
Date: 20 July 2023

North Yorkshire Council: Let's Talk Transport Consultation

Zero Carbon Harrogate Response

Introduction

We welcome this opportunity to contribute to this consultation which we understand will feed into the development of a new Local Transport Plan (LTP). We would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you as part of your consultation to discuss in further detail some of the comments and suggestions that we set out below.

At Zero Carbon Harrogate (ZCH) we understand that people need to get from A to B and reducing our reliance on cars will not be easy. That's why we're calling on North Yorkshire Council to:

- ✓ Ensure sustainability and carbon reduction is at the heart of the new integrated Local Transport Plan and that cutting-edge best practice is followed and adapted to meet the needs of local people.
- ✓ Create an ambitious vision for a more sustainable future that inspires and reassures local people about the benefits of a more sustainable approach to transport.
- ✓ Make it easier, safer and more enjoyable to walk, cycle or use shared or public transport.
- ✓ Commit to ambitious, measurable carbon reduction targets.

Strategic points

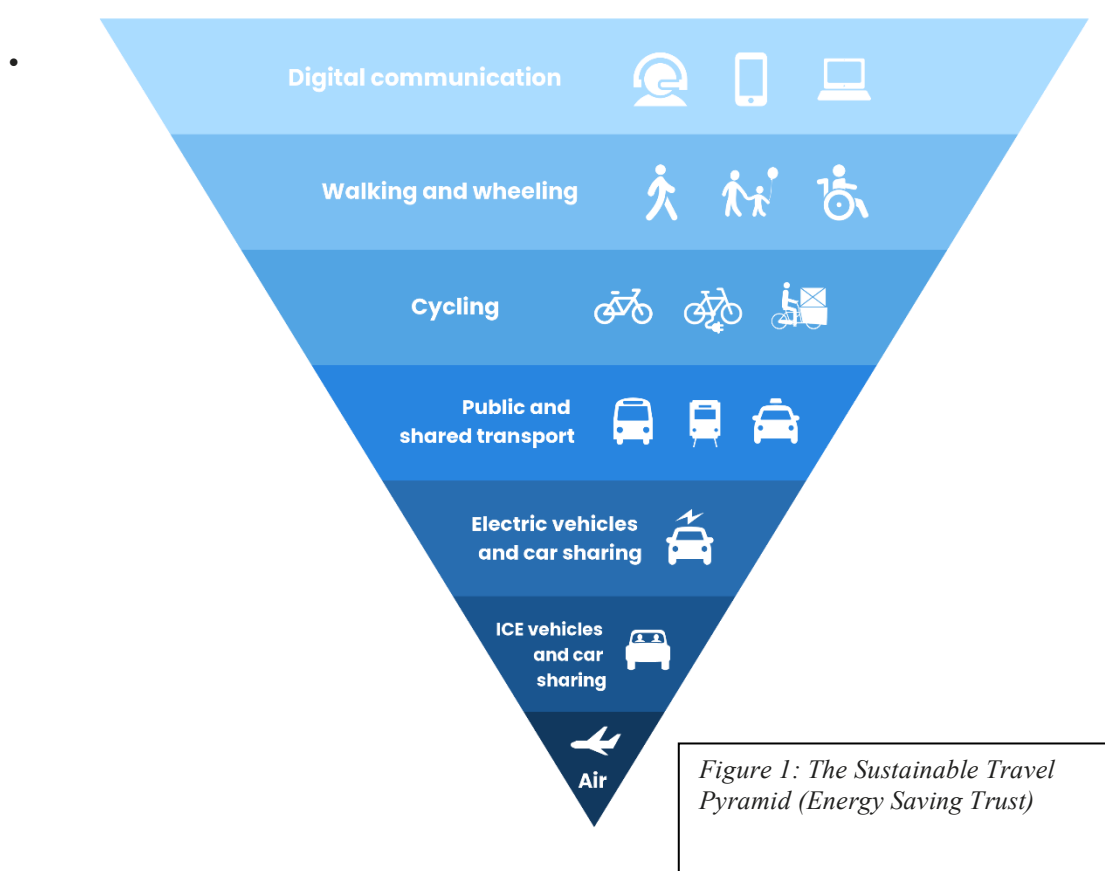
- **Prioritising Decarbonisation**
Transport is the biggest carbon emitter for the county - 28% (1,648.6KtCO₂e)¹, so this should be reflected through prioritising low carbon travel in the LTP and in all NYC decision making processes where transport will be affected.
- **Setting a Vision**
It is critical to have clarity of what net zero carbon travel across the county could look like and setting ambitious targets to reach this objective. By setting out a sustainable travel vision for North Yorkshire (and in more detail Harrogate, Knaresborough, rural areas etc) showing what shape this could take in 10-20 years' time it should be possible to garner public support for each individual step that will be needed to reach this objective.

