

Report of Director of City Development

Report to Executive Board

Date: 16 December 2020

Subject: Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy – Draft for consultation

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Has consultation been carried out?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary

1. Main issues

- This report provides an overview of the draft Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy, which is included within Appendix 1 and details how we are going to achieve our vision for Leeds, “to be a city where you don’t need a car”.
- The strategy outlines the key challenges and opportunities facing the city, our “big moves” and targets for 2030 in order to achieve the city wide vision, support the three overarching objectives as detailed previously to tackle Climate Change, deliver Inclusive Growth and improve Health and Wellbeing.
- In order to realise our vision, meet our objectives and continue to deliver transformational change we need to work with individuals and businesses, regional bodies including the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Transport for the North as well as Central Government.
- Our ambitious mode shift targets combined with the big moves will not only transform our city but will make significant progress towards our pledge to become a carbon neutral city by 2030.
- It is clear however that these actions alone will not be enough to meet the scale of the climate emergency challenge facing us all and that further measures need to be considered as part of the Transport Strategy’s development. The draft strategy therefore presents options to allow the continuation of our transport conversation with everyone in the city to agree the Connect Leeds Transport Strategy.

- The public consultation and engagement exercise is planned following executive Board through to February 2021 to obtain feedback and inform the development of the Strategy ahead of publication in summer 2021.
- The Council cannot achieve this level of change on its own and alongside the publication of the draft strategy and the following consultation we will also be asking for commitment from other businesses, organisations and individuals to help us achieve our objectives in the strategy.

2. Best Council Plan Implications (click [here](#) for the latest version of the Best Council Plan)

- The Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy sets out a strategy for contributing to inclusive growth, improved health and wellbeing and sustainable infrastructure which are values of the best council plan.
- The Strategy will support the best city priorities for becoming a child friendly and an age friendly city.
- The Strategy will help deliver the outcomes of the Best Council Plan by allowing everyone in Leeds to move around a well-planned city easily, enjoy happy, healthy and active lives and have equal access to a strong economy.

3. Resource Implications

- 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 WYCA and call on national government for the support, powers and funding to deliver the Connecting Leeds Strategy.

Recommendations

Executive Board is recommended to

- a) Endorse the draft Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy as contained within appendix 1.
- b) To note that a public consultation and engagement exercise will follow executive Board through to February 2021 to help inform the final strategy.
- c) Note that the Director of City Development continues to be the lead officer for the delivery of the Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy and will report back to Executive Board in summer 2021 following public consultation with a final strategy.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To update and present the draft Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy to Executive Board, ahead of the public consultation and engagement exercise to be undertaken in early 2021.

2. Background information

- 2.1 An update on the Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy was provided to Executive Board in January 2020 which outlined a background to the development of the transport strategy following on from the Leeds transport conversation and subsequent interim Transport Strategy in 2016.
- 2.2 Since the publication of the interim Transport Strategy, significant progress has been made through the Connecting Leeds programme works including the delivery of world class city centre gateways, park & ride, public transport enhancements, new cycle superhighways and rail stations. The Connecting Leeds programme of works over the forthcoming years will continue to deliver transformational schemes across the city including the closure of city square to private vehicles, more rail stations and public transport infrastructure. The future pipeline of schemes across the district will transform how we travel and ensure the city is ready for the delivery of High Speed 2 (HS2) and has the ability to spread the benefits of both HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) across the city and city region.
- 2.3 In terms of context the following are a some key facts relating to travel and transport in Leeds:
 - In 2018 there were 1,995 road casualties in Leeds, with 337 people killed or seriously injured. Alongside street design, we must work closely with partners including the emergency services to address road safety.
 - Air quality in Leeds continues to improve with the initiatives to modernise fleets undertaken especially with bus, taxi and private hire operators. These measures have been successful in bringing Leeds air quality below the targets set by government. Leeds has six Air Quality Management Areas which need a continued focus.
 - 34% of children aged 11 in Leeds have an unhealthy weight. One in five adults in Leeds is inactive and physical inactivity is our 4th largest cause of disease and disability. Using travel to build exercise into our daily routines is an effective way to address these health issues.
 - 81% of trips up to a mile are already being undertaken on foot and 30% of trips between 1 and 2 miles. Using planning to bring services closer to people will allow these trends to continue
 - Commuting only makes up 16% of all journeys on the network. The strategy therefore must focus on all journeys rather than purely tackling the most congested routes and time of day.
 - 23% of all trips account for 68% of total distance travelled. It is these longer trips which are going to be the most challenging to reduce. We need to work with national, pan-northern and regional partners to align our transport policies for these longer journeys.
 - Younger people are less likely to get a driving license than before. Nationally in 2000 75% of 21-30 year olds had a driving licence, this figure has dropped to only

62% in 2019. In urban areas such as Leeds this will be lower still, which points to a generational shift in travel choices potentially through a range of issues including the advent of technology, the increased cost of motoring and concern for the environment.

