

CITY OF YORK ECONOMIC AND RETAIL VISION

ACCESS AND TRANSPORT





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Report

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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1		
1 Introduction	3		
City of York Economic and Retail Vision .	3		
The importance of access and transport .	3		
2 Transport and access in York today .	4		
Changing traffic trends and ‘peak car’	5		
Drivers for change	5		
Traffic and commuting in York.....	6		
Car parking	7		
Transport and the public realm.....	7		
3 Overall approach to transport, movement and access	9		
Policy approach	9		
4 Possible interventions	10		
Footstreets.....	10		
Traffic Management.....	11		
Servicing & Deliveries	11		
Disabled Access & Parking	12		
Parking	12		
Bus and Park & Ride Services	13		
Cycling.....	14		
		Pedestrian Access	14
		Taxis and Private Hire	15
		Coach Access and Parking.....	15
		The Rail Station “Gateway”	15
		Tourist Buses	16
		Information and Promotion	16
		Supporting highway infrastructure	17

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Traffic remains one of the more emotive issues in Britain today. York is no exception, and traffic and transport issues are prominent in the local media and in the daily thoughts and consciousness of the thousands of residents, workers, students, shoppers, tourists and other visitors that use York's streets on a daily basis.

There is however a dichotomy in York with respect to transport. The very qualities that make York special – its characterful historic streets, its narrow ginnels and snickelways, and the plethora of wonderful buildings, places and spaces that make York distinctive – are the very features that make the provision of access and movement in and around the city a difficult challenge in the 21st Century.

As one of the city's most distinctive assets, protecting and enhancing York's historic environment is critical to its future economic success, as well as to broader objectives around sustainability and the environment. This is a challenge for transport. But so too is meeting the changing needs and functions of the city, as it grows and develops over the next 20 years. Out of town retailing and employment is growing, and a subtle change of use from retail to other uses is being

witnessed in the city centre. This has implications for access and transport needs across the city, as people travel to work, education, shopping, healthcare and social opportunities both within the city centre and to diverse and disperse locations across York.



These distinct challenges for York will also be influenced by social, demographic and technological change. These changes have already had an effect on the way that people travel, and there is a downward trend in traffic levels, a fact reinforced by the latest national research on car and train travel trends.

The evidence, therefore, both nationally and locally points towards the adoption of an approach to delivering transport investment

and improvements in support of the city's economy as one that focuses on making York, and especially the city centre, a place that provides a world class environment for people. This means developing and delivering measures to promote walking in the city, measures to improve cycling and public transport, and measures that provide advice and information on the best and most cost effective choices in travelling to and around the city. Measures reducing general 'through traffic' movement through the centre to a minimum will support this approach, as will a balanced approach to parking that seeks to provide more parking capacity in the city's Park & Ride sites, at the same time seeking to reduce parking levels in the City Centre with a consequent benefit to the historic environment. A balanced pricing policy will complement this approach. All of this investment in transport should be reinforced by supporting and implementing behavioural change measures.

There is strong evidence that such an approach to transport will help York achieve its economic goals as it grows over the next 20 years.

1 Introduction

City of York Economic and Retail Vision

This short report on access and transport issues in York contributes to one of the most significant studies undertaken by City of York Council for a generation. The city council is working with Drivers Jonas Deloitte to outline a new 20-year vision for York's economic and retail needs, building on the 2011 York Economic Strategy.

The work, being led by Drivers Jonas Deloitte will provide the evidence needed to develop an economic and retail vision to underpin the new Local Plan for York. JMP is providing advice and support in identifying the critical transport and accessibility issues across York that influence the city's economic and spatial plans.

The importance of access and transport

The city centre is one of the city's most distinctive assets. Protecting and enhancing York's historic environment is critical to its future economic success, as well as to broader objectives around sustainability and the environment.

The city faces increasing challenges, including competition from out of town retailers and regional competitor centres. As a result, a slow, subtle change of use from retail to other uses is being witnessed in the city centre. This has implications for access and transport needs across the city, as people travel to work, education, shopping, healthcare and social opportunities both within the city centre and to diverse and disperse locations across York.



The work undertaken in preparing a Portas pilot programme bid has identified that the city centre economy is more diverse than previously thought. This means that there is a complex pattern of travel, with workers, tourists and visitors adding layers of complexity to journeys right across the city, including trips to and within the historic city centre.

Within this context, this short report seeks to provide an understanding of the accessibility constraints affecting the whole city and its social and economic life. It will also outline some of the opportunities present to support the delivery of improved access to and from the city centre while maintaining the special qualities that attract people to the historic core of York, which remains the city's greatest asset.