Clarity on targets and risks should form part of this vision. For example, the YNYLEP's Routemap to Carbon Negative includes 'reducing private car usage by 48%'. Aligning to regional targets and ensuring that we don't have different targets in different policy/strategy documents for basically the same area. In addition to setting targets, part of the strategy needs to identify the risks of not decarbonising travel and the impacts that this will have on the local economy, health, climate impacts and wildlife.

- Be guided by the Sustainable Travel Pyramid:

1. UK greenhouse gas emissions national statistics 2020

The Sustainable Travel Pyramid offers a clear set of the priorities that can be applied throughout the LTP and wider NYC policy. For example: encouraging local business to support home working where appropriate; providing pedestrian priority over parked cars on pavements and at pedestrian crossings; supporting cargo bike initiatives; allowing bus routes through Low Traffic Neighbourhoods.



is ample exemplar of sustainable travel projects from around the UK and Europe with data to illustrate the impact on carbon emissions, economy and health.

Ensure that the LTP takes into account where the data points to quick wins for carbon reduction, where there is relatively little cost and significant benefit. For example, the single step of reducing the speed limit by 10mph on Motorways and

A roads across the county would yield a 44KtCO₂e and 63KtCO₂e reductions respectively and would probably be the cheapest and quickest win in carbon emissions reductions. This equates to all commercially used electricity (108 KtCO₂e) in the county and is almost as much as all public sector energy use (128 KtCO₂e).

- Policy Framework.

A wide range of policies need to be deployed to match the transport needs of our county. These should be shaped on national best practice, rather than minor revisions of current practice. For example: transport services in the right places at the right price; fixed speed cameras not ad hoc mobile ones; commitment to 20mph zones; shorter HGVs (not longer ones that get stuck in rural communities); and banning obstructive pavement parking.

Across the county but exemplified in the Western Arc of Harrogate planning policy, layouts that design in sustainable transport infrastructure is essential. Here there is provision in the Local Plan for the development of over 4000 homes, but to date the planning policy has been inadequately deployed to provide sustainable travel and minimise carbon emissions. To ensure the effectiveness of the new LTP urgent additional planning policy, in the form of climate change supplementary planning document, is needed.

- Communication

While there is high public support for action on climate change, as the recent NYC Let's Talk Local consultation identified, when specific behavioural and infrastructure changes are proposed, there can be considerable opposition, exemplified in the Harrogate Station Gateway Project. A major communication strategy is required to raise awareness of the reality of the significant changes needed to decarbonise travel, to highlight the benefits that come with this transition together with the risks of not taking action.

The general public need to be aware that there is no "silver bullet" (commonly thought to be the transition to electric vehicles) to decarbonising travel and that

a wide range of behaviour and infrastructure changes are needed. Enabling a much more open approach to diversity of travel choices is essential to reach a point where there is a public sentiment of "while I am not able/choose not to walk to the hospital/ride a cargo bike/take the bus to work etc, I support all those who do because they cut our carbon emissions".

- **Renaming and Reframing**

We suggest that NYC rebrand the department 'Highways' to a bold and progressive department called 'Sustainable Transport' which encompasses all forms of transport, accessibility, affordability, health and which can support and sustain a healthy green economy.

In Harrogate 16% of households do not own a car. It is essential that the LTP addresses their needs. In the past, car-centric policies have unfairly impacted this group as making travel choices less convenient and more expensive.

