

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

26 February 2025

The Report of the Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the Notice of Motion on 'Adoption of an Active Travel Strategy' referred to the committee at the full Council meeting on 13 November 2024

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services)

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Council with a summary of the deliberations and recommendations of the Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee concerning the Notice of Motion referred to the committee at the meeting of full Council on 13 November 2024.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 At Full Council on 13 November 2024, the Chairman referred a number of Notices of Motion to the Scrutiny Board for their allocation to the appropriate overview and scrutiny committee.
- 2.2 Subsequently the Scrutiny Board allocated a Notice of Motion on Adoption of an Active Travel Strategy to the Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with the intention of it been considered and recommendations brought back to this meeting of full Council.
- 2.3 The associated report that went the meeting of the Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 30 January 2025 can be accessed via the following link (Agenda Item 7):
[Agenda for Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Thursday, 30 January 2025, 10.00 am | North Yorkshire Council](#)
- 2.4 The Council's Constitution (Council Procedure Rules, section 11, page 223) states:
- (h) If a motion is referred to the Executive or one committee only, the Executive or that committee shall report to the Council upon that motion together with its recommendation. If a motion is referred to more than one committee, the Executive shall report to the Council upon that motion together with its recommendations. The report of the Executive or any committee to which a motion has been referred shall contain a statement of that motion.
- (i) When the Executive or a committee reports back on a motion, the motion, as originally moved and seconded at the earlier meeting, will be the matter before the Council. Any recommendation of the Executive or committee to amend the motion will therefore be an amendment to the motion and any recommendation to support or oppose the motion will be only an expression of views.

3.0 Adoption of an Active Travel Strategy

- 3.1 The Notice of Motion as proposed by Councillor Hannah Gostlow (and seconded by Councillor Bryn Griffiths) stated:

North Yorkshire Council recognises the importance of promoting active travel as a key component in improving public health, boosting local economies, connecting communities, reducing congestion, improving air quality, and contributing to our commitments on climate change and sustainability as specified in NYC's adopted Sustainable Development Goals.

Therefore, North Yorkshire Council:

- Commits to develop and implement an Active Travel Strategy by December 2025, that will outline a clear framework for promoting and supporting walking, cycling, and other active travel modes across the county.
- Uses data from the already completed 'Let's Talk Climate' and 'Let's Talk Transport' consultations to ensure that the strategy reflects the diverse needs and aspirations of our communities
- Incorporates the following key principles into the strategy:
 1. Accessibility and Inclusivity: Ensure that active travel infrastructure is accessible to all residents.
 2. Safety: Prioritise the development of safe walking and cycling routes, especially near schools, town centres, and residential areas.
 3. Integration with Public Transport: Improve connections between active travel routes and public transport hubs to encourage multimodal journeys.
 4. Sustainability: Promote active travel as a means to reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality across North Yorkshire.
 5. Health and Wellbeing: Recognise and promote the physical and mental health benefits associated with active travel.
 6. Identifies potential funding sources to support the implementation of the strategy, including national grants, regional partnerships, and private sector collaboration.
 7. Sets measurable goals and a timeline for the implementation of the Active Travel Strategy, ensuring regular monitoring and review processes to track progress and outcomes.
 8. Works with neighbouring local authorities and regional bodies to ensure that the strategy aligns with broader regional efforts to promote sustainable and active transport.

This motion works towards the following Sustainable Development Goals:

- Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being - Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages.
Relevance: Encourages active travel to improve physical and mental health.
- Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities - Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.
Relevance: Develops infrastructure for walking and cycling to create safer and more connected communities.
- Goal 13: Climate Action - Taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
Relevance: Promotes active travel to reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality.
- Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals - Strengthening the means of implementation and revitalising the global partnership for sustainable development.
Relevance: Utilises consultations and collaborations to ensure diverse community needs are met and strategies align with broader efforts.
- Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities - Reducing inequality within and among countries.
Relevance: Ensures active travel infrastructure is accessible to all, addressing inequalities.

- Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure - Building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and fostering innovation.
Relevance: Integrates active travel routes with public transport to encourage efficient, multimodal travel.
- Goal 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions - Promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.
Relevance: Establishes measurable goals and regular reviews to ensure transparency and accountability.