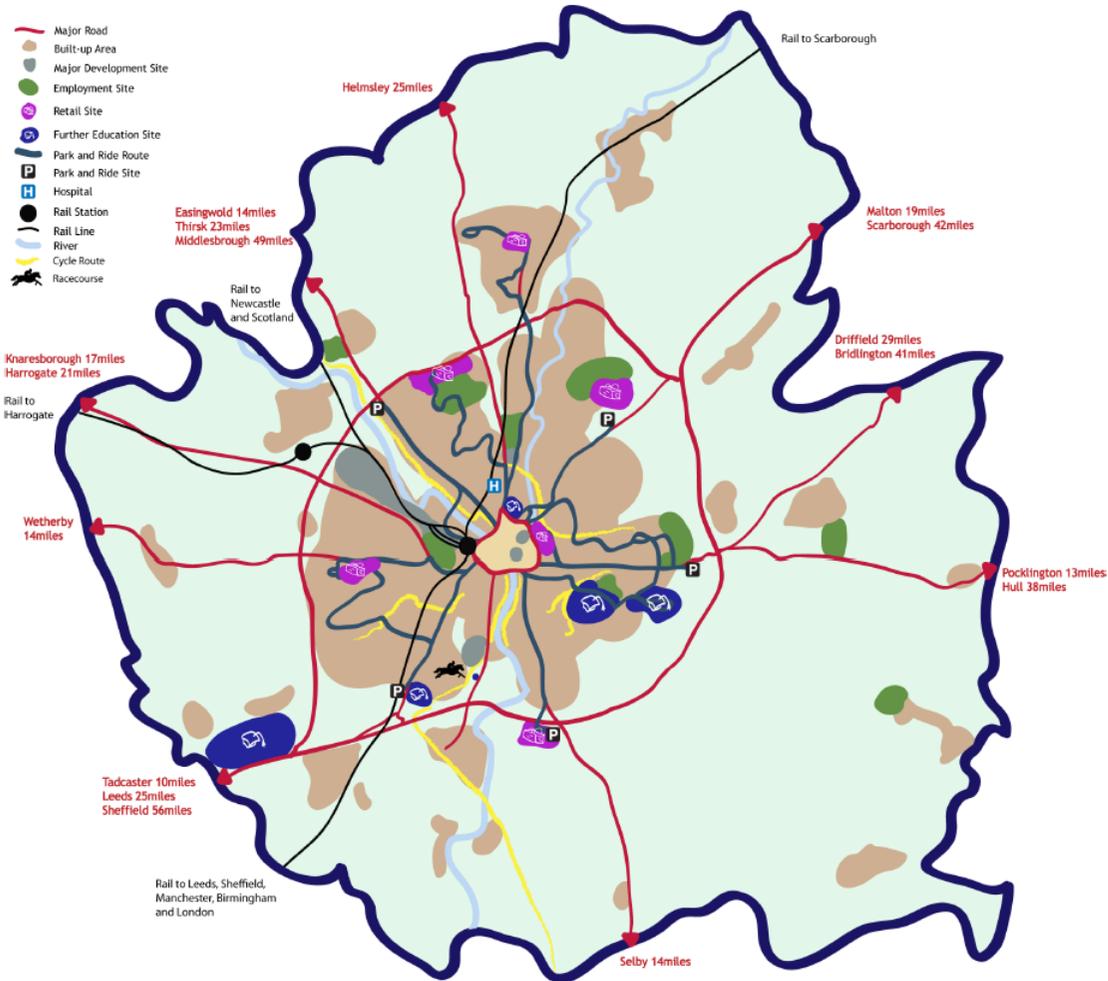


The report will address the ever controversial topic of providing appropriate levels of car access and parking in the city centre, within the context of park and ride and local bus services, and the need to provide high quality walking and cycling access across the city.

2 Transport and access in York today

An overview of York's existing transport and land use system (as shown in the Local Transport Plan for York¹) is reproduced here.

This plan shows important features of the transport system as it exists today, such as major roads, rail lines and stations, park and ride sites and routes, and principal cycle routes, together with important influences on the transport network including the hospital major educational establishments and key retail centres.



¹ City of York Council (2010) Local Transport Plan 2011-2031

Changing traffic trends and ‘peak car’

In 2011, “traffic levels recorded on the automatic traffic counters in the peak hour, as part of the indicator monitoring process for York’s second Local Transport Plan (LTP2) have on the whole, remained close to 2005 levels with a slight downward trend over the longer term.”²

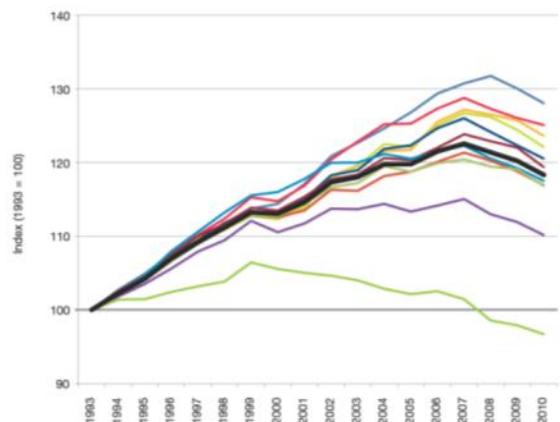
This downward trend in York’s traffic levels is reinforced by the latest national research on car and train travel trends. The recently published ‘On the move’ report³ discusses the observed national levelling off in car traffic in Great Britain – after decades of growth – and a continuing strong growth in rail passenger mileage, even during the current recession. In fact, the aggregated traffic trends for Britain (which are largely based on National Travel Survey data between the years 1995 and 2007) seem to show a ‘peak car’ phenomenon.

