

Report of the Assistant Director Governance & ICT

Feasibility Report into Delivering Modal Shift to Sustainable Forms of Transport

Summary

1. This report suggests ways the Economic Development & Transport Policy & Scrutiny Committee can examine ways to deliver a modal shift to sustainable travel to minimise congestion and the effects of pollution in the city.

Background

2. At a meeting of EDAT in late June 2016 Members considered potential scrutiny review topics for the municipal year and it was suggested by Cllr D'Agorne that the Committee could look at a modal shift to sustainable travel. At a further meeting in July 2016 the Committee asked for an information report to help them decide if such a review would add value to work already being undertaken by the council. Cllr D'Agorne later submitted a scrutiny topic registration form (Annex 1)
3. To achieve a modal shift, changes need to be made to travel modes in the city from cars to more environmentally sustainable transport such as low emission vehicles, buses, cycling and walking.
4. Generally the best-to-worst forms of transport for the environment are:
 - Walking and cycling;
 - Ultra-low emission vehicles;
 - Buses;
 - Shared cars;

- Single-occupant cars.
5. To reduce emissions from transport, people must travel less or change from travel modes at the bottom of the list to those higher up.
 6. Work to make sustainable travel modes more attractive and change people's behaviour patterns have been an important part of the council's transport policy for many years. The Council's Local Transport Plan sets out the main principles of the approaches taken to encourage sustainable transport whilst managing existing and projected traffic levels. The current Local Transport Plan is available on the council's website at https://www.york.gov.uk/info/20108/local_transport_plan/1430/local_transport_plan_2011-2031
 7. Following a successful bid to the Government's Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) in 2011, delivery commenced on a four year programme of initiatives to encourage travellers to use the most sustainable modes in and around the city. A report to this committee in September 2015 updated Members on the progress of the 'iTravel York' programme, funded from the LSTF grant, which had been devised to reduce carbon emissions, stimulate economic growth through influencing travel behaviour and to encourage modal shift.
 8. In recognition of the success of the programme over its first four years, the Department for Transport then awarded a further tranche of funding to extend the iTravel York programme for a further year to March 2016.
 9. LSTF1 built on York's history of sustainable transport successes and the 'Cycling City' programme which immediately preceded it. Named 'iTravel York', the programme aimed to reduce congestion and its impact on the environment and sought to enhance the city's prosperity and growth potential. It did this through an integrated programme of personal, business and school travel planning combined with targeted infrastructure enhancements to increase people's travel choices.
 10. The programme was focussed on a geographic area identified as the 'northern quadrant' of York, bounded by the River Ouse to the west and Monk Stray to the east. It incorporated the city centre, the Monks Cross and Clifton Moor business and retail developments as well as York St John University, York Hospital and a number of other major employers. Key elements of LSTF1 were:
 - Business involvement;

- Personalised travel planning (PTP);
- Communications and journey planning;
- Health and active leisure;
- Infrastructure improvements;
- Low emission vehicles.

11. The Council successfully bid for a further tranche of local sustainable transport funding for a further year until March 2016. Highlights of the LSTF2 bid were:

- A focus on the A59 corridor;
- Continued roll-out of the low emissions taxi incentive scheme;
- An enhanced employer travel planning service;
- Residential travel planning;
- Active leisure local walks and bike rides;
- Continuing the success of the cycling schemes delivered through LSTF1 and Cycling City before that;
- Further development of the Bike Belles programme to address the relatively low uptake of cycling among females;
- Bus stop enhancements in a number of areas.

Further Interventions

12. Further interventions, depending on the availability of funding, would be focussed on the initiatives which have been particularly successful in the LSTF programme. In particular:

- Partnership working with businesses, education providers and volunteers
- Increasing cycling/walking across all age groups
- Increasing active health and wellbeing
- Effective communication and events

- Improving road safety
13. These initiatives would be used to maximise the effectiveness of investment in transport infrastructure across the city. Gaps in the sustainable transport network create major barriers to encouraging residents and visitors to use sustainable modes. A variety of investments are proposed ranging from the provision of new cycle routes and bus network improvements to local safety schemes. In addition upgrades to the A1237 will increase capacity, potentially allowing road space within the urban area to be transferred to sustainable modes, remove traffic from the city centre and local villages and reduce severance.

Specific Topic Areas

14. York has been relatively successful in encouraging higher levels of sustainable transport compared to other areas within the country but the levels remain very low compared to similar continental cities. A review of best practice across other cities in the UK and across Europe would help
15. Over 80% of inbound commuter trips into the city from the surrounding areas are by car. The Council's key policy for reducing the impact of high traffic levels is the provision of a high quality Park & Ride service but are there other methods around the country which could help to deal with this issue?
16. The emerging local plan identifies a variety of sites across the city which will have different transport characteristics and potential problems. Maximising the number of people walking, cycling and using public transport will be critical in making a success of the key city centre sites such as York Central. Maximising sustainable travel from the more remote sites is more difficult but even more important in minimising the impact of the projected growth of the city.
17. **Ambitions for the Review**
18. These include:
- Support One Planet York objectives on sustainable transport and the economic viability of development sites identified within Local Plan allocations.
 - Cross-Party support for effective traffic reduction policies that increase the efficiency of the existing highway network.

