

## York City Centre Deliveries Focus Group, 20 May 10am – 11am

City of York Council officers in attendance:

GW – Gareth Wilce

AK – Andy Kerr

HV – Helene Vergereaux

GT – Graham Titchener

JR – Julian Ridge

JS - Jav Safder

### Introduction from City of York Council

- GW: the Pandemic has changed our economy, there have been extended pavement licensing, the footstreets have been extended until 8pm
- GW: we have been involved in a large piece of work with Blue Badge holders around disabled parking
- GW: there has also been a knock-on impact for taxis and cycle paths, massive demand for delivery drivers and courier drivers. These are part of changes that have been accelerated through the pandemic
- GW: There is some tension across the city centre, we are carrying out a number of conversations so we can support city centre deliveries and courier drivers, alongside Blue Badge holders.
- GW: We want to help you meet demand and do your job.
- AK: mentioned the 'Last Mile project, the council has funding from the government to deliver a new project. More sustainable deliveries, less impact on cyclists and pedestrians. Working to get deliveries into the city centre as much as possible. Further information will be explained in due course
- GW: the council wants to improve accessibility for everyone, there is a competition for space and competing desires from differing groups, we want to come to a solution that will help. Wider retail and extended food and beverage offerings in York when compared to other cities
- The workshop split up into two groups

### Workshop group 1 (GW, HV, JS)

Information provided by food couriers on how they work (linked to information provided in advance by the Union):

- Apps on phones

- Once an order is assigned, couriers are timed from the restaurant to the customer. This is used to manage the performance of the couriers who are independent contractors.
- Wait at the venue or at the customer is unpaid
- Key factors are access to the restaurant and to the customer (as fast as possible)
- It is possible for a courier to accept or reject an order but often not really a choice. Some restaurants do struggle to get drivers though as couriers don't want the jobs – restaurants have to remake the food if there is too long a wait for the couriers to arrive
- Car based drivers – similar process to cycle couriers (described in documents provided)
- Uber enable drivers to operate in several cities/change where they operate
- Apps tend to allocate jobs to the drivers who are very close to the restaurants
- Platforms estimate time for a delivery without taking account of traffic regulations (one way systems, footstreets, etc)
- Oversupply of couriers can be a problem
- Deliveroo – couriers know in advance how much they will be paid but this is not linked to the distance for the job (seems random)
- 5pm to 8pm is peak food delivery time

Views from the couriers and venues that food deliveries have grown significantly and will not drop when Covid restrictions are lifted. Deliveries will also grow to include shopping and pharmacies.

Parking issues – food delivery drivers don't know where to park, not much available, too far from venues + confusion over definition of loading. Food deliveries don't meet the loading definition.

Couriers on the call were asking for a parking permit scheme for food delivery drivers (described in documents provided by the union).

Non-food deliveries – 3pm to 5pm collections from shops in the city centre tend to be an issue. Not enough loading bays but drivers are allowed to stop on DYL and tend to do so.

## Workshop group 2 (AK, GT)

### Business model

*AK: asked a question about the business model of the companies participants worked for.*

- One participant mentioned that parcel carriers and pallet carriers were at all-time high values. Home delivery brought on increase in volume, particularly for pallets. The business does deliveries, e.g. ambient foods, home deliveries, beers, perishables in parcels and pallets. In parcels, they use a company called green link that uses cargo cycles in the city centre. This method cuts down emission and keeps vehicles down in town centre. In pallets this is not possible, bigger vehicles have to go into the town centre - big problem demand on a morning because of restrictions, down Stonegate, Coney street, vehicles are sat there, a vehicle has to stop and wait, with engines running. The participant previously approached the council and suggested a consolidation hub, everyone at the council thought it was a good idea, the council then went off to do a feasibility study. Volumes have gone through roof, more pallets, and more vehicles into York. The participant felt this problem would get worse, not better. Lockdown actually made things quite easy
- AK: has there been a change in bulk stock/more frequent deliveries? In terms of a delivery hub, do you think there is demand?
- Participant stated yes, delivering into York city centre is a nuisance. It's not easy in terms of manual handling, especially on some of York's streets. Always going to be someone who has to get stock into shops/restaurants/etc. Demand since things have opened up has shot up.
- AK: have the hours that we (the council) operates the Foostreets, has that had an impact?
- A participant mentioned that 95% of it is early morning, whether parcel carriers or pallet carriers. They deliver on a morning and collect from customers on an evening. If volumes were great a vehicle will go in later in an evening, only certain premises will accept evening orders.
- GT: does anything hinder deliveries on an early morning?
- Everything has gone into 'next day' delivery, get goods from 3am to 8am, tend to get into town on 8am/9am in morning
- Another participant spoke about the different viewpoint of deliveries, whether that is from a residential perspective, point of stock in shop, getting deliveries out of town to get to local people. The York BID are willing to put money into this issue. Reference made to York being a

medieval city – referring to York not being easy to change and sculpt due to features such as the walls. It other cities are investing in cargo bikes and smaller packages, encouraging office sector to accept visits from bikes rather than vans.

