Responding to Leeds City Council's Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy

Full Response

Our Future Leeds

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Overview

Leeds City Council has recently published their draft Transport Strategy - a strategy designed to transform Leeds into '**a city where you don't need a car**'.

This document sets out Our Future Leeds' detailed response to the draft strategy. This response is intended for highways and transport officers and councillors at Leeds City Council. A shorter summary version of this can be found on our website.

We present this report to city leaders in the spirit of raising our game and rising to the climate and social challenges based on the evidence that exists. We strongly support Leeds City Council's aim for Leeds to be 'a city where you don't need a car', and this document outlines our thinking that can support our city to get there.

Introduction

With its bold target of making Leeds a 'city where you don't need a car', the Transport Strategy put forward offers Leeds an exciting and realistic opportunity to rise to the challenges of tackling the climate emergency. We greatly welcome this ambitious and timely proposal, and look forward to mobilising our network to support its implementation.

However, while we recognise the strategy's ambition, the scale and urgency of the challenge ahead means that the ambition needs to be raised.

To move away from car dependency and change the transport system in Leeds, we need to change the economy.

We need an overhaul of the current planning system - and this means engaging with every aspect of the city, including leisure, work, retail, food and education. This will require complex and interconnected interventions across the infrastructure, politics, planning, culture, and economy of Leeds over the next generation.

As such, we believe that **it is essential for the strategy to address the contradictions of the current economic model of Leeds**. Planning for continued growth - even if 'inclusive' - will not allow Leeds to make the sustainable transport transformation that is required. This contradiction lies at the heart of the current system of continued road building and the culture of car dependency.

Looking through the strategy, there is much that remains unclear. Which *particular* measures will deliver on the vision of a car-free city? How will we create a zero-carbon transport system in the coming decade? The 'Big Moves' outlined in the strategy are incredibly exciting, but much more is needed by way of commitments to reduce car dependency within the city.

We suggest that **early moves in the city centre should be brought forward** - this includes rapid pedestrianisation, closing many central car parks, closing the central loop to cars, and ultimately creating a major green corridor in the inner ring road. Evidence from other cities suggests that this can be beneficial for hospitality and retail in the city centre.

Given the delay of a net zero West Yorkshire mass transit system to 2040, we believe a **transformed bus system should be central to the strategy**. We outline that this transformation should be underpinned by the implementation of completely free electric and publicly owned bus service.

A new approach to community engagement and co-production is paramount to making this happen, and it will require a bold new way of working. We suggest a new

governance structure will be needed to allow for the transition away from traditional highways and transport planning and into a new Department of Sustainable Mobility.

A focus on **climate and social justice needs to be at the heart of this strategy**, especially to address mobility exclusions and the communities and individuals in Leeds facing transport poverty.

This strategy must include aviation and plan for reductions in LBA's impact rather than its expansion.

Key Objectives for a Transport Strategy

Below we reflect on what we see as some of the key objectives of a new transport strategy.

A Whole City Plan

Firstly, this has to be a whole city plan. This is not just about transport - it's about leisure, work, retail, food, nature, planning and education.

In the 1960s, city engineers and architects Charles Geoffrey Thirlwall and Edward Weston Stanley rolled out a comprehensive urban renewal plan that came to be known as 'the Leeds Approach', more popularly known by the slogan: 'Leeds: Motorway City of the Seventies'.

This was a comprehensive plan that completely changed Leeds for 50 years, and we need an approach to match this in ambition and scale. The task now is to reverse out of the 'motorway city' plan and fundamentally redesign how we go about prioritising very different objectives centred around the climate emergencies with social justice at its core.

Leeds has become deeply disconnected because of this motorway city legacy, and reconnecting Leeds' communities should be a priority. This means changing the function of arterial routes and the primary road network, as well as reconnecting the city "rim" (the inner city areas that surround the city centre), which disconnects many inner neighbourhoods from the city centre (e.g. Holbeck, Burmantofts, East End Park). The undermining of south Leeds through the encroachment of the motorway network also needs reversing.

