York Civic Trust

A Strategy for Reducing Travel
April 2021

[Highlights indicate information still needed.]

1   The need for a holistic strategy

York's current Local Transport Plan was drafted in 2011 and sets out a long term strategy for the city's transport system for the period from 2011 to 2031, and a more detailed programme over the period to 2016. There is broad agreement that a new Local Transport Plan is needed, and that work should start soon in the context of the draft Local Plan, which is currently being examined.

We have already prepared a document with recommendations for an overall transport strategy for York, and this is one of seven reports offering proposals for individual modes and policies. Our vision is of a city which respects its environment while enhancing quality of life, social justice and economic vitality. York's new Local Transport Plan should be designed to contribute to that vision. It needs to address the city's needs over the next two decades, while identifying steps which can be taken now. For this to happen, political consensus will be essential to ensure that policies are not reversed each time the Council's political control changes.

In achieving our vision, the new Local Transport Plan should be designed to meet a number of interconnected objectives for the city. Of these, the most important are ensuring that the transport system is efficient, generates substantially less pollution and results in far lower levels of carbon emissions.

At the same time the Plan must be designed to achieve the objectives of ensuring safety, supporting public health, increasing equality of access, increasing liveability, and protecting public space and heritage. A Plan which successfully addresses all of these will also help to strengthen the sustainability and economy of the city.

In meeting these objectives, the Plan needs to adopt a holistic, bold and visionary strategy which achieves significant changes in travel behaviour in the immediate future. The transport strategy should be designed to make effective use of the full range of potential policy measures and to combine them to ensure that the strategy is acceptable, affordable and effective. In doing so it should seek to emulate the best examples in the UK and continental Europe of integrated, sustainable transport planning.

Since population growth is likely to exacerbate York's transport problems, the key elements of the strategy will be measures to enhance public transport, walking and cycling and, at the same time, to reduce car travel, especially in congested and sensitive areas of the City, and to reduce the need to travel longer distances, particularly through the design of sustainable communities. This combination of "carrots" and "sticks" will help make the strategy both more effective and more acceptable to the public and the business community. It should be reinforced by adopting a "hearts and minds" approach, in which incentives are designed to encourage users to change their travel habits and to respect the needs of others.

To reinforce this core strategy, action is needed to improve the operation of the road network, by reallocating road space and using it more efficiently and to improve freight and delivery operations.

2   The focus of this report

In this report, we consider the case for reducing travel. The level of use of our transport system is determined both by the number of journeys made and by the distances travelled. The distances which people travel also influence the modes of transport which they can use. As with most cities and larger towns, York's main urban area and principal roads have inadequate capacity to meet travel demand at the busiest times. All journeys come with a cost, even if only in the time spent travelling, and there is a case therefore for considering whether the need to make as many journeys, or to travel as far, can be influenced.

The argument for considering overall reductions in travel is twofold. Firstly, it is happening anyway as a result of the increase in online activity, and there is a case for supporting that process, and for understanding its impacts on travel. If we can encourage and support York residents to work, learn and shop from home more often, more people will walk and cycle, and we can limit the need for motorised travel. Secondly, if we can reduce the distances that people travel we will make it easier to support public transport, and hence make it, and walking and cycling, more attractive and easier alternatives to the car.

Our focus on reducing travel does not therefore imply that people should be less active, or spend more time at home. Indeed, we would hope that the policies which we consider here might help people to pursue at least as many activities, while at the same time making more use of active means of travel.

There are broadly four ways of achieving this. The first involves providing alternatives to travel, of which the most obvious involve greater use of communications technology, such as working from home and online shopping; the rapid growth in working from home as a result of the pandemic is an obvious example. The second involves land use planning to provide a mix of activities closer to people's homes and workplaces, as encapsulated in the concept of the 15- or 20-minute city. If people are working or studying at home, they are more likely to make use of local services and facilities. This can be addressed in new developments by building to higher densities and providing a mix of land uses. It can also be achieved by repurposing existing land uses; one example is the reuse of redundant retail space in the city centre for housing. The third, which we also consider in our report on managing car use, is that set of behavioural and motivational issues which prompt people to change their travel habits. In the main their focus is on encouraging the use of alternative modes, but they can also be used to encourage people to make more use of communication

technology, to seek activities closer to home, and to combine those journeys for which motorised transport is needed (sometimes referred to in the technical literature as "trip-chaining"). All three of these responses have been promoted in advice during recent lockdowns. The fourth way of reducing travel involves the more efficient provision of freight movements and deliveries. This is covered by our work on freight, which is the subject of a separate report.

