

## **Report of the Executive Member for Transport and Planning**

### **Transport and Planning Report to Council - 17 December 2015**

#### **Transport**

1. A great deal has been achieved over the last 6 months in the transport area - ranging from the delivery of the first phase of the A19 pinch point scheme through to the further development of electric bus operations across the city.
2. Priorities have been reviewed to ensure that resources have been targeted on achieving the best outcomes for the residents of the city. Principles have been established for the further development of a number of key areas including traffic signal operation and maintenance, city centre traffic management, A-Board Licensing and the reinstatement of the enforcement of the Coppergate traffic restrictions. Further reports on Cycling and Parking strategies will be submitted to the Executive early in 2016. These principles will be used to deliver the necessary improvements in these areas over the early stages of this administration.

#### **Major Schemes**

3. The first stage of the A19 Pinch Point project at the A64/A19 junction has been completed. This major improvement to the intersection has reduced queuing from the south and reduce journey times for bus services. It is anticipated that consultation on phase 2 of the project will commence when the timescale for the delivery of the access junction to the Germany Beck development is confirmed.
4. The announcement of Enterprise Zone status for the York Central area will transform the ability of the city to deliver this key development. It is anticipated that the additional funding will give more opportunity to improve the operation of the front of the station. The aim will be remove the conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles in the Tea-Room square area to provide a worthy gateway to the city. Subject to the decision by the Executive in December the initial consultation on the York Central development will commence in January.
5. Development work for the upgrade of the A1237 Outer Ring Road is also being progressed. Public consultation will commence once the funding route and devolution boundaries are confirmed.

## Sustainable Transport

6. The delivery the Local Transport Plan has been re-focused on making the most of the highway network capacity for all road users. Council and grant resources, including the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) and Better Bus Area Fund are being used to deliver a wide range of transport initiatives and improvements.
7. A range of activities have been progressed using the LSTF grant in 2015/16. These have included the continuation of the itravelyork initiative with approx. 7,000 Personal Travel Planning visits to properties in the Holgate/Poppleton area. Continued activities to promote sustainable transport options in the city including Business and School Travel Planning, Bike Belles Cycling initiative, itravelyork website and journey planning tool also continue. The Festival of Cycling was held on 12/13 September (Saturday affected by poor weather but Sunday very busy tying in with Sky Ride – approx. 8,000 registered on Sky Ride).
8. York has been shortlisted as one of 12 cities across the UK to be able to bid for £35m of funds to provide measures to encourage the take-up of low emission vehicles. A bid for a grant to provide low emission vehicles as part of the new Park & Ride services procurement has been submitted. Results are anticipated in December.

## Public Transport

9. Improvements continue to be made to the bus provision across the district using Better Bus Area funding and through collaboration with the city's bus operators through the Quality Bus Partnership. York had the highest level of bus passenger satisfaction in the country recorded by Passenger Focus in March 2015. The Quality Bus Partnership arrangement between the Council and operators works well in York with the added incentive of Better Bus Area funding being allocated to the city.
10. The Park & Ride service goes from strength to strength with increased patronage and the electric buses now operating on two routes. A key challenge over the next few months will be the successful procurement of a new operator based upon the principles approved by the Executive in September.
11. The continued Speed Management partnership arrangements with the Police and Fire and Rescue service were confirmed in November. Following review of the speed and accident data a list of locations where engineering measures were appropriate was agreed with detailed consultation due to commence shortly. A review of Vehicle Activated

Signs has been undertaken identifying the policy for repairing signs where appropriate. The annual review of road safety data has identified a number of locations where engineering measures are considered necessary. These will be reported to a Decision Session in January.