As we discuss below, this new city plan will involve major reallocations of road space away from private automobiles to other, sustainable mobility types. This will be disruptive, but if coupled with a major new approach to affordable public transport and active travel, a new approach to mobility in Leeds is possible.

A New Economy Beyond Growth - A Green New Deal for Leeds' Communities

Our main point is that 'Growth for growth's sake' is no longer compatible with the current climate emergency we face. No transport strategy can be considered without an

integrated economic strategy and must be embedded in a bigger vision. We suggest that the term 'inclusive growth' is no longer either useful or able to give the clarity needed.

A new mobility system for Leeds can actually be at the heart of stimulating a new green economy and will involve:

- A 'New Green Deal' based around the creation of new green jobs in infrastructure, employee-owned transport, and sustainable delivery.
- Localising work, leisure and retail as this is an essential part of reducing journey times across the metropolitan area.
- Stimulating community economies through supporting community workspaces and community co-operatives. This will stimulate the local-neighbourhood work model.
- Supporting more city centre businesses to wholly or partially relocate to the district centres (e.g. Morley, Rodley, Otley, Guiseley, Pudsey etc.) as this will facilitate a more decentralised and balanced, greener economy and transport system.

At the heart of this new approach to the economy is the power of simply doing less (demand reduction). The key to any successful future transport strategy is not simply offering more sustainable transport options, but to reduce the overall level of mobility needs - making leisure, work and retail closer to home, and interconnecting communities better. Simply doing less is also a much cheaper and quicker way compared to building complex sustainable transport infrastructure.

Community-Based Planning

Leeds is a complex set of communities and this has to be taken into account in any transport strategy - it involves market towns, villages, suburbs, inner city areas and a residential urban centre. There is no simple one size fits all approach here. But the key priority needs to be reconnection - prioritising connections between neighbourhoods and not just to the city centre. We need an approach based on 'everywhere, all the time' so no community is left behind or disconnected. Our privatised bus system has left communities disconnected from even the simplest journeys and this needs urgently fixing. Community-led change needs to be central to the strategy, and to involve neighbourhoods to help 'co-produce' change from where they are. The planning system needs to be embedded in a community led approach, especially in terms of school catchment areas.

Drawing on the 15-minute neighbourhood idea where basic goods and services centres are easily accessible on foot/cycle or by other vehicle if a person has disabilities (see

also below), all future developments should be planned to negate the need to travel by car for most residents to undertake daily tasks outside of one's immediate area.

We suggest integrating these 15 minute neighbourhoods into a renewed spatial plan across the city, with a network of these local (10-15 minute) neighbourhoods sitting alongside larger scale local town centres that meet the needs of a wider part of the city (e.g. Pudsey, Morley). Each neighbourhood gives priority to walking, cycling and public transport, with low priority for cars.

A new transport strategy needs to prioritise the accessibility of those not able to cycle and walk. People with disabilities and health needs are the focal point of this planning. Solutions need to be co-produced to ensure that they are locally-owned (such as more widespread involvement in persuading less car use). A widespread city based campaign will be required to support changes in the public's attitudes. Much can be learned from the current Active Travel Neighbourhood roll out in terms of the need for longer term and detailed community work.

Plans for a car-free city centre, as proposed below, will need to follow the same principles.

Climate Justice

As we explore below, the climate emergency and the route to a zero carbon Leeds by 2030 needs to be at the heart of this transport strategy.

A climate justice approach is essential, ensuring the well-being of those most affected by climate change is put at the heart of any new transport strategy. Addressing transport inequalities and transport-poor communities should be a central plank of any new transport strategy. Therefore, the strategy needs to be much more explicit about the kinds of equity and justice outcomes we need as a city.

The strategy needs to regard issues of transport (people's mobilities) as fundamentally an issue of justice. Differences along lines of race, gender, ability for example, are central factors that determine people's mobility choices. Therefore, the different demographic make-up of Leeds has to be approached with a range of solutions.

