

**Local Development Framework  
Working Group  
Report of the Director of City Strategy**

**3 October 2011**

**Local Development Framework: City Centre Area Action Plan  
City Centre Movement and Accessibility Framework**

**Summary**

1. This report advises Members of the production of a City Centre Movement and Accessibility Framework as an evidence base document for the City Centre Area Action Plan.
2. The Framework was produced by a multi-disciplinary consultant team as part of the Yorkshire Forward funded Renaissance programme. Key stakeholders were consulted in the production of the report.
3. This report sets out the background to the study, the key findings, a potential policy approach for the Area Action Plan (AAP) and next steps in the AAP process. This report focuses on the strategic issues raised in the Framework as they relate to the policy approach of the City Centre AAP. The technical feasibility of the strategy has not been tested, it is presented as a transport and movement vision for the city centre and will steer further work. The vision will form part of the AAP and be subject to extensive public consultation. This is considered the most appropriate method to consult on the findings of the study. It may be possible to consult key stakeholders prior to the full AAP consultation.
4. The Framework is a visionary document that makes a series of recommendations to help inform policies and projects relating to movement and accessibility. The production of the Framework is part of a process in developing the vision/strategy for the city centre to be included in the City Centre AAP preferred options document which will be reported to Members later in 2011.
5. The Framework includes a thorough analysis of movement and accessibility in the city centre at present, a review of factors that

will influence this over the next 20 years and presents a strategy and series of actions for managing movement and access into the future. The strategy aims to enable city centre development and adapt to these changes to maintain good access to the city centre, with a focus on improving access by more sustainable modes such as walking, cycling and public transport. The strategy aims to address traffic issues to minimise vehicular intrusion and to assist in improving the environment and public realm of the City Centre.

### **Background**

6. The Framework study was funded by Yorkshire Forward as part of the Renaissance programme to support the production of the City Centre Area Action Plan and take forward recommendations of the York New City Beautiful document.
7. JMP was commissioned as lead consultant to undertake the study and worked with Camlin Lonsdale and PLB. The study was a multi-disciplinary commission that brought together designers, conservationists and transport planners. JMP have produced a Strategy Report and Background Report - included as annexes.
8. The Framework develops a long-term vision for managing movement and accessibility to and within the City Centre and sets out how the recommended options can be delivered in a phased approach over the next 20 years (the timeframe of the Area Action Plan). The vision seeks to ensure the long-term economic success of the city centre and the protection of the historic environment.
9. The Framework approach will assist in addressing the impact of traffic and highway infrastructure on quality of place. Improving quality of place in the city centre will be a key aim of the AAP.
10. The Framework builds on the findings of the Footstreets Review (Halcrow, 2010). The Framework will also inform the ongoing implementation of LTP3, the City Strategy Planning and Transport Capital Programme and Local Sustainable Transport Fund projects.
11. The study reviews the recommendations from the York New City Beautiful report in terms of the Streets, Places and Spaces, Great Street, City Walls and Gateways, York Central, City Rivers and City as Park themes therein and considers their deliverability.

12. The Framework approach is designed to enable significant new development to progress including (100,000 sqm office space, 50,000 sqm retail space and 1000 new homes) on a number of sites that need to be better 'connected' to the core including Hungate, Castle Piccadilly and York Central.
13. A number of key groups were consulted in the production of the report. As part of the consultation process a workshop in Merchant Taylor's Hall took place in February 2011 attended by over 50 internal and external stakeholders. Officers across the Council have contributed to the process.

### **Summary of the main findings**

14. The Framework is set out in four parts including background, a strategy, detailed proposals and an action plan. The background findings and the strategy are summarised here. Members can view the full range of detailed proposals and the action plan in Annex A.

### Background

15. The Framework includes a thorough analysis of movement and accessibility in the city centre at present – an assessment of the current condition of the city centre. This assessment concluded that:
  - Protecting and enhancing York's historic environment is critical to its future economic success
  - Current traffic patterns are recognised as one of the biggest barriers to improving the environment and public realm of the City Centre
  - There is strong policy support for enhancing the public realm and reducing congestion and car intrusion in the City Centre.
16. The consultants assessed drivers for change in movement and accessibility and concluded that the following are all key issues to be considered: population growth, employment growth, ambition to grow tourism, ambition to increase retail floorspace, ambition for the universities to grow, major new developments in and around the City Centre, air quality incidents, continued growth in walking and cycling and a growing acceptance of a need to manage private motorised vehicle use.

