

5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Introduction

5.1 Public participation and consultation are vital elements in the development and implementation of a fully integrated and sustainable transport system. As a result, the largest ever consultation on transport in York was undertaken to inform our Local Transport Plan. The consultation highlighted, firstly, the transport needs and concerns within the district and secondly, the way forward for transport following the choice of York residents. As a result, the vision, objectives and programme of the LTP strongly reflect the extensive consultation work and consequently represent the views and aspirations of local stakeholders and residents.

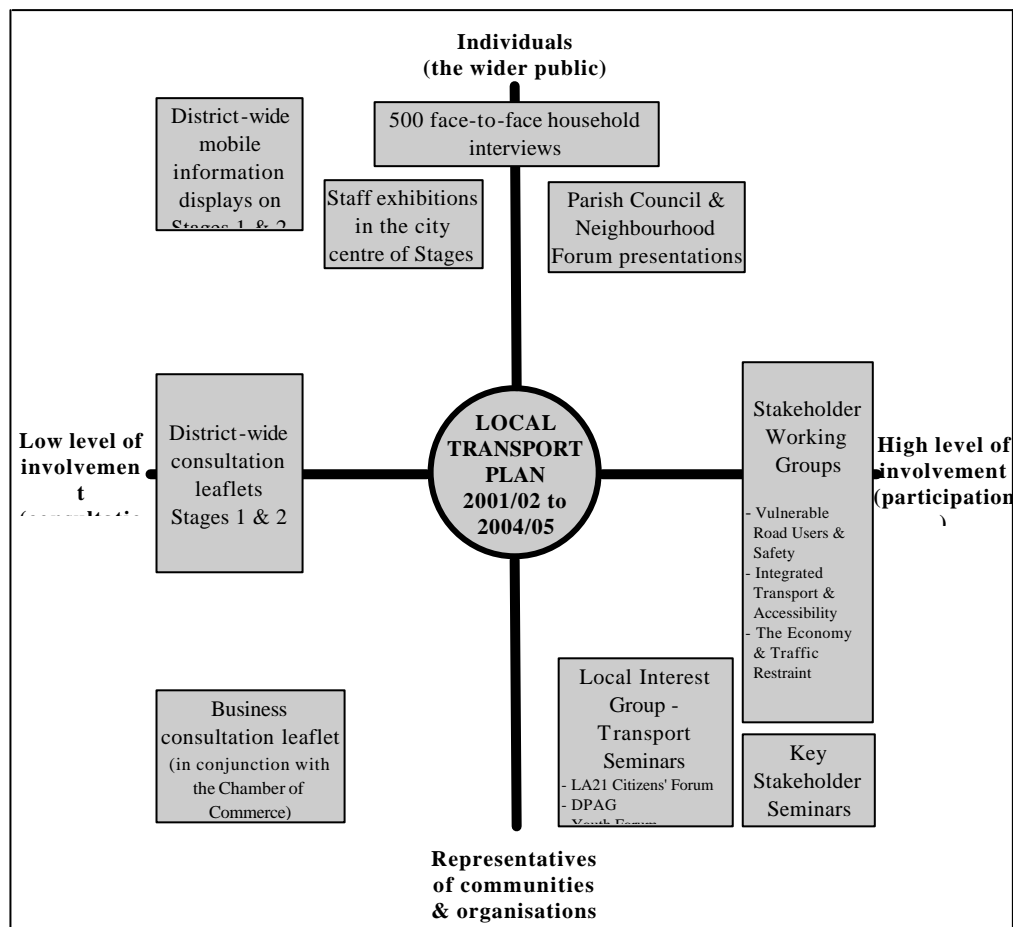
The Participation Framework

5.2 We continue to be committed to the development of policies with the participation and involvement of as many stakeholders as possible. These stakeholders fall into three broad groups:

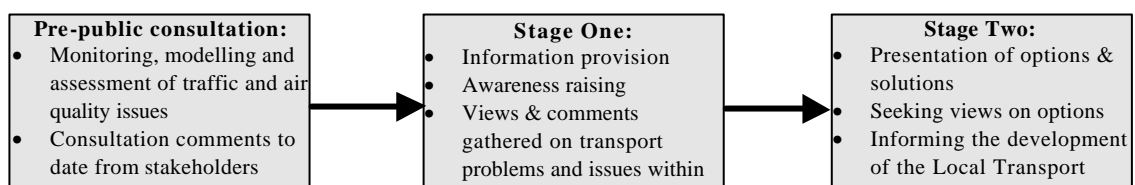
- **Customers**: those who directly use transport services or are immediately affected by the construction and maintenance of transport facilities and includes all those people travelling into the City for work and leisure;
- **Citizens**: the inhabitants of York; and
- **Particular interests**: those groups and communities of interest representing, amongst others, businesses, special needs groups, transport providers and the community.