- Members will be aware of the government announcement to ban the sale of new petrol and diesel cars from 2030. This policy proposal from national government is complementary to the ambitions outlined in the draft strategy.
- 2.4 The strategy document at appendix A gives a much more detail on the current context and discusses the future challenges facing the city's transport system.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 The overarching Connecting Leeds vision is for "Leeds to be a city where you don't need a car". Achieving this vision of moving our transport system away from personal car ownership, towards more efficient, low carbon, shared, active and public transport based system will:
- Allow individuals to choose the most suitable transport option for each journey.
 - Dramatically reduce the number of vehicles needed.
 - This efficiency will translate into reduced cost of travel for all.
 - Reduce congestion by making more efficient use of the road space available.
 - Reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality.
 - Allow more efficient use of land, with less space needed for parking.
- 3.2 The Transport Strategy will enable Leeds to retain its role as local, regional and national transport hub and prepare the city for the arrival of Northern Powerhouse Rail and High Speed 2. HS2 in combination with Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) is expected to help transform the economy of the North of England by significantly improving the capacity, frequency and journey time of rail links between the region's main economic centres. The Strategy will ensure these benefits are distributed across city and wider city region maximising the investment.
- 3.3 Our vision is aligned to three key objectives:
- *Tackling Climate Change*
 - *Delivering Inclusive growth*
 - *Improving health and wellbeing*

Tackling Climate Change

- 3.4 Tackling Climate Change and meeting our City pledge for carbon neutrality by 2030 is one of the greatest challenges we face. The way we manage transport over the next decade has important implications for our streets, public places, our future growth as a city and future generations in terms of addressing the climate emergency. Motorised traffic makes a significant contribution to environmental challenges we face as a city. To begin to resolve these problems, Leeds must become a city where walking, cycling and green public transport become the most appealing and practical choices for many more journeys. For us every journey matters and our aim is to change the transport mix and reduce the number of car journeys. Therefore we need to:

- Reduce the need for travel and the number of car journeys
- Shift people from cars to public transport and active travel
- Improve the efficiency of the transport network through public transport investment to make best use of our road space and tackle congestion

Delivering Inclusive growth

- 3.5 The Inclusive Growth Strategy acknowledges the role of Transport in supporting and delivering inclusive growth in the city. Transport can help develop and regenerate places supporting the economy with the efficient movement of goods and people.
- 3.6 The Transport Strategy aims to improve connectivity for all communities and their access to opportunities through reducing cost barriers associated with transport. The delivery of new infrastructure will enable walking and cycling, the cheapest modes of travel, will expand opportunities in the most deprived localities.
- 3.7 Embedded in the strategy is the requirement to ensure the accessibility of the transport system works for everyone in the city. Throughout the development of schemes and the strategy we engage with accessibility groups to ensure their needs are catered for in the design of our streets and the services which operate in the city.

Improving the Health and Wellbeing of Residents

- 3.8 The streets of Leeds bind our city together – connecting communities, businesses, families and friends. They can improve our health and wellbeing, by reducing social exclusion and loneliness as well as promote physical activity such as walking and cycling. Healthy streets provide everyone with better access to education, services and employment opportunities as well as creating an environment where businesses can thrive. A healthy street environment will have far reaching benefits across all our daily lives. In essence streets provide an enormous opportunity for transport to improve everyone’s quality of life and broader experience of our city.
- 3.9 The Connecting Leeds Vision combined with the three overarching objectives have guided the development of the draft Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy attached at Appendix 1. The strategy outlines the key challenges and opportunities facing the city, our “big moves” and what further measures may need to be considered.

Big Moves

- 3.10 To achieve the vision and enable our objectives to be achieved, the strategy outlines six big moves, which will be our focus areas for the strategy going forward:
- Decarbonising Transport – *Reducing the need to travel, re-mode how we travel away from private car use and encouraging the further uptake of Alternative Fuelled vehicles and associate infrastructure.*
 - Creating healthier streets and communities – *ensuring walking and cycling are the first choice for the shortest trips, creating places and spaces where people want to spend time which are inclusive and accessible to all.*
 - Transform the city centre – continue to deliver and develop transformational change in the city centre, from world- class gateways to ensuring all modes are integrated, supporting Leeds role as a local, regional and national transport hub.

