

Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy – post-public consultation update

Date: 24th June 2021

Report of: Director of City Development

Report to: Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth Scrutiny Board

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

What is this report about?

Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- The Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy sets out our vision for Leeds to be a city where you don't need a car, where everyone has an affordable and accessible choice in how they travel. The strategy sets out the challenges and opportunities facing the district and how we propose to respond to these through policy and infrastructure measures and achieve our vision.
- This report provides an update on the development of the transport strategy following an extensive public consultation and engagement exercise undertaken early 2021. The report will outline the key findings from the consultation, proposed next steps and areas where further consideration needs to be given.
- The strategy will form the Council's transport policy for the district embedding the three Key Pillars of tackling climate change, inclusive growth and health and wellbeing as the overarching objectives for the strategy.

Recommendations

- a) The Scrutiny Board (Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth) are requested to note and provide comments on the update on the Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy following the consultation and engagement exercise; and
- b) The Scrutiny Board (Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth) is asked to determine what - if any - further scrutiny activity is required in relation to the matter referred. If further action is requested by the Board, the work programme will be amended accordingly.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1 This report provides an update on the Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy following an extensive public consultation and engagement exercise undertaken in early 2021. The report also outlines the programme of ongoing work to finalise the strategy and the development of an action plan.

Consultation Feedback

Commonplace

- 2 The Commonplace site launched on 18/12/20 and was open until 11/04/21, over this time the site had 19,072 visitors; 4,634 contributions from 1,739 respondents. 769 respondents have subscribed to be kept updated.
- 3 There is ongoing work analysing the consultation feedback however an initial report has been appended to this report with a summary provided below.
- 4 The feedback received identified that sentiment towards the strategy was largely positive (68%), 12% neutral and 20% either negative or mostly negative as summarised in Figure 1 below.