17. The Local Transport Plan 3 is also recognised as a main driver for the strategy. Of particular relevance is the LTP3 aim of reducing vehicle intrusion in the city centre. LTP3 has 5 Strategic Themes:
- Provide Quality Alternatives (to the car)
  - Provide Strategic Links
  - Implement and Support Behavioural Change
  - Tackle Transport Emissions
  - Improve Public Streets and Spaces.

### Strategy

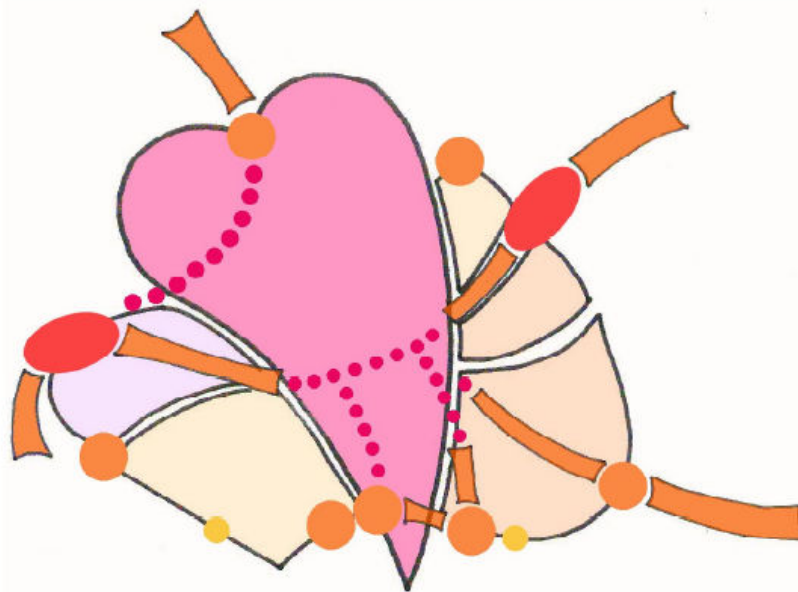
18. The Framework sets out a Strategy for movement and accessibility. The following extract from the Framework provides a good summary of the strategy:

*The City Centre is the destination and to enable people to enjoy this special place to its maximum once they have arrived – and to create the conditions for flourishing tourism and retail – priority should be given to the pedestrian and there should be a focus on enhancing the settings of the historic buildings, streets and spaces.*

*Therefore the Strategy should seek to offer excellent access to the City Centre by all modes, but to assert quality of place and pedestrian priority once people arrive, with the removal of through traffic and the confinement of access to the centre to only those vehicles that are essential to its economic functions.*

19. The strategy includes a series of principles for managing access and movement that further develop the above concept. The consultant team's proposals are:
- Pedestrian priority in the 'heart of the city (see aerial photograph in paragraph 21)';
  - Removal of through traffic from the 'heart' with managed access provided for essential traffic on priority routes (Lendal and Ouse bridges) - maximising access via bus, walking and cycling (a Priority Route would restrict general motor traffic during the day but allow access for buses, taxis, cycles and pedestrians and service vehicles);
  - Four functional areas to become Traffic Cells allowing general traffic into, but not between, different parts of the City Centre (see paragraph 21);

- Intercept car trips at a ring of parking at the edge of City (Park and Ride) and the edge of City Centre;
- Make the whole of the City Centre a 20mph zone and introduce a Low Emission Zone in the historic core (a Low Emission Zone would need to take into account a wider area including the inner ring road);
- Reduce the number of car parking spaces;
- Expand the pedestrianised Footstreets to embody the 'heart of the city' and extend operating hours;
- Remove or significantly reduce motor traffic from the Footstreets during operational hours;
- Significantly reduce the level of servicing traffic in the city centre through development of an Urban Consolidation Centre;
- Enhance cross-city centre cycle routes.



*Strategy - priority routes and traffic cells with a pedestrian focussed 'heart of the city'.*

20. A key purpose of the Framework is to consider the deliverability of the proposals in the York New City Beautiful report. The City Beautiful report recommends a long term objective of complete removal of general traffic from within the city walls. JMP concluded that many of the quality of place principles of the report can be achieved without complete removal of traffic - by

recognising the different function of areas within the City Centre and taking a specific approach for each.

21. The study identifies four functional areas of the City Centre in terms of movement.
- 1 The historic 'Heart of the City' – contains visitor attractions and retail core
  - 2 Southwest of the Ouse – employment / quiet residential
  - 3 North of the Foss – quiet residential including Aldwark and Hungate
  - 4 Southeast of the Foss – large diversity of uses – small scale retailing and employment with quiet housing areas.