5.3 The established pattern of consultation undertaken during last year's provisional LTP and its predecessor, the City of York Transport Policies and Programme (TPP), was significantly developed and expanded with consultation for the full LTP being intense. An extensive consultation programme was developed encouraging participation throughout and to gather views, comments and opinions from as wide a population as possible. Many different methods of engaging consultees were used and these included open days, focus groups, talkabout panels, seminars, working groups, surveys, information displays, manned exhibitions and presentations.

5.4 The framework of participation and consultation is illustrated in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1: Local Transport Plan - Participation and Consultation Framework

- 5.5 The climax of the consultation centred around a two-stage approach (illustrated in Figure 5.2 below) which raised awareness of the issues, gathered views and comments, sought priorities and then presented options and solutions to transport problems in the district. This involved sending an initial leaflet/questionnaire to every household in the District followed by a second questionnaire developing in detail options and solutions. In addition a comprehensive at home interview of 500 residents (the 500 survey) was also carried out with participants chosen to represent a statistically correct cross section of the community.

Figure 5.2: Two-stage consultation approach

- 5.6 A full breakdown of the consultation responses and public participation can be found in Appendix A.

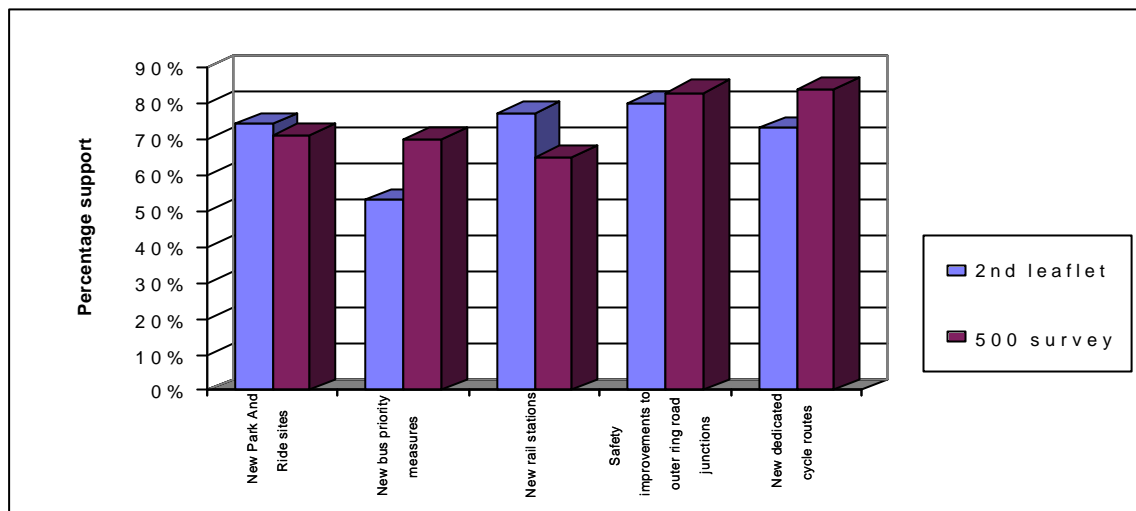
Identification of Transport Problems

- 5.7 The need to tackle traffic congestion was consistently highlighted throughout the consultation as the key issue affecting York and, as a result, a number of other important problems were also highlighted. These included the associated impact on personal mobility and accessibility, the economic and environmental impact of traffic delays, the detrimental impact on public transport services, and the occurrence of 'rat-running' and high traffic speeds through both residential and rural areas.
- 5.8 An overwhelming 88.4% of respondents to our first consultation leaflet thought that more action was required to tackle traffic congestion. The main suggestions to do so focused on banning cars in central areas, developing more Park and Ride facilities, more and safer cycle routes, better public transport, and the creation of lower fares for buses. These views were also supported by a representative survey of 500 York households.
- 5.9 The residents of York viewed the state of public transport as the main area of weakness within the city, with unreliability, inadequacy and cost being the main areas of contention. The Park and Ride services, however, were generally viewed positively.
- 5.10 Results from the business consultation survey indicated concern over traffic congestion leading to delays and problems for both staff and customers together with a perceived lack of parking facilities. Congestion was also seen as the main problem affecting deliveries and freight accessibility, especially within the city centre.
- 5.11 Better public transport was a theme that emerged from other stakeholders involved in the consultation, in particular young people and the elderly. Integration and affordability of the service are key elements, together with the need for accessibility to all members of the community, a vital point raised by those with mobility difficulties. The message for an improvement in the local bus service was echoed by the local business sector, through their survey, as an important element to assist in both staff and customer travel in and around York. This view was backed up by York residents at a number of public presentations at parish council and neighbourhood forum meetings, improving public transport being the number one concern raised.
- 5.12 Similar concerns and views were expressed via the stakeholder working groups and meetings. Emphasis was placed on the development of public transport to meet the reliability and convenience of the car together with the provision of clear and reliable information on services. It was viewed that an integral part of this must be the development of priority measures to benefit the services and improve journey times.
- 5.13 The need to tackle air pollution and maintain the city's environment was a key concern of the major opinion formers of the district due to the clear links with health, quality of life and the intrinsic vitality of York. Alongside this, there is the need for a sustained awareness and information campaign to inform people of the important issues at hand.

