

North Yorkshire County Council
Business and Environmental Services
Executive Members

21 May 2021

**Proposed Response to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA)
Connectivity Infrastructure Plan Consultation**

Report of the Assistant Director – Highways and Transportation

1.0 Purpose Of Report

- 1.1 To provide the Corporate Director, Business and Environmental Services (BES) and BES Executive Members outline details of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) Connectivity Infrastructure Plan Consultation and to seek approval for the proposed response being submitted by the County Council.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) has launched its Connectivity Infrastructure Plan setting out a long-term transport infrastructure investment programme for the next 20 years. WYCA is currently consulting on the plan, and will review and re-shape it in summer 2021 following engagement feedback.
- 2.2 This report will summarise the main components of the Connectivity Infrastructure Plan and present NYCC officers' draft response to the consultation, which is due for submission by 31 May 2021.

3.0 WYCA Connectivity Infrastructure Plan

- 3.1 WYCA has launched a consultation on its Connectivity Infrastructure Plan that sets out a long-term transport infrastructure investment programme for the next 20 years. It provides a picture of where improvements are most needed to enhance people's quality of life and bring investment to the area.
- 3.2 The Plan is informed by a range of research, plans and case making documents, with key inputs including:
- West Yorkshire (WY) Bus Network Review;
 - WY Carbon Reduction Emissions Pathways study;
 - WY Rail Vision and Strategy;
 - WY Future Mobility Strategy;
 - WY Mass Transit Vision 2040;
 - Housing Affordability and Needs study; and
 - Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs).
- 3.3 The Plan sets out an investment plan with initial proposals for a forward pipeline of transport infrastructure improvements to 2040, categorised as:
- A – schemes for delivery by 2025;
 - B – strategic priorities for development and/or delivery by 2025; and
 - C – options for delivery between 2026 – 2040.

- 3.4 The Plan sets out three main issues facing the region that has helped to frame the plan and its subsequent investments. These are:
- Covid-19 recession and recovery – ensuring accessibility to jobs to address unemployment and inequalities exacerbated by Covid-19.
 - Inclusive growth – ensuring that all residents benefit from economic growth in the region.
 - Climate change and decarbonising the economy – reducing transport’s contribution to emissions, helping to achieve net zero carbon by 2038.
- 3.5 Work on the Plan began before the Covid-19 pandemic, however it has since become a core component of the plan as it is a considerable challenge faced by the region, particularly in relation to its economic and social impacts.

4.0 Connectivity Priorities

- 4.1 For WYCA there are a number of connectivity priorities, establishing the desired transformation for each mode of transport to achieve preferred outcomes. These are:
- Walking and cycling – becoming the first choice for short journeys and integrating with public transport services;
 - Bus – at the heart of WYCA’s plans, with new infrastructure giving bus an advantage over cars;
 - Rail – serving trips to main centres, boosted by improved journey times, capacity, station facilities and accessibility;
 - Mass transit – a new form of mass transit will provide the missing link in WY’s transport system, bringing additional capacity, quality and connectivity;
 - Cars and vans – will be used less but still be important, and will transition to electric vehicles with an extensive charge point network;
 - National and international connectivity – business and movement of goods will be enhanced by reduced traffic congestion. Rail will play a greater role in longer-distance freight transport. Mobility and consolidation hubs will provide sustainable ‘last mile’ solutions for deliveries in urban centres.

5.0 NYCC response

- 5.1 NYCC Officers have reviewed WYCA’s consultation and drafted a response to the consultation survey. The full consultation response can be found in Appendix A.
- 5.2 Where appropriate, NYCC officers’ have highlighted areas where it is important for considering cross-boundary journeys, particularly to Skipton, Selby, Harrogate and York. It will be important for NYCC to continue working with WYCA and local authorities to address cross-boundary transport issues and maximise sustainable connectivity.
- 5.3 Due to the survey format, some questions do not provide an opportunity to elaborate on the responses other than ticking a box; where this is the case and NYCC has further comments, we will send WYCA officers a supplementary note. Appendix A details the full response that NYCC proposes to provide; this includes both the allocated Likert Scale response (e.g. agree, neutral, disagree, don’t know) and the written response (which may be submitted separately), where necessary.