*Strategy – four functional areas of the City Centre.*

22. The strategy of creating Traffic Cells for the four functional areas and Priority Routes allows for necessary access to the city centre but discourages through traffic. This would reduce the overall

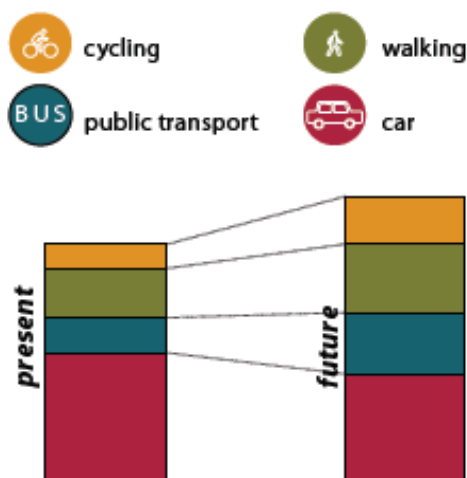
traffic levels within the centre and allow for enhancements to the public realm in key locations including those identified as priorities in the draft Conservation Area Appraisal such as at the Station, Exhibition Square and Pavement. This approach for discouraging general traffic could also encourage more walking, cycling and use of public transport. The effects of the restrictions on the wider city and on the movement of freight and deliveries will need to be carefully considered alongside preferred options consultation responses in the production of the submission draft of the Area Action Plan.

23. The strategy can help deliver the York New City Beautiful proposals in the following ways:
- Streets, Places and Spaces: Reducing levels of through traffic and rationalising parking will allow the settings of many public spaces to be enhanced whilst reducing traffic intrusion and space given over to highways
  - Great Street: Enhancing the space in front of the Rail Station, restricting access to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport during designated hours across Lendal Bridge and reformatting Duncombe Place into a Footstreet
  - Walls and Gateways: The setting of the walls and historic bars can be enhanced by reducing the dominance of motorised vehicles and unsympathetic highways infrastructure
  - Rivers: Better and easier connectivity and access to riversides
  - City as Park: Green spaces surrounding the City Centre can be better consolidated and connectivity between them and the rest of the historic centre improved.

### **Justification for the Strategy**

24. The concept behind the strategy is that improving the quality of place will increase the attractiveness of the city centre for businesses, residents and visitors thereby increasing economic activity.
25. Access, therefore, needs to be managed by enhancing walking, cycling and public transport links to the City Centre, whilst reducing the priority and space given over to private motorised vehicles.
26. In this way, the anticipated growth in trips to the City Centre can be managed by growing the market share of sustainable modes whilst

managing – and reducing – reliance on the car, as illustrated schematically below.



### Strategic Fit

27. The Framework has influenced and been influenced by the Local Transport Plan. The recommendations of the Framework align well with a number of the LTP3 Strategic Themes, Aims, Objectives and Priority Measures. The key LTP3 aims are:
- Q2 – Ensuring quality adaptable local public transport services that meet the needs of passengers in a changing city
  - Q3 – Having a comprehensive cycling and pedestrian network
  - E2 – Meeting the EU legal requirements for air quality
  - P1 – Enhancing the character of public spaces, streets and corridors
  - P2 – Reducing vehicle intrusion in the city centre and alterations to the inner ring road
  - P3 – Reducing vehicle dominance and improving the environment (for walking and cycling) in residential areas.
28. The Framework also aligns well with the Core Strategy Policies CS18 (Sustainable Transport) and CS2 (York City Centre) and the following Core Strategy Strategic Objectives:
- Preserving and enhancing the special qualities and distinctiveness of the city centre
  - Providing quality alternatives to the car
  - Tackling transport emissions
  - Improving the quality of public streets and spaces.



29. The Framework reaches broadly similar conclusions to the Footstreets Review (Halcrow, 2010). A number of the proposals in the Framework relate to projects that are planned through the Capital Programme. The Draft Central Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal (Alan Baxter & Associates, 2011) also identifies a series of proposals to improve access and movement in the centre of York (NB. These are included in section 6.5 Streets, Spaces and Movement in the Appraisal). The key relevant findings of the Appraisal are:

- Mitigate the environmental, physical and visual impacts of traffic and highway infrastructure to support the improvement of the pedestrian experience and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area
- Reduce traffic on the inner ring road by promoting public transport
- Inner ring road and cross-city bus routes should be reviewed to rationalise the siting of bus stops
- Aim to remove or enhance car parks in sensitive locations
- Cycling routes should be reviewed
- Specific junctions and stretches of road should be reviewed and redesigned to improve the general appearance of the Conservation Area and the settings of historic buildings.

