

## **6 What can we learn from other cities?**

We can learn useful lessons by examining good transport planning practices that have been adopted elsewhere. Such lessons must be tailored to meet the specific challenges and requirements of York.

We selected nine cities from England and continental Europe which share some common characteristics with York in terms of size, geography, economy and history. They were Bath, Cambridge, Chester, Norwich and Oxford; Delft, Dijon, Freiburg and Ghent. We used available documentation but recommend that the Council organises study visits or online workshops at a later date.

Our case studies showed a wide variety of political, organisational and financial arrangements. Unsurprisingly, those cities that have full control over land-use planning and transport matters tend to have the most focused and integrated approaches. All have a recently prepared Local Transport Plan or equivalent. We reviewed the main strategic thrusts, priorities and policy measures.

### **Effective approaches to planning**

Successful transport planning is only possible where there is a vision agreed among politicians and the public, and a limited number of clearly stated objectives. It needs strong public and business engagement. It requires a longer-term perspective, and a willingness to take challenging decisions. Above all, it needs clear political and professional leadership, as exemplified by recent experience in introducing Ghent's Circulation Plan (Figure 6a).

All our case-study cities are planning to accommodate growth whilst protecting their historic and cultural assets. They all aspire to sustainable new development, encourage economic vitality and inclusivity, and enhance the well-being of all citizens. They all focus on tackling climate change, reducing air pollution, managing congestion, improving equality of access and promoting health through active transport.

Transport and land-use planning must be closely integrated. In Europe, it is normal practice to plan investments in transport infrastructure as part of the master planning of new developments. Relatively compact and higher density development is seen as supporting effective public transport and active travel (Figure 6d).

There needs to be close integration between the different modes of transport. A clear hierarchy of users should prioritise walking and cycling, the needs of disabled people, and public transport. Use of private vehicles should focus on providing for disabled people, essential longer journeys, and journeys where heavy goods are being carried. The most effective transport plans are those where a single agency has responsibility for all modes. The best transport plans predict and monitor the impact of their proposals on each of their key objectives.

### **Specific policy measures**

The weakest transport plans are those which fail to recognise the competing and conflicting needs of different users. They become just a wish-list of projects, with insufficient consideration of the funding or the skills needed to bring the plan to fruition. Nonetheless, all the case-study plans have examples of policy measures of relevance to York.

Walking is recognised as the principal mode of travel, especially for shorter journeys. The aim is to develop a comprehensive network, and to make strategic investments to overcome blackspots. All the cities have developed pedestrian zones. In the best examples walking always has priority, followed by cyclists and disabled people. There are a number of experiments with electric mini vehicles.

All the cities are seeking to promote cycling. They stress the need for a comprehensive cycle network, which is safe and perceived to be safe, is segregated, and has strategic investments in key crossing points.

Most of the case studies stress the importance of liveable streets or low traffic zones in which the needs of pedestrians and cyclists are given clear priority (Figure 6c). These use signage, barriers and chicanes, as well as street furniture and landscaping, to control vehicle access.

Most of the European examples have a well-developed, subsidised tram network (Figure 6b). These are closely integrated with other forms of transport. The English examples focus on high quality, high-capacity bus routes.

All the English examples have operational park and ride schemes. York's system stands comparison with the best of these, though there are lessons, such as the need for extended hours of operation, more intensive use of sites and better access arrangements.

The English examples also focus on the provision of bus priority measures and the introduction of bus corridors to improve speed and reliability. Some case-study cities have interesting innovations in combined, multimodal and discounted fares.

All the cities seek to reduce congestion and the use of private vehicles through measures such as traffic management on radial routes, the introduction of cells to eliminate through traffic, the re-allocation of road space to active travel modes, lower speed limits and controls on parking.