

Meeting	Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee
Date	7 November 2022
Present	Councillors Crawshaw (Chair), Fenton (Vice-Chair), Fisher, Hollyer, Musson, Norman, Pearson and Wann (Substitute for Cllr Baker)
Apologies	Councillors Baker and Rowley
In Attendance	Councillor D'Agorne, Executive Member for Transport
Officers Present	James Gilchrist, Director of Transport, Environment and Planning Dave Atkinson, Head of Highways and Transport Dawn Steel, Head of Civic, Democratic and Scrutiny Services

Chair's Opening Remarks:

Cllr Crawshaw opened the meeting and put on record that he believed the existing arrangements for the substitution of Members at this meeting were contrary to the spirit and purpose of the legislation, in particular that which allowed the substitution of a Green Member by a Liberal Democrat one. He had asked the new Monitoring Officer to provide further advice on these arrangements.

14. Declarations of Interest (5.33 pm)

At this point in the meeting, Members were asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest or other registerable interest they might have in respect of business on this agenda, if they had not already done so in advance on the Register of Interests.

Cllr Crawshaw declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in relation to item 4 (City Centre Access – Action Plan Update) as his mother was a member of the Steering Group for York Disability Rights Forum (YDRF).

No further interests were declared.

15. Minutes (5.33 pm)

Resolved: That the minutes of the last meeting held on 03 October 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record.

16. Public Participation (5.34 pm)

It was reported that there had been four registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme, in relation to agenda item 4 (City Centre Access – Action Plan Update).

Diane Roworth stated that the decision to ban Blue Badge holders from the city centre lacked balance and that it should be taken separately from decisions that related to the Hostile Vehicle Mitigation Measures (HVMM). She urged consultation and co-production with affected groups and urged Members to take action on the Reverse the Ban petition.

Tom Franklin, Chair of the Green Party York, stated that the advice from the Police lacked an accessibility assessment. He noted that it was important to minimise the risk from a terrorist attack, but further action was needed to ensure that Blue Badge holders could access the city centre during footstreet hours. He welcomed the progress of the action plan and emphasised that the council must ensure access for disabled people.

Adam Myers asked that Members listened to the voices of those who signed the Reverse the Ban petition. He explained that the ban had caused harm, had impacted on people's social lives, made them feel unimportant and not part of the wider community. He noted that the current HVMM in place would not prevent someone from driving the wrong way up a one-way street to get through the barriers.

Cllr Peter Kilbane, Deputy Leader of the Labour Group, stated that should a Labour administration be elected that they would enable Blue Badge holders' access to the city centre. He highlighted that counter terrorism advice required a sterile zone in place which banned all vehicle movements at set times. He raised concerns that vehicles could currently gain access to the city centre at any time. He stated that due to the vetting process undertaken to process Blue Badges, that Blue Badge holders were the safest people to have in the city centre. He felt that pavement café licences, rather than the security of residents, were behind the reasons for the HVMM.

17. City Centre Access - Action Plan Update (5.49 pm)

The Director of Transport, Environment and Planning introduced the report which provided an update on the City Centre Access Action Plan. He noted that the Executive had received an action plan update in July 2022. Members were informed that the appointment of an access officer was very close to being finalised, and that an access consultant had been appointed to progress some of the actions in the absence of an access officer.

The following stakeholders, who had attended the scrutiny meetings in October 2021, had been invited to provide their views at this meeting:

Flick Williams, from the York Disability Rights Forum, stated that there had been no sense of urgency to improve the situation for those for whom various mitigations were not effective. She also identified that the café pavement licenses had increased access problems and made it very difficult to get around the city in a wheelchair.

Scott Jobson, Chief Executive of MySight York, stated his disappointment for the blind and partially sighted residents of York. He highlighted the co-production of Street Charters as an example of best practice but stated it was difficult to put these into practice with the existing measures in place. Members were informed that the Blue Badge parking ban had impacted immeasurably on the community. He confirmed his willingness work with the new access officer.

Jim Cannon, Chair of York Older People's Assembly (YOPA), emphasised the effects of a lack of city centre access on older people and explained that it had increased social isolation and prevented them from attending drop-in centres such as St Sampsons Centre. He gave credit for reopening Castlegate parking but highlighted the difficulties in walking round the city due to the café pavement licences.

Jane Burton, from York Accessibility Action, explained that mitigations such as benches and dropped curbs did not address the main issue of providing parking close enough to the city centre. She highlighted the social isolation experienced by those affected by the Blue Badge ban and urged consultation with other cities, to find a solution that kept people safe and did not discriminate against older people. She urged Members to open the footstreets to enable disabled people access to the city centre.

All four stakeholders noted that the Martin Higgate access report contained recommendations that would, in their opinion, improve city centre access.

Officers responded to questions from Members covering access officer recruitment, the access consultants (MIMA), the number and cost of benches, vehicles accessing the city centre, the shuttle bus trial and pavement café licences.

Following extensive debate, Members agreed the following actions / recommendations:

- To request that Pavement Café Licencing is added to the City Centre Access Action Plan.
- To receive a further update to the Action Plan in three months' time.
- To recommend to Executive that the Action Plan is amended to include those with sensory, physical and hidden disabilities.
- For the Chair and Vice-Chair to discuss at the next scrutiny work planning meeting if a Counter Terrorism item should be examined at a future Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee or alternative Scrutiny Committee.
- For the Chair of the Housing and Community Safety Policy and Scrutiny Committee to consider any outcomes from the Manchester bombing enquiry and to consider the timings of Executive Member security briefings.
- To request that the Monitoring Officer considers the legal advice received last year regarding city centre access for blue badge holders and satisfies himself that, from a legal perspective, CYC is in a safe, robust position considering the recent Westminster Council High Court judgement.
- That the advice from the Monitoring Officer be circulated to Members of the Committee in due course.
- To request that a detailed report which addresses the issues raised within the Reverse the Ban petition and considers them against the City Centre Access Action Plan be taken to a future Executive meeting.

Resolved:

- i. That the update to the City Centre Access Action Plan be noted and that the recommendations relating to the Action Plan, listed above, are actioned accordingly.
- ii. That the above recommendations relating to the Reverse the Ban petition be actioned accordingly.

Reason:

To provide ongoing scrutiny of the implementation of mitigation measures agreed by Executive and consider

petitions presented to Council as required by the Constitution.

18. Budget Setting Overview - Item deferred

Resolved: That the item be deferred to the next Committee meeting.

Reason: To allow sufficient time for proper scrutiny.

19. Scrutiny Review Support Budget 2023/24 - Item deferred

Resolved: That the item be deferred to the next Committee meeting.

Reason: To allow sufficient time for proper scrutiny.

20. Work Plan (8.40 pm)

Members noted the corporate scrutiny work plan covering the next meeting of this Committee and the meetings of the other Scrutiny Committees up until 09 January 2023.

Resolved: That the work plan be noted.

Reason: To ensure that the Committee has a planned programme of work in place and an overview of the other Scrutiny Committees.

Cllr J Crawshaw, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.32 pm and finished at 8.40 pm].