

Executive

18 November 2021

Report of the Corporate Director for Place
Portfolio of the Executive Members for Transport & Finance and
Performance

Strategic Reviews of City Centre Access and Council Car Parking

Summary

1. This report sets out the outcomes of the Strategic Review of City Centre Access and Council Car Parking that was commissioned by the Executive in November 2020. The review has been broken down in to two separate strategies which sit together as sister documents.
2. The review of access is based on extensive public and stakeholder engagement and proposes a clear strategy for how people and modes of transport travel to and through the city centre and sets out how access to and through the city centre footstreets can be improved for disabled people, delivery couriers, cyclists and residents.
3. The second review relates to council car parks and has two elements. The first is to identify where there are information gaps in car parking usage and provision that can be improved to guide future evidence based decision making in Local Transport Plan 4 about the role city wide car parking plays within our integrated transport system. The second is to create a hierarchy of council car parks to inform immediate investment decisions and how to respond should there be any future natural or policy driven decline in parking demand.
4. This cover report summarises the outcomes of both reviews and recommends that both are adopted by the council, as are the associated action plans to improve city centre access and parking, which includes the creation of an Access Officer post.
5. The decision regarding the procurement of a contractor for the new St George's Field multi-storey car park (MSCP) will be considered as part of a future delivery report on Castle Gateway which is due to be brought to

Executive in February, including consideration of the outcome of the parking review.

Recommendations

6. The Executive is asked to:

- 1) Approve the Strategic Review of City Centre Access and associated Action Plan (Annex 1), including the creation of an Access Officer post

Reason: *To agree a clear strategy for access to and through the city centre footstreets and approve the action plan (subject to the success of identified funding bids) to implement the improvements to access that have been developed through public and stakeholder engagement*

- 2) Approve the City Centre Access model set out in the Strategic Review of City Centre Access as a key principle in Local Transport Plan 4

Reason: To ensure the council's strategic priorities are aligned and consistent

- 3) Approve the Strategic Review of Council Car Parking and associated Action Plan (Annex 2)

Reason: *To allow the council to define and invest strategically in its priority car parks and to inform future decisions on which car parks could be used for alternatives uses should future parking demand decline through either market conditions or policy based decisions*

- 4) Note that a future report on whether to re-commence the paused procurement of a contractor to build St George's Field MSCP will be brought to Executive as part of a wider delivery update on the Castle Gateway project in February 2022

Reason: *To consider whether to proceed with St George's Field MSCP in light of the outcomes of the Strategic Review of Council Car Parking, a review of the business case, and the wider progress of the masterplan*

Background

7. In November 2020, Executive instructed officers to undertake a strategic review of the city centre access and parking, to be completed by summer 2021. The review was commissioned at the same time as the Executive's decision to commence the statutory consultation on extending the geography of the pedestrianised footstreet area - this is a separate decision that will be also considered by the Executive on the same agenda.
8. The main purpose of the access element of the review was to explore through public and stakeholder engagement how access could be improved to and through the footstreets - regardless of their geographical extent – with a particular focus on disabled people, cycling and e-scooters, deliveries, taxis and residents who live within the footstreets.
9. The parking review is linked to the above, in understanding and identifying improvements for disabled parking, but also has a separate purpose to improve evidence bases on the role of parking in the city and guiding immediate investment decisions. This was closely related to the decision by the council's Executive to pause the procurement of a construction contractor to build the new St George's Field multi-storey car park (MSCP) as part of the Castle Gateway regeneration masterplan until the impact of Covid on parking demand had become clear.
10. The purpose of the MSCP is to consolidate two large surface car parks in to a smaller more land efficient car park, reducing the overall number of spaces, moving car journeys outside the inner-ring road and allowing Castle Car Park and the remainder of St George's Field to be replaced with new public parks and event spaces. Whilst the MSCP received planning permission in January 2021 the Executive had decided to pause the procurement process until the impact of Covid on car parking demand had been understood and the review of car parking was complete to understand whether St George's Field was identified as a priority location for city centre car parking.
11. Both reviews are annexes to this report but the outcomes are summarised in the following sections.

Strategic Review of City Centre Access

12. The review followed the council's 'My' approach to public engagement that has been successfully pioneered on other projects and issues in the

city. This involved placing the public and stakeholders at the heart of understanding and defining the challenges, producing an open brief, establishing a draft vision, and then testing and refining that vision through further engagement.