Timeline and Measurement

While we welcome Leeds' ambitious strategy, currently key details are missing on how much impact each policy has in getting towards zero-carbon. This is essential in terms

of making sensible public policy decisions and allocating resources to different activity areas.

Moreover, there needs to be a more urgent timeline for several key aspects of the strategy including a much earlier car-free central city, and transformations in the city's bus service.

We are concerned:

a) that some measures do not come into effect until after 2030, and
b) that the transformation phase will not start until 2027.

This timeline is not in sync with the city's climate emergency ambitions. The timescales and proposed actions in the document are inconsistent with achieving LCC's agreed carbon reduction targets. For example, the targets in the strategy only seem to achieve a 43% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030

There is some acknowledgment within the document that additional measures may be needed. But given they will be inevitable to meet the ambitious carbon reduction targets they should be incorporated at this stage. The longer time taken to make significant change, the more rapid change needs to occur at a later date if we are to have any chance of staying within our carbon budget.

We suggest that clear zero carbon transport targets need to be stated for a particular year. We can then work back from that by establishing Interim annual targets which can then be scrutinised, held to account and measured against as the strategy progresses.

Wider Connections

Leeds plays a strategic role as the gateway to the North. Therefore there is a significant opportunity to connect up this strategy with West Yorkshire's broader Connectivity Strategy and other areas in Yorkshire.

In particular there is insufficient cooperation and joint planning between North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire combined authorities for planning, rail and bus tickets/prices etc. This will significantly undermine the ability of Leeds to implement a transformational transport strategy.

The Implications of COVID-19

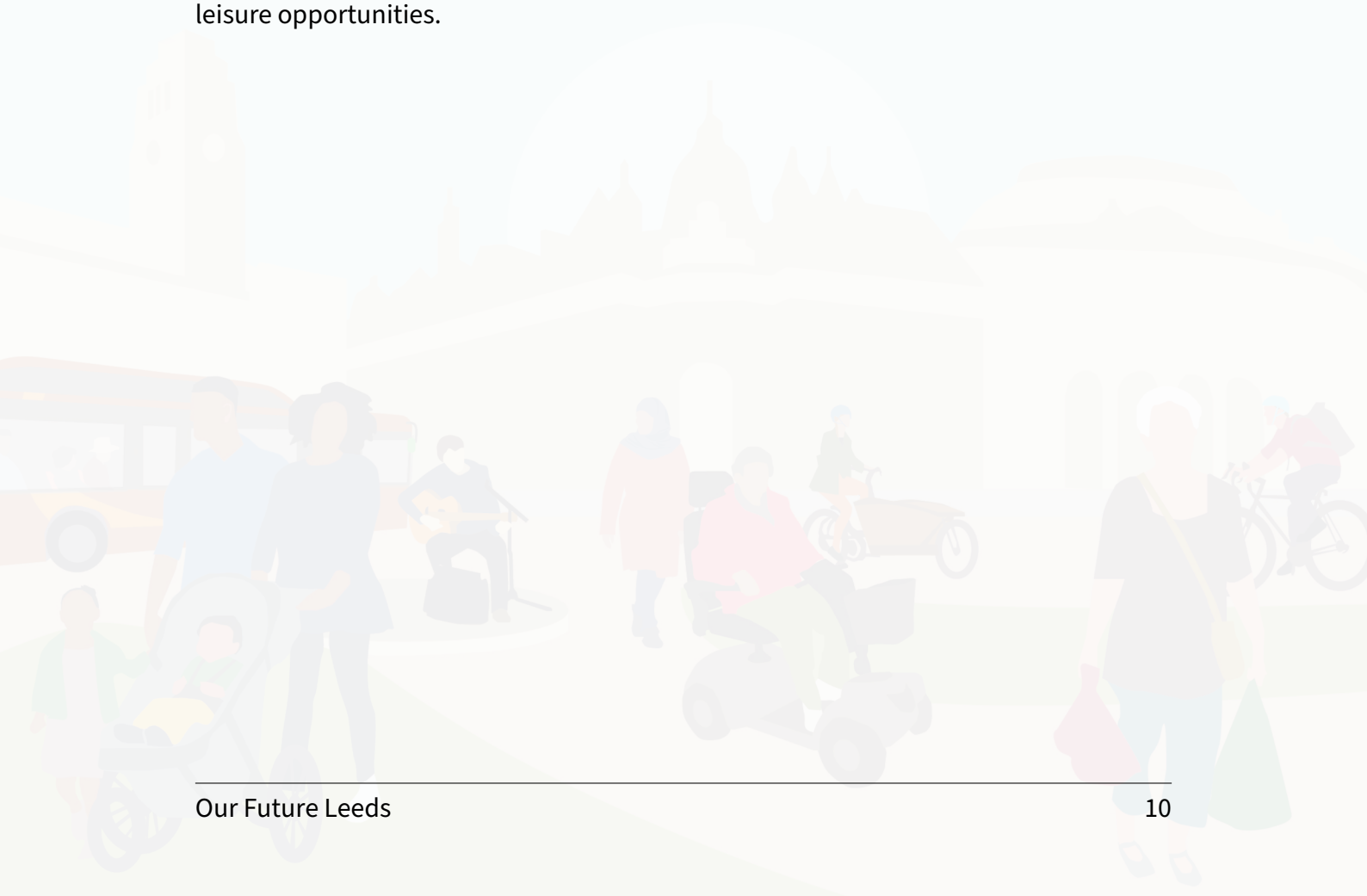
A key frame of the strategy going forward should be finding safe ways to reverse the reduced numbers of public transport users due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This is

