

City of York Council

Extract Committee Minutes

Meeting	Cabinet
Date	6 May 2014
Present	Councillors Alexander (Chair), Crisp, Cunningham-Cross, Levene, Looker, Merrett, Simpson-Laing (Vice-Chair) and Williams
In attendance	Councillors Barton, Cuthbertson, D'Agorne, Fitzpatrick, Funnell, Galvin, Reid, Steward and Watt

132. **Public Participation**

Lendal Bridge Trial Evaluation Report

Gwen Swinburn spoke to raise concerns in relation to the decision making process undertaken as part of the reopening of Lendal Bridge. She also referred to issues of democratic accountability in respect of an important decision for the city which had prevented any input from members and residents.

Cllr Steward referred to the lack of cross party discussion in relation to the Lendal Bridge closure and reopening and his concerns at the length of time prior to the decision taken to reopen the bridge. He highlighted the lack of tangible metrics and how success would have been measured.

Cllr D'Agorne spoke to welcome the detailed assessment of the Lendal Bridge trial and to the setting up of a cross party congestion commission. He expressed regret that the evidence had not been considered prior to the reopening of the bridge and changes made to parking charge whilst there was still a need to find solutions to traffic congestion in the city centre.

Cllr Cuthbertson spoke of the damage done to the reputation of the city in relation the Lendal Bridge trial. He questioned whether sufficient information on footfall could be gained from one camera and pointed to longer journeys and air quality issues during the trial. He asked for a cross party scrutiny review of the Lendal Bridge trial to ensure that lessons were learnt and other measures taken to tackle congestion.

134. **Lendal Bridge Trial Evaluation Report**

Consideration was given to the final evaluation report of the Lendal Bridge traffic restriction trial, implemented using an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order which had restricted vehicles from using the bridge between 10.30am and 5.00pm each day. The report provided information covering the six month period up to 26 February 2014 and up to the decision taken to revoke the order on 8 April 2014.

It was noted that analysis of the data recorded during the trial, in transport terms, had achieved many of the original objectives to improve the environment for pedestrians and cyclists and reduced public transport journey times. Considerable concern had however been raised by residents and businesses regarding implementation of the trial.

Following questions regarding the legality of the enforcement of the restriction a request had been made to the Chief Adjudicator for the decision to be reviewed. A presentation of the finding of the trial had subsequently been made and the Leader had exercised his powers to remove the restrictions from the bridge which had resulted in it being reopened shortly after. At that time it had also been agreed to set up an independent commission to review how traffic congestion could be addressed in the city.

Cabinet Members acknowledged the problems that had arisen during the trial but confirmed that advice had been sought prior to the trial closure from both the Department for Transport and the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency. Members expressed their continued support for undertaking the trial as there was still a need to tackle congestion in the city. It was noted that alternative measures would have to be examined to meet future traffic challenges the city faced, particularly as traffic in the city would increase by 19 to 30% in the next 5 years, resulting in further congestion.

Officers referred to the difficulties encountered in running the trial and to the large amount of data collected which required further work, although some of the trials objectives had been achieved.

Members expressed appreciation for the work undertaken by officers both during the trial and subsequently in the analysis of data and preparation of the final report.

Following further lengthy discussion it was

Resolved: That Cabinet agree:

- (i) To note the Leaders decision made on 8th April 2014 to end the Lendal Bridge trial from 12th April 2014.
- (ii) That no expenditure is committed from the net receipts at this time prior to the resolution of the legal process. This will be subject to a future cabinet report.
- (iii) That Councillor Reid's motion is referred back to Council in July 2014 together with details of any discussion on the issues raised. ¹.
- (iv) To note the Leaders decision to establish an independently chaired, cross party congestion commission and to request that the scope of the commission be brought to a future meeting. ².

- Reason:
- (i) As a result of significant public interest that emerged on the issue and the need for urgent clarification.
 - (ii) This is the most prudent approach to treating the income at this time.
 - (iii) In accordance with the Council's Constitution.
 - (iv) To consider how the impacts of future congestion can be mitigated.

Action Required

- 1. Refer motion back to 17 July Council meeting. JP
- 2. Schedule report on the legal issues and scope of the Commission on Forward Plan. RS

Cllr J Alexander, Chair
[The Meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.50 pm].