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MEETING	TRAFFIC CONGESTION AD-HOC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	7 MAY 2009
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS MERRETT (CHAIR), HOLVEY, HUDSON (VICE-CHAIR), MORLEY, PIERCE, SIMPSON-LAING, R WATSON (SUB FOR CLLR ORRELL) AND MR M PAGE (CO-OPTED NON-STATUTORY MEMBER)
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLOR ORRELL AND MR M SMITH (CO-OPTED NON-STATUTORY MEMBER)

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## **5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were invited to declare, at this point in the meeting, any personal or prejudicial interests they might have in the business on the agenda.

Councillor Merrett declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in agenda items 4 (Draft Final Report) and 5 (Residents Consultation Survey) as an honorary member of the Cyclists' Touring Club and as a member of Cycling England.

Councillor Holvey declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in agenda items 4 (Draft Final Report) and 5 (Residents Consultation Survey) as he was employed by Leeds City Council and had been involved in City Region issues.

## **6. MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 12 June 2008 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

## **7. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

It was reported that there had been two registrations to speak under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

One from Cllr D'Agorne who had been unable to attend the meeting owing to illness but he had forwarded emailed comments in relation to the Scrutiny Committees draft final report, which were circulated at the meeting. He confirmed that the report was an excellent analysis of the difficult transport choices facing the city.

The second was from Paul Hepworth who spoke on behalf of the CTC (Cyclists Touring Club). He stated that the report highlighted the very serious consequences if the threats posed by congestion were not addressed. He confirmed that York's Local Transport Plan 2 bid had been

designed to address some of the congestion issues detailed in the report but he stated that others would require funding via LTP3. As a representative of CTC, he requested that Members consider the establishment of an LTP style public Congestion Review Group involving all local transport stakeholders to supplement the planned public consultation.

## **8. TRAFFIC CONGESTION AD - HOC SCRUTINY REVIEW - DRAFT FINAL REPORT**

Consideration was given to the draft final report of the Committee, which focused on tackling traffic congestion. The aim of the review had been to identify ways, including Local Transport Plans 1 and 2 and other evidence, of reducing present levels of traffic congestion in York, together with ways of minimising the impact of the forecast traffic increase.

Members also considered the following additional documents:

- Annex Ah – Table of issues/findings, identified solutions, possible impacts and draft recommendations (circulated prior to the meeting but not with the agenda)
- Reactions to the Report from the York Quality Bus Partnership (QBP) in which they made suggestions regarding possible amendments, circulated at the meeting and attached as an Annex to these minutes.
- Email from Cllr D'Agorne expressing his support for the final report and his suggestions for campaign promotions to run in conjunction with the Committee's recommendations, circulated at the meeting.

Officers reminded Members that the broad overall solution to both congestion and the climate change challenge was a concerted approach using the following hierarchy of measures:

- i. Reducing the need to travel (through IT, video conferencing and other solutions like encouraging workers to live closer to work)
- ii. Undertaking more of the journeys that still need to be made by green and environmentally less damaging modes
- iii. Improving engine efficiency and switch to lower / non-carbon based fuels
- iv. Undertaking a greater proportion of car based journeys on a shared basis
- v. Improving driving standards (for fuel efficiency and safety, and to make roads safer and more attractive to green travel modes)
- vi. Reducing congestion delays and fuel wastage in traffic queues.

Consideration was then given to all the information in the covering report, the draft final report at Annex A and it's associated Annexes and it was

**RESOLVED:** i) That agreement be given to the inclusion of paragraphs 19, 20, 29, 34, 35 and 58 which contained information and recommendations that had not previously appeared in any of the interim reports;

- ii) That agreement be given to the inclusion of the following additional information and amendments to the draft final report and annexes:

Paragraphs 19 & 69 – Amend all references to 2020 to 2025;

Paragraph 20 – Update required;

Paragraph 22 – Amend fifth bullet point to include reference to ‘lower embedded carbon models’;

Paragraph 37 Graph – Amend abbreviation references into alphabetical order and ensure graph contents readable;

Paragraph 58 – amend intermediate plans in line with any subsequently agreed changes;

Paragraph 69 - include the words ‘because of their affordability,’ before ‘good quality’ in the final point;