The following diagram shows the index of growth rates in car traffic by region since 1993, taken from traffic counts (using 1993 as an index base of 100). Yorkshire and

² City of York Council (September 2011), City of York Local Development Framework (LDF), Topic Paper on the Transport Implications of the LDF, p3

³ Scott Le Vine and Peter Jones (December 2012), On the Move: Making sense of car and train travel trends in Britain, RAC Foundation.

Humberstone is depicted by the blue line in the middle; it is clear that by 2010, traffic levels had dropped back to 2003 levels, (roughly 20% higher than traffic levels in 1993); the bold black line is the national average.



The ‘On the move’ report explores the reasons behind the observed levelling off of car mileage in Britain. Looking at the detail of this report helps us to identify some of the influences that have seen the levels of car mileage stabilise after many decades of growth and that point towards changes in the way we travel. The report provides some pointers to understanding what future movement and access needs will be in York.

- Driving mileage by men has decreased, much of which can be accounted for by a sharp fall in company car use;
- The exception to this pattern is men in their 20s, whose average car mileage fell

by about 2,000 miles per year, the largest drop of any age cohort, a drop unrelated to company car use;

- Driving mileage by women has increased, though still represents a smaller proportion of car mileage than for men.
- A substantial, 60% growth in GB rail travel. This is the result of more people starting to travel by train, rather than existing rail users travelling more.

Drivers for change

There are a number of other drivers of change that will increasingly influence travel in and around York⁴, many of which reflect demographic, social and technological changes shaping life across the whole of Britain:

- An older population, some with more limited mobility;
- Continued growth in walking and cycling, as a lifestyle and healthy travel choice;
- Growing acceptance of need to manage car use, especially within the City Centre;
- Real time network management via urban traffic management systems;

⁴ JMP, Camlin Lonsdale and PLB (May 2011) York City Centre Movement and Accessibility Framework, Strategy and Proposals, pp10-15

- Ready access to travel information for all modes (real time information for public transport and in-car; palm-held applications for cyclists and pedestrians);
- Integrated cashless public transport ticketing through smartcards;
- Fuel prices will increase and become more volatile (peak oil);
- Low or zero emissions vehicles to be a significant part of fleet.

Within York itself, there are significant demographic, social and economic changes that will influence movement and access:

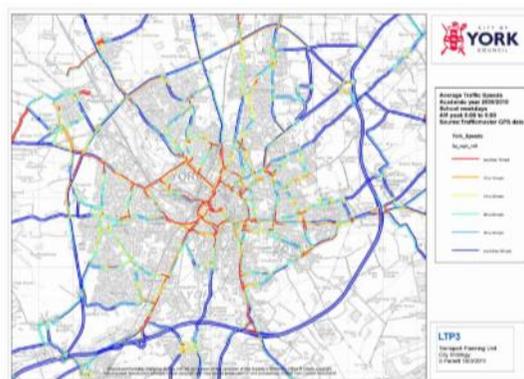
- Population growth, with approximately 1,000 new residents per year anticipated;
- An ageing population: Old age dependency ratio will go from 25 in 2005 to 36 in 2030 (ratio of over 65 to 15-64);
- Employment growth, with approximately 1,000 new jobs expected every year and growing importance of knowledge-based industries and tourism-related jobs;
- Proposals for significant growth and major developments across the city over the next 20 years, which will influence spatial patterns, and therefore travel demands, to, from, and within York.

2011 Census data published in December 2012 shows that 26% of households in York do not have access to a car (which is similar to the national average). York has a lower than

average multiple car ownership compared to the national average, but a higher than average proportion of households that have access to one car (46.7% opposed to 42.2%).

Traffic and commuting in York

The general downward trend in observed traffic levels across York must be considered within the context that “traffic on the Inner Ring Road, key radials and the northern outer ring road experience significant delays at peak travel times”⁵. Average morning peak traffic speeds in 2009/10 is shown below (from the city’s Local Transport Plan⁶).



Another key consideration for the economic visioning for York is that the city experiences a

⁵ City of York Council (September 2011), City of York Local Development Framework (LDF), Topic Paper on the Transport Implications of the LDF, p3

⁶ City of York Council (2010) Local Transport Plan 2011-2031

relatively high level of in-commuting - York is “according to 2001 Census data, a net ‘importer’ of approximately 5,000 commuter trips per day, an increase of 65% from 1991”⁷. The 2001 Census data shows 17,653 of journey to work trips (59%) are made by residents of City of York (including outlying villages). 12,168 trips (41%) are made by in-commuters.