13. The initial engagement ran across almost 12 months, using 3 surveys distributed online and to every household in York – with freepost return – in the council’s Our City publication. Whilst surveys play an important role in allowing a broad range of voices to participate, the cornerstone of the engagement approach has been workshops and insight meetings allowing the council to gain a deeper understanding of the access issues facing specific groups. During the summer of 2020 the council co-facilitated two online workshops and events with the York Disability Rights Forum. The events, which were signed by British Sign Language interpreters, were attended by 30 people. Officers also attended specific insight meetings with the disability rights forum, My Sight York, the Older People’s Advocacy Group and others with a combined membership of several thousand. In 2021, we then held a further seven targeted events to discuss the disabled access routes through the city centre, Shopmobility services, cycling and couriers, deliveries and taxis.
14. All of these events went in to producing an Open Brief (Annex 4) on the issues raised, capturing the wide range of views and feedback that were received. The draft recommendations and strategy were then based on that Open Brief and the findings of two independent reviews that considered York’s accessibility challenges. The final engagement on the draft recommendations received over 1,000 survey responses and 300 interactions on social media and helped to refine the final strategic review document. These responses are set out in Annex 5. In addition two independent reviews commissioned by the council and conducted in 2020 and 2021 by Disabled Motoring UK (Annex 6) and Martin Higgitt Associates (MHA) (Annex 7) explored a range of issues and helped guide the outcomes as set out in the strategy document.
15. The key issues raised can be summarised by audience:

Disabled access

16. Much of the engagement over disabled access has been dominated by the separate decision on the geography of the footstreets, and the issues relating to that are set out in the report that considers that decision. The engagement relating to the Strategic Review of City Centre Access focused on the issues that impact on access to and through the footstreets and how this can be improved.

17. The discussions highlighted a need for more benches to provide resting points in strategic locations, and that current accessible toilet provision is insufficient. There are significant challenges presented by poor quality and narrow pavements and footpaths in the city centre. Whilst pedestrianised areas do allow people to use the wider, smoother road surfaces there needs to be more dropped kerbs to allow people with mobility aids to get back on to pavements to access shops and services. Similarly outdoor seating for cafes needs clearly defined areas that don't spread out beyond their licenced area and block routes; tap rails for people with visual impairments to prevent trip hazards; and greater consideration of how people get back on to the pavement at either side.
18. Disabled residents use a variety of transport modes to reach the city centre, with buses being the most popular, and being particularly important for blind and partially sighted people. However, for many blue badge holders being able to park as close as possible to where they need to be is of primary importance. For others distance is less of an issue than the quality of the parking space, with the ability to safely unload their wheelchair or mobility aid, and the quality of access routes to their destination. Multi-storey car parks with single lifts are unpopular as if it is out of use then people cannot get back to their vehicle. For the people that use Shopmobility it is a very popular service, but wider awareness and demand is low, providing a real growth opportunity to improve the offer and increase the number of customers. The idea of an accessible land train/shuttle service was also raised.
19. There was a general consensus that there needs to be improved levels of up to date information on where blue badge holders can park in the city centre, where seats and toilets are located, and information to help people plan their journeys. It was also suggested that the council should employ an Access Officer to help educate those making decisions and responsible for services and projects so that accessibility is 'designed-in' to future initiatives.

Cycling, e-scooters and e-bikes

20. Cycling and e-scooters in the city centre remains a contentious issue amongst residents. While some cycle campaigners would like to see the restriction on cycling through the pedestrianised areas removed entirely, others have proposed a dedicated route through the footstreets to create a quicker route through the city centre. However, such spaces are unpopular with some residents, who feel that sharing pedestrianised spaces with cycles and e-scooters impacts on their perception of safety.

21. Cyclists, or potential cyclists, also feel perceptions of safety is a major barrier to increased cycling to the city centre, with roads like the inner ring road in particular deemed unsuitable if travelling with young children. The workshops also identified that safe and segregated cycle routes are welcome, but often require cyclists to navigate less-safe roads in order to reach them. Regardless of routes and exemptions, many residents believe that active travel to the city centre would increase with improved, secure cycle parking which responds to the variety of sizes, weights and wheelbases of modern bikes.

Deliveries

22. Traditional pallet based deliveries to city centre businesses broadly work well with the 10.30am start time for the footstreets, with a sufficient window for vehicles serving the city centre before it starts to get busy. However, WalkYork provided supporting feedback from a pedestrian's viewpoint, expressing frustration at delivery bottlenecks in the city centre, particularly the market, due to the large number of vehicles making it difficult to walk through the centre before 10.30am.
23. For some that rely on regular small scale deliveries to and from their business during the day there are challenges of being located in pedestrianised areas, and whilst delivery couriers are able to viably provide this service on foot it does result in pressure on loading bays at busy times. The biggest challenges relate to the increase in food deliveries during the pandemic, which has become part of the everyday business model of many food outlets. These are serviced by both vehicles and cycle couriers, although the large app based operators increasingly seek to incentivise vehicle deliveries due to their wider delivery reach.
24. Cycle couriers have asked for exemptions to be able to cycle in the pedestrianised areas in order to reduce delivery times and improve performance, although many of the problems outlined by couriers related to issues with the apps and wait times at pick up points that the council do not control. As noted in the cycling section there are also many residents who feel unsafe sharing these spaces with cyclists, particular cyclists who have an incentive to travel quickly. In response to the concerns a self-organised union of delivery cyclists have proposed signing up to code of conduct to reassure the public that they would use any exemption responsibly.
25. Delivery hubs for larger goods were proposed to avoid bottle necks in popular delivery points across the city centre. It was also referenced that

other cities are investing in cargo bikes and breaking deliveries into smaller, more regular deliveries, particularly to offices and small businesses. The dual use of loading bays with disabled parking in Duncombe Place was welcomed by couriers, but this contradicts the views of some blue badge holders who find the location dangerous or unavailable due to the high levels of delivery activity.