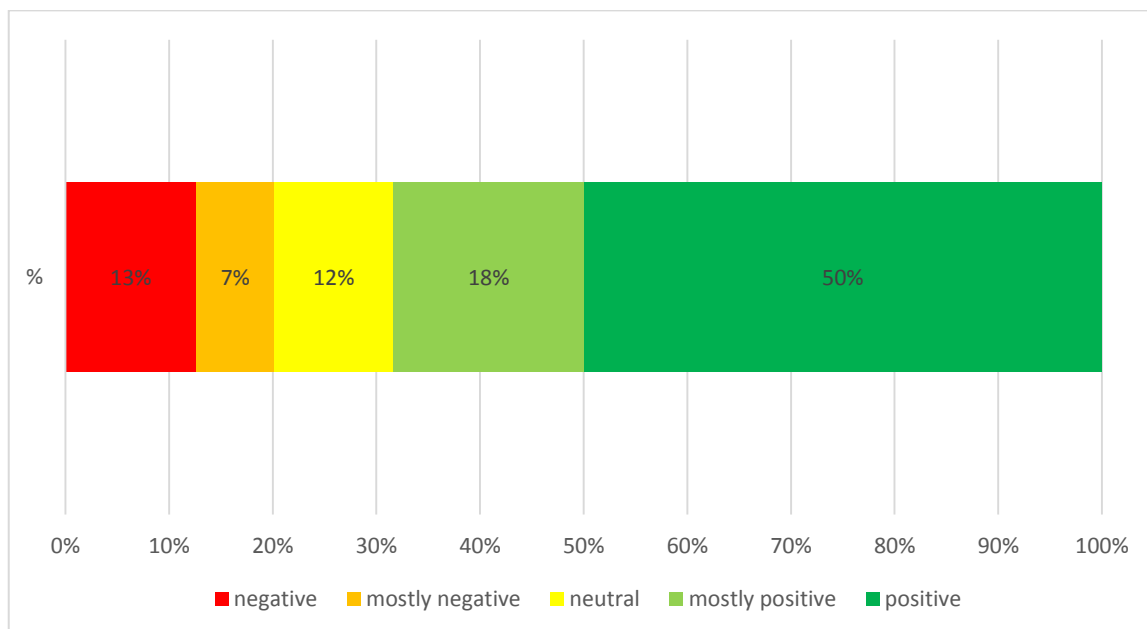


Figure 1 – Overall sentiment toward the Transport Strategy

- 5 The initial results indicated a high agreement amongst respondents (70%) with the objectives of the strategy with other responses of 9% neutral and 20% disagreed or strongly disagreed. A similar result was recorded for the targets, which 71% considered to be very ambitious or ambitious. The breakdown of other responses included neither ambitious nor unambitious (14%), unambitious (7%), very unambitious (4%) and don't know (3%).
- 6 Further analysis has been undertaken to identify why respondents have disagreed or strongly disagreed with the objectives and or found the targets to be unambitious or very un-ambitious. The following top themes have emerged:
 - Economy (12) – responses include “Preserve the economic wellbeing of the city. Avoid a city centre ghost town”, “Economic growth rather than taxing every car related activity” and “Need to focus on Leeds as a place for business and growth rather than wish washy climate and inclusivity goals”.

- Personal Choice (16) responses include “Allow everyone free access to the city - even if they choose to use a car”, “Individual choice on how people wish to travel” and “Not put barriers up or regulations or rules or charges to penalise people making their own transport choice”.
 - Disability (15) responses include “Absolute equality for the disabled”, “There still needs a place for those that have mobility issues to be able to drive in city centre” and “Disabled people must be put at the heart of any changes.”
- 7 The survey asked respondents to prioritise the six big moves of the strategy. A ranked voting analysis identified the following priority for the big moves:
- 1- Enhance public transport,
 - 2- Creating healthier streets, spaces and communities,
 - 3- Deliver mass transit,
 - 4- De-carbonising transport,
 - 5- Transform the city centre; and
 - 6- New mobility solutions.
- 8 Respondents strongly agreed (mean score of 81 out of 100) that more needed to be done to reduce Carbon Emissions from transport however only 58% of respondents were willing to change to a lower carbon mode, other responses to this question include: neither likely or unlikely (15%), quite unlikely (6%), very unlikely (11%), Don't know (1%) and not applicable (8%). Of the respondents who were unlikely or quite unlikely to change, 44 stated they would continue to drive and 28 stated nothing would encourage them to travel differently.
- 9 Respondents were asked what we, Leeds City Council, can do to help you change how you travel, the top result was provision of reasonably priced transport followed by better integration of bus and rail.

Webinars

- 10 In lieu of the inability to host face to face events a series of webinars were held which covered the six big moves alongside initial and closing sessions. The sessions brought together LCC Members, Officers and other key stakeholders including the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, Leeds Transport Advisory Panel, academia, industry and operators. The session included a 30 minute question and answers slot for stakeholders to participate in the discussions.
- 11 The sessions were well attended and have now be re-watched on YouTube over 2,500 times.

Community Committees

- 12 During the engagement the strategy was brought before all ten Community Committees throughout February and March 2021. A range of themes emerged during the committee which include but not limited too;
- The public transport network notably the bus network including timetables, cost, operation and routes.
 - Disability and inclusivity of the transport network –ensuring everyone can access services and that future schemes are right for everyone.
 - Electric vehicle infrastructure – ensuring there is adequate provision of charging facilities to encourage the uptake of electric vehicles.

- Mobility hubs – development of mobility hubs which could ease integration between modes alongside providing enhanced facilities such as real time travel screens.
- Rural transport – the need to recognise the different challenges there are within rural communities compared to urban locations.

Summary and next steps

- 13 The consultation and engagement exercise identified that there is support for the Transport Strategy subject to further amendments and that there is a desire for more detail on the proposals to be brought forward to implement the strategy.
- 14 The two ongoing work streams are as follows: update to the Transport Strategy document in lieu of the consultation results and the development of an Action Plan.
- 15 It is planned to bring the final strategy and action plan to Executive Board in October for adoption.