The remaining sections of this report consider in turn:
3. how reducing travel contributes to our objectives in Section 1
4. current trends in travel and the problems to be addressed
5. the targets which we propose for doing so
6. the measures which might be used
7. the ways in which we propose that they should be applied
8. our recommendations for different areas of York
9. our recommendations for different groups of users
10. the barriers to implementing these measures, and ways in which they might be overcome
11. the implications for each of our other six modal strategies.

3   The contribution to our objectives of reducing travel

Travel enables people to carry out many of their daily activities, and has a societal function in allowing people to mix and in overcoming loneliness. Travel can be a time for introspection, for conversation and for broadening the mind. Nevertheless, it is in the main access which people seek, rather than travel for its own sake, and if access can be achieved either without travelling (through communication technology) or by travelling shorter distances, then the costs of travel are reduced. A key objective therefore is **accessibility**, which can be thought of as "ease of reaching" as opposed to mobility ("ease of moving"). As the recent International Transport Forum report indicates, reducing car dependency requires "changes in land-use patterns to maintain high levels of accessibility with lower overall levels of mobility".[1]

Reducing travel leads to reduced costs, and hence to increased **efficiency** in the transport system, as long as the purposes of travel are still satisfied. But reducing journey length also makes it easier to provide for travel on foot, by bike and by bus, which will contribute further to efficiency by reducing congestion. Both processes will create benefits in terms of reductions in **air pollution** and **carbon emissions**, and improve **public health**, **road safety** and **liveability**. Depending on the resulting travel patterns they may also have implications for the wider **environment**, **public realm**, **heritage** and the **economy**. To quote a recent report for the Local Government Association "Supporting people to travel less [should be] an essential part of every council's decarbonisation strategy". "Rather than thinking that supporting people to plan to travel less is potentially damaging, it could in fact support the types of lifestyles people want to live."[2]

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[1] International Transport Forum (2021), *Reversing car dependency*, Paris, OECD
[2] Lokesh K et al (2020) *Decarbonising transport: travelling less and the role of online opportunities*, London: Local Government Association.

4   Current trends and problems

4.1   Changes in travel demand

Travel patterns have changed markedly over the last two decades. A 2018 report by the Commission on Travel Demand[3] indicates that across the UK:

- we made 16% fewer trips than in 1996
- we spent 22 hours a year less travelling than a decade earlier
- we travelled 10% fewer miles than in 2002
- there had been a 20% reduction in commuter journeys per person since the 1990s
- on-line shopping was growing by 10% to 12% per year
- van traffic was growing by 5% per year.

But these changes varied substantially by age, gender and location:

- 18-30 year old males travelled 50% fewer miles than in the 1990s
- 17-29 year old males made 44% fewer trips by car than in 1992/4, and females 26$ fewer
- holding of driving licences among 21-29 year olds had fallen by 12% since 1992/4
- but those over 65 drove 12% more miles in 2014 than in 2004
- reductions in travel were greatest in London and least in rural areas; in urban areas of over 100k, such as York, between 2002-5 and 2011-14:
    - over 65s drove 10% more miles per capita
    - those aged 35-59 drove 18% fewer miles per capita
    - those aged 17-34 drove 22% fewer miles per capita.

4.2   Past trends in York

[We need data on trends in:

- number of journeys per capita
- travel distance per capita
- modes used by distance
- travel by visitors.]

4.3   Recent responses and future trends

The pandemic has had much more marked impacts on travel, some of which appears likely to be sustained. In the initial lockdown, across the UK as a whole, car use fell by 70% and bus use by 85%, while walking remained unchanged and cycling as much as doubled. By November, car use had increased, but was still 11% lower, while bus use remained 55% below pre-lockdown levels. York's figures were similar but, while bus use was only 40% lower, cycling had also fallen by 10% compared with before lockdown. This decline in cycling can be explained by the impacts of working from home, which appears to have particularly reduced commuting by bicycle and by train.[4]

Prior to the pandemic, 10% of employees worked from home at least occasionally, and 5% were completely home based.   By June this had risen to 49%, and 65% of office workers. In

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[3] Marsden GR et al (2018), *All change? The future of travel demand and the implications for policy and planning*, London, Landor Links

[4] Marsden GR et al (2021), *At a crossroads – travel adaptations during Covid-19 restrictions and where next?* Oxford, Centre for Research into Energy Demand Solutions

November 2020 it still stood at 41%. In 2019, online retail sales already accounted for 20% by value; by early 2021 this had risen to 35%. There has been a large increase in the volume of online learning during the pandemic, and this is expected to continue on a reduced scale, especially for college, university and adult students.

It seems likely that many of these impacts will be long-lasting. A survey of employers in July 2020 showed that they expect the proportion of staff who work from home all the time to rise to 22% once conditions have stabilised following the pandemic.[5]   More recent analysis indicates that increases in online shopping will be sustained, and that there are good reasons for encouraging sustained home working.[6] Given these uncertainties, any future strategy needs to be flexible.