Taxis and private hire

26. Taxi drivers would like to see clearer signage indicating the location of taxi ranks. There was a shared opinion between both taxi and hackney carriage groups that there is insufficient space to park up during busy periods, particularly as certain areas are now shared spaces with delivery drivers and Blue Badge holders. This is exacerbated by a steep increase in food delivery drivers, especially in the shared areas of Duncombe Place.
27. Disabled residents expressed concern over the lack of taxi operators' understanding of accessibility and the availability of accessible vehicles. The council has been asked to consider establishing a forum between taxi operators and disabled groups to improve the taxi offer.
28. Based on the findings of the Open Brief a number of proposals were taken forward for a final round of public and stakeholder engagement to help refine the final recommendations in the strategic review. These proposals covered a number of themes:
 - whether the footstreet hours should run until 7pm in the evening to deliver the My City Centre vision of a family friendly early evening economy
 - whether the footstreet hours could start at 12 noon to during weekdays in the less busy period of the year to allow longer period of access for blue badge holders
 - creating further disabled bays in Duncombe Place/Blake Street
 - investing in the Shopmobility and Dial-&-Ride service, identifying users and additional locations, and the intention to expanded provision of mobility aids
 - a feasibility study for a dedicated EV shuttle service for disabled people and those with mobility issues

- providing additional seating at key points across the city centre, improving the availability and quality of disabled toilets, and improving poor quality pavements
- the aim for all city centre business deliveries being undertaken by ultra-low emission vehicles or cargo bikes by 2030
- that in principle cycling should not be permitted in the footstreets
- but whether there should be exemptions for people who use a cycle as a mobility aid or for cycle couriers
- improving existing city centre cycle routes, and investing in more secure cycle parking spaces

29. The response to this engagement is set out in detail in Annex 5. Overall the ideas which received the most support were; improving accessibility with better facilities for disabled people; that cycling, e-bikes and e-scooters should not be able to access the footstreets area during pedestrianised hours; working with cyclists to co-design secure cycle storage in key cycle park hubs; and all city centre business deliveries to be ultra-low emission vehicles (e.g electric vehicles) or cargo bike. Other ideas which received strong support were for trans-shipment hubs; working with cyclists to co-design improvements to the existing cycle routes around the edge of the footstreet area; and an EV shuttle service for disabled people.

30. There was far less certainty in the views around exemptions for different cycling groups. Around half of respondents were in favour and half against exemptions for disabled people who consider their cycle as a mobility aid, and for cargo bikes. There was less support for cycle courier exemptions, although more for allowing couriers after 5pm than them rather than an exemption all times.

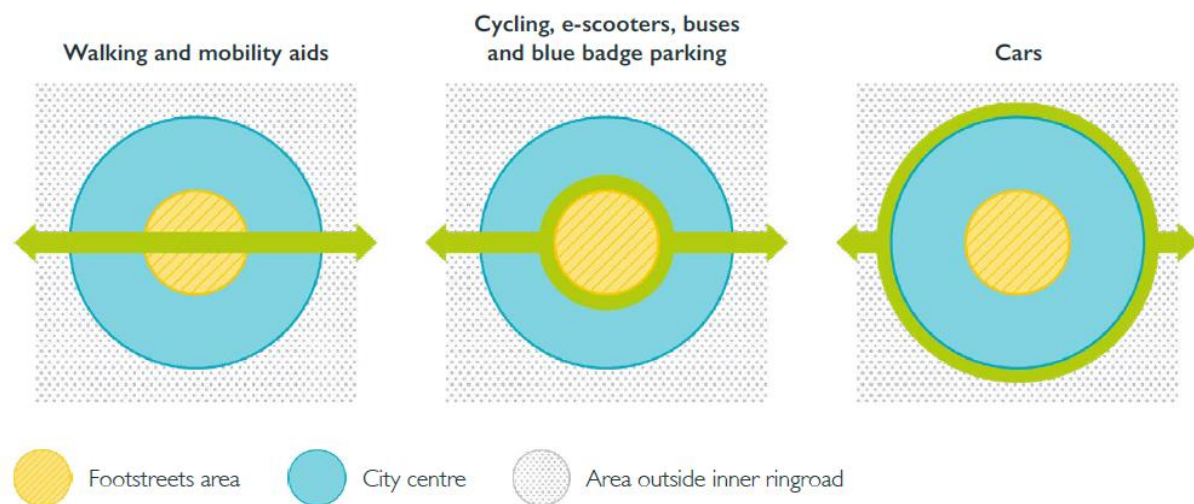
31. In terms of footstreet hours, the My City Centre vision that is also considered at this Executive sets out a number of ambitions for the future of the city centre, including creating a family friendly mid-week early evening economy, spreading events across the city centre, and encouraging the outdoor café culture that has emerged in recent years in the footstreet areas. These were all well received during the engagement on that vision, and as a consequence the Strategic Review of City Centre Access engagement sought to test the proposal for the long term