a serious issue for the city given that it has stimulated increased car use, and hence decreased air quality. Air quality remains a significant challenge for Leeds. For example, a Harvard University Study of PM2.5 (particulate matter) has shown that an increase of 1 µg/cm3 over the WHO safe level of 10 µg/cm3 in PM2.5 increases the number of COVID-19 deaths by 15%. The continuing unsafe levels level of PM2.5 and Nitrogen dioxide contribute to continued higher mortality levels in Leeds and other cities, and radical interventions to dramatically increase air quality remain an absolute priority from 2021 onwards.

Additionally, the Lancet reports that rapidly increasing traffic pollution since the 1980s reduces the lung capacity of children by at least 10%. However, this still impacts all those living within the inner city region. Therefore, there is a deep concern that decades of traffic pollution may well have contributed to the high level of inner city COVID deaths. Urgent action should be focused on those living near major arterial routes, the primary road and motorway network.

Furthermore, as we now know COVID-19 has changed fundamentally how many people think about a) home-working, b) commuting, and c) the role and function of the city centre.

The opportunity must not be lost to significantly alter commuter and rush hour patterns for good (as we have explored elsewhere). Central to this vision includes the car-free City Centre, a 15 minute neighbourhood and encouraging local employment, retail and leisure opportunities.



Big Moves

Decarbonising Transport

We acknowledge that the City Council has introduced bold targets for reductions in carbon emissions as well as car use and journey miles. But the car use reduction targets of 30% simply don't go far enough. As a city, we won't meet car reductions targets unless the form and function of the primary road network is fundamentally changed. This means:

a) making cycling/walking the quickest and safest option, ultimately to the detriment of private vehicles.
b) the highest priority needs to be given to public transport routes on all parts of the primary road network.
c) the city centre needs to be closed to passenger cars (except emergency vehicles and for people with disabilities) by 2025.

Investments (both currently committed and those planned in the future) need to be reallocated from roads to public transport/active travel, except insofar as road changes (improvements to the outer ring road, for example) are central to the Transport Strategy. This will involve difficult decisions including gearing down investment in the road network across the city including the inner ring road and the East Leeds Orbital road. Ultimately, these investments left unaltered will significantly hinder the City Council strategy to meet their climate emergency carbon reduction targets.