5   Proposed targets for reducing travel

We propose four targets which between them reflect online activity, overall travel in person-km, the development of a 20 minute city and modal shares in new communities. These are listed in the table, and justified below. We have used target dates of 2027, which is five years after the start of the new Local Transport Plan, and by which time the outer ring road should have been upgraded, and 2037, by which time the planned development in the draft Local Plan should be complete.

Target	Baseline	Survey
Increase online activity: 25% of work and 35% of retail to be online by 2027; 35% and 45% respectively by 2037	Nationally 10% of employees working from home in 2019; 40% in November 2020; 20% of retail sales online in 2019; York data not known.	This will require new survey data.
Reduce overall travel: total person-km travelled by York residents to fall by 10% by 2027, and 20% by 2037.	[Baseline data should be available from NTS]	The National Travel Survey will provide this if it can be disaggregated to show data just for York
The 20 minute city: proportion of the population living within 20 minutes' walk or cycle of local facilities and by bus to the city centre: 80% by 2027, 95% by 2037	[Baseline to be established]	This will require a new survey of accessibility
Modal share in new communities: share of trips made by bus, cycle and walk in new communities 50% by 2027, and 60% by 2037	Unless surveys are conducted of recent new communities such as Derwenthorpe and Germany Beck, there is no baseline figure	This will require new surveys of travel in these communities.

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[5] Houghton E (2020), *Coronavirus and the workforce: working from home in the 'new normal'*, London, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

[6] Marsden GR et al (2021), *At a crossroads – travel adaptations during Covid-19 restrictions and where next?* Oxford, Centre for Research into Energy Demand Solutions

5.1   Online activity   As a recent report for the Local Government Association[7] stresses, encouraging activities to take place online rather than face to face is a simple and attractive way of reducing travel. Between 2002 and 2018 this resulted in a 13% reduction in commuting and shopping trips, and both these effects have been accelerated as a result of the pandemic. There is however relatively little evidence on what might be achieved by further emphasis on doing things online and, while the base data is available nationally, there is none specifically for York. We recommend that the Council seeks information from households on their online activity on a regular basis. Since many larger employers will have committed themselves to zero carbon targets, the Council should work with them to support home working, and to seek their data on trends. Subject to obtaining local baseline evidence we have tentatively suggested that it might be possible to increase the percentage of work and retail activities conducted online to 25% and 35% respectively by 2027 and 35% and 45% respectively by 2037.

5.2   Overall travel   West Yorkshire's carbon reduction pathways, which cover an area including York, suggest that person-km need to fall by 10% by 2030 in order to achieve their target of being carbon neutral by 2038.[8] Since York has set a target to be carbon neutral by 2030, we recommend that the target for 2027 should be a 10% reduction in person-km by York residents, with a reduction of 20% by 2037.[9] In practice evidence suggests that much of this reduction will arise among the higher income households. Information on distances travelled is collected in the National Travel Survey. **[We are checking whether this data is available specifically for York.]**

5.3   The 20-minute city   In our briefing note for the Trust's recent workshop on sustainable communities we reviewed the development of the 15-minute city, originally advocated for Paris.[10] Discussion in the workshop[11] led us to conclude that the need to access the city centre from all parts of the city implies that York as a whole should be planned as a 20-minute city, and that individual communities should be developed as 20-minute communities, in which local facilities, services and jobs are accessible to all on foot or cycle, and the city centre by bus within a maximum of 20 minutes from home. This is, of course, not intended to imply that all journeys will take 20 minutes; this should be the maximum, and where possible households should have access at least to the most frequently used facilities within 10 minutes.

New developments should be designed to satisfy this requirement from the outset, but it will take some time for existing suburban communities to be reconfigured to meet it, and the Council needs to take steps to protect those facilities which already exist. Where local centres do not exist, or where they have a limited range of facilities and services, we suggest that the Council should include and protect sites for them in the Local Plan and facilitate

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[7] Lokesh K et al (2020), *Decarbonising transport: travelling less and the role of online opportunities*, London: Local Government Association

[8] Element Energy (2020), *West Yorkshire Carbon Emissions Reduction Pathways*, West Yorkshire Combined Authority

[9] York Civic Trust Transport Advisory Group, *Carbon reduction requirements*, March 2020

[10] White N (2020), *Welcome to the 15-Minute City*, Financial Times,18/11/20

[11] York Civic Trust (2021), *Sustainable communities*, Workshop report

their development. We do not have the baseline data on maximum travel times for York, but it should be relatively easy to calculate. We recommend that the Council carries out such an assessment on an annual basis, drawing largely on known changes in land use. Subject to that, we provisionally recommend that the Council should aim for 80% of the population to be within 20 minutes of such facilities by 2027 and 95% by 2037.