footstreet hours to run until 7pm in the evening. This was well received, with only 23% of respondents stating their preference for the footstreet hours to end at 5pm. 44% supported them ending at 7pm, and 18% supported the hours ending even later. Based on this feedback, and to deliver the My City Centre vision, it is proposed that the long term footstreet hours should run until 7pm in the evening. Any changes to the footstreet hours would however require a future full statutory consultation to allow all views to be considered in making the decision.

Final recommendations

32. Having considered all of the above feedback an overarching guiding principle has developed to create a City Centre Access model on which the recommendations in the review are based. This centres on three key principles – that the footstreets is an area where people walk or use their mobility aids; that cyclist, e-scooters, buses and blue badge holders are encouraged to be within the city centre but to pass around or park on the edge of the footstreet area; and where people choose to use cars and vehicles rather than public transport they are encouraged to use, and park outside of, the inner ring road.

Figure 1 – City Centre Access model



33. The recommendations in the review are consistent with this City Centre Access model, which it is proposed will also be adopted for use in Local Transport Plan 4. The recommendations are as follows:

General recommendations

- As noted above once the Covid response has finished the footstreet hours should operate until 7pm in the evening
- A review of all existing footstreets exemptions will be undertaken as part of the design and implementation of the Hostile Vehicle Mitigation measures

Disabled access recommendations

- The creation of an Access Officer post
- Further dedicated disabled bays to be created wherever possible on the edge of the footstreets
- Investing in the Shopmobility and Dial-&-Ride services, to raise awareness of the service offer and ensuring this offer better meets the needs of a wider audience, and expanding the provision of mobility aids
- Work with Tier to explore the potential roll out of mobility aids at key points across the city
- Carry out a feasibility study for a dedicated EV shuttle service for disabled people and those with mobility issues
- Install additional seating at key points in the city centre to be identified with disabled groups
- Improve the availability and quality of disabled toilets by working with partners and businesses across the city
- Improve accessibility of key routes in to and through the city centre by investing in poor quality pavements and dropped kerbs
- Improve the information available on the services and facilities available to improve disabled access to the city centre, including those listed above
- Work with disabled people to identify two gold standard disabled car parks for upgrade
- Develop a York Standard for the quality of city centre streets and spaces with disabled groups

Cycling, e-scooters and e-bikes

- Confirm the existing position that cycling is not permitted in the footstreets during footstreet hours
- Improve existing city centre cycle routes (*subject to Active Travel Fund bid*)
- Invest in improving secure city centre cycle parking in strategic locations, including for adapted cycles (*subject to Active Travel Fund bid*)

Deliveries

- The aim is for all city centre business deliveries to be by ultra-low emission vehicles or cargo bikes by 2030
- Explore options for a trans-shipment hub for city centre (DEFRA funding secured)
- Work with the BID to continue to understand the evolving nature of food delivery businesses in the city centre

Taxis

- Clearer signage indicating location of taxi ranks
- Potential new evening rank on Piccadilly
- Facilitate a forum between taxi operators and disabled groups to improve the taxi offer

34. There are several key issues which were considered as part of the review but ultimately discounted at this stage. The first of these related to the starting time of the footstreet hours. Consideration was given to whether they could start later on weekday mornings at less busy times to allow an increased period for deliveries and blue badge parking. There were a mix of views, with 34% of respondents in favour and 44% against the proposal. Blue badge holders were more likely to agree with the proposal as it would give them longer to access the city centre by vehicle. However, at this stage there remains unresolved officer concerns as to how traffic regulations could allow the times to change regularly based on how busy the city centre is, and consequently it is not proposed to revise the morning start times at this stage.

