

---

MEETING	TRAFFIC CONGESTION AD-HOC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	17 APRIL 2008
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS MERRETT (CHAIR), HUDSON (VICE-CHAIR), MOORE, PIERCE (JOINED THE MEETING AT 6.10PM), SIMPSON-LAING, ALEXANDER (SUBSTITUTE) (LEFT THE MEETING AT 6.10PM) AND KIRK (SUBSTITUTE)  MR M SMITH AND MR M PAGE (CO-OPTED NON STATUTORY MEMBERS) STEVE BURRELL, TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT OFFICER, (NORTH YORKSHIRE POLICE)

### **35. 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 item 4 (Interim Report) as an honorary member of the Cyclists' Touring Club and a member of Cycling England.

### **36. MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 16 January 2008 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

### **37. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

### **38. TRAFFIC CONGESTION AD-HOC SCRUTINY REVIEW – INTERIM REPORT**

Members considered a report, which detailed the background to the Traffic Congestion Scrutiny Review, set up with a remit to reduce present levels of traffic congestion in York together with ways of minimising the impact of the forecast traffic increase.

The Committee were reminded of the briefings and extensive consultation undertaken in relation to the objectives. Also the request to SMC for an extension of time and additional funding for a survey to ascertain resident's views on the broad strategic options available to the city to tackle congestion.

Members also considered the following information:

- Plans relating to Annex F detailing by colour code, accidents relating to pedestrians, cycles and powered two wheelers, previously circulated;
- Plan showing the geographical distribution of car accidents displayed at the meeting;
- Briefing note: Contributions to Reducing Congestion Major Options, circulated at the meeting;
- Annex E surveys carried out as part of LTP1 and LTP2, circulated at the meeting.

### **Briefing Note on Traffic Congestion and Road Safety**

Officers confirmed that the information used to produce the graphs, displayed in the report, was based on Police accident records.

#### **General**

- Surprise that there was such a close alignment between accidents rates and peak traffic flows;
- Relationship between congestion and accidents was less clear as congestion was difficult to measure/define without geographical analysis;
- Measures that may be chosen to relieve congestion may result in more accidents;

#### **Powered Two Wheelers**

- Further examination of this data required to ascertain the type of powered two wheelers involved, age of driver, experience, speed etc prior to any conclusions;

#### **Cycle Accidents**

- Appeared to be more cycle than pedestrian accidents;
- Plans showed accidents closely related to main road networks;

#### **Pedestrians**

- Confirmation that this information related to pedestrians who were involved in a collision with a car/cyclist including those reported on cycle tracks;
- Confirmation that a high number of pedestrian accidents go unreported;
- Noted that concentration of accidents are in the city centre with very few in residential areas;

#### **Car Accidents**

- Noted that policing was reduced after 1am leaving Officers covering larger areas;
- Premature for conclusions on car accident data, deeper analysis required eg age of driver, weather related etc.
- Officers confirmation that a detailed investigation was undertaken each year of areas where 4 accidents had occurred in the previous 3 year period to try and ascertain a common cause but this was often difficult;
- Confirmation that there was liaison between the Police, North Yorkshire County Council, the Highways Agency and the City of

York Council in relation to all roads in the area with preparation of long term strategies;

- Portsmouth's proposed 20mph zone would only cover residential streets, with signage to ensure driver compliance, in an effort not to increase traffic calming measures. The anticipated cost was £½ m over the 2 year introduction period. This was not considered as a realistic option for York owing to the nature of York's roads.
- Introduction of blanket measures would be difficult, further investigation of why accidents occurred eg junction visibility etc required, prior reduction measures being examined;
- Shunt accidents required smoother traffic flow rather than blanket 20mph speed limits.

The Chair thanked Steve Burrell and the Officers for their work on the analysis of this data, which had provided informative discussion.

### **Contributions to Reducing Traffic Congestion by Major Options**

Officers reminded Members of the massive piece of work that would be required to examine in detail the major options and the likely contributions that each could make on reducing traffic congestion. The subjective assessment of senior officers had assessed and scored each option and its costs, not including social and economic costs, in relation to how each would impact on York.

It had become clear from this work that the greatest benefit to reducing congestion was through the suite of initiatives in the Local Transport Plan supplemented with further major options. The major options that would bring additional benefits would be the Access York Projects, improved bus services and facilities, implementation of softer measures, and some form of demand management in the city.

Members and Officers commented:

- That despite recent measures to reduce congestion it had worsened;
- Introduction of a cordon area in the city could prove easy to avoid but would need charges at a high level, to ensure a modal shift, smaller charges would only redistribute traffic;
- A zoned area would be more applicable for York but problems would arise for cross city journeys;
- Difficult to look at options in isolation as a combination of measures would be required to ensure any real impact;
- A stepped change was required;
- Bus priority would be a significant demand restraint but there were difficulties with adjacent property boundaries with any expansion in this area;
- Speed restraint would lead to congestion elsewhere;
- Useful to support drivers in vehicle sharing;
- The introduction of a 20mph speed limit on the inner ring road outside peak hours could divert traffic from the inner to the outer ring road to assist with congestion in the centre;

- Parking demand restraint had probably been exhausted but there were insufficient resources to undertake detailed work to find an alternative that would be as effective;
- Any radical solutions required examination by outside Consultants;
- Road user charging considered unpopular unless considered as a package eg revenue used to improve outer ring road;
- There had been a previous dismissal of options without full investigation;
- Recognition that some of the traffic on the inner ring road was not travelling into the city centre but through it, rather than using the outer ring road;
- Should not dismiss any of the demand management options until a comprehensive assessment of each had been undertaken.

Arising out of the above discussion it was decided that the final report should take the following form:

- Short strategy report;
- Details of where we are including information collected, residents surveys, attitudes, plans previously circulated etc;
- The way things are going including predicted growth levels, impacts, congestion maps, current LTP, 15 year strategy bids, Park and Ride sites;
- Government framework requirements including improved public transport, buses (as trams are not an option), transport investment funding legislation, options for demand management;
- Potential choices and the need for a step change;
- Pointing out that a lot of evidence had been collected and discussed but the options available required proper studies commissioning, these studies to include potential funding options and how they would affect residents. This work was required at the earliest opportunity to alleviate the worst affects of future congestion.

- RESOLVED:
- i) That the Committee note all the information provided in the report and annexes.
  - ii) That, in light of the tight timescales for production of the draft final report, the Committees meeting scheduled for Thursday 1 May 2008 be rescheduled to week commencing 19 May following consultation with all Committee members.
  - iii) That no additional information be sought on objectives (vii) Quality of Life and (viii) Road Safety.
  - iv) That no further work be undertaken in connection with the investigation of objective (vi) Economic Performance.

- v) That consideration of the format and content of the proposed residents survey be deferred pending the decision of the Executive on funding.

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

CLLR D MERRETT, Chair  
[The meeting started at 5.00 pm and finished at 7.10 pm].

This page is intentionally left blank