- Enhance public transport – build on the successes we have had in recent years at improving the bus network and working with partners to expand and enhance the offering in the future.
- New mobility solutions – thinking about transport differently, encouraging the use of shared transport, paying for transport differently and the use of technologies to improve mobility in the city.
- Deliver a mass transit network –delivering a low carbon mass transit in Leeds, enhancing the transformational work already going on in the city centre through partnership with the Combined Authority.

Covid-19 Pandemic

- 3.11 The Covid-19 pandemic has brought about fundamental changes to how we live, work and enjoy our city. It is true that we do not know the long term impacts of Covid-19 on how we travel in the city. We do know that traffic levels peaked at 80% of normal levels in September and October, and that there will be some return to offices in the forthcoming years.
- 3.12 The Leeds Economic Recovery Framework sets out how we adapt and respond to coronavirus and seek to build resilience into the economy. The transport strategy and policies measures detailed will help contribute towards a greener and more resilient economy.

Targets

- 3.13 The targets for the transport strategy are set out into three distinct areas:
- **Net Zero Carbon Emissions by 2030**
 - **Vision Zero**
 - **Mode shift**

Vision Zero

- 3.14 Our Vision Zero target is for no one to be killed or seriously injured on our roads by 2040. We know that incidents are preventable and Vision Zero shares responsibility for fatalities from road users, to engineers to road operators.

Mode Shift

- 3.15 The January 2020 update on the Transport Strategy set out ambitious 10 year mode split targets to 2027 from the 2017 baseline. For the Transport Strategy, these have been extrapolated out to 2030. The revised 2030 are proposed below
- Bus Increase +130%
 - Rail Increase +100%
 - Walking Increase +33%
 - Cycling Increase +400%
 - Car Decrease -30%
- 3.16 This means by 2030, travel choices need to change, so trips in Leeds are only 41 per cent by private car, walking 31 per cent, 22 per cent by public transport, four per cent cycling and two per cent other modes.
- 3.17 These targets were considered ambitious pre-covid pandemic. Whilst covid-19 pandemic has changed how we travelled over the last year, the long term effects on

travel behaviour are not known. Recent research by the RAC¹ has suggested that attitudes to public transport have regressed 18 years as a result of pandemic, with more people choosing to travel by car. Retaining these ambitious targets is required in order to achieve the scale of change required to meet the Climate Emergency pledge. When the targets are combined with the expected population growth and technology change would reduce the transport carbon emissions by up to 43%.

Consideration of additional measures

- 3.18 Our targets combined with the big moves will not only transform our city but will make significant progress towards our pledge to become a carbon neutral city by 2030. It is clear however that these actions alone will not be enough to meet the scale of the challenge facing us all and we will require input from regional and national bodies.
- 3.19 The Transport Strategy sets out a range of measures that we will need to consider beyond our existing measures if we are to meet this pledge. As part of the planned consultation exercise feedback will be requested on which measures we should be considered going forward.
- 3.20 The council's has a role in every measure we consider however the nature of that role is dependent on the measure themselves. The role of the council can be set out as follows:
- Influence and encourage – influence individuals, businesses to make low carbon choices
 - Lead – lead on local Leeds specific measures
 - Support – Support measures which need to be brought in at either a West Yorkshire, City Region or Northern scale
 - Lobby – Lobby for measures which can only be introduced at a national or international level

Collaborative Working

- 3.21 The extent to which we are able to deliver this vision will be influenced by the action we take to transform transport in the city, the region and wider north of England. In order to realise our vision, meet our objectives and deliver transformation change we need to work with individuals, businesses, local employment, regional bodies including the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Transport for the North as well as Central Government. Without collaborative working and support, we will be unable to meet the scale of challenges facing us collectively.
- 3.22 The Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy focuses on surface based Transport and it does not therefore cover aviation travel within the City Region, recognising that aviation targets and policies are established at a national level to ensure that all regional airports operate within a common and national policy framework. We have called upon central government to include aviation in national carbon reduction targets, to invest in research and design, which would create new jobs in cleaner aviation technology and to invest in HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail to provide reliable alternatives to domestic flights and flights to near European Neighbours alongside the introduction of a frequent flyer levy.

