
Decision Session
Executive Member for Transport

22 March 2022

Report of the Director of Transport, Planning and Environment

Update on Actions agreed by Executive for City Centre Accessibility

Summary

1. This purpose of this report is to provide and update on the City Centre access action plans as agreed at 18th November 2021 Executive meeting.
2. The City Centre access plans were developed after extensive public and stakeholder engagement and proposes a strategy for improvements to how people are able to travel to and through the city centre and sets out how access to and through the city centre footstreets can be improved. It is vital that this work is progressed to support the implementation of hostile vehicle measures (HVM), as agreed in November 2021
3. The following is a summary of progress, including the creation of the role of the Access Officer, which will drive through sections of the current programme and work and provide a positive lead in the work to improve transport and network access and engagement around future projects.
4. The report also includes an update on the development of partnerships (Shopmobility and Dial & Ride) to support this work and the implementation of physical measures through improvements to the highway and facilities.

Recommendations

5. It is recommended

- i. that the Executive Member review and note progress on City centre accessibility and the action plan.

Reason: to update the Executive Member on the progress of agreed actions

- ii. that the Executive Member prioritises the programme of dropped kerbs in the city centre and to be funded from the

Pedestrian and Cycling Schemes element of the Transport Capital Budget.

Reason Part of the access improvement work is the review of dropped kerbs in the City Centre footstreets. The intended funding for this work was subject to a bid, £250,000 to the Department for Transport for Active travel. The announcement on this funding is yet to be made. To mitigate this and to ensure this important work could proceed, one of the decisions at the 18th November 2021 Executive meeting in the “Consideration of Changes to the City Centre Traffic Regulation Order” paper was for the Executive Member for Transport to be delegated authority to fund this work through the Transport Capital Programme in the absence of an announcement from Government.

Background

6. The Executive approved an action plan in November 2021 to improve City Centre Access. This was developed after extensive public and stakeholder engagement. The below is an update on the progress of the action plan implementation

Creation of an Access Officer Post and engagement on York Standard and Mobility aids

7. The job description is in final draft form and engagement has been undertaken with representatives of disability groups to ensure their input into its design. The funding for the role was confirmed by Councillors at a meeting of Full Council in February 2022. Recruitment will follow the grading of the role. The Access Officer will develop a York standard for the City centre with disabled groups and stakeholders. The Access Officer will work with disabled people to implement and action relevant parts of the action plan, as well as support any future work to improve transport and network access and engagement around such projects.
8. The actions set to be led by the access officer include working with representatives of disability groups and disabled residents to assess the use of mobility aids in the footstreet areas. The Access Officer will also work with the Quality Bus Partnership, and local disability representative groups to review how drivers prioritise wheelchair users' access and make Class 3 access training available in York. They will also work on the co-production of additional seating to be provided at key points along routes in to and around the City Centre.

Consult on removing the exemptions and waivers and permanently extending the footstreets until 7pm

9. The statutory consultation period for the amendment to the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) on exemptions and waivers to accessing the footstreet area started on Thursday 10th March and will run until Friday 1st April 2022. Depending on the level of response, it is currently proposed to be debated at either May/June decision session for the Executive Member for Transport
10. The statutory consultation on the proposal to make 10.30am to 7pm the permanent footstreet hours will take place in the summer to allow consideration prior to the expiry of the current temporary measures at the end of September.
11. Alongside these statutory consultations, a review is set to be carried out with Make It York regarding the operation of the markets. Market traders would be one of the key stakeholders affected by the permanent footstreet operating hour proposals, given the challenges of transporting stock. The My City Centre vision set out proposals to work with Make It York and traders to explore opportunities to further improve the market; increase popularity, vibrancy, hours of operation and flexibility of the space; as well as making the markets simpler and more efficient to operate. This engagement will take place throughout the Spring and will consider how market access can be managed in light of the above proposals.

Additional Disabled bays

12. The implementation of disabled bays, further to the statutory consultation on the TRO, was recognised as a significant mitigation to the changes to footstreets that affected Blue Badge holders
13. The work to extend this provision started during the COVID-19 lockdown recovery periods, and included agreements at the 26th November 2020 Executive meeting and the 18th November 2021 Executive meeting.
14. The agreed additional dedicated disabled bays have all been installed on street and the following locations:

Location	Dedicated Blue Badge Parking indicative vehicle capacity
St Saviourgate	2
Carmelite Street	2

Dundas Street	5
Piccadilly	9
Duncombe Place	7
Duncombe Place - Horse Carriage bay	3
St Andrewgate	1
Deangate	3

15. A review of the signing and lining in these areas is currently on-going. The provision of Blue Badge parking both on street and in the Council's car parks is monitored and is constantly under review, with the aim to identify and address any gaps in provision.

16. Once the hostile vehicle measure locations have been through detailed design, a review of the capacity for additional disabled parking bays on Blake Street will be undertaken.