- Underpin a draft Local Plan which maintains the historic character of the city while allowing for sustainable economic and housing growth.
- Decoupling economic growth from traffic growth to boost the competitive advantage of the city.

Suggested Approach

19. Key characteristics include greater use of public transport, increased walking and cycling, reduced single occupancy car use and reduced travel to work. Steps could include considering:

- Soft measures such as setting up car share schemes;
- A sustainable transport infrastructure to encourage walking and cycling with new and improved walking and cycling routes;
- Encouraging improvements in the attractiveness of public transport in terms of cost, comfort, reliability and speed, particularly into the evening.
- Promotion of ultra-low vehicles, including taxis and buses, as well as private vehicles, and ensuring the city supports an increase in these vehicles by providing charging stations;
- Encouraging firms, wherever possible, to give employees the opportunity and facilities to work remotely, at home or some other base, using telephones and computers;
- Prioritising sustainable transport through policies and investment decisions.

One Planet York

20. One Planet York is a growing network of local organisations and businesses working towards a more sustainable and resilient One Planet future. One of the 10 key principles of One Planet York is sustainable transport with the aim of encouraging low carbon modes of transport to reduce emissions and reducing the need to travel.

21. The One Planet York prospectus for 2016 states:

Our compact city is ideal for walking, cycling and taking the bus. The large foot streets area is popular and York is amongst the UK's

leading cycling cities.

York is served by a bus network and a nationally regarded Park & Ride providing over four million passenger trips each year. It is one of only five Quality Bus Partnerships in the country.

It is also home to the world's first diesel to electric double decker tour bus operating alongside a fleet of low emission buses, taxis and car club vehicles.

The city is accelerating uptake of low emission vehicles and is rolling out electric charging points. i-Travel York promotes an increase in sustainable travel amongst businesses, schools and residents.

Leading cities make sustainable transport the norm and the first choice for short trips. Public transport operators are decreasing their reliance on petrol and diesel engines to reduce harmful emissions that can damage our health and well-being.

A new oyster-style York by Bus smartcard makes bus journeys easier and faster and is accepted by all of the main bus operators.

Air Quality

22. Improvements to air quality in the city has long been a council priority and the latest Annual Status Report was considered by the Executive Member for Environment at a decision session just two days ago (5 September).
23. A report to the Executive Member notes that the *Delivery of modal shift and congestion reduction measures (via the third Local Transport Plan and i-Travel York programme) remain important to air quality improvement and emission reduction in York. They are supported by planning policies that ensure sustainable travel is embedded into all new development in York.*

The Low Emissions Strategy has already changed the way York delivers public transport and plans for future transport trips through:

- *A new fully electric Park & Ride site at Poppleton Bar*
- *Introduction of electric buses at Monks Cross Park & Ride site*
- *Retrofitting the world's first electric double decker sightseeing bus*

- *Converting around 7% of the taxi fleet (50+ vehicles) to low emission alternatives (Euro 5+ hybrid or electric) through an innovative taxi incentive grant scheme*
- *Implementing an extensive ‘pay as you go’ fast charge public electric vehicle recharging network*
- *Establishing 11 publicly accessible rapid chargers*
- *Achieving a 34% reduction in ‘grey fleet’ trips by council staff, reducing CO₂ emissions by 47%*
- *Developing low emission planning guidance*

24. An annex to the report details ongoing work to improve air quality, such as promoting travel alternatives including a modal shift and network improvement measures. An active travel campaign includes:

- Personalised travel planning;
- Promotion of walking;
- Promotion of cycling;
- School travel plans;
- Workplace travel plans.

Other considerations

25. To measure the effectiveness of possible interventions to promote a modal shift, the Committee may wish to undertake or commission a survey of people’s travel habits at the start of any review and repeat the survey some time after any review recommendations have been implemented to monitor the success these recommendations.
26. The committee may also wish to consider, on a regular basis, air quality statistics taken at agreed points, again to measure the success of various interventions against the aim of reducing pollution in the city

Consultation

27. Should Members decide to proceed with a scrutiny review the committee, or an appointed Task Group, will need to consider who they want to consult once a remit has been agreed

Options

28. Having considered the information provided in this report members can decide if there is value in considering additional work to influence a modal shift towards sustainable forms of transport, or not.

Analysis

29. There is no analysis at this stage.

Council Plan

30. A review into a modal shift to sustainable travel will contribute to the Prosperous City for All and a Council That Listens to Residents elements of the Council Plan.

Risks and Implications

31. There are no risks or implications arising from the recommendation in this report

Conclusions

32. There are no conclusions at this stage.

Recommendation

33. The Committee needs to consider whether there will be added value in undertaking a scrutiny review into a modal shift to sustainable forms of transport and if so consider how Members want to undertake a review, in what timescale and suggest a proposed remit.

Reason: To decide if members want to initiate a scrutiny review

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Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex 1 – Topic Registration Form