

A key focus for the administration continues to be supporting residents and businesses to stay safe and recover from the impact of the pandemic. Since 17 May, with the reopening of hospitality, the city has got a lot busier and officers have been working through the process of ensuring a covid safe return to the use of West Offices and other larger venues for in person council meetings. Members of the Executive and senior officers are also developing a strategy for staff to combine the benefits of home working with a part – week return to office-based working. The intention is to upgrade resources to allow for hybrid and remote working where this is most efficient in providing regular communications and the best service delivery while also ensuring effective team working and interaction with colleagues. Opportunities will be taken to provide greater flexibility than has previously been the case but ensure that staff are fully supported in delivering services even if there are continuing restrictions that affect working practices. As part of the budget process, the experience of return to the office may provide the opportunity to let out further space within West Offices to partners and move more towards satellite operations around community hubs for those who are area based customer-facing staff.

In June, we re-launched the ‘Big Conversation’ Consultation with both online and paper-based options inviting residents through a special edition of ‘Our City’ to contribute to the Economic Strategy, Climate Change and the Local Transport Plan. These three core strategies are very interdependent and this first phase, alongside the My City Centre consultation, will start to shape these crucial strategies for the recovery and the coming decade leading us towards delivering our ambitious target of Zero carbon by 2030. Work on developing the updated Local Transport Plan is under way, with the new LTP Working Group meeting later this month and the All Party Transport Group, open to all councillors for cross-party conversations, having met 3 times. I would very much like to thank York Civic Trust for the work in establishing and hosting discussions of the Citizens Transport Forum which will feed into the process along with the officer reports and the outcomes of the consultation.

Recent Transport Decision Sessions have been well attended, with the maximum 10 public participants speaking on the various reports. This has included the approval for new Residents Parking zones in South Bank and the area to the north of University of York and despite the level of working from home and the reduced level of on-site academic activity there appears to be no let up in the level of demand for new zones to be designated. Approval was given for the development of an Enhanced Bus Partnership to support the recovery of public transport. The July decision session will include consideration of over 80 locations where there have been requests for parking or other traffic regulation orders, Proposed improvements to Tadcaster Road and the approval of a renewed York and N Yorkshire Road Safety Partnership to try to work towards Zero road casualties in our area. By the time of the meeting I hope to be able to report progress towards implementing the Active Travel Fund Cycle schemes, now that we have recruited additional staff to lead on these programmes. The phased expansion of TIER e-scooter hire and now e-bike hire is continuing and growing in popularity in the warmer weather, with the extension until Mar 2022 in line with the DfT national arrangements. After having their first UK operation in York TIER have now secured the right to operate in London as well. Regular liaison with the operator has ensured that that irresponsible riding is managed and safety has a very high profile. Electric bus operation is proving to make the park and ride service an attractive offer and work is continuing in earnest installing the Hyper Hub charging facilities in council car parks to support the growing number of electric cars.

Whilst we face significant challenges with the additional costs and reduced income resulting from Covid, we are committed to engaging residents at an earlier stage this year to help shape the budget process. An early start is being made by portfolio holders looking at all areas of possible efficiencies, service improvements and areas where we can do things differently to provide the best possible outcome for our residents.

Cllr Andy D'Agorne

Deputy Leader, and Executive Member for Transport