
MEETING	TRAFFIC CONGESTION AD-HOC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	12 OCTOBER 2009
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS MERRETT (CHAIR), HOLVEY, HUDSON (VICE-CHAIR), ORRELL, PIERCE, SIMPSON-LAING, VASSIE AND MR M PAGE (CO-OPTED NON-STATUTORY MEMBER)
APOLOGIES	MR M SMITH (CO-OPTED NON-STATUTORY MEMBER)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare, at this point in the meeting, any personal or prejudicial interests they might have in the business on the agenda.

Councillor Merrett declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in agenda items 5 (Traffic Congestion Final Report) and 6 (Traffic Congestion – Residents Survey) as an honorary member of the Cyclists’ Touring Club, a member of Cycling England and a member of the York Cycle Campaign.

Councillor Holvey declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in agenda items 5 (Traffic Congestion Final Report) and 6 (Traffic Congestion – Residents Survey) as he was employed by Leeds City Council as an Economic Policy Manager.

Councillor Simpson-Laing declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in agenda items 4 (Air Quality Update) and 5 (Traffic Congestion Final Report) as she lived adjacent to a possible future Air Quality Management Area.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 7 May 2009 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council’s Public Participation Scheme.

4. AIR QUALITY UPDATE

Consideration was given to an update report on Local Air Quality Management in York. Members were reminded that in 2002 the City of York Council had declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and that since then air quality monitoring in the city had revealed that the local

and national objective levels were still being exceeded in a number of locations.

In York the five areas of concern were located on or near to the inner ring road and they were characterised by their enclosed nature and long periods of congested traffic. It was confirmed that while the council had already achieved a lot in terms of modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport, the levels of NO₂ still appeared to be deteriorating and that only a step change in transport policy was likely to deliver any measurable and sustainable improvement.

Officers stated that since this report had been published the results of monitoring in the vicinity of Fulford Main Street and Heslington Lane had been reported to DEFRA. Their detailed assessment had concluded that the annual average nitrogen dioxide objective was being exceeded in this area that a new AQMA would need to be declared and a plan drawn up for that area.

Members questioned various aspects of the report including:

- Health implications for residents in the breach areas;
- Possible joint working with the PCT and details of related hospital admissions;
- Considered that some traffic light sequencing added to air pollution;
- Error margin on air quality figures and averages across the AQM area;
- LTP2 included the examination of low emission zones towards the end of the plan period.

The Chair thanked Officers for their extremely helpful and comprehensive report on air quality and confirmed that this information would be used in the final report. The Committee felt that this report should also be sent to the Community Safety and Overview Committee for their information.

RESOLVED: That the Air Quality update report be noted.

REASON: To update the Committee on the present position in relation to air quality in the city and proposed future improvements.

5. TRAFFIC CONGESTION FINAL REPORT

Members considered the draft final report of the Committee which had examined ways, including Local Transport Plans 1 and 2 (LTP1 and LTP2) and other evidence, of reducing present traffic levels of traffic congestion in York, and ways of minimising the impact of the forecast traffic increase.

To fully investigate and understand the affects that congestion and the improvement areas identified within the remit Members had held a series of meetings between November 2006 and June 2008.

The Committee had concluded that the broad overall solution to both congestion and the climate change challenge was a concerted approach using the following hierarchy of measures:

- i. Reducing the need to travel (through IT, land use planning policies and other solutions)
- ii. Undertaking more of the journeys that still need to be made by green and environmentally less damaging modes
- iii. Improving engine efficiency and switch to lower / non-carbon based fuels
- iv. Undertaking a greater proportion of car based journeys on a shared basis
- v. Improving driving standards (for fuel efficiency and safety, and to make roads safer and more attractive to green travel modes)
- vi. Reducing congestion delays and fuel wastage in traffic queues.

It was reported that comments on the draft final report had been received from Chris Chambers on behalf of the York Environment Forum details of which had been emailed to Members and hard copies circulated at the meeting. The Forum supported the need for an immediate action plan to improve traffic congestion and air quality in the city.

Consideration was given to all the information in the covering report, the draft final report at Annex A and its associated annexes and to the following options:

- i) Amending the findings detailed within the report
- ii) Inserting additional information
- iii) Amending and/or agreeing the vision for York's long-term transport strategy as suggested in paragraph 69
- iv) Drafting and agreeing a subsidiary vision for public transport for inclusion in the final report at paragraph 70
- v) Amending and/or agreeing the conclusions and recommendations within the report (as shown at paragraphs 79 – 84 & 91 - 93)

RESOLVED: That subject to the various amendments and additions suggested at the meeting together with the inclusion of information from the Air Quality Update report, agreement be given to the draft final report and annexes of the Traffic Congestion Scrutiny Review.

REASON: To progress and finalise this review and to enable implementation of the Committees recommendations.

6. TRAFFIC CONGESTION - RESIDENTS SURVEY

Consideration was given to a draft of the planned residents survey, based on the findings of the scrutiny review to enable it to be produced and issued. Members had recognised that it would be beneficial to engage the wider York community as well as interested parties to identify their views on future transport policy, given both the difficult and critical choices to be made.

A revised version of the Traffic Congestion Survey which included some context to the traffic congestion issues faced by the city and how the Committee identified the scenarios shown in the survey had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting.

Members made the following points and suggestions in relation to the survey document:

- Survey to contain less text and more pictures/photographs to ease understanding;
- Simplified explanation of the scrutiny process towards end of text;
- Maps require simplification and inclusion of text as unclear in present form;
- In addition to projected traffic growth figures include details of proposed increase in congestion to 2021 on the basis of current policies and funding levels;
- Outcome of options to be made clearer and that % reduction is against the future;
- Include details of funding levels and costs for options A, B and D;
- Should be made clear that this is a long term strategy;
- Explanation of what congestion means eg longer queues, longer journeys to work, more junctions blocked etc;
- Scenario's A – D to be incorporated into a tick box grid to include predicted outcomes;
- Include bicycles and powered 4 wheelers as methods of commuting;
- Include 'equipment associated with work' as one of the barriers to travelling;
- Include questions to gain details of the postcode of employment and the school runs;
- Q7 to detail costs for each of the options and to allow residents to allocate a sum of money (eg 10 years transport funding) between these options;
- Indicate that this survey relates to long term strategic options for the city (10 years plus) and that a separate consultation relating to the shorter term Local Transport Plan 3 will follow;
- Examine possible A3 size survey;
- Circulation to schools to reach young people;
- Ensure plain English and snappy core messages;

Officers confirmed that to enable the survey to be produced and distributed, no later than December, that an amended draft survey would be required within approximately 10 to 14 days to allow for agreement on the final format and publication.

- RESOLVED: (i) That the survey of York residents to evidence the findings of the scrutiny review and support the arising recommendations be undertaken in an amended format to be agreed;
- (ii) That the Chair, Vice Chair and Cllr Holvey as spokesperson of the Lib/Dem group be delegated authority to agree amendments to the survey to enable it to be produced within the necessary timescales.

REASON: To enable the survey to be produced and distributed and to evidence the value of the work of this Scrutiny Committee.

CLLR D MERRETT, Chair
[The meeting started at 6.00 pm and finished at 8.00 pm].

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