- 5.14 The dialogue developed with the stakeholder working groups also highlighted a range of important issues. The need to recognise people's travel requirements and patterns should assist in the development of transport whilst the needs of the most vulnerable members of the community - the young, the elderly and the disabled, should also be addressed throughout. This again relates to the importance of accessibility, integration and safety for all transport users. Through ticketing and the development of a 'seamless' journey were highlighted as integral to public transport services, together with the need to cater for orbital as well as radial movements. Finally, links with other policy areas are required to ensure the vision is deliverable at all scales. In particular, the need to address issues of sustainable freight movement, the enhancement of the city's economy, links to land use planning and development as well as addressing social exclusion and crime prevention strategies.
- 5.15 The identification of these transport problems have assisted in the prioritisation of the objectives outlined in Chapter 3 but also formed the basis of the options and solutions which in turn leads to the identification of transport opportunities that were presented as part of the consultation.

Identification of Transport Opportunities

- 5.16 The second stage of the consultation presented a range of options for possible inclusion within the Local Transport Plan. These were developed from the consultation work undertaken and aimed to tackle the key issues at the heart of transport problems in York.
- 5.17 The broad basis of the options developed focused on the reduction of traffic growth through improving public transport and encouraging cycling and walking by:
- building more Park & Ride sites;
 - working with bus companies to attract more passengers and so achieve lower fares and increased frequency;
 - building local rail stations and introducing local train services;
 - completing and extending the old city's cycle network;
 - carrying out safety improvements to Outer Ring Road Junctions;
 - providing more effective off road cycle routes and links to out of town destinations; and
 - extending 'footstreet' hours, or extending the pedestrian area.
- 5.18 Three options were developed, each of which represented an increasing level of funding and outlined the outcomes possible if adopted. Full details of the options can be found in Appendix A.
- 5.19 Strong support emerged from the second stage consultation questionnaire for the core elements of each option. The levels of support expressed in leaflet returns and the "500 survey" are shown in Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.3 Support for each transport initiative

- 5.20 Support for Park and Ride was further confirmed at the Key Stakeholder Seminars. Delegates viewed the current Park and Ride system as efficient both for staff and customers alike and supported its further expansion.
- 5.21 The outcome of the second consultation stage also indicated support for a radical approach towards tackling pollution problems in and around York. Nearly half (49.0%) of the respondent's first preference supported the most restrictive form of action to tackle air quality in areas where levels may break legal limits. This related to allowing access to those who live or own a business in the area, and to those servicing businesses (outside peak hours), plus emergency vehicles and 'low emission' public transport.
- 5.22 Consultees were clearly informed of restrictions to cars that bus priorities would entail. They were also informed of the cost of the more radical Option and that this could only be funded using additional external resources possibly from local transport charges. Despite this, the majority of residents were strongly in favour of the third and most radical option. 51.9% of respondents indicated Option Three as their preference, with 25.3% supporting Option Two and 13.8% supporting Option One. This represents support for a significant expansion of the Park and Ride network with the development of transport interchanges at the termini, the full development of a local rail network, the introduction of new, high quality buses together with safety improvements to outer ring road junctions and new dedicated off-road cycle routes. The improvement of the local bus network, as highlighted above, clearly runs alongside these developments links not only radial routes but also orbital routes as well. This links strongly to the perceived need for a fully integrated transport system for the city as a whole and as a result represents a key objective of both the Local Transport Plan and our transport strategy.
- 5.23 In connection with the options developed, opinion was gathered regarding the investigation of local transport charges to fund transport improvements if required levels of funding were not received from other sources. Tentative support was indicated through the second stage consultation with 55.4% agreeing to the council investigating charging mechanisms. Further

information was gathered via the 500 household surveys on which form of charging structure would be preferable if investigated - 40.6% indicated workplace charging whilst 24.6% indicated road user charging. However, a significant proportion (34.8%) was not sure which mechanism would be preferable.

- 5.24 The transport opportunities identified through the whole of the consultation process have formed the basis for the contents of the Local Transport Plan, from which further details and programmes have been designed. It is clear that if the policies and programmes developed are to be successful, awareness and support needs to be gained through all members of the community, business sector and local interest groups, and wherever possible form partnerships to meet common goals.