6.0 Equalities

- 6.1 There are no equalities issues arising from this report, see Appendix B.

7.0 Finance

- 7.1 There are no financial issues arising directly from this report. The Connectivity Infrastructure Plan is a long term investment programme for WYCA. As proposals develop, there may be financial implications for NYCC in the future and these will be subject to further reports at the appropriate time.

8.0 Legal

- 8.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report. The Connectivity Infrastructure Plan sets out a long term transport infrastructure investment programme for WYCA. The Plan is at an early stage and will be subject to further rounds of engagement and evaluation.

9.0 Climate Change

- 9.1 As the report relates solely to submitting a response to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority's consultation on their Connectivity Infrastructure Plan, there are no direct climate change impacts arising from this decision, see Appendix C.

10.0 Recommendation

- 10.1 It is recommended that the Corporate Director - BES and the BES Executive Members approve the recommended response to the consultation to be submitted to West Yorkshire Combined Authority, as detailed in Appendix A.

BARRIE MASON
Assistant Director – Business and Environmental Services

Authors of Report: Will Britton

Background Documents: None

Connectivity Infrastructure Plan

Questions

Q1 How are you responding to this survey?

- I am a member of the public, giving my views as an individual
- I am responding on behalf of, or as a representative of, a business or organisation
- Other

On behalf of an organisation

Q2 The key objectives outlined in the Connectivity Infrastructure Plan that would help us improve connectivity are:

- Inclusive growth – making economic growth inclusive, to benefit all communities
- Covid-19 recovery – enabling a green recovery from recession, which addresses unemployment and inequalities made worse by Covid-19
- Climate change – the urgent need to decarbonise the economy and transport

Do you agree that inclusive growth, Covid-19 recovery and climate change are the correct priorities? (Yes, in full; Yes, in part; No, not at all; Don't know)

Yes, in full

With the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is important that it is recognised as a significant challenge in the short and longer-term, with consequential economic and social impacts. It is vital that recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic is done in a way that is both inclusive (i.e. decreases inequalities) and low-carbon, to avoid a high-carbon recovery. There will likely be overlaps and synergies between the priorities that will need to be understood to reduce the risk of one priority having an accidental detrimental impact upon another.

Additional considerations may relate to increasing health and wellbeing (likely as part of inclusive growth), and improvements to the environment wider than climate change (e.g. air pollution, green spaces, resilient landscapes etc.).

Q3 Do you agree that the types of places below should be the key focus of our plans to improve transport connectivity? (Yes, in full; Yes, in part; No, not at all; Don't know)

- Main cities and towns
- New housing growth
- New employment growth
- Areas of deprivation
- Other

Yes in part

The types of places listed above should be the key focus, especially as it will help to increase inclusive growth, boost the economy and reduce congestion and emissions. It is particularly important for areas of new housing and employment growth to be well connected to public transport and active travel, reducing the risk of increased traffic and congestion in

West Yorkshire. It will also be important for transport options to be improved from transport interchanges to residential areas, facilitating more sustainable multi-modal journeys.

When considering access to main towns and cities, key commuting areas outside of West Yorkshire should also be considered, as well as areas of new housing and employment growth outside of the West Yorkshire conurbation. Similarly, connectivity from West Yorkshire to key destinations outside of the conurbation (particularly for leisure and tourism) should be considered.

Q4 Our Connectivity Plan proposes alternatives to private car use by joining up other forms of transport for easier journeys door to door. Do you agree with this approach? (Yes, in full; Yes, in part; No, not at all; Don't know)

Yes in full

This approach is suitable for providing a viable alternative to private car use. It is vital that public transport and shared mobility modes are affordable and well integrated to provide seamless multi-modal journeys. Similarly, integrating walking and cycling infrastructure with transport interchanges will help to support first/last mile connectivity. As part of joining up forms of transport for easier door-to-door journeys, it is important to consider how journey planning, payment and ticketing can help to make multi-modal journeys a seamless experience. It will also be important to consider how further investment and improvements can be made to transport for journeys starting or ending outside of the conurbation, particularly commuting and leisure trips to and from nearby towns and cities (e.g. York, Harrogate, Selby, Skipton).

