

Report to Full Council from the Deputy Leader of the Council

It is an extremely busy time for the council with progress in safely returning to face to face meetings and provision for hybrid working to suit operational needs and greater efficiencies of working from home for at least a proportion of staff for some of the time. Below is a summary of some recent developments in Transport and Council priorities.

Bus Service Improvement Plan

As a key element of covid recovery and enhancing our public transport infrastructure, the draft bid to the government for funding for future years was due to be approved at Executive Member for Transport Decision Session on Oct 19th prior to submission by the end of this month. This provides a vital basis for rebuilding patronage on a modern clean efficient 21st century integrated bus service which can take full account of changed behaviours such as contactless payments, increased home working, multi modal travel etc. Cut price ticketless travel for young people, interchangeable between operators is clearly important to help establish sustainable travel habits, and a range of other changes are intended to complement our renewed Local Transport Plan and Climate Change Strategy.

Great British Railways:

I am pleased that City of York will be entering into the competition to secure the future location of the newly established Great British Railways (GBR) (to take over responsibility for railway operations) I know that the Leader has already written to the DfT and Network Rail, jointly with North Yorkshire County Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership, to formally express our interest and to offer our assistance in identifying a suitable location in the city.

We still await further detail from the Government, particularly regarding how the competition will be run and what the criteria for success will be.

Once we have secured that detail, we will be in touch with partners to outline the next steps.

Haxby Station:

I welcome the continued progress being made to deliver a new railway station in Haxby. The executive has already agreed to purchase a plot of land as part of the project, putting the strongest possible case forward to the Government to secure further funding to make this happen.

Such a facility would make a significant contribution to the city's sustainable transport network, enabling many residents in the area to walk or cycle to catch the train for direct travel to Malton, Scarborough and York or for connections to the rest of the country and beyond. Others may travel by bus or car to the station, reducing the need for longer car journeys.

We will continue to work with partners to keep making progress on this project, with further updates to come in due course.

Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan:

Last month, Executive approved the introduction of a highways management framework that includes a Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (HIAMP), designed to help us better manage the city's infrastructure, based on recommendations from the UK Road Liaison Group, a group endorsed by the Department for Transport.

Through the new framework, we can better guide the long term maintenance of the highways network in the city, including how the council prioritises and manages all its infrastructure including street lights, gully cleaning, footpaths and cycle routes.

It is worth reminding colleagues that the council is responsible for around: 500miles of roads, 550miles of footway, 44,000 road gullies, 23,000 street lights, 3.5 miles of bar walls and 1,500 signposts.

Introducing the new framework aims to secure the most efficient and effective approach to managing our highway infrastructure, with significant benefits achieved through longer-term planning. The plan will ensure the council can determine the most cost effective point to make repairs to keep our roads and paths in a safe and serviceable condition.

Annual Carbon Emissions Report:

The Council has published our Annual Carbon Emissions Report to provide a base line and kick-start the next phase of reducing our carbon emissions to net zero.

The report, which has initially been published for the Climate Scrutiny Committee, will then be updated and considered by the Executive Member for the Environment and Climate Change on the 10th November 2021.

As part of this work, annual reporting will now take place every year to monitor the council's corporate progress to reduce its carbon emissions to net zero by 2030. The report identifies priority areas for decarbonisation, as well as some of the key steps already taken by the council to reduce its carbon footprint – such as purchasing 100% renewably sourced electricity since April 2020.

The report currently focuses on scope 1 and 2 emissions (ie those which are created within the city, but excluding scope 3 which is the emissions from international travel/ freight and the emissions caused by the creation elsewhere of the products we consume.)

The publishing of council corporate emissions will form part of the evidence base that will support the city's first Climate Change Strategy, which is due to be published early next year. The councils own emission reductions while setting an important example will not be enough on their own which is why we are working with other major organisations

such as the Universities and big corporations through the York Climate Commission to ensure a coherent strategy for the whole city.

Shaping My Castle Gateway:

Design options for the space around the Eye of York were recently presented to local residents as part of the My Castle Gateway project, to continuing the engagement of residents in shaping the future of the area.

