

# Leeds Streetscape Space Allocation Policy

Date: 13 July 2022

Report of: Team Leader (Forward Planning), Transport Strategy

Report to: Chief Officer (Highways & Transportation)

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 a vision for Leeds to be a city where you don't need a car, where everyone has an affordable, low carbon, healthy and accessible choice in how they travel. The subsequent action plan to 2024, adopted in 2021, set out an action to develop and adopt a roadspace reallocation policy.
- The 'Streetscape Space Allocation Policy' sets out Leeds City Council's, as the Local Highway Authority, approach to its managed roads. The policy will help prioritise and reallocate space to active travel and public transport, working towards the targets of the Transport Strategy and action plan. The policy sets out the need to formalise new thinking into design and adopting a best practice approach.
- The streetscape space allocation policy is a key document in the implementation of the Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy and supports the wider council's ambitions of tackling climate change, delivering inclusive growth and improving health and wellbeing.
- This report seeks the adoption of the Streetscape Space Reallocation Policy.
- The Policy document is accompanied by advice on the application of the policy and how it should be implemented and interpreted in the design of highway and transport improvements.

## Recommendations

The Chief Officer (Highways & Transportation) is requested to:

- a) Note the contents of the report; and
- b) Agree to the adoption and publication of the Leeds Streetscape Space Allocation Policy.

## Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1 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, low carbon, healthy and accessible choice in how they travel. The subsequent action plan details the measures we are going to implement and deliver until 2024.
- 2 The targets set out in the Strategy include Net-zero Carbon emissions by 2030 and modal shift away from private vehicles (-30%) alongside an increase in bus patronage (+130%), cycling (+400%) and walking (+33%) from 2017 baseline levels. These targets cannot be achieved without significant changes to the way road space is allocated.
- 3 The Strategy also adopts a Vision Zero approach to road accidents and highlights the need to both reduce general traffic speeds and provide highway infrastructure which can physically constrain inappropriate speed levels. The measures and principles set out in the policy consider the aims of Vision Zero through practical measures on the highway. Consultation on the draft Vision Zero strategy will start on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022.
- 4 The Action Plan commits to delivering policy in relation to road space reallocation specifically the development of the streetscape space allocation policy. The policy is to set out the future design of highways which prioritises the most vulnerable road users and encourages behavioural change.
- 5 The Streetscape Space Allocation Policy sets out the need to formalise new thinking into design and adopting best practice into our street spaces. The accompanying advice on the application of the policy which details how the approach to design must change and proposes some high-level principles which will guide and contextualise decision making. It is guided by the new emphasis on designing roads, and streets, for everyone and supporting the Transport Strategy objectives for climate, inclusive growth, and health and wellbeing.
- 6 Fundamentally, Policy and advice on its application is needed which can help planners and design engineers consider how to allocate 'street-space' to address the needs of different users, in a way that can best support the objectives of the Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy.
- 7 A copy of the Leeds Streetscape Space Allocation Policy and its application has been appended to this report.

## What impact will this proposal have?

### Wards affected: All wards

Have ward members been consulted? ☐ Yes ☒ No

- 8 The network of streets underpins all travel throughout the district. We know our streets vary and we will adopt a different approach on key routes to the local road network. Our approach to the key route network will prioritise public transport where often the conflict between different users occurs most frequently. On local streets our focus will be on active travel, creating greener, safer and quieter environments for people to travel and live in.
- 9 In recent years, we have started to design, and deliver transformational schemes through the Leeds Public Transport Investment Programme (LPTIP) which has evidenced the benefits of a more holistic and equitable approach to road space reallocation. In its simplest form there has been a clear rebalancing of priorities, which includes:
  - footways have been widened, and carriageways narrowed
  - improved and expanded road crossing facilities making it more convenient, safer and less stressful to cross the road, for increasing numbers of pedestrians

- more public space for pedestrians to linger, relax and socialise
- more segregated cycle lanes
- more bus priority, in terms of bus lanes and gates
- better bus passenger waiting areas, with more space and a better environment
- catering for disabled people, older people and children
- providing more, and protecting existing, green infrastructure
- delivering higher quality landscaping using more modern and attractive materials
- managing on-street parking in a way which can cater for some of the demand, and provide for priority users such as disabled motorists and taxis