As well as carbon emissions the LTP needs to incorporate the potential to bring wider benefits. For example, congestion and high traffic volumes in Harrogate and Knaresborough town centres and surrounding streets creates poor air quality. This damages health and the impacts can be seen in the rising cases of respiratory disorders amongst school children who are disproportionately affected by pollution.

Suggestions for the LTP

1. Digital Communications

- a. Include digital communication in the LTP
- b. Continue to deliver high speed broadband across North Yorkshire
- c. Incentivise and support businesses to allow home and hybrid working
- d. Support or lead campaigns such as Car Free Fridays
- e. Support change of use for office space within the local plan and, if necessary, introduce a supplementary planning document to enable this to take place in advance of the adoption of a new local plan for NYC.

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- f. Design work from home facilities into all new housing developments e.g., local meeting hubs, house designs to include home office space.

2. Walking and Wheeling

(Including consideration for mobility scooters, shopping trolleys and pushchair access)

- a. A comprehensive plan for Low Traffic Neighbourhoods to open up a wide range of safe pedestrian routes;
- b. A comprehensive plan for School Streets to create a safe pedestrian environment around every school across the county
- c. Systematically redesigning street space to favour pedestrians to create a safer, more pleasant environment. For example:
 - i. Copenhagen crossings that support pedestrian priority on side roads
 - ii. Widening pavements and providing barriers to the vehicle carriageway where possible
 - iii. Narrowing vehicle carriageways to cut speed
 - iv. Introducing additional puffin and zebra crossings to ensure safe and easy pedestrian routes (for all ages and abilities). For example, on Stray Rein/Wetherby Road and Oatlands Drive Harrogate.
 - v. Increase street trees, shrubs and grass to improve the pedestrian experience and help with climate adaptation
- d. Introducing a 20mph speed limit in all residential areas.
- e. Prioritising pedestrians at pelican/puffin crossings (i.e. the signal changes as soon as the button is pressed) to ensure that walking route times are reliable and reduced.
- f. For new developments pedestrian access should be the design priority. Careful consideration of design of access to homes, services, safety, shortest routes and house design for pedestrians (eg storage space for pushchairs, coats and umbrellas).
- g. Work with local businesses and schools to support travel planning and incentivise behavioural change to active travel
- h. Work with local health care providers to promote active travel where appropriate as a wellbeing and health solution for mental health and medical conditions.

3. Cycling

- a. Lead on the coordination of commercial delivery hubs to reduce the number of single item deliveries by multiple providers, particularly to rural locations.
- b. In urban areas across the county lead on establishing local consolidation centres to reduce the need for van and truck traffic within the town. Replace multiple "white van" movements with "final mile" deliveries by cargo bike services.
- c. Cycling needs to be supported with high quality infrastructure that enables end to end journeys. The Chris Boardman test in the Manchester strategy was whether a parent would feel comfortable with their 8-year-old child cycling unaccompanied to school.
- d. Secure cycle parking is needed at all key destinations. Secure cycle storage is a major need in Harrogate as cycle theft in town is a problem.
- e. Bike loan schemes, which need to be supported by safe routes and secure storage.
- f. Key cycle routes to link to new housing developments. For example, the Western Arc of Harrogate there are no planned cycle links to the town centre, secondary schools or other key town destinations. All that is proposed are cycle ways within the developments.
- g. There are no safe cycle routes in Harrogate other than the Greenway from Bilton to Ripley and the Starbeck link. There are dangerous white lines on roads and pavements and a low-quality partial scheme on Otley Road, but nothing that can provide safe end to end journeys. Schemes that have been government funded have been delayed indefinitely or abandoned:
 - Otley Road – partial low-quality build and then abandoned
 - Beech Grove – abandoned
 - Oatlands Drive – abandoned
 - Victoria Avenue – delayed with no plan / funding shortfall
 - A59 Knaresborough Road – delayed with no plan / funding shortfall
 - Station Gateway – delayed with no plan
 - No other schemes are planned or in progress

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- h. Walking and cycling. NYC has not yet published the update to the Harrogate Cycle Infrastructure Plan to include walking.
 - i. Where safe cycle routes use the main road, carriageway resurfacing to ensure cycle safety is essential.
 - j. Communication of cycling as a mode of transport. The profile of cycling as a sport has been considerably raised by a series of major international cycling events in North Yorkshire, not least the UCI World Championships in Harrogate. The disruption from this sporting event generated considerable antagonism from some residents. Considerable remedial communication work needs to establish support for cycling as a non-disruptive mode of transport.

