

Report of the Head of Civic, Legal & Democratic Services

Traffic Congestion Ad Hoc Scrutiny Committee

Summary

1. This report presents the final report of the Traffic Congestion Ad Hoc Scrutiny Committee regarding their review on Traffic Congestion in York. Councillor Merrett, Chair of the Committee, will be attendance to present the report.

Background

2. In coming to a decision to review this topic, the Committee recognised certain key objectives and the following remit was agreed:

Aim

3. To identify ways including Local Transport Plans 1 & 2 (LTP1 & LTP2) and other evidence, of reducing present levels of traffic congestion in York, and ways of minimising the impact of the forecast traffic increase.

Objectives

Having regard to the impact of traffic congestion (based on external evidence and those measures already implemented in LTP1 or proposed in LTP2), recommend and prioritise specific improvements to:

- i. Accessibility to services, employment, education and health
- ii. Air Quality, in particular looking at the five hotspots identified in the LTP2
- iii. CO₂ Emissions
- iv. Alternative environmentally viable and financially practical methods of transport
- v. Journey times and reliability of public transport
- vi. Economic Performance
- vii. Quality of Life
- viii. Road Safety

Consultation

4. As part of the review the following organisations and individuals were consulted:
 - Assistant Director of City Development & Transport

- Environmental Protection Manager
 - Principal Transport Planner
 - Representatives from the local bus service providers
 - Chair of the Quality Bus Partnership
5. In addition, reference was made to national Government policy documents and the Council's mid-term reports on LTP2, and a number of consultation events were also held:
- 'Road User Charging' (presented by Capita Symonds)
 - 'Broad Strategic Options Available to York' Report (presented by the Assistant Director of City Development & Transport)
 - 'Quality of Life' (presented by Professor John Whitelegg)
6. Finally, a city wide consultation survey was undertaken to gather residents views on the possible options available to the city for tackling congestion.

Options

7. Having considered the findings contained within the final report and its annexes attached, Members may chose to support all, some or none of the recommendations shown in paragraph 7 of this report.

Analysis

8. In regards to the aims and objectives of this review, the Traffic Congestion Ad-hoc Scrutiny Committee analysis of all of the information gathered, is shown at Annex C to their final report. The final report was presented to the Scrutiny Management Committee on 1 February 2010 and they endorsed all of the recommendations within it.

Summary of Recommendations Arising from the Review

9. The Committee have drafted a number of recommendations as result of their investigative work on the objectives of this review. These do not include any recommendations around the testing of the scenarios identified from the consultation. These will follow in a further report to the Executive, once the responses received have been analysed.
10. However, the Traffic Congestion Ad-hoc Scrutiny Committee have already agreed a number of recommendations which have been split into two parts - those that in the Committee's view need to be implemented in the short term and included in LTP3, and those that make up a long term strategic response to tackling congestion from LTP3 onwards. The recommendations made to date are shown in the tables below:

Recommendations to be implemented in the short term i.e. included as part of the preparatory and ongoing work for LTP3	Executive Comment / Proposal
i. Strengthen the place of transport policy in future versions of York's Sustainable Community Strategy to recognise its importance in the life of the city and the importance of tackling congestion to its' residents	
ii. Commission a detailed study involving stakeholders, of a future long term Transport Strategy to 2025 and beyond based around the scenarios emerging from the consultation.	
iii. Adopt an on-going public engagement strategy in terms of the future transport strategy and solutions for the City	
iv. Adopt the transport hierarchy detailed in paragraph 19 of the Final Report	
v. Fund the development of a comprehensive 'Smart Choice' package including personalised journey planning to maximise modal shift together with a re-invigoration of 'Travel Plans', ensuring they are implemented, monitored and periodically updated	
vi. Re-acknowledge the role of city centre car park availability and fee levels relative to bus fares in influencing modal choice, whilst taking account of the short term economic situation and recognising the importance of both imperatives. Remove car park charges from the budget process entirely and set them as part of a longer term policy approach to both transport and the city centre economy	
vii. Ensure the current local development control policies on limiting city centre car parks are enforced and further tightened up within the new Local Development Framework	
viii. Seek an agreed traffic enforcement strategy with North Yorkshire Police for the York area and establish an on-going delivery partnership arrangement to address issues including:	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bus priorities • road safety • on-street parking • school no parking zones • considerate road user campaigns across all modes 	
<p>ix. Make representations to Government in relation to the roll out powers to non London authorities on enforcement issues possibly through the Sustainable Communities Act</p>	
<p>x. Undertake an early comprehensive review of the current bus network in terms of appropriate changes to match changing development patterns and gaps etc, since the 2002 review</p>	
<p>xi. Undertake an urgent review of the Council's bus strategy, taking into account the new powers in the recent transport act, so as to move towards a bus network that is completely integrated from the bus users point of view, including integrated ticketing and day round services, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examining how the current stagnation in overall bus usage, decline in non-concessionary usage, and in the conventional bus network can be reversed • Ensuring positive promotion of bus network and bus usage including passenger information • Improving the quality of interchange points between public transport modes and between routes with designated interchange stops, and co-ordinate bus timings • Prioritising the provision of timetable displays and bus shelters at all bus stops • Requesting that local bus companies continue to revise bus timetables to provide more accurate and credible timings, and work to them • Improving access to York District Hospital from all parts of the city, which may involve route revisions and through ticketing. Demand for parking at and around the Hospital as well as improved access can be achieved by ensuring the extension of Park & Ride services to include the Hospital 	

