

**York Civic Trust Planning Committee**  
**York Central consultation**  
**Comments on transport and movement proposals**  
**27<sup>th</sup> April 2018**

This paper sets out York Civic Trust's response to the consultation and exhibition on York Central as they relate to transport and movement. They should be read alongside the Trust's submission following its workshops in early February 2018.

As we said in that document:

"Transport is a key issue for York Central. A feature of the site is its limited access for vehicles. This presents the need and the opportunity for a clear policy to be articulated on how transport needs into and out of the site are to be treated and what role York Central should play in the broader transport needs of the City."

Since then, we have developed our proposals further, and tested them in a workshop held as part of My York Central. That session reinforced our view that York Central cannot be seen in isolation; transport in and through York Central needs to be integrated with that for the city as a whole. At the same time, York Central offers an opportunity to adopt an innovative approach to transport planning in an inner city area, much as planners in Freiburg and Heidelberg have done. That opportunity needs to be grasped.

We welcome the advances in York Central Partnership's thinking since early February, as evidenced by the exhibition, and offer our proposals below as ways of building further on the Partnership's proposals. We present them under the six headings which we used for our workshop. They are listed in the same order as York City Council's hierarchy of users, which must form the basis for all proposals for movement in York Central.

#### Pedestrians

The network which pedestrians can use needs to be as dense as possible, and separated from vehicular traffic wherever feasible.

At the boundaries of the site, at least two further pedestrian access routes from Holgate Rd/Poppleton Rd need to be provided between Water End and the planned southern access, so that the site is integrated with the services available on and to the SW of the A59. Ideally, one or more access routes should be provided to access the path along the river to the NE. The principal access/egress will however be between York Central and the city centre; we consider this jointly with that for cycling below.

The housing development should be accessed via traffic-free pedestrian routes which can act as play streets. Vauban in Freiburg offers an example but so, much closer to home, do

streets like Chestnut Grove in New Earswick. Other pedestrian routes should be open to cyclists as well, with careful design to ensure that both modes are integrated safely.

The current pedestrian route along Leeman Road should not be severed by the new National Railway Museum precinct. It is unacceptable to require pedestrians to make a substantial diversion around the Museum when it is closed. The opportunity should be taken to provide a separate secure route for pedestrians (and cyclists) through the Museum, much as has been done with the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. The topography of the site offers ways of achieving this through innovative solutions.

### Cycling

With the exception of the play streets outlined above, cyclists should be able to use all the routes which pedestrians can. However, on any through routes for cyclists it is sensible to provide a separate path for pedestrians to avoid conflicts.

The proposals for the western access offer the potential for an improved long distance cycle route avoiding Holgate Rd. It should be designed as such to encourage through movement which is separated from vehicular traffic. We welcome the proposals for integrating the street, and its pedestrian and cycle routes, with the park.

A key feature for both pedestrians and cyclists will be the means by which they cross the railway north of the station and gain access to the city centre. None of the options offered for Leeman Road Tunnel and Marble Arch is ideal in this respect, since the tunnels offer a poor and threatening environment. Of the three, only Option 2 with alternate one way working for vehicular traffic is in any way acceptable; the other two should be rejected as imposing unacceptable risks for cyclists. We would much prefer to see an innovative solution which takes pedestrians and cyclists over the railway line. A bridge similar to that north of Cambridge station should be feasible provided that an initial landing point on the city centre side can be designed; this in turn could provide direct access to Scarborough Bridge, the riverside, and the eastern end of Leeman Rd.

Generous secure cycle parking needs to be provided in all residential and commercial development, as well as in public spaces and at the National Railway Museum. Provision should also be made for non-standard bikes, such as cargo bikes, e-bikes and, if adopted by the city, bike sharing. The secure cycle parking facilities should ideally be in readily accessible purpose-built covered units.

### Buses and other public transport

We welcome the decision to run the 2 and 59 park and ride routes through the site in both directions. Both need to be extended into the late evening, so that users of York Central can leave their cars at Poppleton and Rawcliffe Bars. We suggest that the longer distance buses serving Thirsk and Easingwold should also run in both directions through the site, and that the 10 should have its frequency doubled to four per hour, and serve the British Sugar site as well. In this way, York Central should have up to 22 buses per hour in each direction.