For residents of York, walking and cycling account for nearly half of all commuting journeys and public transport for a fifth, with just a quarter of people driving⁸. In contrast for people commuting from outside the City of York, driving accounts for over 60% of trips and public transport for over a quarter.

However, in 2002, traffic surveys in York suggested that over 40% of traffic passing through the city centre had neither an origin nor destination in the city centre⁹. The historic road network struggles to cope with such traffic levels which causes significant congestion,

⁷ City of York Council (September 2011), City of York Local Development Framework (LDF), Topic Paper on the Transport Implications of the LDF, p3

⁸ JMP, Camlin Lonsdale and PLB (May 2011) York City Centre Movement and Accessibility Framework, Background Information and Evidence Base, p14

⁹ JMP, Camlin Lonsdale and PLB (May 2011) York City Centre Movement and Accessibility Framework, Strategy and Proposals, p4

and contributes to poor air quality. Work led by JMP on behalf the city council in 2011¹⁰ recognised that current traffic patterns are one of the biggest barriers to improving the environment and public realm of the city centre.

Car parking

The issue of car parking provision is an emotive one in York, as it is in towns and cities across Britain. However, there is a considerable amount of evidence that demonstrates that providing additional capacity for cars in the city centre would not only be against local and national government objectives but also unnecessary, in both current and future needs¹¹:

- Only 4 car parks have over 80% utilisation by 9am (The Crescent, Queen Street, Piccadilly and the Railway Station (from 2008 data);
- 18 long-stay car parks have less than 50% utilisation by 9am;
- Examination of live car parking utilisation data from CYC website suggests that levels of use in eight of the largest public

¹⁰ JMP, Camlin Lonsdale and PLB (May 2011) York City Centre Movement and Accessibility Framework, Strategy and Proposals, p4

¹¹ JMP, Camlin Lonsdale and PLB (May 2011) York City Centre Movement and Accessibility Framework, Background Information and Evidence Base, p23

car parks (with 1,840 spaces) is a maximum of approximately 60% on a November weekday.

- A car park user's survey was conducted by City of York in 2007. The most popular activity stated by car park users was shopping (47%). Only 7% of car park users stated that they were working. 47% of users stated that they parked in specific car park due to convenience, though 37% of York residents chose the car park based upon cost. Of the all-day car parks surveyed (Foss Bank and Union Terrace), 76% of those using Foss Bank stated that cost was their main reason.

Transport and the public realm

Protecting and enhancing York's historic environment is critical to its future economic success, and yet, there are many weaknesses within the historic core.

*"Compared to other cities, both within this Region and elsewhere across Europe, the quality of the public realm in York is poor and, in a number of areas, detracts from the setting of its historic assets"*¹².

¹² City Centre Area Action Plan, Issues and Options Consultation 2008

There are a number of transport and public realm issues that are relevant¹³:

- A number of key public spaces, historic gateways, narrow streets and bars (some of York's major characteristics and assets) are compromised by traffic and highway infrastructure, inhibiting the ability for visitors to the City Centre to enjoy the special surroundings;



- The Rail Station entrance as a key gateway to York, and the Inner Ring Road as the main thoroughfare into the heart of the city, provide a poor introduction to York - busy, congested, confusing and disorientating for pedestrians;
- Levels of traffic travelling into and through the centre reduce the sense of arrival and

¹³ JMP, Camlin Lonsdale and PLB (May 2011) York City Centre Movement and Accessibility Framework, Strategy and Proposals, pp6-7

undermine the feeling that you are entering a special place;

- Car parking seriously compromises key assets, e.g. parking around Clifford's Tower; Nunnery Lane next to walls;



- Some areas of over-engineered highway jar with the historic environment: e.g. dual carriageway along Tower Street by Clifford's Tower; guard-railing and traffic lights around Pavement and at Bootham Bar;
- The Footstreets are tired and dated. The volume of traffic on some Footstreets undermines their function. Access regulations are unclear, create clutter and lead to high levels of abuse which do not appear to be actively enforced;
- Levels of service and delivery vehicles in the Footstreets at the beginning and end of key activity times create conflict with shoppers, visitors and other users;

- Inadequate circulation space for pedestrians creates conflict and impacts on the quality of experience: e.g. traffic in footstreets, crowding around bus waiting areas;
- The Inner Ring Road causes significant severance to pedestrians and cyclists on some approaches into York, as well as delays to bus services and car users due to congestion around junctions;
- Despite its cycling tradition and status as a Cycling City, some of the cycling links into the centre and through the centre are restricted and there is inadequate cycle parking where needed;
- The scale of some vehicles (HGVs, articulated buses) is inappropriate on narrow, historic streets in the heart of the City, detracts from the user experience of the centre and is often intimidating to pedestrians.