35. The second was in response to a request from York Cycle Campaign to provide a new cycle route through the city centre via Parliament Street, Davygate and Blake Street. This proposal was also considered by MHA in their review (Annex 7) which looked at what would be required for this to be feasible. They concluded that a route could work with a dedicated contraflow cycle lane, pinch-points where the width of the road narrows, a suspension of the cycle lane during any events in Parliament Street, and cyclists being required to dismount during the busiest periods when there are high volumes of pedestrians.
36. Having considered their proposal officers are of the view that they are unworkable in practice without a complete redesign of the existing road network and public realm, and could only be considered should there be future plans and funding to redesign the whole of that area of the city and footstreets. It was also considered impractical to operate on the basis of cyclists judging the need to dismount when the route was too busy, which in effect is the pedestrianised footstreet hours, and how that would be enforced. The regular events programme for Parliament Street would also require frequent suspension of the cycle lane.
37. The other major areas that was considered but ultimately discounted was the proposal to trial exemptions for certain groups to allow them to cycle through the footstreets. This would have primarily extended to two groups, those with a disability who use a cycle as a mobility aid and cycle couriers. The public engagement reflected a mix of views on the subject, and we received personal testimony from respondents over the impact of sharing pedestrianised areas with cyclists, with particular concern over cycle couriers who have a vested interest in travelling quickly from location to location.
38. On balance these proposals were not included in the recommendations in the review at this stage. There were concerns over how the scheme would be enforced, requiring the development of a permit scheme for those with exemptions; that it would cause confusion as to whether cycling is permitted within the footstreets leading to an increase in the number of cyclists in the area; and during a period of flux where the geography of the footstreets and hours of operations are currently under review and change is the wrong time to trial any exemptions.
39. In terms of food cycle couriers there are also wider issues to understand about how the city centre will continue to develop in response to food deliveries. Whilst cycle couriers provide a vital service and are the preferred mode of sustainable delivery, food outlets are also serviced by vehicles, and major delivery operators often seek to incentivise those

deliveries due to the expanded reach of the offer. As a consequence the city centre operating as food delivery hub attracts more vehicle journeys and leads to significant pressure on pinch points on the edge of the footstreets such as Duncombe Place which are problematic.

40. Therefore it is proposed to keep this issue under review. The council will look to undertake further work with the BID and businesses to understand how the food delivery models are likely to develop and explore ways in which food deliveries, particularly from larger chains, can be facilitated outside of the footstreets and from locations that can be more easily accessed by cyclists and delivery drivers. In terms of disabled people who use their cycle as a mobility aid this will be explored further by the newly created Access Officer post to consider how a potential exemption scheme could work.

Action Plan

41. The review is accompanied by an Action Plan which sets out a series of recommendations to deliver the strategy; identifies the proposed or secured funding sources for delivery; who will be responsible for delivery; and the target date for completion. This provides a clear approach to improving city centre access and tangible outcomes.

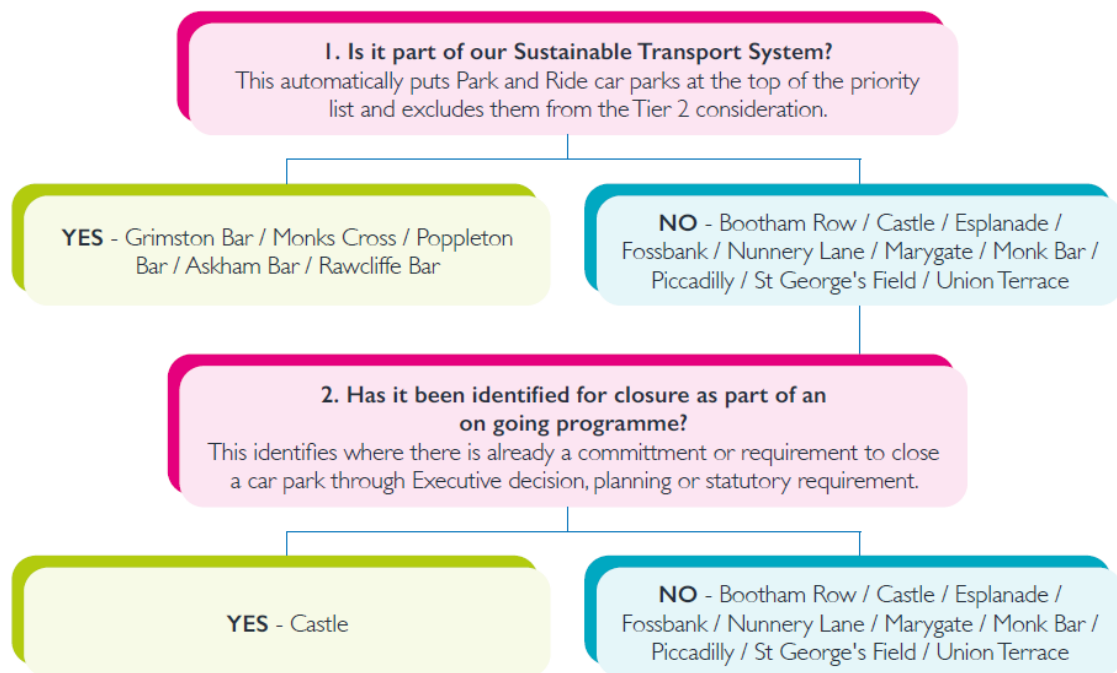
Strategic Review of Council Car Parking

42. The council's priority is for people to use sustainable modes of transport, but car parking also has a role to play in a successful city centre economy, in allowing the city centre to compete with out of town retail and other local centres that offer free or discounted car parking. As set out in the My City Centre vision, people and footfall are crucial to the ongoing economic and social success of the city centre, and for some cars will remain the preferred mode of transport.
43. The council has 19 car parks across the city, from the park and ride sites that are a key part of our sustainable transport network, to large car parks servicing the city centre, and small local car parks serving secondary centres. Collectively the car parks generate in the region of £7m each year, which is an important income stream in funding the wider services provided by the council.
44. It is important to note that the council cannot use its own car parks in isolation to influence car journeys. Should the city seek to take a future proactive approach to reducing car journeys through car parking it needs

to be determined through Local Transport Plan 4 and supported by appropriate planning policy. If the council tried to reduce car journeys through the closure of any of its car parks without this policy framework it could result in the private sector capitalising on the demand created by the reduced supply and responding with the building of new car parks.

