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**Decision Session –  
Executive Member for Transport**

9<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Report of the Assistant Director of Transport, Highways and Environment

**iTravel York progress report and programme 2021/22**

**Summary**

1. This report provides an update of the iTravel Programme of work to benefit traffic flow, health and the environment through promoting behaviour change towards sustainable travel options.

**Recommendations**

2. That the Executive Member notes the proposed 21/22 iTravel Programme subject to funding.

Reason: to endorse the proposed approach to delivery for 2021/22 in support of the council plan outcome of enabling more residents to get around sustainably.

**Background**

3. The iTravel Team delivers travel behaviour change activities to benefit traffic flow, health and the environment in York. It is a Council team (currently 7 employees) within the Sustainable Transport Team. The iTravel programme is the means for delivering most of the travel behaviour change activities. It is funded by DfT's Access Fund, which is the main funding source for the iTravel Team.
4. The iTravel Programme is a set of work packages that belong to five categories/themes:

<b>Themes</b>
1. Employment Sustainable Travel uptake
2. Education Sustainable Travel uptake
3. Engaging Sustainable Travel uptake
4. Better Bus Promotion
5. Communication, Promotion

5. The iTravel Team works closely with the other teams in Sustainable Transport, which also draw some of their funding from the iTravel Programme. The Road Safety team provide child pedestrian training and adult and child cycle training. The Public Transport Team promote and provide information about bus and Park & Ride services.

## Transport

### Sustainable Transport Team

#### iTravel Team

*Promoting sustainable travel*

#### Road Safety Team

*Promoting safer travel*

#### Public Transport

*Promoting/supporting bus and Park & Ride*

## Benefits of promoting sustainable travel

6. The role of the iTravel team is to encourage people in York to travel sustainably, e.g. walking, cycling, public transport, car sharing and low emission vehicles. The team primarily uses the method of 'travel planning' to help individuals to change to using sustainable travel. For example for cycling, some of that support can be free information, training, 'tryouts' and challenges. This could be provided directly by the team or through 'travel plans': documents developed by employers and other organisations about how travel to their site can be changed.
7. The following table relates the benefits of sustainable travel to the Council Plan core outcomes, illustrating how important it is to what the Council wants to achieve.

<b>Benefit from increasing sustainable travel</b>	<b>Council Plan core outcomes that link with this</b>
Reduced congestion by using road space more efficiently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting around sustainably</li> <li>• Well-paid jobs and an inclusive economy</li> </ul>
Improved air quality by emitting less or cleaner vehicle emissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting around sustainably</li> <li>• A Greener and Cleaner City</li> </ul>
Reduced carbon emissions by emitting less or lower carbon vehicle emissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting around sustainably</li> <li>• A Greener and Cleaner City</li> </ul>

Increased health through active travel. Walking to the bus is healthy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good Health and Wellbeing</li> </ul>
Cost savings to individuals. Walking/cycling is low cost, but bus and car sharing can save money too.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well-paid jobs and an inclusive economy</li> </ul>
Safer travel through support to cycle safely.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe Communities and culture for all</li> </ul>

### **iTravel Programme: DfT funding allocations**

8. The iTravel Programme is a programme of travel behaviour scheme initiatives. It is funded in revenue by the Department for Transport's (DfT) Access Fund, which followed similar funds such as the Local Sustainable Transport Fund. The Access Fund was awarded to us through a competitive bidding process for a 3 year programme – 17/18, 18/19, 19/20. An extension of funding was made by the DfT for 20/21.
9. See the funding received so far. Some funds included capital allocations, but only revenue is summarised below.
  - Cycle City York – £223K (08/09); £543K (09/10); £615K (10/11)
  - Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) – £180K (11/12); £647K (12/13); £777K (13/14); £896K (14/15)
  - LSTF 2 – £1m (15/16)
  - Sustainable Transition Fund – £399K (16/17)
  - Access Fund – £451K (17/18); £390K (18/19); £472K (19/20)
  - Access Fund extension – 2020/21 - £438K
10. The 21/22 budget is yet to be confirmed.

