

Scrutiny Management Committee

18 May 2009

Report of the Democratic Services Manager

Interim Report of the Traffic Congestion Ad-hoc Scrutiny Committee

Summary

This report presents an interim report from the Traffic Congestion Ad-hoc Scrutiny Committee detailing their ongoing review and requests a carry forward of the monies from the 2008/09 scrutiny budget previously allocated for carrying out of a city-wide consultation survey.

Background to the Scrutiny Review

1. This topic was originally registered by Cllr Tracey Simpson-Laing in April 2005 in order 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 without any pre-decision scrutiny.
2. In November 2006 Scrutiny Management Committee (SMC) reconsidered the topic registration suggested by Cllr Simpson-Laing, together with a draft remit for a revised scrutiny review focusing on tackling traffic congestion. After due consideration, SMC agreed a timeframe of six months for the review, and the following remit was agreed:

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), to 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. CO₂ Emissions
- iv. Alternative environmentally viable and financially practical methods of transport
- v. Journey times and reliability of public transport
- vi. Economic Performance
- vii. Quality of Life
- viii. Road Safety

Consultation

3. The Traffic Congestion Ad-hoc Scrutiny Committee have held a number of informal and formal meetings and consultation events, as detailed in the draft final report at Annex A.

Review Conclusions to Date

4. The Committee comprehensively reviewed the Council's current transport policies as expressed through LTP2 and the 'Access York' initiative, and their impact on meeting anticipated traffic growth (including from the continued economic success and housing expansion of York) against the objectives of this review and against the views of York residents. They also noted that transport policy figures very little in the current Sustainable Community Strategy vision, despite its importance in delivering much of its ambitions, and in terms of the feedback from York resident's surveys on the importance of tackling congestion.
5. The Committee acknowledged the continuing priority that York residents place on tackling congestion, their mixed views on adopting differing solutions, and the need for continuing substantial engagement with residents and businesses to gain mutual understanding of:
 - the potential future problems
 - what may or may not work, and scale of benefit
 - what the appropriate policy trade offs may be
 - the need to act in advance given ongoing traffic growth and delivery time lags
6. The Committee have recognised that whilst many positive initiatives and measures are being undertaken, they will not be sufficient to avoid significantly worsening traffic and congestion problems over the next decade or so, which could both adversely affect quality of life in York and undermine the City's future economic success and well-being. Also, the anticipated growth in motorised traffic and congestion, despite vehicle efficiency improvements and modal shift, will lead to a continuing increase in greenhouse gas emissions, against the recent government act target of an 80% cut in emissions by 2050.
7. The Committee have therefore concluded that the broad overall solution to both congestion and the climate change challenge is 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.
8. Whilst bullet point (iii) above is primarily nationally driven, all of these approaches can be progressed locally to varying degrees and with 56% of York's commuting journeys being less than 5km, there is clearly a lot of room to move in terms of bullet points (ii), (iv) and (vi).
9. There is also a need to persuade individuals to make socially informed choices too, with the 'Smart Choices' approach being key. This will need a very specific on-going public engagement and promotional strategy around 'Smart Choices', including reinvigorating the Green Travel Plan approach with York employers and institutions.
10. Residents Survey
Having spent a long time gathering information to support this review, the Committee are now in a position to start production of their planned city-wide consultation survey, with the support of Marketing & Communications.
11. SMC allocated the money for the survey from the 2008/09 scrutiny budget. As that period is now over, the Traffic Congestion Ad-hoc Scrutiny Committee is asking SMC to request a carry forward of the remaining 2008/09 budget to enable the survey to be carried out – see breakdown of survey costs below:

Quantity: 90000 Copies
 Description: Traffic management insert
 Duo Office 100gsm, 1/1 Black
 A4 - A3 folded to A4, 6 page
 Gather, fold & insert into Your Ward
 (excluding VAT) = £ 5,279.00

Design (by HBA graphics) - dependant on the final text: £500.00
 Marketing & Communications could plain English the document for free but if it is near publication deadlines and they don't have the capacity it would have to be outsourced at a small charge.