Q5 Do you agree with the ambition set out in the Mass Transit 2040 Document for a new form of high quality, high-capacity public transport? (Yes, in full; Yes, in part; No, not at all; Don't know)

Yes, in full

A high quality, high capacity mass-transit system can provide a higher-level experience for users and help to encourage greater modal shift, whilst improving accessibility and journey time reliability. The cost, construction time and scale of construction should be taken into consideration for each option, to ensure that value for money is achieved, and that a mass-transit system can be implemented and utilised without delay, as it is imperative that transport emissions are reduced as soon as possible.

Q6 Do you think the Mass Transit Vision 2040 document identifies the right places to connect by Mass Transit? (Yes, I agree; Neutral; No, I disagree; Don't know)

- **East Leeds**
- **Bradford - Leeds**
- **South Leeds – Dewsbury**
- **Bradford – Dewsbury**
- **Huddersfield – Dewsbury**
- **Bradford – Halifax**
- **Wakefield and Five Towns**
- **Bradford and North West Leeds**
- **North Leeds**

Neutral

Mass transit will work most successfully in connecting locations particularly underserved by other modes of public transport (rail and bus); it will be important for mass transit to support connectivity to transport hubs to provide seamless multi-modal travel, along with integrating walking and cycling with mass transit stations.

It is important to ensure that any new form of mass transit enhances the public transport offering in an area, and does not abstract journeys from one mode of public transport to another.

Q7 The Strategic Bus Network Review identifies several highway and bus service improvements which include:

- **Improving the Core Bus Network - increasing priority for bus on the roads & using more environmentally friendly buses**
- **Increasing priority for bus on our roads – to make all bus journeys, regardless of service frequency, faster and more reliable**
- **Improving the quality of the buses**
- **Expanding the bus network – to allow more communities to access a bus more frequently.**

Do you agree that these are the correct priorities for the bus network? (Yes, in full; Yes, in part; No, not at all; Don't know)

Yes, in full

These are the correct priorities. In addition to this, there may be consideration for how bus integrates as part of a wider public transport network, facilitating multi-modal travel across the region, including improvements to interchange facilities. Furthermore, there should be consideration for how ticketing, payment and information is part of the offering, helping to provide a seamless transport experience for users, including those outside of the WYCA boundaries.

The proposed bus priority measures on key routes will have a positive impact on those services operating cross boundary to and from West Yorkshire most notably from Selby, York, Harrogate and Skipton.

Proposed service improvements need to consider additional journey opportunities to cross boundary passengers for example improved links from Wetherby to Thorp Arch offering opportunities for journeys from Harrogate and York.

As the DfT has recently released its National Bus Strategy, it will be of value to consider how key changes in national policy may influence the Connectivity Infrastructure Plan.

Q8 The key objectives for the Rail Vision are outlined below. How strongly do you agree with the objectives? (Yes, in full; Yes, in part; No, not at all; Don't know)

- **Economy – increasing access to jobs, education and amenities, connecting to areas of growth, and supporting businesses provide goods and services**
- **Social – Expanding travel horizons for communities, connecting deprived communities with opportunities, and expanding the role that rail plays in our region.**
- **Environmental – supporting transition to a zero-carbon economy, encouraging use of sustainable modes, and helping to reduce emissions and improve air quality.**

- **Quality of life – supporting a high quality of life, improving health and well-being, and enhancing sense of place within transformed cities, towns and neighbourhoods.**

Yes, in full

The quality of life objective will likely come as a result of the economy/social/environmental objectives if met, so it is important that each objective is not viewed in a silo, but considered as part of an interconnecting system. There may be an opportunity for considering how connecting new developments with rail can help futureproof sustainable transport for developments.

Q9 In considering how rail can help to achieve our objectives, we have developed a set of high level principles to help shape our ambition for the new Rail Vision:

- **Address key capacity issues across the rail network**
- **Improve passenger experience to create high-quality journeys**
- **Provide a consistent rail service throughout the region**
- **Create an integrated transport network with easy door-to-door journeys**
- **Improve the environmental performance of the rail network.**

To what extent do you agree with the ambition for rail set out in the Rail Vision? (Yes, in full; Yes, in part; No, not at all; Don't know)

Yes in part

These principles are appropriate for the rail vision; additional consideration may be valuable for journeys to and from West Yorkshire by rail, especially from nearby towns and cities (such as Skipton, Harrogate, Selby and York), particularly for commuting and leisure purposes.