- 3.2 On 15 November 2024, the Scrutiny Board considered this Motion, and it was agreed that it should be brought to the next meeting of the Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.3 At the 30 January 2025 meeting, Councillor Hannah Gostlow spoke as the motion proposer to provide an overview of her reasons for proposing the motion. She noted the officer report and that it highlighted the positive work undertaken and ongoing to improve active travel provision, but felt a strong, clear statement of active travel vision and values was still required. She felt that active travel can help with overall place making and does not just sit within Highways, but across areas such as the local economy, health, wellbeing and environment.
- 3.4 Councillor Gostlow listed examples within her Knaresborough East division of:
- the recent green investment in the fleet of new electric buses for Harrogate and Knaresborough, but that they will struggle to change the culture and a shift to sustainable transport when the congestion on the roads makes journey times unreliable.
 - The lack of new cycling infrastructure in Knaresborough, with money spent on designs but ultimately not following through to implementation.
 - Unsafe walking and cycling routes for residents in areas that connect bus stops, the local bus station, the local train station, but without the policies and priorities to prevent vehicles speeding and changing the traffic light sequencing as required.
- 3.5 In submitting the motion, Councillor Gostlow felt a dedicated Active Travel Strategy was required in the near future, rather than waiting for it to be incorporated into the new York and North Yorkshire Local Transport Plan. She argued that a dedicated strategy would ensure a sustained focus and accountability for walking and cycling improvements, rather than having them as secondary considerations. Delaying until the Local Transport Plan would be seen as postponing crucial work on infrastructure, accessibility and safety improvements, at a time when active travel is needed to address public health, congestion and climate change goals.
- 3.6 It was also argued that local authorities that are forward thinking and proactive on active travel get more funding, and waiting for the York and North Yorkshire Local Transport Plan may put the council at a disadvantage for future national funding opportunities. A well-designed strategy was felt would also strengthen bids for funding such as Section 106 agreements and regional investments.
- 3.7 Whilst the North York Moors National Park and Yorkshire Dales National Park are developing active travel plans to be welcomed, Councillor Gostlow noted that she felt their focus is on tourism and visitor access, not the every day travel needs for North Yorkshire residents. Local communities would benefit from well planned active travel infrastructure integrating with, but not depending on, other initiatives.

- 3.8 Without a standalone strategy, clear targets, measurable outcomes and a clear timeline for active travel improvements, Councillor Gostlow felt that active travel schemes may be diluted when factored in as part of a broader new York and North Yorkshire Local Transport Plan. Creating a separate strategy for North Yorkshire would contain specific goals, a monitoring process, to ensure active travel is seen as a future priority rather than as an afterthought.
- 3.9 In response, the officer spoke about the work already underway to develop and adopt Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) for each principal town in North Yorkshire. These plans, along with the work of the National Parks, will give a strategic view of the future active travel infrastructure required.
- 3.10 It was felt that the proposal in the motion to create a standalone Active Travel Strategy for North Yorkshire would not help to speed up the overall process, as it would be carried out alongside the development of a cohesive York and North Yorkshire Local Transport Plan. It was also argued that a standalone policy would act as a duplication of the work which will take place as part of the wider Local Transport Plan.
- 3.11 It was also noted by the officer that new guidance on Local Transport Plans and also an Integrated National Transport Strategy has not been released yet, and is expected to be published later this year. As both documents are likely to include guidance and information around Active Travel and the monitoring and evaluation of active travel schemes, it would seem sensible to wait for this information to be available before writing new strategies.
- 3.12 Committee Members held differing views on the motion text which included:
- A suggestion of a working group was put forward to explore some of the more achievable aspects of the motion text to help inform the development of the wider Local Transport Plan. Given the cost of fuel, car tax, insurance and the maintenance of vehicles, investing in active travel would improve the health and the wellbeing of residents and help to support the local economy.
 - With the ongoing process of developing and adopting Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) and the new Local Transport Plan, it is felt that it was not the right time to also be working on a separate Active Travel Strategy for North Yorkshire.
 - A separate Active Travel Strategy would allow a focus to be put on North Yorkshire, rather than the wider region, where it may become diluted. The differences in the geography and demographics of York and North Yorkshire mean that active travel provision may not be fully addressed in a regional Local Transport Plan document.
 - There is a role for the Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny committee to hold the Combined Authority to account around the inclusion of active travel in developing a Local Transport Plan for York and North Yorkshire. Work to create and scrutinise a separate policy document for North Yorkshire at the same time would work against this.
- 3.13 In the debate and discussions that followed, the proposal to form an Active Travel Working Group of the Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee was put forward. In proposing this, it was felt that the working group would focus on how the vision, values and priorities for active travel integrate within the Council Plan document, but also more widely how it can feed into the development of the emerging new York and North Yorkshire Local Transport Plan. This was approved, and officers are in the process of setting this working group up. The terms of reference for the working group will be set when it meets for the first time.
- 3.14 Following the committee decision to set up a working group, the officer report recommendations were approved to go back to Full Council.

4.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The financial, legal, equalities and climate change implications of the motion text were set out in the report to the Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee - edemocracy.northyorks.gov.uk/documents/s46714/Active%20Travel%20in%20North%20Yorks%20hire.pdf

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Full Council is asked to consider the recommendations of the Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee to:
- i) Note the update on Active Travel documents in North Yorkshire
 - ii) recommend back to Full Council at its meeting on 26 February 2025 that an Active Travel Strategy is pursued as part of the York and North Yorkshire Local Transport Plan in collaboration with York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority and City of York Council.
- 5.2 Separately, to these recommendations back to Full Council, the Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee will:
- iii) Set up a working group on Active Travel. The terms of reference are to be drawn up, but it is set to focus on how the vision and values for Active Travel integrate within the Council Plan document and also to engage and contribute to the wider development of the new York and North Yorkshire Local Transport Plan.

Barry Khan
Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services)

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12 February 2025

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Background documents:

Constitution of North Yorkshire Council -

<https://edemocracy.northyorks.gov.uk/documents/s19609/NYCCConstitutionVersion2May2023.pdf>

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.