We have the potential of carrying forward about £130K underspend from 20/21 and we expect to receive a new 21/22 Access Fund grant (a top-up) from the DfT.

The carry forward is necessary because it was not possible to deliver all of the pre-notified programme during the Covid period. Partly this was because social distancing meant it was not possible to hold some of the

anticipated events, but also because some staff in the iTravel team were diverted to work on covid-related projects – see Section 6.1.

A £130K carry forward would be the minimum amount to continue the programme into 21/22. It would cover the April to September 2021 period and breaks down as follows:

<b>Item</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Amount</b>
iTravel Team staff salaries	Required to deliver the programme	£85.5K
Communications Officer salary (part funded)	Required to raise awareness of the programme's services	£10.5K
Sustrans schools contract	Travel behaviour engagement and highways feasibility work. Delivery to end of school year in July.	£34K
	Total	£130K

11. It is likely that iTravel will have a lower total budget compared to previous years. The lower anticipated top-up is related to DfT wanting to give all councils funding for travel behaviour change activity, as opposed to a subset of councils receiving a larger proportion of the pot (as has been the case) because they had live travel behaviour projects.

### **Covid and other impacts**

12. The ability of the programme and team to operate has been significantly reduced by Covid restrictions and effects:
- Much of our work involves face to face contact with individuals and groups, e.g. at school, business and public events. Since March the team has worked from home according to Covid guidelines.
  - Likewise our work often involves providing physical resources, e.g. leaflets and cycles to try out. This hasn't been possible either.
  - Many of the journeys we have targeted have dramatically reduced in number, such as the commute and school run.

- Many of the organisations we have supported in the past have this year been inactive or too busy to engage with.
- With recruitment frozen internally, we weren't able to increase the number of staff back to the level that enables full delivery. One employee had seconded to another team and another has been on maternity leave.
- Numbers of bus passengers and their journeys have declined to around one-third of normal levels. This is because of restrictions and reduced capacity due to social distancing and messaging to discourage bus and rail use.

13. With the above challenges, there are however opportunities for increasing sustainable travel in York:

- a) Working from home and meeting online has reduced the number of journeys taking place. And there is probably a culture developing of partially maintaining this, for both individuals and organisations.
- b) Active travel has been encouraged as part of people's daily exercise during lockdowns and has been one of a few leisure exercises that need not involve proximity to others. Because numbers of journeys have decreased, active travel has probably decreased too, but has probably increased proportionally to other modes.
- c) Upcoming infrastructure that will benefit sustainable travel include the Active Travel Fund schemes, especially the A19 cycle route.
- d) New housing estates, such as Lowfield Green, give us an opportunity of new residents creating new journeys that we can influence.
- e) An increased online culture at work and at home might provide us with different ways to engage with people, outside of our usual face to face services.
- f) There is a need to support take-up of bus and rail again as social distancing measures are rolled back because widespread use of these modes is essential to York's strategy to make the city as accessible as possible, whilst managing congestion and pollution from car use.

### **How the programme / iTravel Team's activities changed in 20/21**

14. As a result of the above issues and opportunities, the following changed.

- a) TryBike (people trying cycling) was to be our flagship scheme, but we have been unable to deliver it. There was no obvious scheme/concept to replace it.

We had planned to buy a fleet of cycles and provide to the non-cycling public to try. The concept itself required proximity and transition of resources that didn't suit covid restrictions.

- b) The Travel2School scheme, delivered by Sustrans, had to reduce the number of playground, assembly and other activities (to encourage walking and cycling). Online sessions replaced these, though face to face and physical activities will always give better results.
- c) Face to face engagement generally stopped. Travel plan meetings have largely not been able to take place. Travel advice and support hasn't taken place at stalls and events.
- d) The covid pandemic has also meant there has been a need for the iTravel team to support wider activities of the Transport Team in the following areas:
- Supporting the Bishopthorpe Road footway widening scheme consultation
  - Assistance gathering information on travel patterns and, in particular, on employers' plans for the return to work after the Spring lockdown
  - Similar partnership working to support the return to schools in September
  - Looking at cycle parking locations in April/ May for the Emergency Active Travel Fund
  - Liaison with Public Health around Covid health planning for transport
  - Provision of information about travel/covid through the iTravel website
  - The team has also been able to assist with the initial phases of research to support York's Local Transport Plan refresh.