45. Instead the review creates a hierarchy of council car parks that can be used to inform a strategy of how any potential future decline in parking demand is managed, and which council car parks should be prioritised for investment and improvements. This is achieved by creating a profile of each council car park and assessing them to compare and rank them in priority for investment. The assessment process has two stages. The first is to assess the car parks against Tier 1 Threshold questions. This process identifies which car parks should be automatically excluded from the hierarchy as they are already predetermined to remain as car parks (park and ride) or have already been identified for closure (Castle Car Park).

Figure 2 – How car parks assessed against Tier 1 Threshold questions



46. The second stage is to then assess the remaining car parks against Tier 2 Hierarchy questions, to rank and establish a hierarchy of the councils' car parks to guide future investment decisions. The Tier 2 questions run in order of importance from left to right on a matrix grid, to create a sequential ranking system aligned on the council's priorities.

Figure 3 – How car parks are assessed to create a matrix of car parks

Tier 2 / Hierarchy Questions								
4. Is it outside or accessed directly from the inner ring road?	5. Is it accessed through a residential area?	6. Does it have an alternative development use?	7. What is its estimated land value? (value per acre)	8. Current usage/current revenue generation based on revenue per space		9. Current surface and parking bay quality	10. Does car park currently have toilets?	11. Currently identified as part of longer term EV strategy
				Q2 2021/22	Q2 2019/20 2019/20 Income			
Yes	Yes	Yes	less than £1.5m	less than £2,000 / space		High	Yes	Yes
No	No	No	between £1.5m and £2.5m	between £2,000 and £4,000 / space		Medium	No	No
			more than £2.5m/acre	more than £4000 / space		Low		

Council car parking hierarchy

All the council car parks within the scope of the study and not excluded in the first stage have been assessed against the Tier 2 questions to create the hierarchy below. Working from the left each car park is determined under each question to either be a high priority or low priority for investment. By assessing question by question on a priority basis this allows the car parks to be ranked in order.

High priority for parking investment

Low priority for parking investment

47. The hierarchy is to be used as a tool to indicate priority car parks for investment and which car parks may be appropriate for alternative uses. This is not a definitive decision making tool. Any future decisions on investment or alternative uses would be subject to individual business cases and Executive decisions.

48. In descending order of importance the matrix assess:

- If the car park is outside or accessed directly from the inner-ring road (in line with strategies to reduce vehicles in the city centre)
- Whether the location of the car park has a negative impact on surrounding residential communities
- If it has an alternative development use that would reduce greenbelt pressure for residential or employment land
- Its potential land value
- The current level of car park occupancy and revenue generated
- The existing quality of the car park
- If it has toilet provision
- If it has been identified as a priority for EV charging

49. Based on this assessment the following is the final hierarchy of council car parks:

Figure 4 – the hierarchy of council car parks

Tier 2 / Hierarchy Questions									
High priority for parking investment	4. Is it outside or accessed directly from the inner ring road?	5. Is it accessed through a residential area?	6. Does it have an alternative development use?	7. What is its estimated land value? (value per acre)	8. Current usage/current revenue generation based on revenue per space		9. Current surface and parking bay quality	10. Does car park currently have toilets?	11. Currently identified as part of longer term EV strategy
					Q2 2021/22	Q2 2019/20			
Low priority for parking investment	Yes	Yes	Yes	less than £1.5m	less than £2,000 / space		High	Yes	Yes
	No	No	No	between £1.5m and £2.5m	between £2,000 and £4,000 / space		Medium	No	No
				more than £2.5m/acre	more than £4000 / space		Low		
St George's Field	Yes	No	No	less than £1.5m	£4.2k / space	£3.8k / space	Medium	Yes	Yes
Nunnery Lane	Yes	No	No	less than £1.5m	£4.5k /space	£2.7k / space	Medium	Yes	Yes
Esplanade	Yes	No	No	less than £1.5m	£3.7k / space	£2.2k / space	Medium	No	No
Union Terrace	Yes	No	Yes	more than £2.5m /acre	£4.1k / space	£3.6k / space	Medium	Yes	Yes
Fossbank MSCP	Yes	No	Yes		£1.2k / space	£1.1k / space	Medium	No	No
Bootham Row	Yes	Yes	Yes	between £1.5m and £2m	£5.2k / space	£4.4k / space	Medium	No	Yes
Monk Bar	Yes	Yes	Yes	between £1.5m and £2.5m	£4.4k / space	£2.2k / space	Medium	No	Yes
Marygate	Yes	Yes	Yes	between £1.5m and £2.5m	£5.5k / space	£2k / space	Medium	No	Yes
Coppergate MSCP	No	No	Yes		£3.5k / space	£2.9k / space	Medium	Yes	No

50. This approach identifies that the council's car parks which are outside the inner ring road, have the lowest impact on our communities as they are not accessed through residential streets, and have no alternative development use and therefore low land value should be prioritised for investment. These car parks are Nunnery Lane, St George's Field and Esplanade.