- iii) That footnotes be included in the final report to cross reference points;
- iv) That Annex Af, ‘Scenarion9 – Road User Charging’ be updated to reflect current views in relation to charging;
- v) That Officers examine the suggested wording alternatives for the long-term transport vision shown at paragraph 69, and circulate their revised suggestions to Members;
- vi) That the draft recommendations be amended and amalgamated to reduce their overall number, in line with Members comments, for their consideration at the next meeting;
- vii) That recommendation (i) be removed and the following recommendations added:
- Under ‘Overall’ sub-heading add – ‘Make representations to Government in relation to the roll out powers to non London Authorities on enforcement issues possibly through sustainable communities’.
  - Under ‘Walking and Cycling’ sub-heading add – ‘Ensure better pedestrian priority in traffic layouts to minimise the knock on consequences’.
  - Under ‘Public Transport’ sub-heading add – ‘Introduce a Bus Champion’.

REASON: To progress this review and enable the survey of residents as referred to in Annex A, paragraph 72.

## 9. RESIDENTS CONSULTATION SURVEY

Consideration was given to a report, which looked at the preparation of a city-wide survey to engage the wider York community and interested parties in the traffic congestion review.

The Committee were reminded that they had previously agreed to the issuing of a survey which detailed the review findings and possible solutions and that this had been deemed crucial in identifying views on future transport policy, given the difficult and crucial choices to be made.

Officers referred to the imminent consultation in relation to the Local Transport Plan 3 and the need for clarity in relation to this consultation survey.

The Head of Marketing and Communications, who was in attendance for consideration of this item, confirmed that recommendations of the draft review could be incorporated into a survey of around four A4 sides. He stated that to enable residents to make informed choices the survey would have to detail the full list of possible scenarios.

Members stated that consultation on the review needed to take a number of different forms, which included the survey, press releases and presentations at Ward Committees etc.

RESOLVED: i) That residents views be sought as part of the Short/Medium Term Recommendation (iv) arising from the Traffic Congestion Review which stated that the following should be a key priority – ‘Adopt an on-going public engagement strategy in terms of the future transport strategy and solutions for the City’

REASON: In order to conclude the review.

ii) That the Committee make a formal request to the Scrutiny Management Committee for funding for broader consultation originally allocated from the scrutiny budget of 2008/09, carried forward into 2009/10.

REASON: To enable consultation to be carried out.

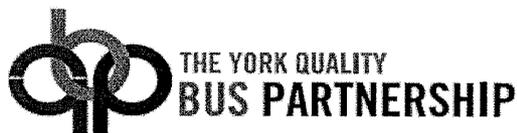
iii) That the Head of Marketing and Communication, in consultation with the Officers concerned, prepare a draft survey for consideration by Members at the next meeting.

REASON: To enable the survey to be carried out.

CLLR D MERRETT, Chair

[The meeting started at 4.30 pm and finished at 6.45 pm].

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Bus Operators and Council working together to deliver better bus services for York

## **Reactions to the draft Final Report of the ad hoc Traffic Congestion Scrutiny Committee**

May 2009

### **1. Introduction**

The York Quality Bus Partnership (QBP) is a public commitment made by Bus Operators and City of York Council (CYC) to maintain and improve the provision of bus services in the City. Working together in partnership for the benefit of all residents, businesses and visitors to the City, the Bus Operators and CYC will strive to provide the best quality of bus services and facilities that can be achieved with the resources available to the partners. The QBP seeks to co-ordinate investment and service development between the partners to improve services to customers and reduce the deleterious impacts of road traffic.

The Independent Chair of the Partnership became aware at a late stage of the meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2009 to consider the draft final report of the Traffic Congestion ad-hoc Scrutiny Committee (TCSC) and has prepared this response without the benefit of discussion with members of the partnership. Views expressed are therefore the personal responsibility of the author and may be updated following the QBP meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2009.

### **2. TCSC Review Conclusions**

#### **2.1 A more Sustainable City (paragraph 5)**

TCSC refers to the policies of the Council expressed through LPT2 and "Access York" and the disappointing lack of prominence of transport policy in the Sustainable Community Strategy vision. The York Environmental Partnership has increased its examination of transport issues, although unfortunately the QBP has not been represented at several meetings because of pressures of business on its members.