17. The implementation of additional bays is supplementary to the provision of Blue Badge parking spaces in the Council owned car parks. As well as to dedicated disabled parking bays in the car parks, blue badge holders can also park for free in any space in council owned car parks. The current numbers of disabled bays in the Council's public car parks are as follows:

Location	Dedicated Blue Badge Parking bays
Bootham Row CP	9
Monk Bar CP	8
Union Terrace CP	13
St George's Field CP	7
Castle CP	20
Marygate CP	11
Coppergate Centre CP	18
Esplanade CP	5
Nunnery lane CP	12
Foss Bank CP	4

Invest in Shopmobility to increase awareness of the service

18. Once appointed, the Access Officer will work with Shopmobility to expand the provision of mobility aids to meet the needs of service users. Discussions have already taken place with Shopmobility representatives on how to improve their current offer and grant payment is in progress. Technology upgrades to improve the customer experience and new mobility vehicles have been identified and are set to be actioned.

Investing in the Dial-&-Ride service, to improve awareness

19. Work is ongoing with York Wheels to improve the Dial-&-Ride service to better meet the need of service users. The Council is also supporting the specification for the new Dial-&-Ride vehicle fleet. A proposal for a programme of investment has been requested from Dial-&-Ride in order to release the funding agreed by Executive, officers will be responsive to the request.

Work with micro mobility operator (TIER) to explore the roll out of mobility aids at key points across the city

20. The Council has no formal contract with TIER to request or instruct a service. However, the Council continues to highlight the benefits of introducing a mobility aid as part of the TIER service in York. TIER is engaging with national disability organisations and groups to understand the needs of disabled people in accessing and adapting vehicles. While this work continues, TIER recently announced a partnership with OMNI, a start-up in France, to understand how their adapted scooters for wheelchair users can improve accessibility.

Improved routes into and around the City Centre, included improved paving and dropped kerbs

21. The funding for this item was identified to come from the Active Travel Fund Round 2 bid. The funding award has not yet been confirmed by the DfT. The Executive Report highlighted the options that in the absence of other funding it could be funded from the wider Transport Capital Programme in advance of the award. Therefore, a decision is needed on whether or not the Executive Member wishes to prioritise this programme of work to now make this happen in the absence of a decision on the Active Travel Fund.
22. At present, capital footway maintenance schemes in the City Centre have been planned for FY 2021/22 on the following streets:
- a. Colliergate
 - b. Stonegate
 - c. Church Street

23. Opportunities have been sought to provide measures as part of this work. A number of challenges have been identified relating to the historic nature of the streets, including cellars and utilities in close

proximity to the footway slabs, which limit opportunities for highway work. Lessons learned as part of the work carried out on these streets will inform the next stages of improvement works.

24. The following areas have been identified as needing additional crossing points due to the location of pavement cafés (permitted under temporary Covid legislation until the end of September 2022).
25. Before work commences the street will be visited with disabled access advocacy groups to help focus on the issues.
 - i. **Fossgate** – In September 2021, an officer decision agreed to the provision of dropped kerbs at several locations on the street to support pedestrians crossing the street to continue using the footway and to improve access to shops and venues on the street. Five uncontrolled crossing points (pairs of dropped kerbs with tactiles) were initially identified and consulted on. However, when undertaking the detail design and site investigations, significant issues were identified with utilities at a very shallow depth under the existing footway (and / or carriageway) and gradients for the dropped areas, which would be in excess of 1 in 12 (due to the presence of cellar tops). This means that the proposed crossing points have not yet been constructed as further investigation and design work are required.
 - ii. **Goodramgate and Low Petergate** - In September 2021, an officer decision agreed for work to progress to provide additional uncontrolled crossing points (in the form of pairs of dropped kerbs with tactiles) on Goodramgate (five locations) and Low Petergate (three locations). Detailed design and investigations are in the process of being procured for these streets.
26. The experience described above has led officers to identify the proposed approach to improving crossing point provision in the City Centre as per annex B.
27. In addition officers are recommending that improved uncontrolled crossing point provision be considered and designed as part of the FY22/23 City Centre Footway Maintenance Programme at Lendal, Blake Street and Coppergate (3 Tuns to Low Ousegate).
28. The remainder of the streets in the City Centre Pedestrianised Area will then be reviewed to identify further crossing point improvements.
29. The methodology for the implementation of these measures is outlined in **Annex B**.

Improve access to disabled toilets in the City Centre through multi-partner provision

30. A funding bid has been made to Changing Places for funding to improve Council owned disabled toilets. The Access Officer will consider a scheme to work with private sector businesses to identify all disabled toilets and reach agreement that disabled people could use them without being a paying customer.

Carry out a feasibility study for a dedicated shuttle service for disabled people and those with mobility issues

31. An initial study was undertaken on this as part of a project with the University of York in 2019. As part of this, engagement with providers was carried out and ultimately a roll out will be subject to a provider being able to deliver the service in partnership with the Council. Once there is confirmation/clarity on the DfT's response to the Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), which features a bid to support a further feasibility study with a request for funding to trial such a proposal, the study will be initiated, and, if possible, a trial will be built into early work in order to prove concept.