### **iTravel Programme 20/21: Output and Outcome headlines**

15. In terms of showing results of the programme it will always be difficult to calculate grand totals, because different schemes require different types of data collection.

As set out above, Covid has reduced the supply of and requirement for our services in 20/21. The results below cover fewer categories than normal with levels of participation also lower compared to previous years.

### **TryBike:**

16. Our flagship scheme to enable non cyclists to try cycling could not take place, due to the inability during the Covid period to deliver.

### **Cycle Training:**

17. Urban Cycle Skills for adults and families is delivered by Road Safety to usually 70-80 participants each year – members of the public who request a session. Despite social distancing guidance it has been possible to give 58 of these sessions in 20/21.

Cycle training is taking part at Mercure Hotel in February/March for up to 14 asylum seekers.

Bikeability training for children (also by Road Safety) is part-funded by the iTravel Programme. See the statistics for 20/21 below with what was expected in brackets.

Total number of Core Bikeability places delivered in schools from April 2020 – Feb 2021 = **457** (1244)

Level 1 & 2 combined = 299 (1000)

Level 2 only = 26 (41)

Level 3 = 132 (263)

Total number of Bikeability plus places delivered from April 2020 - Feb 2021 = 38 (129)

Bikeability Learn to ride = 2 (6)

Bikeability balance (reception children) = 36 (123)

18. Our 19/20 'Cycle Training at York Mosque' project won the 'Excellence in Cycling' award this year from Modeshift – a national award. In partnership with United Bikes, 20 women connected with the York Mosque learned to cycle confidently, substantially increasing their mobility and opportunity.

Quotes from participants:

- "I want to go home and tell my sons and grandsons. I want to do more so I can ride with my family and I know its good exercise"

- “This training gave me the courage to use a bike as means of transportation”

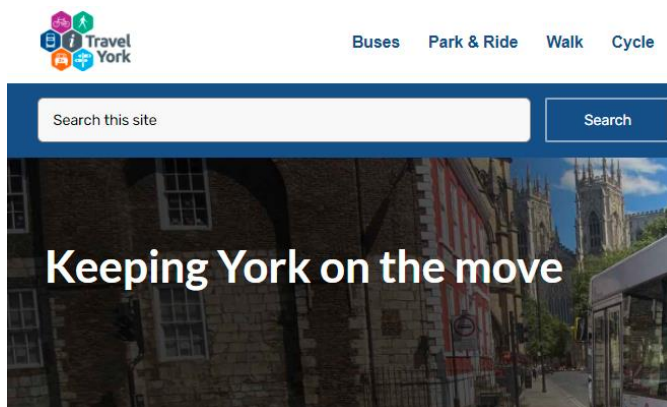


## b) iTravel website reboot

A completely new version of the iTravel website was launched in June 2020.

Producing a new website brought the opportunity of making travel information and resources quicker and easier to find. Boosting the walking content has also been a priority.

The Council web team developed the website with the iTravel Team as the client.



## c) Exploring York Maps

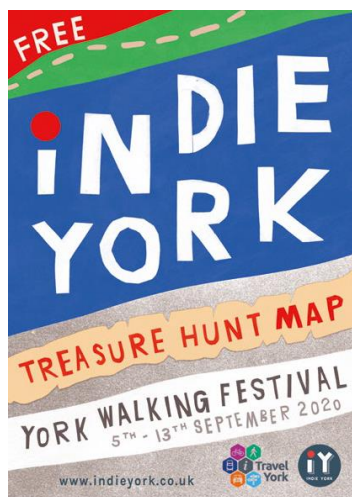
10 walking maps were developed and launched during the York Walking Festival. Feedback so far has been very positive.





