

A Transport Strategy For York

*A Short Guide to York Civic
Trust's proposals*



Developing a new Local Transport Plan for York

In January 2021, the City of York Council invited York Civic Trust to assist in developing its new Local Transport Plan. In February 2022 [we set out our proposals in our Transport Strategy for York](#). The Council is now the only council in Yorkshire not to have updated its 2011 Local Transport Plan, but is about to publish a draft Local Transport Strategy for consultation. In this booklet we summarise our proposals as an alternative vision of what might be done, and to contribute to the debate.

We ask what we want York to be like in fifteen years, and what objectives might be set for transport. We review the data available and propose targets. We consider each aspect of transport policy, suggest what might be done to address the needs of all parts of the city and all users, and discuss the requirements for implementation.



What do people want York to be like?

[The Council's vision, published in December 2022](#), is that York will be a vibrant, prosperous, welcoming and sustainable city, where everyone can share and take pride in its success. But how can transport contribute to this vision?

The most important objectives are to reduce carbon emissions, traffic congestion and pollution and to protect the environment. But transport must also contribute to public health, safety and security. It needs to reduce inequality in all its forms. It must support the economy, protect the city's heritage and public realm, and improve life for residents.

Above: Cyclists, pedestrians, and cars at Bootham Bar.

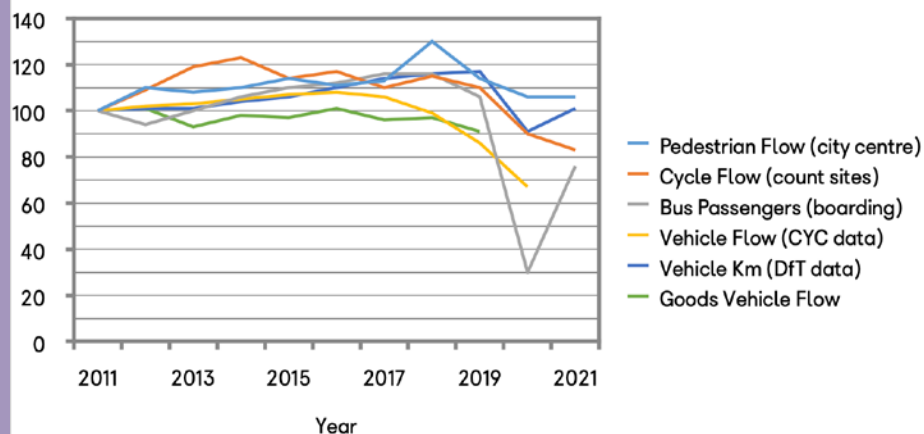
Left: Map of York showing hot spots of poor public transportation (in red). Credit: York Council.

What is known about current conditions?

The chart below shows recent travel trends. Vehicle flows had increased by a sixth since 2011, and are now returning to pre-pandemic levels. Bus usage is still well below pre-pandemic levels. Cycling has fallen by a third since 2014.

[The Council's opinion surveys](#) confirm that tackling carbon emissions, traffic congestion and air pollution are the most important objectives for the new Local Transport Plan. A 71% reduction in carbon emissions from transport is needed to meet [the Council's goal of being carbon neutral by 2030](#). The Council predicts that congestion will increase by two thirds by 2037 if nothing is done. Nitrogen dioxide levels in the inner city are still well above World Health Organisation guidelines.

Traffic trends in York 2011-2021



What targets should be set?

We suggest targets for reducing these problems and for the changes in travel required to do so. These are driven by the Council's target of a 71% reduction in carbon. To meet this target, the city will need to achieve a reduction of at least 20% in travel by car, and a shift to other travel modes.

Above: Queueing traffic on Museum Street.

Objective	Strategy					
	Reduce travel	Walking/cycling	Public transport	Road network	Freight	Car use
Congestion	●	●	●	●	●	●
Pollution	●	●	●	●	●	●
Carbon	●	●	●	●	●	●
Health	●	●	●	●	●	●
Safety	●	●	●	●	●	●
Economy		●	●	●	●	
Access	●	●	●			
Liveability	●	●		●	●	●
Public Realm	●	●		●	●	●

● ● ● Contribution to objective (by size of impact)

What should our strategy be?

- 1 Reducing the need to travel, and the distance travelled. If people can work from home, or reach shops, schools and leisure locally, the transport impacts will be reduced.
- 2 Improving and promoting walking, wheeling and cycling. Doing so will increase accessibility and improve health, as well as providing an alternative to car use.
- 3 Improving and promoting public transport. This will improve accessibility, reduce isolation and help to reduce car use.
- 4 Changing how the road network is managed. Traffic management makes roads safer and less polluted, and can help retain access, particularly for disabled people.
- 5 Changing freight operation. Improving facilities will make freight more efficient, whilst smaller electric vehicles and e-cargo cycles will reduce disruption and pollution.
- 6 Modifying car use. In part this will be achieved by the approaches above, but further reductions could be made through parking controls and charges.

What might be done?

By 2027, the north-eastern outer ring road will be dualled. We should ensure that longer distance traffic uses it in preference to inner city roads.

Across the city, pedestrians and cyclists should experience safer and easier journeys. All areas should have frequent, direct bus or train services, with fast bus routes serving major hubs and new communities.

In the city centre the foot streets should be repaved, with protected access for disabled people and cargo cycles and an accessible shuttle bus. Cyclists should have routes across the centre and improved parking. Bus priorities should be used to restrict through traffic. A 3.5T weight limit should apply, with local freight transshipment points. City centre car parking should be priced to manage use and encourage alternatives.



The Groves, where measures have been put in place to remove through traffic.



Oversize lorry in Lord Mayor's Walk.
Credit: Chris Polack

Within the outer ring road all radial roads should have safe, segregated cycle routes, with queue management and bus priority. Residential roads should have comprehensive 20mph speed limits, with through traffic discouraged. New public transport routes should serve York Hospital and outer centres. Vehicles over 7.5T should be directed to a few specified routes.

All villages should have dedicated cycle and bus routes to access the city centre and local centres. Demand-responsive services could link smaller communities to park and ride sites. New developments should have their own local facilities, with dedicated public transport and cycle routes linking them to the city centre.



Financing the strategy

Finance is increasingly constrained. Much funding has to be bid for competitively. A new Local Transport Plan will help strengthen the Council's bids. New sources of funding will be needed. Parking levies and road pricing could be used to finance attractive alternatives to car use and help deliver the required changes

We all need to contribute

The Council needs to be bold and decisive if it is to achieve its carbon reduction targets and ensure that York remains attractive, vibrant and sustainable. Everyone's travel options and choices will be affected. The Council must secure public support and provide long term political leadership. We advocate a consensus-building approach to developing the transport strategy involving residents, business and civil society.

Above: Cyclists and buses outside York Art Gallery.

Above right: E-Scooters parked outside York Art Gallery.



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