<p>xii. Introduce a Bus Champion for the City to support City Strategy and bus operators in re-invigorating the Quality Bus Partnership, and use them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine and implement ways of improving bus boarding times, whilst avoiding penalising occasional and less well off bus users • Identify underused bus services and undertake those measures that would most effectively stop the current decline in bus usage i.e. ticketing and marketing measures for all services, holding down bus fare levels, increased non-concessionary bus priorities, influencing public attitudes and tackling outstanding issues from the 2001 Steer Davies review • Review the operation and delivery of the BLISS real time bus information display system and agree a comprehensive programme for its early roll out across the whole network, with local bus operators • Review loading and parking restrictions and their enforcement on bus routes with bus operators and the Police • Work with partners in the wider York area 	
<p>xiii. Drive through early implementation of full DDA compliance for all Council vehicles used by Social Services and council procured bus services, and CCTV in taxis and private hire vehicles</p>	
<p>xiv. Ensure better pedestrian priority at traffic signals and in road & junction layouts to simplify and speed up pedestrian crossing times whilst minimising the knock on consequences</p>	
<p>xv. Tackle road safety issues and help to make roads more attractive to green modes by undertaking 'Considerate Road User' campaigns</p>	
<p>xvi. Reinvigorate cycling in York using the 'Cycling City' initiative and funding by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tackling key gaps in the network and difficult locations i.e. bridges, key radials and junctions, as identified by the 2003/4 cycling scrutiny review but as yet not implemented • improving planning processes to ensure adequate consideration is given in new designs to cycling 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relaunching Cycling Forum to give stakeholders the opportunity to shape future cycling policies and proposals, and to encourage partnership work 	
<p>xvii. The Cycling Champion for York to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure cycling measures are focused around what will make a difference • promote considerate road user behaviour by cyclists • engage the business community to encourage the provision of cycling facilities for both employees and visitors/customers 	
<p>xviii. Undertake an urgent review of the Air Quality Management Plan with a view to taking more radical action to eliminate the health risks associated with York's NO₂ hotspots, by the EU deadline of 2010. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • examining the progression of low emission zones • queue relocations using ITS/UTMC • further tightening of the Euro-emission vehicle requirements on the Council's own and its partner's vehicle fleets, tendered transport services and licensed vehicle services, given that buses account for 42% of road traffic emissions • promoting electric vehicles and the servicing infrastructure to support their roll out • consideration of a new city centre servicing plan, particular where traffic flows are frequently interrupted, and the introduction a local freight transshipment centre • working with the PCT to increase understanding of the associated health issues 	
<p>xix. Undertake short term project to measure the levels of most harmful PM2.5 carcinogen carrying particles, to understand if there is a problem in York</p>	