### Network Management

12. Network management and regulation continues to be undertaken to ensure that the city's highway network operates efficiently. This ranges from the provision of licenses for skips and scaffolding through to approving layouts for highway development control. The annual review of Traffic Regulation Order Requests principally for parking restrictions is progressing with 84 items being considered by the Director of City and Environmental Services. There has been a significant increase in maintenance and new supply activity by utility companies leading to increased streetworks coordination requirements.
13. The reintroduction of a camera enforced traffic restriction on Coppergate with the times altered to 8:00am to 6:00pm (7 days) was approved at the Executive on 29 October. Detailed work is ongoing to ensure that enforcement can commence in spring 2016. Future reports will be presented for approval following consultation on the revised restriction and the proposed signage. A wider review of traffic restrictions across the city centre including blue badge and loading access is also ongoing.
14. A 5 year £2.5m investment programme into the renewal and maintenance of traffic signals and the provision of vehicle detection equipment was approved in November. This will ensure that the traffic signals in the city manage traffic effectively and reliably at the lowest possible revenue cost.
15. Approval for the consultation with key stakeholders on the introduction of a licensing arrangement for A-Boards in suitable locations across the city was granted in September. Formal consultation with these groups will commence in January following a request by retailers to avoid the Christmas period.

### Transport Service Challenges

16. There are a number of major challenges to maintaining the current level of service in the transport area in 2016 and future years. The service is currently undergoing a restructure, principally to address the ending of the LSTF funding in March 2016, which will see a reduction of 8 posts out of the current 14 covering the promotion of sustainable transport in the city. Announcements in the Autumn Statement suggest that funding

could be available to continue the initiative into 16/17. Bids will be submitted for any funding which may become available nationally.

17. Council resources are also under pressure leading to potential reduction in transport budgets over the next 4 years. Efficiencies will be delivered in the service where possible but opportunities are limited following previous management and staffing reductions. The extent of discretionary services such as CCTV and Supported Bus Services provided by the Council will need to be reviewed as part of the budget setting process.

## **Planning**

### The Local Plan

18. Good progress has been made in relation to the preparation of a new strategic plan for the city. The report to Executive on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2015 identified the key components of the Local Plan work programme to progress the key Council priority of the Local Plan to publication stage. These are: -

- Update to the Objective Assessment of Housing Need;
- Revised Economic Forecasts
- York, Hambleton, Ryedale and North Yorkshire Moors National Park Authority Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA);
- Analysis of housing windfall trends;
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)
- Employment Land Review (ELR)
- Duty to Cooperate – the role of Neighbouring Authorities
- Update to Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Show People
- Assessment
- Green Belt Appraisal
- Update to Infrastructure Development Plan

19. Since Executive met in July the Local Plan Working Group (LPWG) has met and received updates on the following work areas:

### September LPWG

The Working Group considered an update of the work on the Objectively Assessed need for Housing in the district which took account of the new national household projections. This report included detailed analysis of the drivers of housing growth, such as population growth, the health of

the local economy and migration. Along with this the report also provided LPWG with analysis of historic trends in windfall housing development, an update to the 5 year supply of land for housing and also the demand for student housing.

A separate report set out the forecasts for future economic growth that will provide the start point for an assessment of the demand for land or employment.

### October LPWG

The Working Group considered a report on the progress on the Minerals and Waste Joint Plan that City of York Council is producing with North Yorkshire County Council and the North York Moors National Park Authority and to ask Members to approve the Preferred Options documents for public consultation. This report was also presented to Members of Executive on 29 October 2015.

### November LPWG

The Working Group considered a report on the potential development of the York Central site and how it will contribute to meeting the development requirements of the Local Plan for both housing and office floorspace

20. In respect of the other components of work identified in the Executive report progress on the Local Plan evidence base has been made as follows: -
- A survey of the development industry to test the assumptions we are making about the delivery rates of new homes on the draft Local plan sites, part of the evidence to prove the plan can be delivered, closes this week. We have already received a number of helpful responses to this survey. The results of this survey will be reported back to members of the LPWG in early 2016.
  - Following the changes announced by the government on the definition of housing need in the Gypsy and Traveller community we are commissioning an update of the study carried out by Opinion Research Services. This will give us an up to date understanding of the scale of need.
  - We have commissioned a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) that will update the earlier work carried out across north Yorkshire and York in 2011. This will provide up to date evidence on the need for

affordable housing, the need for specialist housing such as that required by the elderly and the overall mix of housing that the Local Plan should seek to provide. This will be reported back to members of LPWG in early 2016.