Transport Strategy update

- 16 The Transport Strategy document update is specifically focused on consultation feedback received and will allow for the strategy to be formally adopted as Council policy.
- 17 The consultation feedback was supportive of the strategy document as it stood however there were key areas identified that further detail should be included within the strategy:
 - Disability and accessibility – Feedback was that more detail was required about the specific needs of these stakeholders to ensure they will be met in subsequent policy and schemes.
 - Motorcycles – Stakeholders identified a need to identify the role of the motorcycles within the city and what provisions should be made such as parking provision and the trial access to bus lanes.
 - Rural Transport – Further work is ongoing to understand national transport policies in rural areas and also identifying best practice examples of rural transport services and how the challenges surrounding lower density and infrequent trips could be overcome. A further study is proposed within the action plan.

Action Plan

- 18 Alongside the finalisation of the strategy an Action Plan is in the process of being drafted. The Action plan sets out the policy development and infrastructure to be undertaken within the three year period between 2021 -2024.
- 19 A three year period has been identified as the most appropriate time frame and permit for the three plan periods over the course of the strategy until 2030. The actions proposed within the plan will be aligned to the six big moves of strategy.
- 20 The plan will detail our continued annual investment in road maintenance, traffic management, road safety, pedestrian crossing review and investment in street lighting.
- 21 A key task within the draft plan will be understand further the carbon impact of our policies and schemes under development. This will help guide future decision making working towards our 2030 carbon neutrality target.
- 22 The plan will set out how we propose to monitor our progress towards our targets and assess the success of schemes to inform future schemes brought forward. A series of Key

Performance Indicators aligned with those of the best council plan will measure the wider impact of the strategy.

Ongoing considerations

- 23 A series of daughter documents to the Transport Strategy are proposed including the Vision Zero Strategy which will outline the actions required to achieve our target of zero people seriously killed or injured. The Vision Zero Strategy is currently under development.
- 24 The Covid-19 pandemic has changed how, when and the frequency of our travel, with travel behaviour patterns only emerging in recent weeks, there is a need to obtain an understanding of the changes and assess how they will affect our priorities. Recent data has evidenced a strong return to private car trips nationally with 90% of weekday trips compare to pre-Covid levels. Bus patronage has made a strong recovery but usage remains 40% below baseline with rail travel around 60% lower. Local data suggests lower travel activity than nationally.¹ We will continue to monitor travel behaviour to identify changes to the historic patterns in order to better inform the implementation of the strategy.
- 25 Both the strategy and action plan will only be successful if we continue to collaborative working approach with local communities and key stakeholders such as the newly elected Mayor and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards Affected: All

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

- 26 The Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy sets out our strategic transport policy for the City and wider district, setting out the challenges and opportunities facing transport and travel and proposed measures to achieve our vision and objectives. Ultimately, the strategy will inform and guide future decision making alongside investment within the city.
- 27 Transport effects everyone with the city, whether you live, work or visit Leeds. Through the previous Transport Conversation and subsequent engagement on Leeds Public Transport Investment Programme, transport has the potential to have a differential on equality groups with particular regard to:
 - Gender-There are different transportation needs for all identities, with certain groups more likely at risk of transport disadvantage, having different travel patterns and be more sensitive to safety concerns.
 - Disability - Disabled people travel more frequently by bus than others, so public transport plays a vital role in ensuring that they can participate in community life and avoid social exclusion. Disability can also lead to a greater reliance on private vehicles.
 - Race - Differential access to the transport system and the effects of transport policies, particularly for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people are around impacts on access to employment, education and training.
 - Age – both younger and older people are both reliant on public transport both sharing concerns over security and reliance on availability of evening and weekend services.
- 28 The draft strategy was developed building on the outcomes of the previous transport conversation and work undertaken in highways to engage with equality groups in subsequent years. To ensure we continue this conversation and have fully considered the impacts of the transport strategy on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration, we

¹ West Yorkshire Combined Authority Covid-19 Fortnightly insights reports – 28th May 2021

organised a series of meetings and virtual events and will seek to carry on the engagement with the following groups: Social Care forum for Race Equality, Leeds Youth Council, Child Friendly Leeds, Access and Use-ability group, Walking on Together, Leeds DEAForum, Youth Forums.