<p>Recommendations in strategic response to tackling congestion from LTP3 onwards</p>	
<p>The Council and Local Strategic Partnership to adopt and work consistently towards the implementation of the following long-term vision for transport in the City, (complementing the city’s Sustainable Community Strategy, and giving a clear direction to what the city’s transport will look like in the future):</p> <p><i>‘A city which has transformed itself in traffic terms and reasserted its human scale and environmental credentials, through its residents being able and positively choosing to travel less by car and more by foot, bicycle and public transport with little delay, so as to be individually healthier and collectively to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve local air quality, noise levels and quality of life, and where business, leisure and other activity is thriving because of good affordable quality and easy access by a choice of travel modes’</i></p>	
<p>Given the key importance of public transport within the above, the following subsidiary vision for public transport to be adopted, ensuring the Council and its partners work consistently towards its implementation:</p> <p><i>‘By 2026 York is benefiting from one of the best and most popular local bus services in the country outside London, offering a seamless passenger experience, with a single competitively priced ticketing system, high frequency daytime services to all key destinations in the city, recognised interchange points with well timetabled connections where bus transfer is required, non carbon fuelled fully disabled accessible vehicles, friendly and welcoming staff who drive considerately of passengers and other road users, good bus stop facilities and reliable interactive timetable information.’</i></p>	
<p>In regard to buses, the Council to ensure further comprehensive 5-yearly reviews of the bus network are carried out to optimise the network and service frequency, taking into account new housing and other developments</p>	

In regard to freight, the Council to:

- Continue to keep the issue of providing a freight transshipment centre for the City under review if a suitable site and funding mechanisms come forward
- Lobby government (national and EU) to improve standards for HGV engine efficiency and emissions
- Ensure council and partners vehicle fleets, and tendered delivery vehicles move rapidly towards the most up to date emission and efficiency standards

Corporate Strategy

11. This review related to a number of the corporate priorities contained within the Council Corporate Strategy i.e. the recommendations if approved, will support the council's aim of making the city a healthier, more sustainable and thriving city, where residents have improved access to education, employment and health services.

Implications

12. **Financial** – The financial implications associated with implementing the suggested long term transport strategy are outlined in paragraph 55. However in order to pursue these funding streams the scenarios will need to be tested rigorously to confirm the validity of the suggested strategy, which would require Council funding. At this stage it is unclear exactly how much funding would be required and these financial implications would need to be addressed in more detail in future reports to Members should the Executive approve the recommendations arising from this scrutiny review.
13. **Legal** – As Local Highway Authority, Local Planning Authority, Local Environmental Health Authority and Road Traffic Authority, the Council has a wide range of functions it is able to discharge and powers it can exercise in dealing with congestion. In so acting it must adhere both to its own necessary authorisation procedures and all formal statutory requirements.
14. There are no known HR, Equalities, Property, Crime & Disorder, or other implications associated with the recommendations within this report. However, there are likely to be some HR implications associated with any additional recommendations around the testing of the preferred scenarios, which will be made once the survey results have been analysed.

Risk Management

15. There are risks to the Council associated with not adhering to all the legislation associated with the statutory functions listed within the legal implications paragraph above. There is also a potential risk to the Council's reputation if it fails to implement the necessary measures to address the expected increase in congestion levels

Recommendations

16. Members are asked to note the contents of the attached final report and its annexes, provide comments on the findings and approve the recommendations as shown within the tables at paragraph 10 of this cover report.

Reason: To fully inform the Executive of the outcome of the Traffic Congestion Ad Hoc Scrutiny Review.

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Report Approved **Date**

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

- 1 – Road User Charging Presentation by Capita Symonds
- 2 – Broad Strategic Options Report
- 3 – Quality of Life Presentation by Professor J Whitelegg
- 4 – LTP2 Strategy for 2006-11
- 5 – Summary of Regional and Local Transport Policy

Hard copies of these background papers can be obtained by contacting the report author. Alternatively, they can be viewed online at:

<http://democracy.york.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=12836&path=0>

Annexes

- Annex 1 – Final Report
- Annex A – Maps Showing Congestion Levels in 2005, 2011 & 2021
- Annex B – Information Gathered In support of Review
- Annex C – Analysis of Findings Including Table of Issues/Findings, Identified Solutions, Possible Impacts & Draft Recommendations
- Annex D – Broad Strategic Options - Individual Scenarios To Complement LTP3

Committee Members

Councillor D Merrett (Chair)
Councillor B Hudson (Vice-Chair)
Councillor T Holvey
Councillor K Orrell
Councillor R Pierce
Councillor T Simpson-Laing
Councillor C Vassie
Professor M Smith (Co-optee)
Professor M Page (Co-optee)

Previous Committee Members

Councillor R Moore
Councillor J Morley
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