3 Overall approach to transport, movement and access

Policy approach

In 2011, the then emerging City of York LDF identified an approach for mitigating the impacts of traffic growth citywide that included a number of fundamental policy prescriptions, as follows¹⁴:

- Pursue the completion of Access York Phase I and James Street Link Road Phase II before 2016.
- Promote the earliest possible introduction of non-carbon fuel based transport.
- Implement a sustained travel behaviour change programme commencing in the 2011/2012 financial year.
- Implement the low-cost transport infrastructure and service improvements to support the travel behaviour change programme
- Pursue the ORR Upgrade (enhanced Access York Phase II) project which includes upgrading the Northern Outer

¹⁴ City of York Council (September 2011), City of York Local Development Framework (LDF), Topic Paper on the Transport Implications of the LDF, p26

Ring Road for completion by 2026 at the latest (preferably by 2021).

In conclusion, the city council identified in the emerging LDF in 2011 that “if there is insufficient future investment in transport infrastructure and other transport measures, congestion delay time across the network could almost triple by 2026.”¹⁵ The city council went on to note that “investment in transport infrastructure alone will not be sufficient to adequately mitigate the increased congestion delay by 2026. Consequently, other sustainable transport measures will also need to be put into place.”¹⁶

The evidence, therefore, both nationally and locally points towards the adoption of an approach to delivering transport investment and improvements in support of the city’s

¹⁵ City of York Council (September 2011), City of York Local Development Framework (LDF), Topic Paper on the Transport Implications of the LDF, p30

¹⁶ City of York Council (September 2011), City of York Local Development Framework (LDF), Topic Paper on the Transport Implications of the LDF, p30

economy as one that focuses making York, and especially the city centre, as a place that provides a world class environment for people. This means developing and delivering measures to promote walking in the city, measures to improve cycling and public transport, and measures that provide advice and information on the best and most cost effective choices in travelling to and around the city.

The city council, in its infrastructure plan, supports this approach, noting that in “reflecting the Local Transport Plan 3, the Core Strategy strategic objective for transport is to enable the sustainable growth and development of the city through providing quality alternatives to the car; providing strategic links; supporting and implementing behavioural change; tackling transport emissions; and improving the public realm”¹⁷.

¹⁷ City of York Council (September 2011), City of York Local Development Framework (LDF), Infrastructure Delivery Plan, p7

4 Possible interventions

Phil Goodwin, arguably Britain's leading thinker on transport planning, writing in November 2012, noted that "perhaps the single most internationally successful idea in transport planning in the last 30 years has been the discovery that reducing road space for traffic in town centres – combined with improved public transport, facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, and high quality public realms, streets, squares and parks, are the way to revive town centres and make them attractive, rich and prosperous. This is a matter of evidence, not philosophy."¹⁸

There are a range of measures and interventions that the City of York could pursue this approach in addressing access and movement needs within the city centre and across the city that fulfil this. Many of the possible initiatives in the city centre were identified and described fully as part of the 2011 City Centre Movement and Accessibility

¹⁸ Phil Goodwin (November 2012) *Time for a new letter to the Government?*, Local Transport Today, volume 610, p17, Landor LINKS Ltd., London

Strategy¹⁹. In brief, these potential measures include:

Footstreets



¹⁹ JMP, Camlin Lonsdale and PLB (May 2011) York City Centre Movement and Accessibility Framework, Strategy and Proposals

When introduced in 1987, York's Footstreets were pioneering and inspired many other cities to follow suit. Despite initial hostility, they have proved successful and popular. But the Footstreets now appear tired and dated and suffer from a number of problems which need to be addressed if the central retail area is to undergo a further paradigm shift some 25 years after the initial impetus of prioritising pedestrians. High level options for the Footstreets to enable this generational change are summarised below:

- Expand the network of Footstreets;
- Extend and standardise the hours of operation;
- Exclude all motor traffic during the hours of operation, with the exception of essential, authorised operational needs (e.g. emergency vehicles).
- Preferential disabled parking to be provided at edges of the zone;
- Reduce levels of service traffic in the zone through the development of a Delivery and Servicing Plan;
- Declutter the Footstreets and improve appearance, function and legibility by minimising signing and lining in

association with simplified access arrangements and consolidating and updating street furniture;

- Over time, upgrade the streets and public spaces within the zone to consistent style of shared surfaces;
- Develop a public realm strategy and design guide to assist in the above;
- Devise and implement an operational regime to effectively enforce and manage the above.

A body of evidence has grown showing the economic benefits of enhancing pedestrian provision and the pedestrian environment in city centres. When York first introduced its Footstreets, it was shown to have a positive benefit on City Centre retail trade. Research in London demonstrated that people on foot spend more in town centres than people who arrive by car²⁰.

Traffic Management

Manual classified traffic counts on the Ouse and Lendal Bridges show that pedestrians are the dominant transport user, while private traffic represents only a quarter of all person

²⁰ London Assembly Transport Committee (October 2010) *Walk This Way: Making walking easier and safer in London*, p8, Greater London Authority, London.

movements. In spite of this, traffic dominates the environment and reduces the sense of arrival into a special place.



The City Centre Movement and Accessibility Framework recommended reducing general 'through traffic' movement through the centre to a minimum. This report included specific proposals including the designation of a series of traffic cells that allow some vehicular access (including to residential areas in the city centre), but do not permit through movement during critical daytime periods.