¹ RAC 2020 - <https://www.rac.co.uk/drive/news/motoring-news/huge-role-for-cars-in-2020-as-public-transport-confidence-hits-18-year-low/>

Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy – the next steps

- 3.23 Public Engagement is planned through to February 2021, to enable everyone to participate to help shape Transport over the next decade and input to how we should be looking to meet our Climate targets. The consultation will inform the final Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy will be presented to executive board during summer 2021.

4 Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 The Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy is a unique opportunity to change the way our city works for the better - but to do this we need the support of the citizens of Leeds. Public consultation events and key stakeholder engagement is planned for early 2021. Online engagement will be undertaken via Commonplace, building on existing successes with this service for engagement on previous Connecting Leeds schemes and plans.
- 4.1.2 Following the publication of the draft transport strategy we will continue our engagement through the Connecting Leeds transport conversation to explore individual's motivation and barriers to changing their travel behaviour as well as explore what residents, communities, businesses, and key stakeholders think about our future transport proposals for Leeds.
- 4.1.3 As highlighted above the Council cannot achieve this level of change on its own and alongside the publication of the draft strategy and the following consultation we will also be asking for commitment from other businesses, organisations and individuals to help us achieve our objectives in the strategy.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 Themes running through this report have an impact on equality and diversity. The Council aims to improve the lives of all its citizens and foster good relations between different groups in the community. The Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy encourages inclusive growth, aiming to ensure that the benefits of a prosperous economy impact on all Leeds citizens, this includes supporting young people, people with disabilities and those suffering from mental health issues.
- 4.2.2 An Equality Diversity, Cohesion and Integration screening has been undertaken to assess the impact of this report on equality and diversity and is provided in appendix 2.

4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

- 4.3.1 The Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy sets out a strategy for contributing to inclusive growth, improved health and wellbeing and sustainable infrastructure which are values of the best council plan.
- 4.3.2 The Strategy will help deliver the outcomes of the Best Council Plan by allowing everyone in Leeds to move around a well-planned city easily, enjoy happy, healthy and active lives and have equal access to a strong economy.

4.3.3 The big moves of the draft Transport Strategy are aligned with the adopted Local plan. The Strategy is also supportive of the principles of the emerging local plan and ongoing local plan review. It is recognised that the council's lead role in land use planning will be an important factor in delivering the outcomes proposed in this strategy.

Climate Emergency

4.3.4 In March 2019 the Council declared a "Climate Emergency". The West Yorkshire Combined Authority, Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees and others have also done so highlighting the importance of this issue across the Leeds City Region and the rest of the country.

4.3.5 Although Climate Emergencies have been declared elsewhere, the time scales for achieving carbon neutrality targets differ. Our pledge is for 2030 however the West Yorkshire Combined Authority are working towards a 2038 target and the Department for Transport's national target is for 2050. This will ultimately mean that different targets are set in relation to transport at the local, regional and national scale.

4.3.6 The Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy sets out our response to the Climate Emergency declaration in transport terms and details what measures and further measures are required to meet our 2030 carbon neutrality pledge.

4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money

4.4.1 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 WYCA and call on national government for the support, powers and funding to deliver the Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy.

4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

4.5.1 There are no significant legal issues relating to the recommendations in this report. This report is eligible for Call-In.

4.6 Risk management

4.6.1 The Transport Strategy and the implementation of the schemes and policies which it will guide have a fundamental part to play in addressing the corporate risk on Keeping the City Moving.

4.6.2 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.

4.6.3 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.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 This report updates Executive Board on the Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy, our vision, overarching themes and big moves. The report highlights the focus on current Strategy development work in terms of articulating the scale of the challenge in meeting carbon reduction targets, alongside potential policy options and infrastructure investment, needed to meet these targets and our wider transport strategy objectives.
- 5.2 Secondly, it launches the Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy, with a draft strategy for Executive Board consideration and public engagement. This will ensure that we deliver a people first transport strategy that reflects the views, experiences and needs of the citizens of Leeds.

6 Recommendations

Executive Board is recommended to

- a) Endorse the draft Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy as contained within appendix 1.
- b) To note that a public consultation and engagement exercise will follow executive Board through to February 2021 to help inform the final strategy.
- c) Note that the Director of City Development continues to be the lead officer for the delivery of the Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy and will report back to Executive Board in summer 2021 following public consultation with a final strategy.

7 Background documents²

- 7.1 None.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 - Transport Strategy
- 8.2 Appendix 2 - Equality Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening

² The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.