Improve awareness of Blue Badge parking and services which are available to improve access to the City Centre including toilets, accessible routes

32. A refresh of the Council's website with up to date information will be launched on the 24th March 2022 to coincide with the publication and an accompanying paper map which will be made available from the end of March 2022, blue badge holder registered with the council will be updated with a letter.

Work with disabled groups to identify from the hierarchy for priority investment, two car parks for improved disabled parking facilities and improved onward access routes in to the City Centre

33. Discussions have taken place with York Disability Rights Forum. They do not support the decisions taken by Executive in regarding Castle Car Park or Footstreets. However, they are supporting the criteria for defining and engaging with wider blue badge holders on which should be the two priority disabled car parks. This will shape investment for blue badge holders, where

quality of parking spaces, disabled facilities and access routes are a priority over proximity.

Council Plan

34. Considering this matter contributes to the Council Plan in the following areas:

- Getting around sustainably
- Safe communities and culture for all
- An open and effective council

Implications

35. Financial

The updates included within the report detail activity that is being undertaken within current budgets allocations. The report recommends that the dropped crossing programme will be funded from the LTP in the absence of further Active Travel allocations. This will mean other schemes originally planned to be delivered in 2022/23 are put back to later years. Updates to the LTP will be provided to the Executive Member as part of regular monitoring reports.

36. Human Resources (HR)

A process consistent with the policies and procedures of the Council will be undertaken to develop the role and recruit to the Access Officer post/

37. Equalities

Attached in **Annex A** is the latest version of the City Centre Access equalities impact assessment.

38. Legal

Each of the proposed actions above will have their own specific legal implications. Specific advice should be sought from Legal Services on a case-by-case basis. Generally speaking at this point however, the following should be taken into account.

- i. Any grants, loans, and subsidies to be made by the Council to any third parties (e.g. Shop mobility grants; grants to community organisations such as York Wheels for the Dial-a-Ride service), will be subject to Paras. 6 to 8 of Part E of the Council's Financial Regulations. Legal advice should be sought on the preparation and execution of any relevant grant/loan/subsidy terms and conditions, and on compliance with and the impact of any rules and requirements under the UK Subsidy Control Regime (formerly the EU State Aid Regime).

For the avoidance of any doubt, at the time of writing this report, Legal Services are already advising on and assisting with finalising the grant funding arrangements between the Council and York Wheels in respect of the Dial-a-Ride Service.

- ii. External grant funding sought for the delivery of any of the proposed measures outlined above (e.g. DfT Active Travel Fund; DfT funding for the BSIP; funding for provision of City Centre disabled toilets) will be subject to Paras. 6 to 8 of Part E of the Council's Financial Regulations. Further, Legal Services will be required to review and assess any grant funding terms before the Council enters into any such funding arrangements, and where necessary provide advice on the impact of any rules and requirements under the UK Subsidy Control Regime.
- iii. Any works, supplies of goods/materials, and services must be commissioned in accordance with a procurement strategy that meets the requirements of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules ("**CPRs**") and (where relevant) the Public Contract Regulations 2015 ("**PCRs**"); advice should be sought from Legal Services and colleagues in the Procurement where necessary. Where a procurement process is funded, in whole or part, by grant funding which has been awarded to the Council by an external funding body (see above), the Council must ensure that any rules or conditions imposed by the funding body are adhered to, in addition to the requirements of the CPRs and the PCRs.
- iv. Specifically in relation to TIER, the Council previously entered into a Concession Contract with TIER for the delivery of a trial e-scooter and e-bike service for the City of York, which began on 12th October 2020 and is due to expire on 31st March 2022. Work has begun to extend this arrangement up to and including 30th November 2022. Any changes to the current Concession Contract to include the additional rolling out of mobility aids will require a variation to the Concession Contract in accordance with its terms and conditions, the

CPRs and (where applicable) the Concession Contract Regulations 2016, as well as possible amendment to the City of York Council E-Scooter Trial Order 2020.

The Council, as a traffic authority, has the power to make temporary Traffic Regulation Orders under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and (where applicable) in accordance with the procedures contained in the Road Traffic (Temporary Restrictions) Procedure Regulations 1992 and the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (procedure) (England & Wales) Regulations 1996. Some of the proposed actions above may require amendments to the York Parking, Stopping and Waiting Traffic Regulation Order 2014. The traffic authority must be satisfied the traffic on the road should be restricted or prohibited for a reason set out in section 14(1) of the 1984 act.

39. Crime and Disorder

There are no Crime and Disorder implications.

40. Information Technology (IT)

There are no IT implications.

41. Property

There are no Property implications.

42. Other

There are no other implications identified.

Risk Management

In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy there is a low risk associated with the recommendations in this report.

Contact Details

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**Report
Approved**



Date 14/03/2022

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

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Wards Affected: Guildhall

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: N/A

Abbreviations:

HVM – Hostile Vehicle Measures

DfT – Department for Transport

CYC – City of York Council

BSIP – Bus Service Improvement Plan

Annexes:

Annex A: Equalities Impact Assessment

Annex B: Dropped crossing methodology