It is however important that buses continue to enjoy access through the 'heart' of the City Centre in order to accommodate growing demand for access to and through the City Centre.

Car-borne visitors to the centre will continue to be intercepted by a the expanded ring of Park & Ride sites at the edge of York (being

provided through the Access York project) and an inner-ring of car parks at the edge of the City Centre.

Servicing & Deliveries

Effective servicing is vital to City Centre retailers and businesses, but potentially conflicts with protecting and enhancing the quality of place and the visitor experience in the City Centre.

There is currently a high level of servicing and delivery vehicle intrusion in the Footstreets zone immediately before and after operational hours. This coincides with high levels of tourist and shopper pedestrian levels, having a negative impact on the quality of their experience and on the city centre environment.



In 2012, the council has commissioned a *York Freight Improvements Study*²¹ which includes detailed prescriptions for access restrictions; loading and unloading facilities; vehicle routing; overnight delivery; delivery and servicing plans; information and promotion; and an evaluation of the viability of a Freight Consolidation Centre (FCC) for York. Work is continuing into the identification of the best model to deliver a FCC, including discussions with logistics operators to fully establish a cost and operating structure for a York scheme. This may include consideration of an appropriate trial in advance of any full scheme launch. It is likely that any scheme will look to charge participants from the outset, but in the initial stages at least it is envisaged that subsidy from the public sector will be required.

Disabled Access & Parking

Disabled parking is currently allowed within the Footstreets zone during operational hours through system of blue badges and green badges for users with more severe mobility impairment. The system is currently oversubscribed allowing a great many vehicles into the Footstreets leading to many Footstreets failing to truly operate as pedestrian priority zones.

²¹ JMP Consultants Ltd., Peter Brett Associates and FITIT (December 2012), draft York Freight Improvements Study.

To combat these issues, the City Centre Movement and Accessibility Framework recommended making the central Footstreets as accessible as possible for all by removing all traffic during operational hours. Preferential disabled parking would be provided at the edge of the Footstreet zones, alongside the provision of an expanded Shopmobility service and access to the Dial A Ride service. Disabled parking will also be provided in all other public car parks, such that the total exceeds recommended minimum.

In the shorter-term, disabled parking should be maintained within the Footstreet zone until adequate provision of alternative parking and enhanced pedestrian access and Shopmobility has been provided.

Parking

There are currently approximately 5,600 off-street publicly available car parking spaces in and around the City Centre, 2,600 in City of York Council operated car parks and 3,000 in privately operated car parks, including over 1,000 spaces in and around the rail station. In chapter 2, we have seen that these car parks are by no means fully utilised.

One possible approach advocated in the Movement and Accessibility Framework is to provide more parking capacity in the Park & Ride sites, and seek to reduce parking levels in the City Centre and ensure there is no over-capacity provided within the historic core.

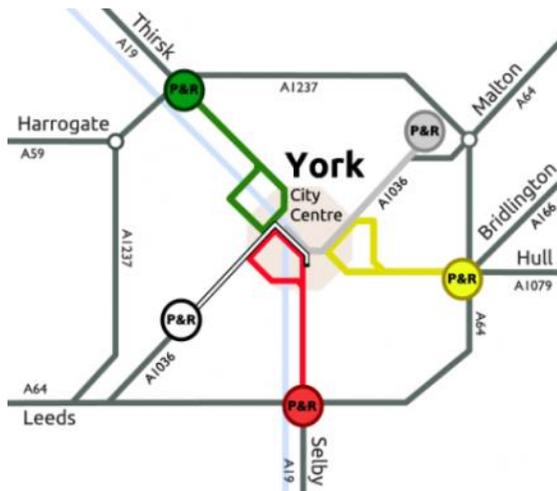
Parking charges should relate to broader City Centre and transport policy objectives. They should be sufficiently high to make Park & Ride competitive, but they should also seek to support York's City Centre economy objectives (e.g. such as free or low evening charges to support the evening economy).

A concern amongst stakeholders in the city centre is that visitors to the city might 'leave early' due to pay and display charging, driven by a desire to not incur a penalty charge for over-staying their ticket. As a consequence the council is to trial a 'pay on exit' approach at Marygate car park in early 2013. This trial will be used to evaluate the impact of such management practices on a range of parking indicators, including the 'length of stay' of customers.



Bus and Park & Ride Services

Bus and Park & Ride serve a wide market of York residents, surrounding rural areas and those visiting York from further afield by car and changing onto Park & Ride (see plan below for existing park and ride locations and routes).



It is estimated that approximately 20% of journeys to work and 17% of trips to the City Centre are by bus or Park & Ride.