- 29 Leeds Involving People were engaged during the consultation to help reach seldom heard groups. Dedicated focus groups alongside a reading group, looking at the strategy in more detail were held.
- 30 An Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration (ECDI) Screening report was produced and published for the December 2020 Executive Board report. A full ECDI assessment will be undertaken ahead of adoption of the final strategy.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- 31 The Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy was presented to Executive Board as a draft for public consultation in December 2020. An extensive consultation and engagement programme was launched following the approval between December 2020 and April 2021.
- 32 This consultation was done as best practice and aimed to continue the ongoing Transport Conversation started in 2016 with the residents, businesses and other stakeholders within the city.
- 33 The engagement exercise was undertaken during a period of a national lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic therefore no face to face engagement could be held. In order to ensure everyone could access the consultation, copies of the Strategy alongside the questionnaire and a freepost return envelope which could be requested by email or dedicated phone line.
- 34 The purpose of this report is provide an update on the strategy following the consultation and engagement exercise and as such the results have been summarised in the first chapter of this report.

What are the resource implications?

- 35 There are no specific resource implications of this report.
- 36 To achieve the vision and targets set out in this report will require significant investment beyond current programmes and we will continue to work with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and call on national government for the support, powers and funding to deliver the Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy.

What are the legal implications?

- 37 There are no significant legal issues relating to the recommendations in this report.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 38 This report has no specific risk management implications.
- 39 The Transport Strategy and the implementation of the schemes and policies which it will inform will have a fundamental part to play in addressing the corporate risk on keeping the City moving. The delivery of any infrastructure changes does have the potential for disruption in the city. As with the infrastructure delivered to date throughout the district, any disruption will be mitigated through hours of working, new construction methods and network management.

- 40 There is always a risk to the Leeds economy through both policies and external pressures. The Council recognises that growing the economy has positive benefits to the city and that the enhanced connectivity through the Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy is a crucial component of delivering our Inclusive Growth Strategy ambitions.
- 41 The risks relating to the Climate Emergency are that the actions of the Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy do not adequately address the need to reduce carbon emissions in-line with the Council's and national objectives.

Does this proposal support the council's 3 Key Pillars?

Inclusive Growth Health and Wellbeing Climate Emergency

- 42 The council's 3 Key Pillars form the three overarching objectives for the Transport Strategy a summary how the strategy is aligned to the three pillars is as follows:
- 43 In relation to the Climate Emergency the strategy objectives are to reduce the need to travel and the number of car journeys, encourage people to choose active travel and public transport, improve the efficiency of the transport network and encourage the update of zero emission vehicles.
- 44 The strategy's inclusive Growth objectives include supporting access to greater employment opportunities through development of the transport network, regeneration of places through continued investment in infrastructure, improve productivity by reducing time spent travelling and lowering the cost of mobility ensuring everyone has access to an affordable and accessible transport system.
- 45 In relation to Health and Wellbeing, the strategy objectives are to ensure walking and cycling are the first choice for the shortest journeys, reduce the negative effect of transport such as pollution and noise, help make the city the best city to grow old in and child friendly through investment in our streets and eliminate road danger through adoption of a vision zero approach.
- 46 During the consultation period, respondents were asked to prioritise the three objectives in relation to the Transport Strategy, the objectives were prioritised as follows: Tackling Climate Change (Climate Emergency), Improving Health and Wellbeing and Delivering Inclusive Growth

Options, timescales and measuring success

a) What other options were considered?

47 N/A

b) How will success be measured?

48 As part of the ongoing work developing the action plan, a monitoring and evaluation strategy is under development. This will include how we are going to monitor progress towards our targets but also a series of Key Performance Indicators which align with the Best Council Plan.

c) What is the timetable for implementation?

49 The Transport Strategy sets out our policies until 2030. A range of measures will be brought forward over the course of the next nine years, these will be best informed by the feedback received alongside the monitoring and evaluation process to ensure the right schemes and policies are delivered for Leeds.

50 The draft action plan looks to cover an initial three year period between 2021 and 2024. It is proposed that two further Action Plan's covering 2024-2027 to 2027-2030 will follow.

Appendices

51 Interim report on Transport Strategy consultation.

Background papers

52 Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy – Draft for Consultation Executive Board Paper – December 2020.

53 Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screen for the December 2020 Executive Board Report.

54 Full details of both report are available at:
<https://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=52602>