10 The Streetscape Space Allocation Policy and its application builds on the successes and approaches already adopted in Leeds, and lessons learnt from the LPTIP as well as best practice approach from elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

11 The Guidance focuses on 'Main and Secondary' roads which form the bulk of roads in the Leeds district, outside of the 'local access' roads. It would not cover Motorways or Strategic Roads such as the Outer Ring Road. Main and Secondary roads generally have the following characteristics:

- roads which carry most bus services (particularly the higher frequency services) and are a focus for bus stops and bus priority requirements
- enable connections into the city centre and other major destinations
- often, they pass through district centres with high pedestrian and retail activity
- normally they have 30mph or 40mph speed limits
- often, they have higher levels of pedestrian activity
- have a high density of traffic signal junctions and pedestrian crossings
- have a high density of frontage activities, including shops, businesses and houses
- have a mixed approach to regulation of on-street parking

12 A key principle of our approach to streetscape is underpinned by a "people movement" approach, based on the user hierarchy, with the needs of disabled people, older people and children to be considered for all modes. The user hierarchy prioritises the most vulnerable users, whereby road users who can do the greatest harm have the greatest responsibility to reduce the danger or threat they may pose to others.

13 Recent changes to the Highway Code (as of 29th January 2022) have adopted the Hierarchy of Road Users concept within national guidance, prioritising the most vulnerable road user such as pedestrians and cyclists over private vehicles.

14 This Policy and its application sets out principles which will help shape our streets, and also establish a common approach to streetscape design. Having 'agreed' principles in place will enable a more efficient and consistent approach to:

- amending existing infrastructure as part of ongoing maintenance or improvements
- developing designs for new projects
- providing a set of outcomes to be achieved as part of the delivery of third-party developments
- undertaking project consultation and avoiding the need to justify the rationale for changes in the way street space is allocated on a case-by-case basis (which can be time consuming and can lead to sub-optimal designs)

15 The Guidance sets out a series of design principles in relation to:

- Footways,
- Cycleways
- Bus priorities

- Bus stops
- Carriageway
- Signalised junctions
- Crossing points
- Green infrastructure
- Parking
- Vehicle restrictions

- 16 It may not be possible in every location to deliver against all the desirable streetscape outcomes. Many locations may have limited street space available and as such compromises will be required. The document sets out how the circumstances where a compromise may arise, the consequences and any required mitigation or other considerations. Any risks that these compromises pose against the aspirations set out in Vision Zero will also need to be considered and will be paramount.
- 17 This policy aims at identifying high-level principles for streets, and in particular those on main and secondary roads. It does not attempt to specify standards, dimensions or materials. The design principles should incorporate local guidance and technical standards set out in three key documents which are:
- Cycle Superhighway Design Guidance
  - Transport SPD (currently in draft)
  - West Yorkshire Bus Stop Design Guidance
- 18 This document does not replace existing national standards either. This includes but is not limited to government guidance such as Manual for Street, Manual for Streets 2, Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and Local Transport Note 1/20 Cycle infrastructure design or relevant updates as they are issued.
- 19 Overall providing the Policy and its application will:
- rebalance travel priorities in support of the outcomes required in the Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy
  - help design engineers adopt a standardised approach to streetscape design
  - speed up the design process by having a set of 'standardised' solutions and approaches
  - give a clear and visible message that Leeds City Council recognise the value of improving the streetscape for the benefit of local people and local businesses

#### Equality, Diversity, Cohesion, and Integration (EDCI) screening

- 20 A full EDCI assessment was undertaken for the Transport Strategy which identified that Transport has the potential to have a differential effect on protected characteristic groups including Age, Disability, Gender and Race. It has been shown that many of these groups are more reliant on public transport and active travel. This reliance can be disproportionate and lead to groups suffering from transport disadvantage.
- 21 A further EDCI screening of the streetscape space allocation policy has been undertaken and attached to this report. The screening has identified a positive impact on equality groups through the promotion and reallocation of road space towards pedestrians (including wheelchair users), cyclists and public transport users. There is a potential negative impact on certain groups who may be more reliant on private vehicles, however any impact should be assessed throughout the scheme development and further EDCI screenings or assessments undertaken as part of scheme development.