However, the constrained environment of York City Centre and the wider York road network cause buses problems that undermine service performance and attractiveness:

- The volume of traffic on key spines through the City Centre causes delay to

buses and unpredictability of journey times;

- Stopping facilities are inadequate for the volume of bus services;
- Passenger waiting facilities are inadequate and of poor quality;
- Slow passenger boarding and transactions reduces stop capacity and increases congestion around stopping points;
- Lack of layover and turning facilities lead to some inappropriate layover locations and force some buses to travel along the Inner Ring Road in order to turn round and re-enter the City Centre;
- Illegal use of restricted roads, illegal parking and inconsiderate loading causes delay to buses, particularly at locations such as Coppergate (it was recently announced that measures to introduce strict new controls on access to Coppergate, to enforce existing access restrictions and support bus operations are to be introduced from April 2013);
- Existing Park & Ride reaching capacity during busy periods, limiting potential for future mode shift.

The same environmental constraints mean that buses cause problems for others:

- Inadequate waiting facilities cause bus passengers to block pavements in key locations, conflicting with pedestrians;

- Layover in sensitive locations seriously undermines quality of place;
- Volume of buses and other vehicles passing along Coppergate creates severance between the south and the north of the City Centre;
- Volume of slow moving diesel buses contributes significantly to air quality problems in the City Centre.

To manage traffic levels in the City Centre, any transport or economic strategy needs to ensure that buses play a bigger role in the future. In order to achieve a mode shift to bus, it is necessary to ensure that buses offer a high quality, competitive service. Fundamental to this is improving journey reliability, offering attractive fares and ensuring competitive end to end journey times. To provide competitive journey times, it is essential that buses offer good permeability of the City Centre and can take passengers to where they need to go.

This will be done by increasing the role of Park & Ride through phase 1 of the Access York project which, when eventually delivered in full, will increase parking capacity by 1750 parking spaces, an increase of over 40%, and by increasing the use of general bus services, with initial improvements being delivered through the *Better Bus* programme.

Initially, at a cost of £21.9m, two new park and ride sites will be delivered. At Askham Bar, a

replacement for the existing Park & Ride site near Tadcaster Road will be provided, as the original site is now too small to meet the city's needs. The second site will be a new facility at Poppleton Bar, serving the A59 route into the city. A third location, at Clifton Moor, will be pursued when funding allows.

The *Better Bus* programme will initially deliver improved passenger waiting facilities and route infrastructure on core routes, including those that provide access into the heart of the city for bus services and their users. Information services and provision for passengers will also be improved through the development of better on line systems.

Cycling

York enjoys the second highest levels of cycling of any UK town or city and is the safest cycling city in the UK.

The 2001 census suggested 12% of journeys to work within York were made by bike and more recent surveys have suggested far greater volumes. Bike use has grown considerably over the last decade, assisted more recently by its Cycling City status.

Cycling must play a major role in managing future access and movement to the City Centre. It takes up little road space and has significant environmental and health benefits. Evidence from Cambridge (the principal UK cycling city) and from many northern European

cities is that sustained investment in and promotion of cycling can significantly grow cycling mode share over the long-term. While York has got good levels of cycling (by UK standards) and has invested in cycling, we consider that the role of cycling could be significantly grown with sustained investment.

Again, the York City Centre Movement and Accessibility Strategy²² prescribed a series of detailed options to achieve these objectives.

Pedestrian Access



York is a walkable human scale. Nearly all journeys to and in the City Centre involve some walking and the City's heritage and environment is best enjoyed on foot. Pedestrians are the greatest single mode

²² JMP, Camlin Lonsdale and PLB (May 2011) York City Centre Movement and Accessibility Framework, Strategy and Proposals, pp75-79

using the Ouse and Lendal Bridges and many of the Footstreets have very high footfalls.

Despite this, there are some drawbacks. Some of the key pedestrian desire lines provide poor connectivity and legibility, and in many places there is inadequate pedestrian circulation space due to high footfall and conflict with other users (such as people waiting at bus stops).

The York City Centre Movement and Accessibility Framework made the following high level recommendations to improve pedestrian access in York:

- Enhance key pedestrian desire lines and routes into the centre by improving connectivity and legibility;
- Remove all traffic from the Footstreets during operational hours;
- Reclaim public spaces for pedestrians (such as Exhibition Square, Library Square, St Helen's Square, King's Square, Whip Ma Whop Ma Gate);
- Declutter streets of barriers to movement;
- Improve legibility by decluttering of streets and enhancing views so people can navigate intuitively through the centre;
- Provide continuous and direct level surface routes from car parks into the footstreet zone;

- Provide direct and convenient crossing points of the Inner Ring Road on key pedestrian desire lines;
- Provide good quality links and orientation between visitor attractions and areas of high visitor numbers.



Taxis and Private Hire

As part of any approach to promoting access to York city centre and managing traffic levels, taxi and Private Hire Vehicles (PHV) have an important role to play.

Detailed proposals for taxis and PHV are outlined in the York City Centre Movement and Accessibility Strategy²³, based around themes of licensing, access restrictions and allowances, and location of taxi ranks.

