achieve greater savings and can have the added health, social and independence benefits of active travel as a lifestyle choice for the next generation growing up in York.

The 'Zero Carbon Britain' report from The Centre for Alternative Technology estimated the potential to cut energy demand from transport by 78% by 2025 through reducing the need to travel and changing how we do it. Transport is still the fastest growing source of emissions and with York expanding we have a greater potential than many communities to lock in benefits of attractive walking, cycling and public transport options, while at the same time tackling challenges of air quality, congestion and potholes.

Electric vehicles for park and ride service and York's clean air zone

In the coming year we will continue to develop our electric charging network with the addition of the hyper hub facility. The introduction of 21 electric double decker park and ride buses from November this year will be a major step forward in preparing us for the bus-based clean air zone for the city centre next year.

The anti-idling message for diesel and petrol engine vehicles was well promoted on Clean Air Day backed up with the signs at key bus stops – a long time coming but now in place. We do now benefit from some evening park and ride services including some additional intermediate stops to help enhance our evening services to suburban areas en route and we will shortly be considering the outcome of tenders for the subsidised evening and No 20 routes. I am keen to work with parish councils, ward councillors, bus operators and businesses to do more to promote public transport, explore cost effective ways to respond to

changing demands and promote access to a wider range of services and destinations.

The new park and ride hospital service is an example of how work with major employers and key destinations can help to reduce the need for car travel into our city. Similarly I have recently met with officers and ward councillors to look at the plans to ensure that fans going to the new stadium later in the year will have shuttle buses from the station and potentially from other park and ride sites on key match days.

Work on expanding the capacity of roundabouts on the outer ring road will continue, helping to prepare for extra traffic that might be created with the opening of the stadium and related facilities there. I am also keen to explore the potential for creating wildflower verges to help biodiversity and pollinators, following on from examples in Lincolnshire and Rotherham.

City centre access

In the city centre I expect to be working closely with the Business Improvement District, officers and representatives of disability groups to secure vehicle access control to the footstreets to keep residents and visitors safe but also ensure that everyone who needs mobility support can access shops and services. This may also provide opportunities to develop better wayfinding and use the Castle Gateway and Minster Neighbourhood Plan work to secure safe and clearly defined cycle routes across the city centre.

Walking and cycling

Work on our local cycling and walking infrastructure plan in consultation with our West Yorkshire Combined Authority partners will I hope put us in a good position to secure funding beyond March 2020 for the essential travel planning and sustainable travel promotion work of the itravel York team.

Their expertise and involvement in major developments such as York Central, British Sugar site etc will be vital to help us to reduce congestion and promote walking and cycling as preferred modes of travel across the whole council area. We have a number of opportunities to really make a step change in walking and cycling as a travel mode with the new Scarborough Bridge route and links beyond to the station and through Bootham Park to the hospital and beyond.

Working towards Local Transport Plan 4

Likewise the Castle Gateway project promises to provide a better crossing point of the inner ring road, a new bridge over the Foss and transformation of Piccadilly to a people-friendly street. The new multi-storey car park will unlock the creation of a public open space around Clifford's Tower and enhancements to this important heritage focal point, free of parked cars.

I would like to see the my castle gateway approach to consultation developed more widely to find the key locations where we need to create people-friendly walking and cycling crossing and access points, for schools, major workplaces, shopping areas etc. I would hope that some of this work could be assisted by the work planned in the coming year by York Civic Trust Transport Advisory Group in advance of our preparation of LTP4 to underpin the Local Plan.

I believe that an independent city-wide survey such as planned by the Trust will help to achieve the wide ranging consultation which was in manifestos recently and help residents to understand the transport implications of our planned 20% growth in population by 2030.

The coming year will also see progress on the station frontage project to transform our gateway to the city, eventually to be matched with work to create a new western entrance to serve York Central and the National Railway Museum. Hopefully, Housing Infrastructure Funding will be announced and we will also see a start on construction of the access bridge and spine road that will unlock development of housing and commercial space on this large brownfield site, connected with enhanced walking and cycling infrastructure from surrounding areas.

Residents' parking review

The scrutiny review of Residents Priority Parking Scheme which I led last year was approved by the outgoing Executive in March and this is a priority for me to see the waiting list cut and online systems explored further to streamline administration processes. I would also like to see a wider conversation with residents, businesses and key stakeholders about the merits of a wider zoning scheme within the ring road to include all terraced streets, but with annual permit charges comparable to the much lower rates in other Yorkshire towns and places like Sheffield. I believe such a move would be more equitable and also compliment our transport strategy by moving commuter traffic either onto using public transport or using council car parks rather than inner city streets.

Highway maintenance

Alongside this work of course we also want to see the backlog of highway maintenance issues tackled to keep drivers and cyclists safe. It is also a timely opportunity to review our winter maintenance schedules and consider options for addressing the risks of ice on key strategic cycle routes that are most heavily used to access schools, universities, colleges, workplaces and the city centre.

I am sure you will appreciate it is early days for the new administration but I am keen that the changes we need get underway as soon possible while being open to input from a broad cross section of people travelling around York and the organisations and businesses that depend on access for suppliers and customers. My portfolio also includes responsibility for digital communications, fleet and emergency planning.

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