5.4   Modal shares in new developments   The Town and Country Planning Association, in its report on Sustainable Transport[12] advocates a modal share target for public transport walking and cycling in new communities of at least 50%, rising in time to 60%. We have proposed these targets for 2027 and 2037 respectively. We are not aware of any baseline data for recently developed new communities in York, and recommend that these targets be specified in Transport Plans for all future new developments, with an enforceable requirement to monitor their achievement. Our separate freight paper recommends ways of making deliveries and freight movements more efficient.

6   The range of policy measures
6.1   Communication Technology
    a. Broadband access and capacity
    b. Working from home
    c. Online shopping
    d. Home learning
    e. Delivery hubs
    f. Teleconferencing and online meetings
    g. Communication hubs

6.2   New development
    a. Scale of development
    b. Location of new development
    c. Higher density
    d. Mixed development
    e. Development designed to support walking and cycling
    f. Development designed to support public transport
    g. Development designed to make car use less attractive
    h. Development designed to support working from home
    i. Transport and access plans
    j. Enforcement of approved standards and plans
    k. The implications of the proposed planning reforms

6.3   Repurposing existing land use
    a. Protecting existing land use
    b. Reuse of office space
    c. Reuse of retail space
    d. Provision of local services
    e. Reuse of brownfield land
    f. Preservation of heritage

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[12] TCPA (2020), *Sustainable Transport, Guide 13*, London, TCPA

g. Quality standards

6.4   Behavioural and motivational measures   We consider the following in our report on Managing Car Use, but we comment briefly on them here:
  a. Personal travel plans
  b. Workplace travel plans
  c. Incentivisation programmes.

7   The ways in which each measure might be used
7.1   Communication Technology
7.1.1   Broadband access and capacity   York has the reputation of being the most digitally connected urban area in the country, and it will be important to sustain that position as expectations grow and technology permits. The principal problems are the affordability of broadband and equipment for economically disadvantaged sections of the population and a lack of ability and confidence to work with modern technologies by others.[13] We recommend that the Council seeks ways to support those households which are affected by barriers to digital working, learning and shopping. There are also some private streets and isolated rural dwellings which are not connected, and it would be worth the Council seeking ways of addressing this.

7.1.2   Working from home   As noted above, working from home has increased dramatically, especially among professionals and white collar occupations, and it appears that many employers will continue to encourage it. However, some employers find that working from home is not conducive to some types of interaction, while some families find that lack of space and equipment limit the ability to work (and study) from home. While these barriers are often best resolved by employers and employees, there are public benefits in sustaining higher levels of working from home. There is a case therefore for the Council to consult with local employers on ways in which it might assist, and to consider provision of IT equipment for lower income families. The LGA report also recommends revising workplace travel plans to support home-based working and flexible hours, and changes to public transport season tickets to permit more flexible and less frequent use.[14]

7.1.3   Online shopping   Online shopping is increasing in popularity, and typically reduces overall travel and parking requirements, though it does lead to increased van traffic and repeat visits when customers are not at home. To some extent, van traffic can be limited by reducing the attractiveness of next day delivery, encouraging click and collect and green slots (which group deliveries in an area), and promoting cargo bikes for local delivery. Otherwise, the main risks are for those shops which are less able to promote online shopping, and to the viability of shopping streets which rely on physical shopping. There may well be a case for the Council to discuss with retailers in these locations how best to balance the demands for online and physical shopping, and to suggest appropriate solutions, which may in turn have implications for transport.

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[13] Lokesh K et al (2020) *Decarbonising transport: travelling less and the role of online opportunities*, London: Local Government Association.
[14] Lokesh K et al (2020) *Decarbonising transport: travelling less and the role of online opportunities*, London: Local Government Association.

7.1.4   Home learning   Home learning has become an essential element of education for schoolchildren, students and many adults during lockdowns, and it seems likely that some elements of learning will continue to be conducted online. However, the experience has highlighted problems, particularly for children from less advantaged backgrounds, with lack of IT facilities, broadband connections which do not support several independent users in a household, lack of space in family homes and in some cases lack of parental support. There are serious concerns that this will accentuate the achievement gap among children. The Council should look to support home learning by making sure that broadband facilities are adequate, supporting the provision of laptops and, potentially, offering community hubs where additional space for learning can be provided.

7.1.5   Delivery hubs Part at least of the rapid growth in van traffic arises from the demands of same day and just-in-time delivery, coupled with customers not being available when a delivery occurs. Delivery hubs, as pioneered by Amazon Lockers, offer a means of safe storage at a central point in a residential area, coupled with secure collection. There is a strong case for promoting such provision publicly, so that it is not limited to specific retailers or logistics companies.