Novel and brave highways engineering solutions will be needed from now on. These will include the reallocation of road space across both the residential and primary road networks, shifting away from the private car and making a majority of roads one way directional. Subsequently, this frees up space for other transport modes (bus and cycle lanes, and wider foot ways), and widespread junction redesign needs to prioritise those on foot, bus and bike, rather than car.

Secondly, public transport provision needs to be driven by access to services and leisure/retail/work opportunities, replicating the ease of use of a car rather than a singular focus in getting to and from the city centre for work. On-demand buses can be central to this in creating a holistic public transport system instead of just one isolated travel goal.

There are many excellent and established examples to follow here. For example, Birmingham is following the 'Ghent model': making the city centre free of passenger cars between 11am to 6pm, restricting car-parking to underground car parks, creating people-friendly neighbourhoods throughout the city, with priority for walking, cycling, buses

and car-free public spaces. In Ghent, car use has dropped by 50%, car collisions by 30%, and emissions by 18%, causing the revitalisation of the city.

Also, Brighton envisages banning passenger cars from the city centre (with specific exceptions, such as for disabled drivers) by 2023. Oxford has a few city centre streets that are zero emission zones (EV only). In addition, Bath, Oxford, and all towns in Kent look to charge for non-EV cars to enter towns or certain zones. Given that Leeds has such an established and extensive pedestrian area, these opportunities should be easy to bring forward.

In short summary, we believe that Leeds could plan for cars being banned from the city centre between 11 - 6pm by 2025 and further assert that this policy is central to a successful zero emission 2030 policy.

Creating Healthier Streets, Spaces and Communities

We are impressed by the focus on creating healthier streets, spaces and communities, in particular the rapid roll out of Active Travel Neighbourhoods across Leeds and look forward to their continued strategic development. One of the key elements is ensuring sustainable travel options between these Active Travel Neighbourhoods, so they do not become isolated from each other. Health impacts need to be central to this strategy, especially improved air quality within residential areas, and increases in physical activity, as a key marker of success. This additionally outlines the importance of dealing with driver attitudes and road aggression to ensure that safety is still paramount to the strategy.

We support the vision zero aspect of the strategy. As implemented in Birmingham: 20mph limits as the default speed need to be extended to the City Centre, along with all residential, semi-residential streets, and all road types apart from A roads. Enforcement is crucial and redeployment of the Clean Air Zone (CAZ) cameras can support this, as is a major city wide public education campaign. However, a CAZ is not a prerequisite for our proposals to work.

More focus on extensive air quality monitoring across communities will be essential to ensuring we are meeting healthier community targets. Formal legislation to ban pavement/on-street parking needs introducing across the city.

Quietways and greenways beyond the outer ring road connecting the Leeds urban area to its extensive rural hinterland would be an additional positive measure creating more safe and pleasant green corridors for people to reach the countryside. This is important for providing leisure, recreation and work opportunities without the need of car based travel.

Enhance Public Transport

It is essential that enhancing public transport is one of the big moves that Leeds makes. It is now time for a much bolder vision for a Leeds bus and rail service.

We propose that this focuses on six key elements:

1. **A free, fully electric and public bus service**

This is a key innovation that supports other innovations that reduce and constrain car use. A new city bond plus recycled funds from a congestion charge (if brought in) and/or a levy on workplace car parks can be used to support this free service - it is part of the solution of persuading people out of their cars. Community and employee ownership will bring a range of further benefits, increasing community support for buses and increasing quality of employment.

However, the current bus system means that Leeds buses spend up to 20% of their time at stops. Partial attempts at Bus Rapid Transit have been made in Leeds with the guided busways and segments of bus lane and priority. These should be worked on and made available to larger parts of the city communities.

2. **A full redesign of the bus network**

Redesigning the bus network includes focusing on routes (many overly winding), stops (sometimes too close together) and the vehicles themselves. This can create a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system at low cost, and within a short time period. A BRT system can deliver up to 70% of the benefit of a tram network at half the cost (source: ITDP).