²³ JMP, Camlin Lonsdale and PLB (May 2011) York City Centre Movement and Accessibility Framework, Strategy and Proposals, pp84-85

Coach Access and Parking

Coaches fulfil an important role in bringing an estimated 10% of tourist visitors to the City.

Currently coach parking is provided at Union Terrace to the north of the centre (35 spaces) and St George's Field to the south of the centre (21 spaces), with drop off and rendezvous points at Leeman Road, Fawcett Street and Foss Bank.

The York City Centre Movement and Accessibility Framework recommended that coach parking either needs to be located sufficiently close to City Centre destinations so that rendezvous points are not needed, or to have a series of strategically located rendezvous points and provide coach parking at a further distance from the City Centre, perhaps a Park & Ride site(s).

The approach of having a northern and southern site seems to work reasonably well at the moment, although the need for having rendezvous points in addition to these sites is questionable.

The Rail Station “Gateway”

The Rail Station provides the most important gateway to York, not only in relation to rail passengers, but as a major hub on bus routes and an important cycle corridor. The link from the Station to the Minster has been identified

as the first part of “the Great Street” in the New City Beautiful vision²⁴.

However, the gateway and routes to the city centre currently suffer from:

- An untidy and chaotic layout immediately outside the station entrance;
- Poor legibility and orientation;
- No tourist welcome and very limited information facilities;
- Congestion caused by bus waiting facilities and traffic conflict around the station entrance;
- Pedestrian route from station entrance onto Station Road is difficult to negotiate due to limited footway, guard-railing, crossings and numerous conflict points with vehicles.



²⁴ Alan J. Simpson et al (October 2010) York New City Beautiful: Toward an Economic Vision, pp81-83

The station provides ‘first impressions’ of York with views of the Walls and the Minster, so this is a crucial space to present attractively. Visitors need to be able to orientate themselves and exit the rail station conveniently. Addressing these issues should be part of the city’s economic and retail vision.

Tourist Buses

Two operators provide a hop-on, hop-off tourist bus service around the City Centre. The tourist buses perform an important role for visitors and make a contribution to the economy and the tourist offer. There are however, some issues for consideration:

- Some of the stopping locations undermine public spaces and interfere with key views (e.g. Exhibition Square);
- The desire to run the buses slowly so visitors can enjoy the views causes delay to other road users;
- Most of the vehicles used are older with stepped access and higher emissions.

Reconfiguring tourist bus routes and stopping points to reduce conflicts and better cater for all modes, and updating the fleet to low-floor, low-emission vehicles are both measures that could help improve the contribution these services make to the wider economic life of the city.

Information and Promotion

Quality information and behaviour change programmes are essential to support any proposals to improve transport provision in York.

i-Travel York

The City of York Council is currently leading the implementation of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) funded i-Travel York (iTY) programme.

This comprises a balanced programme of improvements to infrastructure and information, as well as work to influence behaviours, to encourage and enable people to use and adopt more sustainable travel choices. It is made up of five packages which seek to influence travel choices, and one that will provide higher quality infrastructure to support these choices:

- Business engagement: promoting sustainable travel to people at their workplaces;
- Education and campaigns: providing Personal Travel Planning (PTP) services to 10-12,000 households, plus a range of other initiatives to increase awareness of or information about sustainable travel choices;
- Public transport initiatives: improving bus journey reliability and passenger

information, as well as smart ticketing and modest service improvements;

- School engagement: promoting sustainable travel to pupils and their families through their schools;
- Health and leisure projects: promoting active travel options in lieu of sedentary pastimes; and
- Infrastructure improvements: a wide range of improvements to bus, pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure.



Alongside these packages, iTY will undertake some work to promote uptake of lower-emission vehicles.

In addition to this programme, the York City Centre Movement and Accessibility Framework recommended the following measures to enhance information in York:

- Creation of information materials on-street, in published format and available on a web

page showing movement and accessibility options to and within York City Centre;

- Improved legibility through signing and wayfinding, the promotion of walking and cycling leisure guides and interpretation, including via mobile communications devices to reduce the amount of physical clutter and maintenance required;
- Smartcards and integrated ticketing promotion so that public takes it up;



- Provision of City Centre Ambassadors to assist tourist visitors and to assist City Centre users when strategy elements are implemented (e.g. changes to traffic access into Footstreets, changes to locations of bus boarding points).

Supporting highway infrastructure

As has previously been identified, there was an acknowledgement in the emerging LDF in 2011 that highway infrastructure alone will not

be sufficient to adequately meet the needs of the city's growth. Equally, there will be a need for some highway infrastructure improvements.

One widely debated area of need is the existing northern outer ring road, for which proposals have been included within later phases of the Access York project. Options range from junction improvements, through partial dualling of sections north of the A59, to full dualling of the whole existing single carriageway section from Poppleton Bar to the Hopgrove junction with the A64, though it is admitted that this full dualling option is not a deliverable option in the period to 2026²⁵.



²⁵ City of York Council (September 2011), City of York Local Development Framework (LDF), Topic Paper on the Transport Implications of the LDF, p30

Contents Amendments Record

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