### d) York Walking Festival

We successfully launched the York Walking Festival in September 2020 – the first in recent years. A programme of led walks wasn't possible (social distancing etc). Instead the week focussed on walking challenges. The highlight was the Indie York Treasure Hunt – a partnership success with Indie York. Though evidence is largely anecdotal, we are confident that public participation was high, resulting in increased footfall to shops. This shows the potential for walking initiatives benefiting the economy as well as the usual sustainable travel benefits.



### e) Travel2School:

Sustrans engage with pupils about their travel choices, encouraging more walking and cycling in particular. They work in school years.

Sep17 – Jul20:

**Car Use:** Pupils reporting car use as their usual form of transport to school decreased by over 4 percentage points: from 28.4% at baseline to 23.8% at the end of year three.

**Walking/cycling:** Pupils who usually choose active travel to get to school increased from 65.9% at baseline to 69.0% after three years of engagement.

**Park and Stride:** Park and stride is less popular than active travel, but has increased from 3.8% at baseline to 6.8% at the end of year 3.

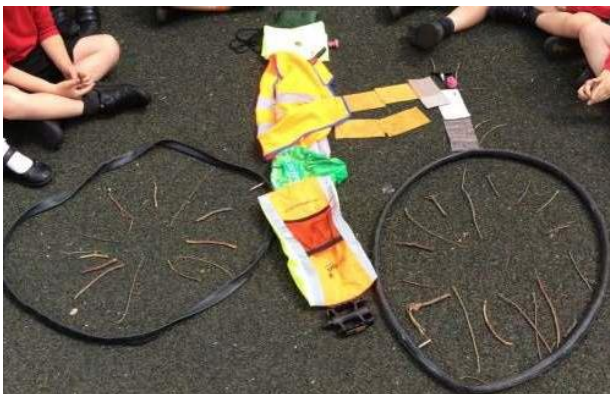
**Travel preferences:** After three years of engagement, 80.2% of pupils want to travel actively to school (up from 77.9% at baseline), and only 9.9% want to be driven to school (down from 13.1% at baseline).

*44 schools have been involved at some point (there are 63 publicly funded schools in York in total). 15 contributed to the stats above.*

Sep20 onwards:

66 activities have been delivered, with those going online during lockdowns. 8 schools involved – fewer schools for more intensive activity. Results not available yet.

Anecdotal evidence has also been positive. For example Carr Infants School: “There is definitely an increase in children coming on bikes and scooter - the sheds at the front are now always full and over flowing!”



Bike art at Robert Wilkinson Primary School

f) Other school activities:

- October 2020 Walk to School Week and Jack Archer Award. We had our joint best year with 32 (out of 49) primary schools (65%) taking part – total of 9847 pupils. Winning school was Clifton Green

primary with 89.6% travelling actively to school. Also delivered 2 assemblies via Zoom.

- From July to September 2020 we worked with Education Transport to help with the full return to school ensuring covid compliance.
- Work with 3 schools on inconsiderate parking, supplying resources.

The iTravel Programme has been part of the work to promote bus services in the city, in particular it has been crucial to promoting the many improvements we have made to the network – for example electrifying the bulk of the park and ride fleet and converting the diesel fleet to the highest current emissions standard in support of York's Clean Air Zone.

g) iTravel Programme: 21/22

h) The 21/22 iTravel programme will face the following issues and opportunities.

**Issues:**

19. We don't know to what extent Covid will restrict our ability to engage face to face with people and provide physical resources (e.g. leaflets/cycles), particularly during the warmer months when people often consider walking and cycling more. We are assuming however that there will be opportunities to do so increasingly from April 2021, albeit more limited than before.
  - i. We don't know how available organisations/groups will be to partner with. Schools and businesses will still be adapting to Covid-related circumstances in 2021 and may be too busy to engage with iTravel as they did in the pre-covid world.

**Opportunities:**

- a) We should expect continued public interest in walking and cycling, that we can support.
- ii. Because of the drop in bus and rail use over the last year, the iTravel Team will have a key role in encouraging people back.
- iii. Our travel planning services could be expanded to support the increase in home working. Generally the increase in online/digital activity will give us more scope to engage with people online and through social media.

