

Traffic Congestion Ad-hoc Scrutiny Review – Interim Report

Background to Scrutiny Review

1. This topic was originally registered by Cllr Tracey Simpson-Laing in April 2005 in an effort to access the draft of the second Local Transport Plan (LTP2) prior to its submission. It was envisaged that the scrutiny process would ensure that LTP2 met the aspirations of the Planning & Transport Panel and allow time for the Executive Member to be questioned on issues of concern. A decision was taken to defer the topic and LTP2 was subsequently submitted.
2. In November 2006 Scrutiny Management Committee (SMC) reconsidered the topic registration together with a draft remit suggested by Cllr Simpson-Laing. After due consideration, SMC agreed a timeframe of six months for the review, and the following amended remit was agreed:

3. **Aim**

To identify ways including Local Transport Plans 1 & 2 (LTP1 & LTP2) and other evidence, of reducing present levels of traffic congestion in York, and ways of minimising the impact of the forecast traffic increase.

Objectives

Having regard to the impact of traffic congestion (based on external evidence and those measures already implemented in LTP1 or proposed in LTP2), recommend and prioritise specific improvements to:

- i. Accessibility to services, employment, education and health
- ii. Air Quality, in particular looking at the five hotspots identified in the LTP2
- iii. Alternative environmentally viable and financially practical methods of transport
- iv. CO₂ Emissions
- v. Journey times and reliability of public transport
- vi. Economic Performance
- vii. Quality of Life
- viii. Road Safety

Background to Congestion Issues

4. Officers gave a number of briefings to the Committee of the congestion issues faced in York. For practical purposes, congestion was defined as 'where traffic

flow exceeds 85% of the road / junction capacity'. This value was adopted as below that level things operated smoothly but above that level flow became unpredictable causing disruption leading to reduced or no free flow.

5. To understand the serious growth and spread of congestion on the principal road network in York, the Committee were presented with information on the modelling work undertaken by Halcrow in 2005. This work was produced using a new traffic model (replacing the various Saturn models that had been used since 1988) and looked at the peak traffic flow (weekday mornings 7am – 9am). It compared the traffic levels for 2005, against the projected 2011 LTP2 based do minimum, the 2021 do minimum & the 2021 do something. – See Annex A.
6. The future projections took into account both the additional traffic from anticipated employment and residential development such as York Northwest, University Campus 3, Germany Beck, Derwenthorpe, and Hungate etc and the LTP2 congestion tackling measures i.e. outer ring road junction improvements, Park & Ride expansion, and network management improvements for bus and cycle routes.

Consultation

7. This review has been progressed in consultation with the Assistant Director of City Strategy, the Environmental Protection Manager and other key officers in City Strategy. The Committee also held the following public consultation sessions:
 - No.1 Presentation by Paul Wadsworth of Capita Symonds Road User Pricing Consultancy on road pricing – see Annex B.
 - No.2 Presentation of briefing paper by Assistant Director of City Development & Transport on the broad strategic options available to York – see Annex C.
 - No.3 Presentation by Professor Whitelegg from University of York on the effects of traffic congestion on York residents in relation to objective (vii) Quality of Life – see Annex D.
8. Members of the public attended and the following stakeholders were also invited:
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - Inward Investment Board
 - York CVS
 - Yorkshire Forward
 - Quality Bus Partnership
 - Nestlé
 - Joseph Rowntree Foundation
 - Without Walls
 - York Taxi Federation
 - Sustrans Ltd

Objectives (i) – (v)

9. A significant amount of work has been done by the Committee to look at objectives (i)-(v), and the findings are shown in the interim report presented to SMC in January 2008. As a result of this work, the Committee recognised the need to raise awareness amongst York residents and to seek their views on the broad strategic options available to the city for tackling congestion. In an effort to do this effectively the Committee consulted with Marketing & Communication on the different ways of doing this and decided to carry out a survey of all York households.
10. In January 2008 SMC agreed to extend the timeframe for the review until September 2008, and in February 2008 SMC considered a request for the necessary additional funding for the survey in the amount of £17,000. Having considered all of the alternative options, they agreed to request the additional budget from the Executive and their report is due to be considered by the Executive on 6 May 2008.
11. Surveys have previously been carried out as part of LTP1 and LTP2 and copies of these are attached at Annex E (to follow). Assuming that the funding will be made available, Members may wish to consider the format of these surveys and start to agree the format and content of the survey for this review.

Objective (vii)

12. The presentation given on 27 February 2008 by Professor Whitelegg (see Annex D) looked specifically at the effects of traffic congestion on 'Quality of Life'. The committee now need to draw some conclusions from the information provided and/or decide if any further information is required, in order to identify any relevant recommendations.

Objective (viii)

12. The Acting Head of Transport has provided a briefing paper on 'Road Safety' – see Annex F.

Options

13. Having regard to the aims and objectives of this topic remit and having considered the information provided in this report and Annexes, Members may wish to either:
 - Request information relating to objective (vi)- Economic Performance, plus any additional information required in relation to those objectives already considered
 - Agree that no further information is required

13. Members may also wish to agree the format and content of the survey in advance of the report requesting the relevant funding going to the Executive on 6 May 2008, so that the preparation work is complete and the review can progress in line with the extended timeframe.

Corporate Direction & Priorities

14. The implementation of the recommendations arising from this review will support the delivery of the following corporate priorities
 - 'Reduce the environmental impact of council activities and encourage, empower and promote others to do the same'
 - 'Increase the use of public and other environmentally friendly modes of transport'.

Implications

15. Financial – If a decision is taken to proceed with the survey of residents on the recommendations arising from this review, additional funding will be required from the scrutiny budget over and above that which is already allocated to each individual review. This is subject to a request for resources from the contingency fund, shortly to be considered by the Executive
16. There are no HR, Equalities, Legal, Crime & Disorder or other implications.

Risk Management

17. There is a potential risk associated with the residents survey in that it may not truly engage residents in the way that Members of the Ad-hoc Scrutiny Sub-Committee are hoping. Equally, any form of consultation about broad strategic options for dealing with congestion could raise public expectations about future Council decisions.

Recommendations

18. In light of the above options, Members are asked to:
 - i) Note all of the information provided in the report and annexes
 - ii) Agree what additional information, if any, is required in regard to objectives (vii) Quality of Life and (viii) Road Safety
 - iii) Agree how to proceed with the investigation of objective (vi) – Economic Performance
 - iv) Consider the format and content of the proposed residents survey in advance of a decision by the Executive for the relevant funding

Reason: To ensure full consideration of all the objectives, and the completion of the review within the agreed extended timeframe

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Interim Report Approved **Date**

4 April 2008

Wards Affected:**All** **Background Papers:** Interim report to SMC dated 28 January 2008

Annexes

Annex A – Maps showing congestion levels in 2005, 2011 & 2021**Annex B** – Road Pricing Presentation**Annex C** – Broad Strategic Options Briefing Paper**Annex D** – Quality of Life Presentation**Annex E** – Example Surveys (to follow)**Annex F** – Road Safety Briefing Paper