The rail strategy for West Yorkshire needs to be able to fully identify and develop wider proposals for whole routes, and not just those within the Combined Authority area. Engagement on cross-boundary rail routes have been good in the past and NYCC would expect this to continue as the rail strategy is developed.

Q10 Please state whether you agree or disagree with the following statements (in relation to the LCWIPs). (Agree; Neutral; Disagree; Don't Know).

- **The Connectivity Infrastructure Plan is correct in aiming to put walking and cycling as the first choice for local journeys**
- **I would walk and cycle more if there was less traffic in my area**
- **I would cycle more if there was a network of safe cycle routes in my area that connected where I wanted to go**
- **I would support the development of more pedestrian crossing points along busy streets in my area**
- **I would like to see more money spent on walking and cycling facilities in my area.**

Agree with all

Many journeys (especially in urban areas) are short in length so there is scope for many to be taken by active modes, helping to reduce private car use, congestion and pollution, and improving the health and wellbeing of local residents. As walking and cycling are at the heart

of the Connectivity Infrastructure Plan, it is vital that walking and cycling receives sufficient investment to improve facilities across the region.

As demonstrated during the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown, reduced traffic on roads partly contributed to a more cycling and walking-friendly environment, along with improved wellbeing (e.g. less traffic noise and pollution).

Creating a network of safe cycle routes is vital for encouraging more journeys by cycle for all journey purposes and ages.

Q11 How did you find out about this engagement?

Other – WYCA Website

Q12 Please provide the first half of your postcode

DL7

Q13 Terms and conditions/privacy policy

I have read and understood the privacy policy

Q14 Please select the sector that best describes your group or organisation

Local Government

Q15 Please select the sector that best describes your business

Local Government

Q16 Please tell us about the group, organisation or business you represent

Name of Organisation – North Yorkshire County Council

Your position in the organisation – Transport Planning Officer

Q17 How do you describe your gender identity?

Not Applicable

Q18 What age category do you fall within?

Not Applicable

Q19 Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?

Not Applicable

Q20 Which of the following activities best describes what you are doing at present? (employment status etc.)

Not Applicable

Q21 What is your ethnic group identity?

Not Applicable

Q22 Preferred method of contact for more info

LTP@northyorks.gov.uk

Initial equality impact assessment screening form (As of October 2015 this form replaces 'Record of decision not to carry out an EIA')			
This form records an equality screening process to determine the relevance of equality to a proposal, and a decision whether or not a full EIA would be appropriate or proportionate.			
Directorate	Business and Environmental Services		
Service area	Highways and Transportation		
Proposal being screened	WYCA Connectivity Infrastructure Plan consultation response		
Officer(s) carrying out screening	William Britton		
What are you proposing to do?	To seek approval to submit a response to the consultation		
Why are you proposing this? What are the desired outcomes?	To submit a response to the consultation		
Does the proposal involve a significant commitment or removal of resources? Please give details.	No		
Is there likely to be an adverse impact on people with any of the following protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, or NYCC's additional agreed characteristics?			
As part of this assessment, please consider the following questions:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent is this service used by particular groups of people with protected characteristics? Does the proposal relate to functions that previous consultation has identified as important? Do different groups have different needs or experiences in the area the proposal relates to? 			
If for any characteristic it is considered that there is likely to be a significant adverse impact or you have ticked 'Don't know/no info available', then a full EIA should be carried out where this is proportionate. You are advised to speak to your Equality rep for advice if you are in any doubt.			
Protected characteristic	Yes	No	Don't know/No info available
Age		✓	
Disability		✓	
Sex (Gender)		✓	
Race		✓	
Sexual orientation		✓	
Gender reassignment		✓	
Religion or belief		✓	
Pregnancy or maternity		✓	
Marriage or civil partnership		✓	
NYCC additional characteristic			
People in rural areas		✓	
People on a low income		✓	
Carer (unpaid family or friend)		✓	