7.1.6   Teleconferencing and online meetings   Business travel accounts for only 3% of all journeys, but 9% of miles travelled. The provision of company cars encourages employees to travel by car rather than other modes. Most employers will have access to facilities for supporting online meetings and conferences, but there may be a case for supporting smaller employers through communication hubs (see below). Workplace travel plans should be revised to seek ways of encouraging online meetings, and evidence indicates that provision of pool cars rather than company cars reduces car use and business travel costs.

7.1.7   Communication hubs   While many households are able to communicate via the internet from home, there is a case for public provision for those who can least afford the equipment, and those with the least space for using it. York Explore already provides facilities for online work, personal business, shopping and conferencing, and such provision also has a social function in reducing isolation. There is a case for expanding Explore's role and providing similar facilities in other communities, perhaps by repurposing disused shops or using existing school and other community buildings.

7.2   New development
7.2.1   Scale of development   Major new residential developments should be at a scale commensurate with the provision of a range of local employment opportunities, services and facilities, thereby achieving a good level of self-sufficiency and reducing the need to travel. Where this is not possible, they should be integrated into the existing urban fabric in such a way as to achieve the same result. New settlements should be developed as sustainable communities and be of sufficient size to ensure a frequent subsidy-free public transport service to the city centre, secondary and tertiary education and major employment sites. Experience elsewhere suggests that this will not be possible in new settlements of less than 15,000 people, and would be maximised by establishing

settlements of 30,000 people.[15] Alternatively, the required economies of scale may be achieved by concentrating smaller new developments adjacent to existing centres or on major transport corridors.

7.2.2   Location of new development   New developments should be located in existing transport corridors, where frequent and reliable public transport already exists. Alternatively, they should be located where they can support viable new services. All new developments should have excellent access to the city centre and nearby settlements by active means of travel.[16] The target should be for them to be located so that the city centre can be reached by bus and cycle within 20 minutes, and secondary and tertiary education, major leisure facilities and suburban centres can be reached within 20 minutes by bus, cycle or on foot as appropriate.

7.2.3   Higher density   The International Transport Forum argues that "promoting compact urban development should be at the core of any long-term strategy to reduce car dependency".[17] This requires building at a residential density sufficiently high as to support the provision of local services, public transport and access by active transport means. Densities averaging 50 dwellings per hectare should be achievable outside the urban core whilst still providing outdoor space and high quality public realm.[18] Since York is already relatively dense, we recommend aiming for an average density of 50dph.   Sites nearer the city and district centres and on high-frequency transport corridors should be built to a higher density, and possibly up to 100 dwellings per hectare, where dwellings are not intended for family living.[19] This proposal would be in line with the advice included in the consultation version of the National Design Codes.[20]

7.2.4   Mixed development   New residential areas should be designed to incorporate a range of local facilities, services and ideally jobs within easy walking or cycling distance, which could reduce the need to travel by means other than by bicycle or on foot. 'Easy' should be defined as 10-minutes' walking time for an able-bodied and unencumbered person, or 20-minutes' cycling time. The RTPI and TCPA have both produced relevant guidance.[21]

7.2.5   Development designed to support walking and cycling   New developments need to provide safe, secure and preferably segregated routes across the development, and minimal on-street parking. In line with the emerging National Design Codes, they should be

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[15] TCPA (2020) *Sustainable Transport, Guide 13*; and Transport for New Homes (2020) *Garden Villages and Garden Towns: Visions and Reality*

[16] Transport for New Homes (2020) *Garden Villages and Garden Towns: Visions and Reality*; Urbed (2014) *Uxcester garden city*, Wolfson Economics Prize; and RTPI (2021) *Net Zero Transport: The role of spatial planning and place-based solutions*, London, RTPI

[17] International Transport Forum (2021), *Reversing car dependency*, Paris, OECD

[18] TCPA (2020) *Sustainable Transport, Guide 13*; and Transport for New Homes (2020) *Garden Villages and Garden Towns: Visions and Reality*

[19] York Civic Trust (2021), *Sustainable communities, Workshop report*

[20] Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government (2021) *National Planning Policy Framework and National Model Design Code: consultation proposals*

[21] RTPI (2021) *Net Zero Transport: The role of spatial planning and place-based solutions*, London, RTPI; and TCPA (2020) *Sustainable Transport, Guide 13*

walkable neighbourhoods, with attractive pedestrian and cycle routes.[22] These routes would link into wider city networks. There should be adequate secure cycle storage for all dwellings and at key locations. The maximum permitted speed on residential streets should be 20mph.