Furthermore, by giving buses greater priority on roads, and substantially reducing passenger car traffic in the neighbourhoods (mainly within the outer ring road and the M621/M1 by 2025), buses will be mostly punctual and quick, dramatically improving their benefit to users.

3. **A rapid shift to refranchised buses**

As a step towards the full redesign of the bus network, we urge that Leeds adopts a rapid shift to refranchised buses similar to a Transport for London style approach that has been brokered urgently by the new West Yorkshire mayor. This will set routes, prices and times for all current private operators. Furthermore, all major employees (over 20 staff) should provide dedicated work buses and/or encourage workers to work all or part of their working week at home, where this was possible during COVID-19.

We also suggest that part of enhancing public transport is to re-establish the old historic transport interchanges based on Leeds' district centres. This would require major

remodelling at strategic intersections such as Kirkstall lights, Lawnswood roundabout, Dewsbury Road, and Sheepscar.

4. **On-demand buses**

On-demand buses are also an important part of a bus service of the future that is capable of reducing car use. Establishing a fleet of micro and on-demand community buses that connect with these new integrated transport hubs would significantly enhance the public transport offer.

5. **More railway stations**

Of additional concern is that several of the proposed economic hubs are situated on motorways; this is not consistent with reducing car transport. These hubs need dedicated public transport connections, with more light railway stations especially in south west and south east Leeds, alongside the stations currently proposed by Leeds.

6. **Integration**

Integration is essential to enhanced public transport. This is in terms of integrated travel tickets, fares and routes, But also integration with other mobility types for example active travel routes to transport interchanges and train stations, more bike space on trains, better and safer, covered cycle storage in city centre, railway stations, bus stations, district hubs.

New Mobility Solutions

1. **New mobility solutions**

These come in many forms and need prioritising. First there needs to be direct support for businesses offering a diverse range of bikes with greater access (e.g. four wheel, electric, recumbent, family-friendly, cargo bikes), bike repair and e-bike hire services. Cargo bike trials and secure storage areas would be particularly useful. They play a significant role in deliveries in the car-free city Ghent, Belgium, and represent another way to replace difficult or large journeys typically taken by car.

2. **Mobility as a Service (MaaS)**

This is essential to offering an integrated platform across mobility types. We propose the adoption of an App akin to Birmingham's Whim, adapting the Europe-wide Mobility as a Service model. This motive will allow residents to a modest monthly sum to access the most carbon friendly modes of transport from A to B travel (Mixing for example car clubs, e-bikes, train, tram and bus). MaaS is now being promoted by the Department of

Transport, and is being encouraged across Scotland. It has been shown to substantially reduce individual car use.

New integrated digital platforms however need to be incredibly sensitive to the diversity of public transport users. They must not enhance digital divides and exclude those without easy access to smartphones or debit/credit cards. Furthermore, attention needs to be paid demographically as youthful generations are more receptive to Maas compared to older generations.

3. **Car-sharing clubs (both private and community based)**

These need to be encouraged as part of new mobility solutions to promote the shift from private car ownership. These car-sharing clubs need to focus on EV and can be linked to a city wide network of neighbourhood 'micro mobility' hubs where residents can access shared cars but also rent a variety of electric bikes.

4. **Park-and-ride schemes**

Giant park-and-ride schemes move traffic out of the city centre, but also need to play a role in discouraging and reducing private and non-electric car use. We propose charges for non-electric cars at Park and Ride (along with detailed public explanation of this policy) to assist in this. Park and Ride needs to be part of a much more integrated rail, bus and cycleway system that provides access to all parts of Leeds, not just the city centre. With strong disincentives to passenger cars travelling inside the outer ring road, park-and-ride may become more important for a period. But the current park-and-ride development is increasing the overall level of 'city' parking and so park-and-ride schemes need to roll out in ways that decrease the overall level of car dependency across the city, rather than just providing additional parking outside the city centre. For this reason there are serious limitations to park-and-ride schemes reducing the overall city carbon footprint.