Following on from public feedback on these designs, local residents were strongly in favour of retaining the existing oak tree, and this option will now be developed in detail as part of the planning application that will be submitted in the autumn.

This public engagement was carried out during August and feedback collected from social media responses and online comments. 4 design options for the Eye of York space were presented to the public, 2 of which retained the existing oak tree, whilst the 2 other options envisaged the space without the existing tree.

The My Castle Gateway blog shares more information about the proposals and I would encourage colleagues to visit <https://mycastlegateway.org/blog/> to look in more detail.

Bike to School Week:

We have been encouraging students of all ages to cycle, as part of Bike to School week, which took place at the end of September.

Every weekday in York, over 23,000 students from Reception to Year 11 make their way to and from school, that's around 230,000 journeys a week in term time. In the recent 'Our Big Conversation' survey, 28% told us that they would prefer to cycle to their place of study. That is why during Bike to School week, we have been working with schools and

families to encourage them to leave the car at home and instead, take their bicycle, tricycle or scooter for the school run.

Bikeability training is offered to all primary and secondary schools in York, with 98% uptake from the schools and over 2,000 training places delivered annually. The training offers children and young people the confidence and skills to make their journey to school by bicycle and they are encouraged to continue cycling on a regular basis once the training is completed. The training also means parents are happier for their children to cycle independently, for leisure as well as a mode of transport. We also offer urban cycling skills one to one sessions for adults who are either taking up cycling or want to boost their confidence on the road.

Active Travel Programme

As reported to my Decision Session in September, a timetable has now been compiled for implementation of a number of active travel infrastructure schemes across the city to a total value of more than £3m. This underlines our commitment to delivering the programme of walking and cycling measures funded through the government Active Travel Fund. This programme includes measures which are funded through West Yorkshire Combined Authority - £1.4m Transforming Cities Fund programme for Tadcaster Rd is to be implemented in 2022 alongside the major drainage and highway maintenance works funded through the Dept for Transport.

Navigation Road Low Traffic Neighbourhood:

Following consultation with residents and businesses earlier this year, a short section of Navigation Road is now one way except for cyclists, removing through traffic taking a short cut from Piccadilly and Walmgate to rejoin the inner ring road at Foss Islands Rd. Traffic leaving the city centre must exit via Walmgate Bar, rather than through the residential area, a diversion of only 60 metres. However access to the area from the Inner Ring road is maintained. The reduced traffic levels will help to improve safety for residents walking to and from Walmgate and the

centre of York and is a good example of how we can reduce through traffic within the city centre while maintaining essential access for all.

The changes also result in improved safety and visibility for pedestrians and cyclists at either end of Hungate Bridge and around Rowntree Wharf car park and safer connections for the city's north-south cycle route avoiding the pedestrianised area. Work is planned for early in 2022 to develop this as a clearly identified route and enhance the cycle connection from Navigation Rd to Morrisons and the Foss Islands cycle route.

Digital Respark system

At the beginning of September we began the transition to a more cost effective 21st century system of residents' priority parking which will be phased in across the city as permits expire. Inevitably there have been some challenges given the complexity of a wide range of different permits and users of the system but I believe we are now close to resolving these. The new system provides users with the facility to secure permits online within a short time of applying. I have asked officers to investigate further options for direct debit monthly payment plans, and reaffirmed the importance we place on providing support for those experiencing difficulty with securing permits through the online service.

And a thank you...

"Finally I would just like to thank all council staff for their ongoing commitment. The past 18 months have been incredibly challenging with COVID and the impact that has had on all our lives but also the way we work. Staff have risen to that challenge. From the services within my portfolio, I would like to make special mention to the highways team who have supported waste services to minimise the impact of disruption to waste collections. I should also thank the Transport team who have responded to rapid changes in how our transport network is used with 'pop up' provision to enable social distancing and plans for a whole raft of changes to make sustainable travel safer and more attractive.

Council - 21 October 2021