7.2.6   Development designed to support public transport   Transport for New Homes[23] suggests that all new residential development should have access to high frequency public transport, specified as 12 minutes or less throughout the working day, and 20 minutes or less in early mornings, evenings and weekends. All development should be within 10 minutes' walking distance of a bus stop. Buses should have priority over other vehicles wherever possible, and give direct access to key employment zones, secondary and tertiary education, strategic sports and health facilities. We consider the future of public transport in our separate paper on Improving Public Transport.

7.2.7   Development designed to make car use less attractive   Residential areas should be designed around the concepts of filtered permeability, low traffic neighbourhoods and homezones/playstreets. Parking should be tightly controlled (not more than one space per dwelling) and designed so as not to dominate the environment.

7.2.8   Development designed to support working from home   Place Alliance[24] recommends improvements to homes and their surroundings in order to support comfortable home working. These would involve building to higher space standards to provide domestic office space, provision of high-speed broadband, good levels of internal and external sound insulation, and access to outside space (including balconies where appropriate).

7.2.9   Transport and access plans   Good quality Travel Plans and Transport Assessments should be agreed for all major new developments, enshrining the principles of sustainable transport. All prospective residents should be informed about their rights and obligations with regard to sustainable transport. Finance from Section 106 should be used to promote sustainable transport (including fully-equipped bus stops, car club membership, bicycle grants, travel passes and secure cycle parking), and Section 278 to enable developers to contribute to highway adaptations.

7.2.10 Enforcement of approved standards and plans   Simply agreeing Travel Plans is not sufficient to guarantee their implementation and maintenance over time. This will require a strengthened enforcement regime with appropriate penalties.

7.2.11 The implications of the proposed planning reforms   In the event that the Government's proposed planning reforms are implemented, it will be necessary to take an integrated view of transport requirements at the time that new Local Plans are being drawn up. Given the proposed changes to Section 106, it may also be necessary to subsidise public transport provision until such time as a site is fully occupied. It will also be necessary to

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[22] Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government (2021), *National Planning Policy Framework and National Model Design Code: consultation proposals*
[23] Transport for New Homes (2020), *Garden Villages and Garden Towns: Visions and Reality*
[24] Place Alliance (2020), *Home Comforts*

apply the standards laid out in the emerging National and Local Design Codes, and to reflect the changed emphasis of the National Planning Policy Framework regarding the promotion of sustainable transport, healthy and safe communities, and the need to design characterful, beautiful neighbourhoods.[25]

7.3 Repurposing existing land use

7.3.1 Protecting existing land uses   The International Transport Forum report indicates that reducing car dependency requires "significant long-term change in the spatial form of cities. In the short to medium-term, it means reallocating space away from roads and parking".[26] While this will be achieved in part through new development, as considered above, it will also require modifications to existing land use patterns, in ways that we consider below. However, in making any such changes, it will be important to ensure that current patterns of land use which support lower levels of travel, such as shops, community facilities and employment in local centres, are not lost.

7.3.2 Reuse of office space   The anticipated increase in home-working and a shorter working week could mean a surplus of traditional office space. Unwanted office space should be converted to residential or mixed use, including office 'hubs' where interaction and innovation can be fostered. This already happens to some extent, but it will be vital to avoid poor quality provision.

7.3.3 Reuse of retail space   The growth of online shopping is likely to combine with other factors to produce a surplus of retail space. There is already considerable underuse of upper storeys above retail units. Unwanted retail space should be converted into residential or other uses, whilst ensuring no adverse impact on heritage. This in turn would help reduce journey lengths for retail and leisure trips.

7.3.4 Provision of local services   Local and district centres need to be retained and where possible strengthened, in line with the concept of the 20-minute city. We propose that all areas should have access to basic facilities and services within a 20-minute walk. The facilities and services should include nursery provision; primary schools; GP, dentistry and pharmacy services; convenience stores; courier drop-off points; play space and public outdoor leisure and amenity space. We recommend that the Council reviews the scope for actively encouraging the revitalisation of existing neighbourhood centres, using the "Bishy Road" success story as a model.

7.3.5 Reuse of brownfield land   Development should always prioritise the reuse of brownfield land over the use of greenfield sites, and these sites should be used for mixed development wherever possible. Some brownfield sites may require the development of a local centre.

7.3.6 Preservation of heritage   Repurposing actions should only take place where they protect and enhance the heritage of York, which is the key to economic vitality.

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[25] Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government (2021), *National Planning Policy Framework and National Model Design Code: consultation proposals*
[26] International Transport Forum (2021), *Reversing car dependency*, Paris, OECD

7.3.7   Quality standards   All repurposing actions should conform to the recommendation of any future local Design Codes, and the principles set out in York Civic Trust's design guidance.[27]

7.4   Behavioural and motivational measures

7.4.1   Personal travel plans   Personal travel plans already encourage those involved to reduce their amount of travel, by seeking facilities closer to home, and combine activities when using the car (often referred to as "trip chaining"). They were used extensively in York a decade ago, but ceased when funding to support them ended. We suggest here and in our companion report on Managing Car Use that it will be appropriate to reintroduce them. In doing so, they could usefully be extended to consider opportunities for pursuing activities online rather than by travelling to them.