It is worth making a number of general points (the first two not specific to York) at the outset:

- The widely expressed attitudes of motorists and bodies promoting motorists' interests that there are irrevocable rights to drive and park freely. This often extends to outright opposition to further traffic management measures, notably including lower speed limits, additional parking and loading restrictions and priorities for buses. This points to a need for greater awareness amongst the general public of sustainability issues in relation to transport and the social, economic and environmental gains that arise from the better management of traffic to maximise the contribution of walking, cycling, public transport and other shared modes (including cars);
- Correspondingly, there is a lack of awareness of the economic (and other) value of scarce road space (consider what the development value of the equivalent land area occupied by roads in central York would be in the impossible circumstances that it could be released and continue to be accessed!). It is unlikely (as referenda results in Edinburgh and Greater Manchester show) that there is any general public appetite for road user charges in congested areas. Arguably London, where public attitudes changed perceptibly after the previous Mayor's introduction of the Congestion Charge, is an exception probably because of experience of the unstable highway

interested in assessing their current performance and improving their driving skills (and maybe also those invited to do so by the Police as an alternative to a fixed penalty!). The Chair of the QBC is associated with the developer of a laptop computer based performance recording and assessment system that has been very successfully used in Australia, Asia and the USA for training bus and taxi drivers and is being developed for car driver training. Such systems could be applied in York but obviously are only partly within the purview of the QBC.

### 3. TCSC Review Recommendations

#### 3.1 Short /Medium Term (paragraph 12)

##### Overall

The Transport Strategy study at (iii) should be stakeholder driven by a suitable steering group and involving appropriate discussion and inputs from businesses, drivers, bus and freight operators, cyclists and pedestrians as well as Council departments and agencies.

The approach at (v) should be fully inclusive involving the bus operators fully with the QBP available as an existing sounding board for those not directly involved in the detailed work. A better formulation might be:

*Agree a development plan to increase the use of bus services, identifying a core network sustainable with the resources predicted to be available commercially from the local bus companies together and the revenue support realistically expected to be available from the City Council.*

This plan should include routes, marketing and ticketing.

At (vi) dealing with charging, it is suggested that a higher level approach is required. There is a need to consider parking charges in the context of other charges for transport, especially bus fares, so that the overall transport policy objectives and targets, particularly modal split, can be achieved.

##### Public Transport

At (viii) there is reference to "holding down" bus fares. Under legislation up to the Local Transport Act 2008, fares are a commercial matter for the operators except for subsidised services for which budgets are limited. The Local Transport Act offers scope for including fares within Quality Contracts and Statutory Partnerships but at the expense of increased bureaucracy. It is suggested that this reference be replaced by "minimising the gap between perceived costs by car and bus".

Also in (viii), revise from "concessionary" to "influencing" to read "*concessionary patronage, additional bus priority measures. Influencing*"

(xiv) needs to be more widely cast. For example:

*"Improve access to York District Hospital from all parts of the District. This may involve route revisions and through ticketing. Demand for parking at and around the Hospital as well as improved access can be achieved by ensuring the extension of Park and Ride services to include the hospital."*

(xv) must involve the highways authority as well as operators. Thus:

These must also be related to proposals for significant development elsewhere in the City, such as York Central. One family of options that should be pursued is creating a public transport spine across the city centre probably based on one of the bridges. Implementation of such a strategy might initially involve creating a loop or other system for distributing general traffic to avoid the central area, progressively increasing the proportion of central area through routes devoted to priority classes of vehicle.

#### **4. Summary and request**

Notwithstanding its length this response to the TCSC report has been quickly prepared and has not had the benefit of discussion with other members of the QBP.

At a number of points it is suggested that the QBP should be given the opportunity to comment, make input or be involved in taking issues forward. It may be that there will be an opportunity to do some of this at the QBP's meeting on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June. In any event it is requested that the QBP should have the opportunity to consider the final report.

Taking the perspective of an informed outsider, the Chair of the QBP considers that key issues are:

- Managing servicing of the central core through an agreed servicing plan
- Ensuring public transport is fully considered in the access plans of all significant new development
- Considering alternative transshipment based servicing options
- Working towards a cross city public transport (bus transit) spine
- A jointly agreed bus development plan
- Full involvement of all stakeholders (particularly operators) in developing future transport strategy.

**John Carr**

6 May 2009

JDC/CYQBP/6 May 2009, perhaps

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