### **Draft City Centre AAP Preferred Options**

30. The AAP preferred options will include a vision for the city centre. The part of the vision relating to movement and accessibility will be based on the Core Strategy vision and incorporate the following elements:

- A fundamental shift in travel patterns away from the car to more sustainable modes in York
- Asserting pedestrian priority in the city centre, establishing new cycling routes and removing unnecessary traffic intrusion
- Protecting and enhancing the 'quality of place' in the city centre including the setting of historic buildings, streets and spaces
- Improving local air quality and contributing to a reduction in York's carbon and eco-footprint
- Improving access so that York fulfils its role as a key driver in the regional economy and ensuring that the role of the city

centre as a sub-regional shopping and entertainment centre is strengthened.

31. A draft AAP policy for movement and accessibility is set out below to outline how the proposals of the CCMAF could be translated in to policy. The policy includes only the strategic proposals from the Framework to align with the scope and purpose of the AAP. The phasing of the projects as presented in the Framework has been reviewed by Officers and revised for the draft policy.
32. The policy provides further detail to those parts of Core Strategy Policy CS18 (Sustainable Transport) that relate to the city centre. An extract from the Core Strategy Submission Draft is included in Annex C.
33. A Draft Policy for City Centre Movement and Accessibility:

#### Strategic Objectives

To address access and movement issues in the city centre and deliver infrastructure and measures which enable sustainable growth and development and enhancement of the city centre public realm through:

- Reducing traffic levels and through traffic
- Enhancing the attractiveness and efficiency of public transport, walking and cycling
- Improving pedestrian safety
- Improving local air quality.

#### Targets

Progress towards achieving these objectives will be measured against the following targets over the next 20 years:

- Achieving as a minimum a 80% reduction in motor traffic on city centre Priority Routes
- The delivery of schemes identified in phases 1 to 4.

#### Policy: City Centre Movement and Accessibility

The City Centre Plan will enable sustainable growth and development and enhancement of the city centre public realm through the following infrastructure improvements phased over the 20 year AAP period (2013-2033), and potentially linked to successive Local Transport Plans:

### Phase 1

- The creation of an 'Ouse Bridge Priority Route' at:
  - Low Ousegate, Nessgate, Clifford Street, Tower Street, Coppergate, Pavement, Piccadilly (part) and The Stonebow (part)
- Investigation of the feasibility of a 'Lendal Bridge Priority Route'
- Introduction of improved bus routing in the city centre
- Establishment of a Delivery and Servicing Plan
- Investigation of the feasibility of an Urban (freight) Consolidation Centre
- Creation of 'Footstreets' at Fossgate, Hungate, Duncombe Place and Deangate
- Introduction of extended 'Footstreets' operational hours
- Making the whole of the City Centre a 20mph zone
- Investigation of the feasibility of Blossom Street to Monkgate via Station Road/Lendal Bridge and Micklegate Bar to Peasholme Green via Ouse Bridge cycle routes
- Enhancement of Southwest Bank of Ouse and Bootham Bar to Walmgate cycle routes.

### Phase 2

- The creation of a 'Lendal Bridge Priority Route' (if feasible) at:
  - Lendal Bridge, Museum Street and St Leonard's Place
- Creation of 'Traffic Cells' for four 'functional areas' within the city centre – The Heart of the City; Southwest of the Ouse; North of the Foss; Southeast of the Foss
- Creation of an Urban (freight) Consolidation Centre (if feasible)
- Creation of a Low Emission Zone
- Provision of a new multi-storey car park at the Southern end of Piccadilly and removal of parking at the Castle and elsewhere on Piccadilly
- Enhancement of Blossom Street to Monkgate via Station Road/Lendal Bridge and Micklegate Bar to Peasholme Green via Ouse Bridge cycle routes.

### Phase 3

- Creation of an improved bus waiting area to south of York Railway Station with rationalisation of bus stops outside station entrance

- Completion of new servicing and disabled parking arrangements for the core 'Footstreets' area
- Creation of 'Footstreets' at Tower Street, King's Staith, King Street, Cumberland Street and Lower Friargate.

#### Phase 4

- Implementation of further projects to deliver the strategic objectives identified through ongoing review of changes to travel patterns and economic conditions.