If the Leeman Rd Tunnel is to be operated as in Option 2, it will be essential to avoid undue delay to buses. We estimate that, were the traffic lights to operate on a 60 second cycle,

only 10 seconds of green would be available in each direction, allowing one bus and three taxis to pass. The average delay would be just over 20 seconds, which should be acceptable. Longer signal cycles would permit more traffic, but impose longer delays. With a 60 second cycle no general traffic could be permitted; even with longer cycles it would be necessary to limit use to designated vehicles (perhaps of York Central residents), with detailed design to ensure that buses were not further delayed.

In the longer term it may be feasible to introduce a low cost tram, using Very Light Rail technology, to York, to serve park and ride sites and new developments such as York Central and British Sugar. The current Harrogate line offers an obvious route, as does the Scarborough line. Potential rights of way should be identified now, so that such a facility can be integrated into the site at a later date.

### General traffic

We reiterate our view that general traffic should not be allowed to pass through the site. This is consistent with the principles in the draft Local Plan. As noted above, Option 2 for the Leeman Rd Tunnel would only be feasible if this policy is adopted, and is in our view the only acceptable option. Careful thought is needed now as to how the current through traffic might be rerouted and accommodated, while bearing in mind the general finding that 25% of that traffic is likely to disappear if the route is closed.

The needs of residents of the site, and particularly of St Peter's Quarter, need to be borne in mind in adopting such a policy. It may be that they could be offered controlled egress through the Leeman Road Tunnel in a similar way to that at Victoria Bar, while encouraging them to use the enhanced walking, cycling and bus routes when possible.

We also reiterate our view that the bridge under the railway connecting Leeman Rd to Salisbury Terrace should become a bus gate. This should not impose any undue inconvenience, since the new access from Water End will provide a much improved alternative.

### Parking and car sharing

Parking will be needed for residential and commercial development, and for the National Railway Museum. (We consider parking for the station below.) For residential development, low maximum parking standards should be adopted to encourage occupancy by those who seek a largely car-free environment. We suggest a figure of no more than 0.5 spaces per dwelling unit. For commercial development, parking spaces should only be provided for operational use, and not for commuting, reflecting the very high accessibility of the site. The National Railway Museum should be encouraged to ensure that as large a proportion of its visitors as possible arrives by sustainable modes, or uses park and ride for the last leg of the journey. Its parking requirements should be assessed on that basis.

All parking should be in designated facilities, as close to the Water End access as possible, and designed to be used flexibly by all three groups of user, and to be readily converted to other uses as need for parking declines. No parking should be permitted on-street; parking for disabled drivers should be provided off-street closer to the developments concerned.

As an additional way of offering an alternative to conventional car use, car sharing should be encouraged, with priority parking for car club cars provided alongside those for disabled drivers.

### Servicing

Servicing, including waste disposal, will be needed for residential and commercial development, and for the National Railway Museum. New opportunities are arising for consolidating such traffic and avoiding use by competing operators. These should be designed into the site. Servicing points should be provided off-street in central locations to serve the residential and commercial development and the Museum. These should include central secure points for delivery of on-line orders. Where onward delivery to individual addresses is needed, it should be facilitated by small low energy vehicles.

### The station

Buses and taxis should be able to serve both sides of the station, and guidance will be needed to help passengers use the appropriate exit. Lyon Part Dieu offers an example of how to do this efficiently.

We are very concerned to learn that a current study for the station envisages a need for 500 more parking spaces. It is essential to the future of York that alternative ways are found to access the station for those travelling from outside York. In the longer term a new tram service (as outlined above) should offer a much faster route from park and ride sites. In the immediate future, steps should be taken to ensure that all park and ride services serve the station, and operate throughout the hours at which passengers arrive and depart in significant numbers. The number of parking spaces should then be reduced to reflect that provision. All such parking should be accessed from Queen St rather than through York Central.

We accept, however, that it will be appropriate to continue to provide for pick-up and drop-off on both sides of the station. Access to the facility on the York Central side should be designed to minimise its impact on York Central.