### **What consultation and engagement has taken place?**

- 22 An extensive consultation and engagement exercise was undertaken on the draft Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy between December 2020 and April 2021. The consultation webpage had 19,072 visitors and 4,636 contributions from 1,739 respondents.
- 23 The consultation highlighted that enhancing public transport was the top priority for respondents including the better integration of bus and rail being key action that the Council can take to help change the way people travel. The second priority for respondents was creating healthier streets, spaces and communities. Respondents stated the desire to walk and cycle within safe, healthy, and far less traffic dominated environments. People also want their local communities to be more attractive and welcoming, in a way that is more responsive to the needs of people, rather than catering solely for the needs of motor vehicles.
- 24 The Streetscape Space Allocation Policy seeks to provide guidance to scheme planners and engineers to ensure walking, cycling and public transport are prioritised and highway space is reallocated towards these modes.
- 25 Consultation and engagement have taken place across all departments within Highways and Transportation.
- 26 The Executive Member for Infrastructure and Climate and Deputy Executive Member for Active Travel and Sustainable Travel have also been consulted.
- 27 The Access and Useability Group (AUAG) have also been consulted and expressed support for the Policy and the provision of Guidance to help clarify how it can be implemented.

### **What are the resource implications?**

- 28 There are no specific resource implications associated with this report.

### **What are the legal implications?**

- 29 There are no specific legal implications included within this report, nor is any information contained within this report deemed to be confidential.
- 30 The Streetscape Space Policy and its application is designed to formalise new thinking into design and adopting a best practice approach to our streetscapes. This document does not replace existing highway standards which LCC have a statutory duty to adhere to.
- 31 The report is not eligible for call-in.

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

- 32 The risks relating to the Climate Emergency are that the actions of the Streetscape Space Allocation Policy do not assist with the need to reduce carbon emissions in-line with the Council's and national objectives.

### **Does this proposal support the council's three Key Pillars?**

☒ Inclusive Growth

☒ Health and Wellbeing

☒ Climate Emergency

- 33 The Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy, which is aligned to the council's three pillars, sets out two Big Moves to 'Enhance Public Transport' and 'Create healthier streets, spaces and communities' which support the development of the Streetscape Policy and its application.
- 34 The Strategy set out our commitment to the climate emergency and to work towards net-zero carbon emissions. This proposal supports the strategy by reallocating road space away from private vehicles and encouraging people to choose active travel and public transport rather than the private car.

- 35 In relation to Inclusive Growth, the Streetscape Policy and its application will support the regeneration of places through informing investment in transport infrastructure and also contribute towards improvement in productivity through a better time and cost-efficient transport system.
- 36 The proposal supports the health and wellbeing pillar by prioritising active travel and public transport infrastructure enabling walking and cycling to be the natural first choice for the shortest journeys.

## **Options, timescales and measuring success**

### **What other options were considered?**

- 37 Two scenarios were considered in the development of the streetscape space allocation policy.
- 38 **Option A: Do minimum.** Proceed as per current arrangements using the Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy as overarching guidance with no detailed approach to streets identified. This option was discounted as it would not have adopted a consistent approach to streets across the district and lacked the detailed needed to inform streetscape designs.
- 39 **Option B: Produce Streetscape Space Allocation Policy and Guidance.** This option was to develop the Streetscape Policy which, as outlined in this report, contains greater detail in the challenges and opportunities in relation to streetscape design. This option was selected as the preferred option.

### **How will success be measured?**

- 40 Success will be measured against the Strategy's targets and objectives alongside the Key Performance Indicators identified within the Action Plan.

### **What is the timetable for implementation?**

- 41 Upon adoption of the Leeds Streetscape Space Allocation Policy will become Leeds City Council policy towards highways and should be used to inform the development and implementation of all subsequent highway schemes. The accompanying advice provides the context and advice on how the Policy can be practically implemented.

## **Appendices**

- 42 Appendix 1 – EDCI Screening
- 43 Appendix 2 - Leeds Streetscape Space Allocation Policy and Guidance.

## **Background papers**

- 44 None.