

North Yorkshire Council

Skipton and Ripon Area Committee

05 March 2026

Briefing Paper – Ripon Mobility Hub

Briefing from the Corporate Director Environment

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Members of the Area Committee on the current progress of the Ripon Mobility Hub feasibility study and to summarise the emerging findings from this work.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Skipton and Ripon Area Committee (AC) commissioned a study to assess the feasibility of a mobility hub in Ripon. The study focuses on finding options to improve sustainable travel choices by enhancing facilities for walking, cycling and other low-carbon modes and evaluates the extent to which a mobility hub could help achieve wider transport policy objectives of reducing private car dependency, supporting carbon reduction, improving air quality, supporting economic growth and improving the experience of transport users. It assesses the potential of a mobility hub to enhance the overall quality of the city centre by creating a more attractive and accessible environment, encouraging increased footfall, longer dwell times and greater local economic activity.
- 2.2 There are three key stages in the Department for Transport (DfT) WebTAG business case development process before a scheme can be considered 'shovel ready'. The Strategic Outline Case (SOC) establishes the need for intervention by identifying the problems, setting objectives, generating a long list of options and undertaking initial sifting to understand feasibility. The Outline Business Case (OBC) then develops the shortlisted options in detail, including robust modelling, appraisal and assessment of costs, benefits, risks and deliverability. Finally, the Full Business Case (FBC) sets out the arrangements for delivery, procurement and funding, and defines how the scheme's impacts will be monitored and evaluated.
- 2.3 The work funded by the AC, to produce a feasibility study, is commensurate with a Strategic Outline Case, representing the first step in the business case process, however, during the development process, more detailed analysis than is normally expected at this stage was produced. This has meant that some material is now being reorganised so that the SOC is presented in a clear and concise format, with the more detailed technical content moved into a separate document for use in the next stage, the Outline Business Case (OBC) stage. This is essentially a formatting and restructuring exercise and is not expected to change the main findings or the recommendations in the report. To complete the OBC, a decision is required to understand how the scheme will be delivered, more detail is given on this at section 5 of this study.

3.0 RIPON MOBILITY HUB FEASIBILITY REPORT

- 3.1 The study identifies the main transport challenges in Ripon as congestion, parking pressures, limited access to rail via Thirsk, and gaps in active travel connectivity. It highlights that Ripon's compact form and growing population create both challenges and opportunities: while car dependency is high, most internal trips are short enough to be walked, cycled or supported through improved public transport. The objectives of the scheme are therefore to strengthen sustainable travel options, reduce reliance on private cars, support the economy, and create a more inclusive, connected transport system.
- 3.2 A long list of more than 30 potential interventions was developed including bus service improvements, bus station changes, mobility hub features and satellite mobility hub locations. These interventions were sifted against the project objectives and packaged together resulting in three deliverable options which were appraised alongside a Do-Nothing baseline. The four options are summarised in the table below;

Table 1 - Options

Option	Description	Capital Cost	Operational Cost (p/annum)
Do Nothing	No changes	N/A	N/A
Option A – Do Minimum	No bus service improvements Do-minimum bus station changes (a new footpath in front of the station) Small bike share + car club Public realm + information improvements	£175k-£400k	£20k-£50k
Option B – Do Medium	Doubles frequency of 70/X70 bus to Thirsk Addition of bus laybys both sides of Moss Arcade so busses stop in the direction of travel Small mobility hub building Small scale bike + car share schemes Public realm and info upgrades Satellite hubs only in the city centre (4)	£600k-£1.5m	£250k-£300k
Option C – Do Maximum	Doubles frequency of 70/X70 bus to Thirsk and adds weekend/extra services Major bus station redevelopment Small mobility hub building Bike and car share schemes Public realm & info upgrades nine satellite hubs (9)	£1.3m-£2.0m	£350k-£400k

- 3.3 The Do-Nothing option fails to address core problems, achieve the objectives and offers no further policy alignment, modal shift or strategic benefit.
- 3.4 Option A is the 'Do Minimum' option and is considered to provide limited benefits. The suggested improvements are largely confined to small-scale public realm enhancements, with no changes to bus services, meaning there are no improved options to access Thirsk rail station or support wider modal shift opportunities.

