

## **Interim Report**

### **Background**

1. In coming to a decision to review this topic, the Scrutiny Management Team recognised certain key objectives and the following remit was agreed:

2. **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. CO<sup>2</sup> Emissions
- v. Journey times and reliability of public transport
- vi. Economic Performance
- vii. Quality of Life
- viii. Road Safety

### **Accessibility to services, employment, education and health**

#### **Information Gathered**

3. Two informal meetings were held to consider this first objective (6<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> March 2007). Members considered information provided by the Head of Transport Planning and information contained within LTP2. As a result, a number of factors were identified which could affect a positive change in more than one of the objectives set out in the agreed remit for this review. These were presented in an interim report on 4 April 2007 and members requested that additional mapping work be carried to investigate these factors. Members were informed that due to limited staffing resources the mapping work required as part of LTP2 was yet to be completed. Members recognised the importance

of this work and requested a clear prioritised work programme, plus a costing for carrying out the additional mapping work identified in the interim report of 4 April 2007. This programme was originally presented at a meeting on 17 July 2007 but Members agreed to defer consideration of it until this meeting – see annex A attached.

4. Members also requested evidence of the soft measures presently in place to encourage alternatives to car travel in York. This information was also presented at the meeting on 17 July 2007 but again Members agreed to defer consideration of this until this meeting – see annex B attached.

### **Air Quality, in particular looking at the five hotspots identified in the LTP2**

#### **Information Gathered**

5. At a meeting on 19 June 2007, the Assistant Director of City Development & Transport gave a presentation on where congestion is at it's worst in York, the expected effects of the measures to be implemented as part of the second Local Transport Plan (LTP2) and a fifteen year view.
6. Members also received a presentation on the Management of Air Quality in York, from the Environmental Protection Manager which:
  - highlighted the five Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in York identified in 2002
  - detailed the actions taken to date as part of the two Air Quality Action Plans (AQAP1 & AQAP2), published in 2004 and 2006 respectively
  - identified the methods used to record levels of pollutants in the air and identified their sources
  - detailed the current position both inside and outside of the AQMAs
  - listed the successes and ongoing threats to be addressed in the future

#### **Issues Arising**

7. As emissions from vehicles are the main factor affecting air quality it was recognised that the number, types and age of vehicles on York roads was relevant to the levels of pollutants recorded. Members requested details on the vehicle fleet in use in York and this was included in the agenda for the meeting on 17 July 2007. At that time, it was agreed to defer consideration of the information provided until this meeting – see annex C attached.

### **Alternative environmentally viable and financially practical methods of transport & CO<sup>2</sup> Emissions**

#### **Information Gathered**

8. At the meeting on 17 July 2007 the Head of Network Management provided a paper on sustainable fuels and the effects of CO<sup>2</sup> Emissions. It sought to put the term 'environmentally friendly' into context and indicated potential responses that could have a measurable impact on the environment. It also provided facts on carbon emissions and identified alternative green transport

fuels. Members agreed to look more closely at this paper, at this meeting – see Annex D attached.

### **Journey times and reliability of public transport**

9. Representatives of the local bus service providers were invited to a meeting on 17 July 2007 to discuss this key objective. John Carr (Chair of the Quality Bus Partnership) attended together with the following representatives from the bus companies:

Jonathon Stewart	- First
Colin Newbury & Paul Adcock	- Arriva
Peter Dew	- Topline Travel & Veolia
Geoff Lomax	- Coastliner
Bob Rackley	- East Yorkshire Motor Services

### **Information Gathered**

10. In order to provide a context for the discussion, the Head of Network Management provided a paper giving City of York Council's view on journey times and reliability, which highlighted the issues reported by York residents.
11. It was recognised that a lot more work was required in relation to journey times and reliability of public transport and it was indicated that one possible solution to improve the public's perception of bus reliability would be for the timetable to more closely reflect actual journey times particularly at peak times. It was also recognised that the Authority did have some part to play in assisting the bus companies.

### **Issues Arising**

12. Members raised a number of queries:
- The legal status of bus timetables - it was confirmed that the Commissioner would expect 95% of services to be on time, and if the timetable was not consistently met he could impose sanctions.
  - Unforeseen difficulties affecting journey times e.g. delivery vehicles in the town centre etc – it was recognised that the relocation of large delivery vehicles to transshipment centres could create problems elsewhere
  - The need to make clear to the public any changes to services i.e. Rawcliffe Bar Park and Ride where additional stops had now been added which resulted in a bus service rather than a high frequency express service
  - Problems with buses not adhering to the speed limit in an effort to stick to the timetable
  - the number of BLISS (Bus Location and Information Sub System) enabled vehicles in use in York, the costs involved and the length of time taken to install BLISS – it was confirmed that the cost of installing the BLISS system on one bus route was in the region of £10,000

- variations in peak traffic flows during school holidays - it was confirmed that flow was between 8-10% lower and that this made a significant difference to reliability.
  - the relative cheapness of the Park and Ride fares relative to local bus services – it was noted that this created a perverse incentive for local residents to drive to a Park and Ride site.
  - The number of buses in operation that were still not Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant
13. Members were informed that six years previously, Steer Davies Gleave Consultants also examined the reliability of the bus services in York and their final report highlighted reasons leading to unreliability which included dwell time, ticketing, congestion of the road network and money in the capital programme. It was acknowledged that the issues relating to bus service unreliability were still very much the same today.
14. Finally, Members agreed that the attractiveness of the bus package was not helped by the fact that not all bus stops had timetables or shelters and that passengers crossing the city were having to purchase different tickets.

### **Options**

15. Having regard to the aims and objectives of this topic remit and having considered the information provided in Annexes A-D, Members may wish to:
- request some further information relating to key objectives (i) – (v), or;
  - agree some recommendations relating to key objectives (i) – (v), so that future meetings can concentrate on the remaining objectives listed below:
    - vi. Economic Performance
    - vii. Quality of Life
    - viii. Road Safety

### **Corporate Priorities**

16. It is recognised that any recommendations made as a result of this scrutiny review could contribute to Corporate Priority no 2 – To increase the use of public and other environmentally friendly modes of transport.

### **Implications**

17. There are no known Financial, HR, Equalities, Legal, Crime and Disorder, IT or other implications associated with this report.

### **Recommendations**

18. Members are asked to note all of the information provided, formulate some recommendations relating to key objectives (i) – (v) and agree a workplan for future meetings of this ad-hoc scrutiny committee

Reason: To ensure full consideration of all the objectives

## Contact Details

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**Interim Report Approved**



**Date**

20 August 2007

**Wards Affected:**

**All**



**For further information please contact the author of the report**

## Annexes

- Annex A** – Programme for carrying out mapping works
- Annex B** – Evidence of the soft measures presently in place to encourage a reduction in car travel in York
- Annex C** – Statistics showing vehicle fleet in use in York
- Annex D** – Paper on alternative environmentally viable and financially practical methods of transport