- iv. New infrastructure schemes will benefit from promotion to encourage use.
- v. Travel planning remains very relevant at key locations in York, e.g. new residential estates, the hospital, colleges/universities, York Stadium.
- vi. New developments also offer new opportunities for itravel to work with developers to reduce car travel. The developments currently coming forward (e.g. York Central) have large dedicated travel planning elements to their Section 106 agreements.
- vii. More generally, the high amount of work in the transport team generally (for example, developing the Active Travel Fund projects and consultation elements of the Local Transport Plan).

20. In terms of funding, at the same point last year, we had clear direction from DfT about the upcoming 20/21 allocation and how to seek sign off on what we wanted to spend it on. This year we have only received an indication that funding will be available for 21/22, without any further guidance. And so no proposed programme has been submitted to DfT at this time.

21. The proposed programme by **area of work** is as before.

1. Employment Sustainable Travel uptake
2. Education Sustainable Travel uptake
3. Engaging Sustainable Travel uptake
4. Better Bus Promotion
5. Communication, Promotion and Project Management
Project management

22. The proposed programme by **scheme category** is as follows (again the same categories used in the original funding bid in 2017). The funding breakdown will depend on the budget that is yet to be determined.

<b>iTravel - Adult Services</b>	<b>Area of work</b>	<b>Details</b>
Workplace active travel support	1	Providing resources to these 3 groups, including cycle and bus try outs
Travel2Campus	2	
Community Cycling	3	
<b>Road Safety - Services</b>		

Inclusive cycling uptake	3	To enable community partners to promote inclusive cycles.
Cycle training	3	Funding for cycle training
Road safety promotion	3	
<b>iTravel - School Services</b>		
Travel to School	2	Schools engagement
Green Neighbourhoods	2	Feasibility work on school highway measures
<b>iTravel - Events</b>		
Festival of Cycling	3	Cycling promotion in Sep, but no special festival day.
Active Leisure led walks	3	York Walking Festival in Sep
Clean Air Champions	3	To help promote air quality action.
<b>iTravel - Travel Planning</b>		
Workplace Travel Network	1	Travel planning activity, facilitating the action of other organisations.
School Travel Planning	2	
<b>iTravel - Comms + recruitment</b>		
Active Travel Dashboard	1,2,3	An online challenge will help us to engage despite Covid restrictions
Community Champions	3	Building partnerships to increase our influence.
City promotional campaign	5	Our communications and events budget.
Website development	5	The iTravel website is an increasingly important resource. We will focus on developing route information.
<b>Public Transport Team</b>		
Better Bus information services	4	Funding that will be used to promote bus services.
Park&Ride promotion	4	
Bus network enhancements	4	
<b>iTravel - Project Management</b>		
Project management		Project and programme management.

23. The proposed 21/22 programme above takes the following approaches:

- Alongside work starting in 21/22, we should deliver as much as possible the activities we were unable to finish in 20/21. As well as our travel planning services, there is the feasibility work, carried out by Sustrans, to identify and consult on potential highway solutions for Badger Hill School and Clifton Green School.
- A greater emphasis on using iTravel staff rather than outsourcing delivery. The team has grown to be more effective and will benefit from being in control of its own delivery.
- Travel planning will continue to become our default way of operating. Though we can achieve much by providing services directly to individuals, by supporting organisations to tackle their own travel (an indirect approach) we can achieve much more. Travel planning for residential estates, will have a particular focus. We will continue supporting businesses and schools.
- Generally we will 'link up' more. We want to become a more partnership oriented team, working with community groups to influence travel. We also want to encourage people to use new infrastructure schemes (e.g. through the Active Travel Fund) and want to support work on the Local Transport Plan.
- We will assume that engaging face to face with individuals and partners will continue to be difficult (because of Covid), at least at the beginning of the 2021/22 year. Online resources are therefore a wise investment. An online challenge will encourage people to travel differently through e.g. incentives, games, challenges and peer influence. We would also like to produce videos of cycle routes and interactive audio guides of walking routes.
- Adult/family cycle training will continue to branch out. Road Safety are discussing delivery cycle training to about 25 young people who attend Blueberry Academy. This may also include pedestrian training and independent travel advice
- We have bid for a further £133K of funding to deliver a scheme that encourages people to try and buy electric cycles – announcement by early March. This will change our delivery for the year substantially if successful. Either way though we are interested in our proposed model (in the bid) of using a number of bike shops to provide such services through grants and vouchers. This concept is something we would like to try with normal cycles as part of the main iTravel programme.