51. In addition to the hierarchy of car parks the review makes a series of recommendations set out in the action plan:

- Undertake a business case to roll out pay on exit in high priority for investment car parks, including a review of detailed data collected and analysis from Marygate and Coppergate pay on exit to date
- Bring forward future rolling investment plan to improve high priority investment for car parks

- Reinststate vehicle counters and variable messaging signs which give real time updates on the number of available spaces to customers
- Explore the expansion of the BIDs Moving Insight data through LTP4 to cover car parks to provide an improved data set including where people have travelled from, their onward route on foot in the city centre, and spend once there
- Work with disabled groups to identify two car parks within the hierarchy for priority investment for improvement of disabled parking facilities and onward access routes in to the city centre
- Carry out a feasibility study with First on options for Park & Ride sites to become multi-functional hubs, providing overnight parking for city centre visitors and better inter-city bus links
- Continue the roll out of EV charging strategy across the council's car parks

52. During the public engagement on city centre access some disabled people identified that proximity to the city's pedestrianised footstreets was less important to them, and they would rather park in car parks with high standard disabled parking bays, better facilities, and high quality access routes in to the city centre. Whilst it is recommended car parks will undergo ongoing investment to improve the customer offer over time it was agreed that identifying two council car parks within the hierarchy for priority investment in improving both the facilities for disabled people and the access routes in to the city would help to improve York's access offer. These gold standard disabled access car parks would then be promoted to residents and visitors. It is important to note that this would not preclude those car parks from part closure or redevelopment in the future but that the disabled parking would need to be retained.

53. In discussion with York Disability Rights Forum it has been agreed that the disabled priority car parks should be identified in consultation with disabled people, and that this should follow the associated decisions relating to the footstreets considered in a separate item at November Executive. This is because the geography of the footstreets, and the decisions on where disabled people have exemptions to park within the city centre may impact on which car park location is most appropriate. Consequently it is recommended that officer's work with disabled people

to establish the methodology and define the priority car parks, with a future report to Executive to agree these car parks based on the outcome and consider the investment asks and funding routes available.

St George's Field MSCP

54. In October 2021 the Executive considered a full business case review of the Castle Gateway masterplan in light of the impact of Covid. Based on that review the Executive agreed to proceed with the delivery of the regeneration masterplan, procuring a contractor for Castle Mills and preparing a planning application for the high quality public realm to replace Castle Car Park and the Eye of York. However, at that stage due to uncertainty of the impacts of Covid on car parking and the ongoing considerations of the changes to city centre access, the decision was taken to pause the procurement of a contractor for the St George's Field MSCP until the summer of 2021. Subsequently the Executive commissioned the Strategic Review of Council Car Parking to help inform the decision as to whether to proceed.
55. The review establishes that car parking demand has returned to and exceeded pre-Covid levels, and has identified St George's Field as a priority car park given it is outside the inner-ring road, isn't accessed through residential streets, and has no alternative development value.
56. The decision as to whether to proceed with St George's Field will be brought back to a future Executive in February 2022, as part of a wider delivery report on the Castle Gateway. This will need to be considered at the same time as the decision to proceed with Castle Mills based on the tender price for that project. This was due to also be considered at this Executive, however it has been deferred as there has been a delay in the contractor providing the tender price due to current market uncertainty owing to Covid and Brexit. As such it is prudent to consider whether to proceed with St George's Field as part of that wider business case review.
57. Officers are aware that there is a separate piece of analysis that has been undertaken by the York Cycle Campaign and a local resident campaigning on the basis that the council should not proceed with the St George's Field MSCP. As noted earlier in the report the council review is based on creating a hierarchy of its own car parks to inform future investment decisions, and any decision relating to a specific car park will require its own business case and Executive approval. As set out above,

at this stage there is no decision being taken on whether to proceed with St George's Field.

Consultation

58. The Strategic Review of City Centre Access is the product of extensive public engagement that is set out in detail in the main body of this report. The report was also considered by Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee on Monday 8 November and made a number of recommendations to Executive. These will be shared with Executive as an agenda supplement.

Council Plan

59. This strategic reviews have strong links with the council plan:

Well Paid Jobs and an Inclusive Economy: Both reviews are important parts of helping to deliver the My City Centre vision in seeking to provide a vibrant city centre with good footfall at all times to support jobs and the economy.