### **Next Steps**

34. The intention is to report a Preferred Options document to Members later in 2011. There a number of tasks to be completed before the document can be finalised, including:
- Public Space Strategy – this is being progressed by Officers in the Major Development Projects and Initiatives team
  - Review of the finalised Conservation Area Appraisal following report to Planning Committee
  - Further review of the recommendations of the York New City Beautiful report
  - Further area based studies to review the potential for development and public realm enhancements
  - Drafting of the Preferred Options document
  - NB. Traffic Modelling and Surveys will be required prior to submission of the AAP to test the implications of access restrictions. This will include an analysis of the implications on the rest of the city which will need to fully understood prior to completing the AAP.
  - NB. It may be appropriate to pilot some of the proposals prior to implementation. The AAP delivery plan will include details of which projects will be piloted.

### **Options**

35. Members have two options relating to the City Centre Movement and Accessibility Framework:

Option 1: To approve the City Centre Movement and Accessibility proposals as included in the draft Area Action Plan Preferred Options policy in paragraph 33 for inclusion in the City Centre Area

Action Preferred Options document, which will be put out for consultation.

Option 2: To seek amendments to the strategy and main proposals and / or further work to be undertaken to review these proposals.

### **Corporate Priorities**

36. The City Centre AAP has the potential to contribute towards most of the Corporate Priorities through its policies and actions. It will aim to:
- Reduce the environmental impact of Council activities and encourage, empower and promote others to do the same;
  - Increase the use of public transport and other more sustainable modes of transport, such as walking and cycling;
  - Improve the actual and perceived condition and appearance of the city's streets, housing estates and publicly accessible spaces;
  - Increase people's skills and knowledge to improve future employment prospects;
  - Improve the economic prosperity of the people of York with a focus on minimising income differentials;
  - Improve the health and lifestyles of the people who live in York, in particular among groups whose levels of health are the poorest;
  - Improve the life chances of the most disadvantaged and disaffected children, young people and families in the city;
  - Improve the quality and availability of decent, affordable homes in the city.

### **Implications**

37. The following implications have been assessed:
- Financial – The cost of preparing the City Centre Area Action Plan DPD is being met through current budgets provided for the LDF. The City Centre Movement and Accessibility Framework was wholly funded by Yorkshire Forward.
  - Human Resources (HR) - None
  - Equalities - None
  - Legal - None
  - Crime and Disorder - None
  - Information Technology (IT) - None

- Property – The AAP identifies areas within the city centre for development or public realm enhancement which includes land and buildings in the Council’s ownership.
- Other - None

### **Risk Management**

38. In compliance with the Council’s risk management strategy, the main risks associated with the recommendations of this report, should the proposals be carried forward into an adopted Area Action Plan, are those which could lead to an inability for the Council to meet elements of it’s ‘Thriving City’, ‘Sustainable City’, ‘City of Culture’ and ‘Healthy City’ themes of it’s Corporate Strategy. In addition there is a reputational risk if projects are not delivered.

On this basis the risks associated with not approving the option to improve movement and accessibility in the city centre will result in a high risk score.

Should Option 1 be approved, the implications for the traffic network will need to be examined further including identifying any risks. Potential safety issues arising from implementing any proposal would be identified in detailed risk assessments (highways safety audits).

### **Recommendations**

39. That Members:

1) Note and comment on the York City Centre Movement and Accessibility Framework

Reason: To help progress the Area Action Plan to its next stage of development.

2) Note and comment on the Draft Area Action Plan preferred option for movement and accessibility.

Reason: To help progress the Area Action Plan to its next stage of development.

## Contact Details

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*n/a*

### Implications

### Report Approved

Date 21/09/11

**Wards Affected: Guildhall, Micklegate and Fishergate.**

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

### Annexes:

Annex A – York City Centre Movement and Accessibility Framework – Strategy and Proposals (JMP, 2011)

Annex B – York City Centre Movement and Accessibility Framework – Background Information and Evidence Base (JMP, 2011)

Annex C – Extract from the Core Strategy Submission Draft, 2011.

### Background Papers:

- City Centre Area Action Plan Issues and Options report, July 2008.
- City Centre Area Action Plan Issues and Options Sustainability Statement, July 2008.
- LDF Working Group report - Local Development Framework: City Centre Area Action Plan Issues and Options report - Consultation Summary, January 2009.
- LDF Working Group report - Local Development Framework: City Centre Area Action Plan – Progress Toward Preferred Options, January 2010.
- LDF Working Group report - Local Development Framework: City Centre Area Action Plan – Vision Prospectus, May 2010.
- LDF Working Group report - Local Development Framework: City Centre Area Action Plan – Update, November 2010.