4. Public and Shared Transport

- a. Bus services need to be frequent and affordable compared to car use.
- b. Joined up train and bus services are needed with frequency and pricing that meet their needs with comparable cost and convenience to car use. This would be welcome for all but particularly to help low wage hospitality and retail workers in Harrogate who often commute from out of town due to the level of local house prices.
- c. Frequent and upfront bus services proposed for the new developments. The current proposals for routes for the Western Arc of Harrogate are far from adequate to discourage car dependency and need to be priced to be affordable compared to car use.
- d. Adequate funding for school bus services.
- e. Strategically place car club vehicles at public transport interchange hubs and terminuses e.g. Ripon bus station, to allow onward travel by car as necessary.

5. Electric Vehicles and Car Sharing

- a. Working with local businesses and community groups to incentivise car sharing for all journeys not just commuting e.g. school drop offs, children's after school activities, shopping, leisure journeys.
- b. Expand the current Car Club in Harrogate and Knaresborough to every town and village in North Yorkshire to provide access to a car without the need for car ownership.

- c. Strategically place Car Club vehicles at visitor entry points to allow tourists to arrive by public transport but have access areas across North Yorkshire not served by public transport.
- d. Develop and implement a strategy for the roll out of EV charging for residents on streets without off-street parking. Make use of community buildings with car parking facilities that could provide space for overnight charging centres.

6. Reducing the impact of internal combustion engined vehicles

- a. Work with National Highways to reduce speed limits on the A1M to 60mph. 27% of North Yorkshire's travel related carbon emissions come from vehicles on the A1M and M62. Reducing speed limits from 70mph to 60mph would cut emissions by 10%.
- b. Likewise, introduce a 50mph speed limit across all A, B and C class roads with 60mph for dual carriageways to reduce carbon emissions by 10%, increase safety and for the economic benefit of reduced fuel costs. 39% of travel emissions (637KtCO₂e) in the county come from A roads, 29% from minor roads.

The single step of changing the speed limit on Motorways and A roads would yield a 44KtCO₂e and 63KtCO₂e respectively, reduction and would probably be the cheapest and quickest win in carbon emissions reductions.

- c. Introduce a 20mph speed limit in all urban areas across the county to improve safety, reduce noise and generate a pedestrian-priority streetscape.
- d. A comprehensive plan for Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) to restrict through traffic in residential areas and encourage local residents to use active travel over car use. These 15-minute neighbourhoods across each town could provide incentives for local businesses providing goods and services in each area to reduce the needs for out-of-town shopping or longer journeys for basic services.
- e. A comprehensive plan for School Streets, restricting access to drop off and pick up children near schools by car.
- f. Develop and deploy a strategy to reduce on-street parking across in town centres. 3% reduction per annum has worked in other urban areas. Use street

space currently used for parking for wider pavements, cycle paths, mini play parks (in LTNs) or green spaces/trees.

- g. New housing development design should minimise capacity for car parking near houses to encourage safer walking and cycling

7. Highway maintenance and improvement

- a. The emphasis on maintenance of highways should be reconfigured in accordance with the sustainable transport pyramid (see above), with the emphasis being given to providing safe and convenient infrastructure for 'walking and wheels' and cycling.
- b. There should be a rejection of the failed 'predict and provide' policies used over recent decades, with an implicit assumption of ever-increasing vehicle traffic volumes. Rather, the emphasis should be on good accessibility planning, and providing adequate public transport links to key local facilities.

8. Air travel

- a. Supporting the local Yorkshire tourist industry to deploy sustainable travel incentives for visitors
- b. Raising awareness with NY residents of the carbon emissions associated with air travel and promoting holidaying local and staycations
- c. Including in the LTP a position of no support for expansion at neighbouring airports such as Leeds/Bradford and Teesside.

We hope that this note can form the basis of a developing conversation with the Local Transport Plan team.