- The York North Yorkshire and East Riding Spatial Planning Board met in September and considered cross boundary strategic issues that will affect the York Local Plan and need to be addressed to meet the requirements of the Duty to Cooperate. This included consideration of future housing provision.

21. Future LPWGs will take place at around 6 week intervals in the New Year and will consider: -

- A report on the outcome and implications for the Local Plan of the updated SHMA including the need for affordable housing;
- A detailed analysis of the relative merits of individual potential development sites that could be included in the revised Publication Draft Local Plan; and
- The general extent and detailed boundaries for the York Green Belt

22. Depending in part on the outcomes of LPWG the indicative timetable for the next round of Local Plan consultation proposes a Summer 2016 consultation on a publication draft Plan followed by submission towards the end of 2016.

### Neighbourhood Planning

23. Neighbourhood planning was introduced through the Localism Act 2011 to provide greater power to communities in planning for their neighbourhoods. If adopted by the Council, these Plans form part of the statutory planning framework for that area and will sit alongside Local Plan policies.

24. Since 2013, York has received 10 area applications from Parish Councils (Copmanthorpe, Poppleton, Dunnington, Rufforth and Knapton, Murton, Fulford, Huntington, Heslington, Earswick and Strensall with Towthorpe) with a further four areas showing an interest. Of these, seven areas have been approved and are at various stages of drafting their Neighbourhood Plans, and three are at the consultation/designation stage.

25. The Council has statutory duties to fulfil as part of our role in Neighbourhood Planning. This covers a duty to advise and assist which includes regular meetings with the communities to discuss their ideas and progress on the plan; we offer technical advice regarding evidence

base, legal obligations, Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment and mapping, as well as general information on writing policies and plans. The Council also has a more formal duty to arrange and pay for an Examination and Referendum towards the end of the process.

26. Officers have also set up a Neighbourhood Planning Officer Working Group within the Leeds City Region and our neighbouring authorities to discuss best practice and to share experience and guidance. This includes attendance and advice from the Planning Advisory Service (PAS).

### Minerals and Waste Joint Plan

27. City of York Council formally agreed to prepare a Joint Minerals and Waste Plan with North Yorkshire County Council and North York Moors National Park Authority in 2013. Over the past 3 years, three stages of the Plan have been progressed; 'First Consultation', 'Issues and Options', and 'Further Sites Consultation'. Currently, the 'Preferred Options' version of the Plan is being consulted on (ends 15<sup>th</sup> January 2016). This draft includes the Joint Authorities preferred policies and site allocations for minerals and waste development up to 2030.
28. Extensive evidence base work and sustainability appraisals, which sit behind the proposed policies and sites have been carried out. This includes assessments of the type and location of mineral resource across the plan area, the type and quantity of waste streams being produced and managed in the plan area both now and in the future, as well as supporting evidence regarding environmental constraints, and transport implications.
29. The next steps will require officers to take account of the responses received at the preferred options stage before reflecting these and any relevant national policy and evidence updates in a 'Publication' draft that will then be consulted upon and submitted to an inspector for an independent examination and hopefully adoption by mid-2017.

### Planning Performance

#### Speed of decisions

30. For the year to 30<sup>th</sup> June, York exceeds the national statutory targets for percentage of applications decided within the time statutory target time period or in the agreed time in every application category:-

Category	York	National Average	Unitary Councils Average
Majors	78	77	76
Minors	74	71	70
Others	87	82	82

### Proportion of applications approved

31. In York in the year to 30th June, 94% of applications were granted, well above the national average of 88% and the unitary authorities average of 90%. This is despite the high quality environment and heritage asset constraints on development and demonstrates that we work with applicants to seek acceptable solutions, rather than just refusing applications without engagement.

### Appeals Performance

32. For the 12 months between 1 July 2014 and 30 June 2015, 26% of appeals decided were allowed; again well below the national average of 34%. This indicates that where we are refusing applications, the decisions are not taken lightly and it is usually with sound reasoning.

### City and Environmental Services: Customer Services

33. Finally there are good processes to ensure customers' needs are identified at an early stage and that, wherever possible, there is a named officer who is responsible for contact with individual customers. Performance in relation to timeliness and quality of service is also measured.

Cllr Ian Gillies