- The participant offered a rough figure on deliveries. 25% residential pre-covid, during covid 90% residential, this is swinging back round again now. Residential deliveries have gone up now due to covid. Probably going to go up to 35% residential.
- AK: talked about cycling and the footstreets, during footstreet hours cycling is prohibited, there is a request from a cycling group to get through city centre, should there be exemptions for cycling couriers, be useful to understand this from the perspective of someone who uses a bike to make deliveries
- One of the participants worked for a large fast food company (McDonalds). The company had been doing deliveries 3/4 years now, last year to two years deliveries have accelerated, they use Uber and Just Eat at the moment. Prior to covid 15% of sales were deliveries, during lockdown 100% of sales were deliveries, when they have been able to reopen this changed to 75% of order being deliveries, at present 50% of sales through deliveries. The business that the participant worked for completed 820 deliveries in total. Other national chains (Five Guys and Nando's) experiencing similar issues with surge in demand. The participant spoke of meetings with Just Eat and Uber. The participant spoke about the impact a parking ticket can have on a drivers earnings for the day, with one ticket wiping away takings for the day. It was mentioned that recently there have been some bays that have been helpful at Duncombe Place York. It was mentioned that York is not very large in space. Idea of 4 hubs North, East, South, West - that could be a solution in the city centre.
- AK: Does a hub approach work? For example, Heworth to Micklegate, do you tend to work in sectors
- A participant added that the city is split up naturally due to bridges and perhaps a north or south hub would work.
- A plan to set up an indoor or outdoor cycling hub to store bikes was mentioned.
- The differing circumstances of delivery drivers was discussed. The differences between deliveries of food/non-food were mentioned, with non-food less urgent.
- A participant added that multiple hubs would be a mistake, logistics to get to each hub. Idea of 1 hub would work well.

- A cargo bike trailer company was mentioned. There is a company that does cargo bike trailers, trailers act as a hub for pallets, planning to get some of these.
- A question was raised by one of the participants around who would pay for the hub and would this cost be borne by businesses?
- One of the participants mentioned that one of the large food delivery companies should sponsor and inject money into measures
- The contractual status of workers (Uber, Deliveroo) might mean this could not work may not work due to contractual status of workers. Some of the delivery drivers who work for Just Eat drivers are actually employed.
- AK: is the demand higher than what you can actually produce?
- A participant provided an example, recently drivers celebrating Eid, due to this there was so much demand. Yesterday 1/4 of deliveries were not successful. Production of food cited as not being an issue it is just getting the food out. As a proportion, 600 deliveries Just Eat, 200 Uber.
- AK: queried whether this is this the same with smaller food outlets? Can smaller food businesses meet the demand
- A participant in the group added that smaller premises tend to have their own delivery drivers/delivery bikes. The participant has a business and makes personal deliveries to shambles 3 times a week, brings 3 tonnes to the shambles every week via a small vehicle, use YDL as pallet courier across the country, wouldn't want to give them the work to deliver to my shop at the Shambles. An issue with City of York Council vans parked and blocking deliveries was raised.
- Some businesses 'close to the breadline' doing deliveries themselves now. Need to wait and see what happens over the summer. Differences between large multinationals and smaller independents. Need for engagement with delivery companies such as Just Eat, this will help us to understand bigger picture. Valuable data on how many companies they work with/delivery radius. If its further afield - then it will be cars
- The difficulty with the logistics of getting things down streets was mentioned. Cargo bikes also discussed as not being the solution for everything. Parking solution 'terrible' in the city centre. Large number of BID vehicles in city centre was mentioned
- AK: One of the topics for discussion was the rules and regulations of parking in the city centre. It was mentioned that the rules would be more applicable to the other group

#### Additional points raised by participants

- For the larger food businesses that have pivoted, there are not enough couriers to meet the demand
- Issues were raised about permits and parking waivers
- GW: evenings a big pressure point. Can't change how they (delivery companies) practice and their algorithm
- One of the participants mentioned that independents businesses would scale back deliveries in line with easing of restrictions.