Distribution - Additional costs over and above normal delivery costs due to additional weight etc = £2,944.03

Return Postal Costs For Survey - 'FREEPOST' return address
 Dependant on the number of returns i.e. 10% returned
 = 9,000 @ 0.24p = £2,160.00

Compiling Survey Results - Dependant on number of returned surveys i.e. 10% returned = 9,000 £4,650.00

Analysis Costs - Dependant on number of returned surveys i.e. 10% returned = 9,000 £1,500.00

There is a suggestion that this work could be done by graduates from Leeds University which would minimise the cost, but at this stage we are not able to confirm if this will be possible.

Minimum Total based on 9,000 returns £17,033.03

12. The costs above do not include any additional costs to cover requests for the survey in alternative languages, large print, Braille or on audio tape etc. It also does not include the additional staff resources required to deal with any enquiries received as a result of sending the survey out. Marketing & Communications have confirmed that this is the usual consequence of sending out a survey to all York residents and that enquiries will continue to be received for up to six weeks after the survey is issued.

Options

13. Having considered the findings to date contained within the draft final report attached and its associated Annexes Aa-Ai, Members may:
- Agree to request a carry forward the remaining 2008/09 scrutiny budget in order to finance the consultation survey, or;
 - Decide not to finance the consultation survey, and instruct the Traffic Congestion Ad-hoc Scrutiny Committee to conclude their review based on the information gathered to date

Analysis

14. The Traffic Congestion Ad-hoc Scrutiny Committee met on 7 May 2009 to consider their draft final report and agreed a number of amendments, including a consolidation of the recommendations therein. It was not possible to complete the resulting amendments to the draft final report prior to its inclusion in this agenda, due to the lack of time available before this agenda was published and put into print on 8 May 2009.
15. The review is expected to be finalised during the next municipal year and the finalised report will be presented to SMC at that time. At this stage, the draft final report is only attached as an annex to this report, in order to inform Member decision about whether to finance the planned consultation survey and not for detailed consideration of the recommendations.

Corporate Direction & Priorities

16. 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

17. The implications associated with the recommendations arising from this review will be thoroughly analysed once the review has been completed and the final report updated in line with the findings.
18. **Financial** - The financial implications associated with the recommendation in this report relate to the survey costs detailed in paragraph 11 above.
19. There are no HR, Legal, Equalities, Property, ITT or Other implications associated with the recommendation in this report.

Risk Management

19. If a decision is taken not to finance the survey, there is a risk that the lack of engagement of residents through a consultation process, will weaken the argument for the Executive to agree to the recommendations arising from this review.
20. As the cost of the survey will be high, there is also a financial risk attached to carrying out the survey, i.e. the survey would need to be productive as there may be limited added value from it, given the delays in getting to this stage in the review and the already comprehensive nature of the draft final report and its annexes.

Recommendations

11. Members are asked to:
 - note the findings to date detailed in the attached draft final report
 - consider whether they wish to request a carry forward of the remaining 2008/09 scrutiny budget in order to finance the planned consultation survey

Reason: To agree a method for completing the Traffic Congestion Scrutiny Review

Contact Details

Author:

Melanie Carr
Scrutiny Officer
Scrutiny Services
Tel No.01904 552063

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Dawn Steel
Democratic Services Manager

Report Approved **Date** 8 May 2009

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None

Annexes

Annex A – Draft Final Report

Annex Aa – Maps showing congestion levels in 2005, 2011 & 2021

Annex Ab – Information on Other Impediments to Traffic Flow

Annex Ac – LTP2 Strategy for 2006-11

Annex Ad – Summary of Regional and Local Transport Policy

Annex Ae – Broad Strategic Options - Individual Scenarios To Complement LTP2

Annex Af – Information on Other Cities' Progress in Implementing Road User Charging & Its Capacity to Attract Investment

Annex Ag – Broad Strategic Options – Combination Scenarios To Complement LTP2

Annex Ah – Matrix of Committees findings, possible solutions, impact & corresponding recommendations

Annex Ai – Road User Charging Presentation by Capita Symonds