- 3.5 Option B is the 'Do Medium' option which offers a good balance of strategic benefit, risk and affordable costs. This option increases bus frequency, increases opportunities for modal shift as well as introducing local satellite hubs which mean you do not have to travel to the city centre to travel sustainably or switch mode. This option is considered feasible within the available space, supported (in principle) by bus operators, has lower capital and operational costs and is lower risk.
- 3.6 Option C is the 'Do Maximum' option which offers the greatest strategic benefit but scores poorly on deliverability, cost (both capital and operational) and risk. It provides additional bus stands, improved circulation for larger vehicles and a significantly larger mobility-hub footprint. However, this option would require major redevelopment of the bus station, including the relocation of coach parking to an alternative site, for which new land would need to be secured. Option C introduces more satellite hubs in locations across the wider area, it comes with a higher construction cost, requires more complex engineering and there is a higher reliance on multiple partners (bus operators, landowners, coach operators) which introduces greater delivery and operational risk than the other options.
- 3.7 A Multi-Criteria Assessment Tool (MCAT) was used to compare these options against the scheme objectives and deliverability criteria. The MCAT results show Option B achieves the highest overall score (41/60), offering a good balance of benefits, deliverability and risks; Option C scores 37/60 with greater strategic reach but materially higher costs and risks; Option A scores 34/60 reflecting limited-service improvements; and the Do Nothing option scores 20/60. On this basis, Option B is identified as the most balanced, beneficial and achievable option for Ripon.
- 3.8 The study emphasises that interventions must be delivered at a scale and pace appropriate for Ripon, balancing the cost of delivery and the need to ensure that investment meaningfully contributes to the project objectives without committing to infrastructure that is undeliverable or unaffordable to operate.
- 3.9 An example of how this principle is applied in the study is with the satellite hubs included at Options B and C. Both options propose several small, low-cost satellite hubs (located at places where people naturally begin their journeys). Option B recommends four satellite hubs concentrated within the city centre area where demand is high, whereas Option C proposes a wider, more dispersed network of nine hubs including several hubs at leisure and rural destinations. The study concludes that while Option C offers wider geographic reach and serves a broader range of potential users, the scale of its network, combined with higher capital and operational costs, increased complexity and greater delivery risks, makes it disproportionate to Ripon's needs. Option B therefore is identified as the more balanced, feasible and appropriately scaled option for Ripon.
- 3.10 Members are provided with this update to confirm progress and to inform them that the study has a positive outcome; that there are feasible options for a mobility hub that would meaningfully contribute to the strategic objectives creating a more inclusive, connected transport system in Ripon, though the scale of delivery is important.
- 3.11 Members should also note that the study recognises that a mobility hub cannot deliver its full benefits in isolation. Other complementary projects, particularly those identified through the Ripon Renewal Project, such as active travel improvements, must also be realised to support safe and convenient access to the hub(s) and to maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport use across the wider area.
- 3.12 Before progressing to the next stage of work, a funding, delivery and operational model must be agreed because the business case, costs, procurement approach and long-term operation of the hub all depend on who will lead and manage the scheme.

4.0 Next Steps

- 4.1 Officers are working with the consultants to complete the outstanding work, primarily around the presentation and structure of the SOC report. Following this, an agreement for a delivery model will need to be reached so that the Outline Business Case can be progressed, building on the work already completed.
- 4.2 Officers will provide a further update at the next meeting of the AC in June 2026, once the SOC has been completed and the OBC has been updated; Officers will confirm the funding position and confirm the position outlined in this briefing note.

5.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 Alternative options for a sustainable transport are considered within the study. However, officers believe that the recommended option will best contribute to the Council's priorities and secure better outcomes for people living, working and visiting Ripon.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 At this stage, there are no direct financial implications arising from noting the contents of this report. Any future financial considerations, particularly those relating to the preferred delivery model, capital requirements, and long-term operational costs, will be brought to Members as part of the Outline Business Case at the next stage.
- 6.2 At present, no capital funding has been identified to deliver any of the mobility hub options. Once a preferred option and delivery model have been agreed through the Outline Business Case, further work will be required to establish a viable funding strategy. This may include pursuing external grant opportunities via the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority or other national funding streams or seeking capital allocation from North Yorkshire Council though there are no relevant funding opportunities at the moment. Any commitment to progress to delivery, including approval of the required funding, will be subject to consideration and formal decision by the NYC Executive.

7.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no legal implications associated with submitting this briefing note for information.

8.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Consideration has been given to the potential for any equality impacts arising from the recommendations. It is the view of officers that at this stage the recommendations do not have an adverse impact on any of the protected characteristics identified in the Equalities Act 2010. A copy of the Equality Impact Assessment screening form is attached as **Appendix A**. Equalities impacts will be revisited at key stages in the project.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The proposed schemes should have positive impacts on greenhouse gas emissions and pollution, but a full climate change impact assessment is not proportionate for the purposes of this briefing note. Further assessments will be carried out during the development of approved schemes. A copy of the Climate Change Impact Assessment initial screening form is attached as **Appendix B**.

10.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 The recommendation is made to ensure Members are fully informed of the progress made on the Ripon Mobility Hub feasibility study and the positive outcomes identified to date. The study demonstrates that there are viable and deliverable options capable of strengthening sustainable travel choices, supporting wider policy objectives and contributing to a more inclusive and accessible transport system for Ripon. Noting the outcomes at this stage enables the project to move forward in a structured and timely manner, allowing officers to finalise the Strategic Outline Case, establish an agreed delivery and operational model, and prepare for development of the Outline Business Case. The recommendations are intended to provide assurance that the scheme is progressing in line with best-practice business case requirements and positions the Council to take informed decisions at the next stage of work.

11.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1
- i) That Members of the Area Committee note the progress made on the Ripon Mobility Hub feasibility study, including the positive outcomes of the assessment and the identification of Option B as the most balanced and deliverable approach.
 - ii) That Members acknowledge the next steps required to finalise the Strategic Outline Case and progress towards the Outline Business Case, including confirming the preferred delivery and operational model for the scheme.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Equalities Impact Assessment

Appendix B – Climate Change Implications

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

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18 February 2026

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