Annual Residents' Opinion Survey

- 5.25 Each year we undertake a survey of Residents' Opinions on a range of issues. The latest survey was undertaken during October to November 1999 and involved 1,456 face-to-face interviews covering a range of issues and topics. For each of the last four years traffic congestion has remained the most important issue of public concern (see Table 5.1 below), reflecting the impact that this has on people's mobility and on the environment. This public concern is reflected in the priority of the objectives listed that form the vision of the LTP. Other issues that remain of significant concern are those of inadequate public transport and the condition of the district's roads and footpaths. However, it is interesting to note the relative decline in concern regarding the lack of parking within York despite the Council policy to reduce the amount of long stay parking.

Table 5.1: The Most Important Issues Facing the York area

	1996	1997	1998	1999
	%	%	%	%
Traffic congestion	35	45	48	45
Crime / vandalism	33	34	34	35
Unemployment	28	20	19	12
Lack of parking	13	14	16	11
Poor public transport	9	11	13	11
Poor condition of roads	7	8	8	10
Education / schools	16	13	7	10
Poor condition of footpaths	6	7	11	8
Financial problems	9	7	6	8
Health	13	4	10	7

Source: City of York Council Resident's Opinion Survey 1999

Local Air Quality Management

- 5.26 The City of York Council recognises that the need to meet the Government's Air Quality Objectives, as set down in the Air Quality Regulations 2000, will have a significant impact

on other areas of Policy work, particularly with respect to the Local Transport Plan and economic development.

- 5.27 The authority has an integrated approach to development of the Local Transport Plan such that consultation carried out for the LTP contains significant elements on both Air Quality and Economic Development. Key stakeholders in the city have been consulted on air quality. In addition the LTP questionnaires sent to all households in the city asked residents for their views on options for tackling air pollution problems through various different transport schemes.
- 5.28 Consultation on the First Stage Review and Assessment of Air Quality was undertaken at the beginning of 1999. Copies of the document were provided to all key stakeholders in the city and made available to the public in Council reception areas and the main public libraries. An evening seminar was also held for members of the public outlining the main findings of the document and providing an opportunity for discussion.
- 5.29 The Second and Third Stage Review and Assessment of Air Quality in York will be published towards the end of 2000. As with the First Stage Review and Assessment this document will be circulated to key stakeholders and made available to members of the public for comment. In addition the City of York Council will also be working with the Stockholm Institute for the Environment, based at the University of York, on a joint project which will examine the public acceptance of the results of the air pollution modelling carried out by the City of York Council.

Customer Research on Highway Maintenance

- 5.30 Considerable research has been undertaken into public views of the condition of York's roads, through the Annual Residents' Opinion Survey and other means. A full account of the customer research on highway conditions appears in Chapter 10.

Future Participation

- 5.31 As part of the development of the Local Transport Plan, we shall be maintaining the dialogue established through the consultation. This will ensure that stakeholders remain involved in the development of transport within the district. As a result, it is intended to maintain the existing links in order to continue discussion on the LTP.

(i) Key Stakeholders

- 5.32 The key stakeholder group, comprising the most influential opinion-formers of the city, will continue to meet for a day's transport seminar on at least an annual basis. This will enable an update on the Local Transport Plan to be delivered together with the option of discussion on any policies, programmes and project implementation that may be relevant or necessary.

(ii) Stakeholder Working Groups

- 5.33 The stakeholder working groups will continue to meet twice a year in order to allow for discussion on a wider range of issues, including the Local Transport Plan. Whereas previous meetings has been driven by the LTP, there will be scope for a wider discussion on a range of day-to-day transport issues relative to the working group members and their organisations.

(iii) Public Feedback

- 5.34 There is a clear need to feedback the results and outcomes of the consultation together with the main features of the Local Transport Plan, especially to those to do not take an 'active' interest in the development of transport in York. Local media will enable details of the above to be made available and copies of the Local Transport Plan will be widely available for reference in the district's libraries and council reception areas. The established market research mechanisms employed by the council will also continue to provide representative feedback on transport issues and views around the district.

Consultation with neighbouring authorities

- 5.35 In addition to the extensive consultation undertaken within York, the Council has close links with neighbouring authorities on a wide range of cross-boundary issues. Many of these links are identified throughout the LTP in the relevant sections, such as co-operation on rural bus challenge and rural bus grant funded services; the Yorkshire public transport information partnership; the development of national and other long distance cycle routes; and on rail services. Co-operation on new initiatives continues, such as ensuring that the national old people's concessionary half fare travel scheme is available on certain journeys outside York, such as those to and from Harrogate.
- 5.36 This commitment to develop policies and services within the region is reinforced through York's participation on a number of regional groups within Yorkshire and Humberside, at both Member and Officer level, such as the Regional Assembly Transport Officers Group, the Regional Transport Partnership and the Regional TravelWise Group.