<p>Does the proposal relate to an area where there are known inequalities/probable impacts (e.g. disabled people’s access to public transport)? Please give details.</p>	<p>No, the response to the consultation will not have an equalities impact.</p>		
<p>Will the proposal have a significant effect on how other organisations operate? (e.g. partners, funding criteria, etc.). Do any of these organisations support people with protected characteristics? Please explain why you have reached this conclusion.</p>	<p>Any such impacts will be because of decisions made by WYCA on all of the responses received from the consultation, not just the NYCC response.</p>		
<p>Decision (Please tick one option)</p>	<p>EIA not relevant or proportionate:</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Continue to full EIA:</p>
<p>Reason for decision</p>	<p>This is a response to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority’s Connectivity Infrastructure Plan consultation. The response itself will not directly have an equalities impact.</p>		
<p>Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)</p>	<p>Barrie Mason</p>		
<p>Date</p>	<p>12/05/21</p>		



Climate change impact assessment

The purpose of this assessment is to help us understand the likely impacts of our decisions on the environment of North Yorkshire and on our aspiration to achieve net carbon neutrality by 2030, or as close to that date as possible. The intention is to mitigate negative effects and identify projects which will have positive effects.

This document should be completed in consultation with the supporting guidance. The final document will be published as part of the decision making process and should be written in Plain English.

If you have any additional queries which are not covered by the guidance please email climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk

Please note: You may not need to undertake this assessment if your proposal will be subject to any of the following:

Planning Permission
Environmental Impact Assessment
Strategic Environmental Assessment

However, you will still need to summarise your findings in in the summary section of the form below.

Please contact climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk for advice.

Title of proposal	WYCA Connectivity Infrastructure Plan consultation response
Brief description of proposal	To seek approval to submit a response to the consultation
Directorate	BES
Service area	Highways and Transportation
Lead officer	William Britton
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the impact assessment	
Date impact assessment started	13/04/21

Options appraisal

Were any other options considered in trying to achieve the aim of this project? If so, please give brief details and explain why alternative options were not progressed.

No

What impact will this proposal have on council budgets? Will it be cost neutral, have increased cost or reduce costs?

Please explain briefly why this will be the result, detailing estimated savings or costs where this is possible.

None

APPENDIX C

<p>How will this proposal impact on the environment?</p> <p>N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.</p>	<p>Positive impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>No impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>Negative impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?</p> <p>Where possible/relevant please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes over and above business as usual • Evidence or measurement of effect • Figures for CO₂e • Links to relevant documents 	<p>Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.</p>	<p>Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.</p>	
<p>Minimise greenhouse gas emissions e.g. reducing emissions from travel, increasing energy efficiencies etc.</p>	Emissions from travel		*				
	Emissions from construction		*		Phase 1 is the identification of a high-level walking and cycling network, and does not involve physical construction at this point.		
	Emissions from running of buildings		*				
	Other		*				
<p>Minimise waste: Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost e.g. reducing use of single use plastic</p>			*				
<p>Reduce water consumption</p>			*				
<p>Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise)</p>			*				

APPENDIX C

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<p>Ensure resilience to the effects of climate change e.g. reducing flood risk, mitigating effects of drier, hotter summers</p>		<p>*</p>				
<p>Enhance conservation and wildlife</p>		<p>*</p>				
<p>Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of North Yorkshire's landscape</p>		<p>*</p>				
<p>Other (please state below)</p>		<p>*</p>				

Are there any recognised good practice environmental standards in relation to this proposal? If so, please detail how this proposal meets those standards.

N/A

Summary Summarise the findings of your impact assessment, including impacts, the recommendation in relation to addressing impacts, including any legal advice, and next steps. This summary should be used as part of the report to the decision maker.

West Yorkshire Combined Authority’s Connectivity Infrastructure Plan consultation seeks views on its plans to improve transport connectivity in West Yorkshire; part of this focuses on the importance of sustainable transport, particularly with an aim of supporting a reduction in transport-related emissions.

NYCC’s response to the consultation does not have a negative impact on climate change, and expresses support towards WYCA’s ambitions to reduce carbon emissions through sustainable transport interventions.

Sign off section

This climate change impact assessment was completed by:

Name	William Britton
Job title	Transport Planning Officer
Service area	Highways and Transport
Directorate	BES
Signature	W Britton
Completion date	13/04/2021

Authorised by relevant Assistant Director (signature): Barrie Mason

Date: 12/05/21