## **Funding beyond 21/22**

24. For the iTravel Team and the iTravel Programme there is currently no allocated funding for 22/23 onwards or funds made available by DfT to bid to. We have heard that the DfT may provide all local authorities in the UK funding – rather than the current situation, where through the 2017 bid select authorities have been allocated funding. Like all local authorities, we will await further announcements as DfT develops in Decarbonising Transport workstream. At this stage, there is an expectation, however, of a multi-billion pound funding settlement for the active travel element of this workstream over the next 3 years, plus a similar funding settlement for bus services.
25. A key aim for the iTravel Team is to diversify income so that it is less dependent on the annual DfT grant, which is potentially subject to change from year to year. Potential sources of additional funding which have been identified are:
- Section 106 funding for ‘travel plan implementation support’ in planning applications
  - Scheme funding – promoting use of new infrastructure
  - Scheme/LTP development funding – e.g. helping with consultation and gathering data on travel patterns
  - There may also be funding opportunities made available by the government to promote bus services that could be applied for in partnership with local bus operators.

## **Corporate Strategy**

26. The key component of ‘Getting around sustainably’ relates to more people choosing to travel by public transport, walking or cycling – both through infrastructure and the iTravel ‘hearts and minds’ work. The iTravel Programme is referenced in the Council Plan document under this theme. The following key components are also relevant:
- ‘Good health and wellbeing’ – the programme contributes by encouraging active travel.
  - ‘A greener and cleaner city’ – a switch to sustainable travel from car journeys can reduce both local air pollution and carbon emissions.
  - ‘Well-paid jobs and an inclusive economy’ – the economy benefits from employees and jobseekers finding options for their commute.

Footfall to shops and other businesses could also increase, e.g. through promoting walking.

## **Implications**

27. The following are the identified implications.

**Financial** – The proposals set out within the report will be subject to the level of grant awarded for 2021/22. As this has not been announced at the time the report is drafted the allocations will need to be reviewed upon confirmation. The proposed carry forward of £130k from 2020/21 into 2021/22 would enable existing commitments to be met in line with DfT requirements. The final level of carry forward will be dependent upon the overall level of spend in 2020/21 and again cannot be confirmed at this point. If further DfT funding is not received in 2021/22 the carry forward would also ensure the costs of the iTravel programme ending are funded if alternative sources of external funding cannot be identified.

- **Human Resources (HR)** – We are not planning to recruit staff in 21/22.
- **Equalities** – We will continue to make our iTravel Programme schemes and our travel planning services available to a broader range of people in the city. Publicity will be more citywide and we have increased our contact with community groups. There are no adverse impacts of this report on specific groups in the community and an Equalities Impact Assessment is not necessary for this report.
- **Legal** – There are no legal implications.
- **Crime and Disorder** - There are no Crime and Disorder implications
- **Information Technology (IT)** - There are no IT implications
- **Property** - There are no property implications

## **Risk Management**

28. There continue to be risks to delivery from the impacts of Covid – in particular the uncertainty of our ability to engage with people face to face, though we are partly mitigating that through focussing on online resources.



**Contact**

**Details:**

**Author**

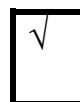
Duncan McIntyre  
iTravel Programme  
Manager  
Tel No. (01904) 553786

**Chief Officer Responsible for the Report**

James Gilchrist  
Assistant Director Transport Highways and  
Environment

Neil Ferris  
Corporate Director Economy and Place

**Report  
Approved**



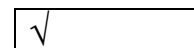
**Date** 26.02.21

**Specialist Implications Officer(s)**

Patrick Looker, Finance Manager

**Wards Affected:**

**All**



**For further information please contact the author of the report.**

**Background Papers: None**

**Annexes: None**