7.4.2   Workplace travel plans   As the LGA report on decarbonising transport[28] emphasises, businesses have a key role in promoting online working and, where relevant, online service provision. Workplace travel plans were also used extensively in York a decade ago, but tend now to be limited to businesses which have been required as a condition of planning permission to have them. We suggest here and in our companion report on Managing Car Use that it will be appropriate to reintroduce them. In doing so, they should be expanded to identify opportunities for supporting working from home or from community hubs.

7.4.3   Incentivisation programmes   We suggest that the Council pursue two educational and awareness programmes as part of its carbon reduction strategy. The first would target residents, and increase their awareness of the need to reduce carbon from travel, and of the potential for travelling less and using online access more. The second would target developers, and encourage them to adopt the principles which we outline above for new development, and for repurposing existing land use.

8   The proposed policy measures by area

8.1   City-wide measures

Reduction of travel across the city will best be stimulated through promotional measures, and particularly Personal Travel Plans that encourage individuals to consider alternatives to travel, and pursuing activities closer to home, and Workplace Travel Plans which pursue with employers the potential for working from home. We discuss these in more detail in our companion report on Managing Car Use.

8.2   City centre

The city centre offers a mix of retail, leisure, employment and residential use, which is conducive to shorter journeys and the use of sustainable modes. The principal need will be to maintain a similar mix, by repurposing existing retail space to provide for an alternative mix of uses. There is also a clear case for supporting cargo bikes to support online shopping.

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[27] York Civic Trust (2021) *Building York's Future: delivering Yorkness*

[28] Lokesh K et al (2020) *Decarbonising transport: travelling less and the role of online opportunities*, London: Local Government Association

8.3   Inner and Outer York, including the villages

A range of types of support is needed for residents in order to facilitate home working, home learning and online shopping. Targeted support in low-income households is needed to enable them to sustain access to broadband and to procure sufficient IT equipment to allow family members to work and study from home. Where properties have limited accommodation for working and studying from home, the Council should consider providing communication hubs to support the community. There is also a case more generally for providing delivery hubs with lockers, to reduce the costs and disruption of missed online deliveries.

Each community should ideally have a local centre within 20 minutes' walk or cycle ride, with a good range of local retail, service, social and leisure facilities to support residents who are working or studying from home, and to reduce journey lengths for such activities. In many cases these centres already exist, and the focus should be on procuring and supporting as full a range of services as possible. It may be possible to repurpose vacant retail space at the peripheral shopping centres. Where they do not exist, the Council should aim to identify suitable locations, include and protect the sites in the Local Plan, and facilitate development. In the villages, it will be appropriate to involve parish councils in such developments.

8.5   New developments

We discuss the requirements for new developments in Section 7.2 above. In summary, we recommend that newly developed communities in outer York are designed for a minimum of 15,000 population, or 6,000 dwellings, and located so that the city centre can be reached by bus within 20 minutes, and suburban centres such as the University of York and retail centres on foot or by cycle within 20 minutes. They should be designed to a minimum of 50 dwellings per hectare, with a community centre reflecting the requirements in Section 8.4 above, and a primary school and appropriate health, leisure and retail services. The community should have its own dedicated public transport route linking it to the city centre, other local centres, a secondary school and strategic sports facilities, with all dwellings within 10 minutes' walk of a bus stop. It should be designed to give priority access for walking and cycling, with limited access for cars and parking provided on the fringes. It should provide a delivery hub, rather than expecting commercial vehicles to service every dwelling. All of these provisions should be supported by a Transport Assessment for each development, and a Travel Plan maintained and supported by the developer and monitored by the Council.

9   The implications for each user type

All of the provisions in Sections 7 and 8 should be designed to be available to all residents, so that there are no barriers to opportunities to travel less and to access services close to home. A particular focus is needed on the needs of lower income households, carers and those who are vulnerable, to ensure that they can reduce their travel where appropriate. The Council's 8m visitors a year also add to the demands on the city's transport system, and to carbon emissions from transport. It is more difficult to apply many of the proposals in this report to them, since much of their transport activity will be involved in getting to and from the city. But there is a case for the Council working with travel providers to encourage

tourists to combine journeys and to include a number of adjacent tourist attractions when planning visits.