Greener & Cleaner City: Both strategies set out a number of sustainable transport improvements, including the ambition for all city centre deliveries to be by ultra-low emission vehicles or cargo bike by 2030; a feasibility study in to a trans-shipment hub; improvements to cycle routes and parking; EV charging policies; and a strategy to manage any future natural or policy led reduction in car parking demand.

Good Health & Wellbeing: The Strategic Review of City Centre Access recommends a number of improvements to access in the city centre, particularly for disabled people, and investment in active transport.

Safe Communities & Culture for All: The Strategic Review of City Centre Access considers how access to all groups can be improved to the city centre and proposes a number of recommendations and funded projects to deliver the vision.

An Open and Effective Council: The Strategic Review of City Centre Access has been developed through an open, transparent, wide-ranging and inclusive engagement approach following the 'My' principles set out in the report.

Implications

60. The relevant implications are set out below:

- **Financial** - *The accompanying action plans to the strategic reviews detail the recommendations proposed and identifies the funding sources for each of the recommendations.*

In relation to the Strategic Review of City Centre Access the identified costs within the action plan are £1,085k of which £320k has been currently identified. The balance of £765k is dependent on the success of bids for external funding and or additional external funding awards.

Should the council be successful in its bids the funding will be added in to the capital programme to fund the associated schemes. Should the council be unsuccessful or receive lower values than required it will be necessary to review the levels of schemes that can be funded. Alternatively funds from other Transport programmes could be reprioritised to deliver these ambitions. Executive will be updated through the annual capital budget report and ongoing monitoring reports.

The Access Officer post will be funded from existing budgets.

In relation to the Strategic Review of Council Car Parking the majority of the plan details further officer work that is required to identify the improvements proposed and financial costs. Other measures are dependent on the success of funding bids or external grant funding. Further reports will need to be presented to Executive should further funding be required or to the Executive Member should they be funded from existing Highways and Transport budgets.

- **Human Resources (HR)** – *the report proposes the creation of a new Access Officer post which will require a job description to be produced and may require a recruitment process.*
- **Equalities** - *In line with the Equalities Act 2010 requirements an Equality Impact Assessment (Annex 3) has been produced for this report and will be required for any projects or decisions that arise from it to determine potential impacts and mitigation where individuals*

or groups with protected characteristics are identified. This will ensure that equality and diversity impacts are addressed through specific projects and programmes of work.

- **Legal** – *This report is eligible for call-in. There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.*
- **Crime and Disorder** – *considered to be no implications*
- **Information Technology (IT)** – *considered to be no implications*
- **Property** – *The property implications are covered within the report and car park values on a per acre basis have been provided on an indicative basis having regard to the prevailing property market. They are indicative only and full checks of services and legal encumbrances would also have to be undertaken which could have a possible bearing on land values should there be any future proposal to consider alternative land uses.*

Risk Management

61. The report proposes two key strategies for adoption. The Strategic Review of City Centre Access is the product of extensive engagement with the public and targeted engagement with groups who have a specific interest in access to the city centre. The review sets out a number of recommendations that seek to improve access in response to the issues raised in the engagement. Some of those groups had proposed further improvements that have not been taken forward following wider public engagement or consideration of the practical or technical constraints, and there may be disappointment amongst those that their preferences have not been realised. However, the recommendations have sought to balance the impact on all users and the strategy is a product of those balances and deliberations.
62. The Strategic Review of Council Car Parking is based on an assessment of the available data and the production of a matrix to create a hierarchy of council car parks. The review acknowledges that the data sets on council car parking could be improved, and sets out proposals to improve the evidence base to assist future city wide strategic decision making in LTP4. However, there is sufficient data to support the methodology that has been applied and it is a clear, robust and logical assessment of the council's car parks. It prioritises based on the sustainability of location

and minimising impact on residential communities, focuses on locations with no alternative development use that could reduce the demand on greenfield sites, or generate a high land value to offset lost parking revenue. Importantly it is only a tool to guide investment decisions. Any future decisions to invest or dispose of any council car park will require its own separate Executive decision.

Contact Details

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Report Approved **Date** 9 November 2021

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Wards Affected: [List wards or tick box to indicate all]

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Strategic Review of City Centre Access and Parking, Executive Member for Transport, April 2021

The future of the extended city centre footstreets, Executive, November 2020

Update on Castle Gateway and business case review, Executive, October 2020

Annexes

Annex 1 – Strategic Review of City Centre Access and Action Plan

Annex 2 – Strategic Review of Council Car Parking and Action Plan

Annex 2a – Annex 1 to the Strategic Review of Council Car Parking

Annex 3 – Equalities Impact Assessment for this report

Annex 4 – Open Brief

Annex 5 – Summary of engagement on the Strategic Review of City Centre
Access draft recommendations

Annex 6 – Independent Review of York’s Access offer – Disabled Motoring
UK

Annex 7 – Martin Higgitt Associates report

List of Abbreviations Used in this Report

EV charging – Electrical Vehicle charging

LTP4 – Local Transport Plan 4

MHA – Martin Higgitt Associates

MSCP – Multi-storey car park