10   The barriers to be overcome

10.1   Political and public acceptability

Of the measures proposed above, those involving improvements in communications technology and its use seem unlikely to be controversial either among politicians or with the public. Indeed, the Council should be able to sustain its reputation as a leader in broadband provision by doing so. Those measures which involve repurposing existing land use may generate some local concerns, but should in the main be positively received as providing better support for the community, but may lead to political concerns over cost and the role of the public sector. We suggest that the Council might encourage a higher level discussion about the future role of local communities and centres, as a basis for seeking consensus. The principal aspect of these proposals which will be contentious relates to new development. However, it is clear to us that the Council's target of achieving net zero for carbon is best served by having fewer, larger and hence more sustainable new communities. This needs to be addressed in the Local Plan at the earliest opportunity, and backed up by the Supplementary Planning Document on meeting the carbon target which we understand is currently being drafted.

10.2   Governance

Most of the measures considered in this report are within the purview of the Council. This may however change if the structure of local government is amended. It will thus be important to agree on the policies to be adopted before such changes occur. To some extent larger firms will be pursuing similar carbon-reduction goals, and the Council should work with them to develop a synergistic response. The main limitations on the Council's ability to secure planning change are the reliance which has to be placed on developers to submit appropriate proposals, and the weaknesses in the planning system in opposing inappropriate development. We recommend that, as the Trust has been doing, the Council enters into a dialogue with major developers to encourage them to commit to the principles which we outline above.

10.3   Skills and professional commitment

One potential difficulty with the proposals in this document is that they are the responsibility of officers outside the transport team. We would hope that those responsible for communications technology and community support would see the benefits of our proposals for these areas and will have the resources to respond to them. We suspect that there might be a more significant problem with the planning team in terms both of the resources available to encourage the changes which we propose and of the understanding of the need for them. We are aware, for example, that developers wishing to reduce parking in major developments are still being discouraged by Council officers from doing so.

10.4   Finance

There are potentially significant financial costs in supporting the enhanced use of communications technology and in repurposing existing land uses. There is also an ongoing

need to finance the planning enforcement and monitoring needed to achieve the changes in the nature of new development which we seek.

10.5   Enforcement

Enforcement is principally an issue for planning decisions, where staff resources are needed to ensure that developers abide by the requirements of planning decisions and, as we propose, regularly monitor achievement against their Transport Plans. We encourage the Council to find ways of ensuring that such staffing is provided.

11   The implications for other modal strategies

11.1   Reducing car use

The strategies for reducing travel and for managing car use are largely complementary. If levels of travel are reduced, there is less need to reduce car use, and to some extent the converse is true. Some of the measures considered, such as the role of behavioural measures and parking provision in new developments, are common to both.

11.2   Public transport

The use of public transport will be affected by increased use of online alternatives. To date the main effect appears to have been in reducing peak demands, which may actually help improve the efficiency of public transport provision, but future plans for public transport provision should take account of the anticipated impact on overall demand. Public transport will be critical to the provision of sustainable travel for new communities, and we have set out above, and in more detail in our companion report, the level of provision which will be needed. As noted, it will be essential that this level of service is provided from the outset in new developments, with any subsidy being the responsibility of the developer.

11.3   Walking and cycling

Increases in online activity are likely to lead to an increase in walking and cycling to gain access to community hubs and local centres, and any improvements in the network, particularly for cycling, need to support this. Walking and cycling are also critical to the provision of sustainable travel for new communities, and we have recommended that all new developments be designed around walking and cycling networks, with high quality safe walking and cycling routes to nearby centres, and to link to the city-wide networks.

11.4   Managing the road network

Measures to reduce travel will reduce congestion and thus simplify the task of managing the road network, and the strategy for managing the road network needs to be developed in the context of what can be achieved by reducing travel, as well as by reducing car use. The road network needs to be managed to protect community hubs and local centres from through traffic, so that the encouragement to pursue more activities online and in local centres is not thwarted by the degraded environment which traffic can impose. Roads will clearly be needed to access new developments, but need to be designed to support the principle that the priorities for access and for local movement are walking, cycling and public transport. Roads within new communities should be designed to a scale suitable for

walking and cycling, social interaction and play. It should not be assumed that every estate road has to be serviced by freight vehicles. It will be particularly important to ensure that no provision is made to allow traffic to pass through new developments, whether they are in outer York or, as in York Central, close to the centre.

11.5   Improving freight

Increased online activity requires an increase in home delivery, and there is a danger that unplanned delivery traffic offsets the benefits of the strategy for reducing travel. The freight strategy therefore needs to identify ways in which deliveries can be made to community hubs rather than to individual dwellings, which should in turn reduce the problem with repeat deliveries. New communities should not be designed for delivery to individual dwellings; instead each should have one or more purpose-designed delivery and collection hubs at the entrance to the community, which should be supported as part of the services provided by the developer. In both existing and new communities, cargo bikes should be considered as a sustainable means of onward delivery.