Delivery of a Mass Transit System

We welcome the exciting new prospect of a future mass transit system (in whatever form) in Leeds/West Yorkshire. It will be an essential part of the jigsaw of future sustainable mobility alongside public transport networks (buses, park and ride, trains). However, Bus Rapid Transit could also provide many of the benefits of a mass transit system more quickly and cheaply, albeit with lower capacity.

The main concern is that the mass transit system has been provided a target date of 2040. Given this is a long time away, it is very unlikely to be implemented in time to have any

influence on the 2030 carbon reduction targets. Similarly HS2 will not be implemented in time to have any impact on the 2030 carbon reduction targets.

In this context, Leeds would be better advised lobbying for increased local and cross-country spending on rail infrastructure. In addition, the delay to the Mass Transit system, and the urgency of the Climate Emergency, should make it possible to access funds to effect the proposals we put forward.

Further, our concern regards marketisation and that the introduction of any mass transit system would only increase the privatised, expensive model of public transport delivery. This project could end up being a showcase and new source of profit for an already existing private transport monopoly.

As a city we should now start building the case for a publicly owned and radically subsidised mass transit system.

Moreover, mass transit systems that involve tram lines on public highways, this can be hazardous to cyclists, motorcyclists, and e-scooter and wheelchair users so further precautions regarding safe travel will need to be considered.

Reimagining the City Centre

As part of the COVID recovery we need a bigger and bolder vision for the City Centre that is backed by ambitious early moves between now and 2025. These could include:

1. A car free city centre by early 2025 based on: pedestrianisation extensions by a number of streets each year, leaving only routes for buses, emergency vehicles, and those with mobility needs. Delivery vehicles, taxis, traders, car-reliant essential workers and inner city residents (all these to be EV) may use the roads in permitted hours, making.for a radically new experience of the city centre.
2. Immediate roll-out of selected streets within the city centre to be EV only as a spur to drivers to change (as trialled in Oxford).
3. All non-passenger vehicles coming to City Centre to be EV by January 2025.
4. City centre loop to have universal 20mph limit as soon as possible.
5. Reimagine and plan repurposing of city centre loop for active travel, public realm, exercise by 2025.
6. Immediate temporary street closures of all side streets for the creation of parklets. In certain cases they will be accessible during daytime but for many streets by 2025 there will be permanent street closures to enable more trees, bushes, grass areas, flora, outside cafes, performance and public art.

7. Once car use is much reduced, plan the closure of A58(M)/A64(M) inner-ring road and introduce a linear biodiversity park. See example of Birmingham's proposed closing A38 through road, and re-routing to improved Ring Road. (Possibly one lane of A58M, a super cycle way). Major works are needed on the outer ring road to take over the A58(M)/A64M through-Leeds traffic.
8. Closure of many city centre car parks to restrict flow of cars in the central area, retaining only underground car parks and reduced car parks for essential workers, especially around Leeds general Infirmary. End street parking.
9. Work with owners (e.g. NCP) to develop new financial models for this real estate. Create new housing opportunities (flats etc.) where possible. Follow urban market trends towards new street markets also a possibility or extend existing Kirkgate market with a growth of non-food stalls, plant-based food stalls but also the encouragement of new cafes and recreational areas.
10. Second central rail station to increase rail use.
11. Bringing forward workplace parking levy to further reduce city centre car flows and to create a funding stream to fund above.

Targets

Here are some reflections we have on the particular target set.

Affordability

Affordability and socially equitable outcomes need to be one of the key targets that drives any new transport strategy, especially in terms of tackling transport poverty.

More affordable integrated tickets are essential to cover all everyday journeys as an incentive to leaving cars behind.

Supporting affordable, community-based car clubs is a key element especially in supporting and promoting communities to set up their own car pooling/sharing.

Airport

One of our main concerns is that the expansion of Leeds Bradford airport isn't discussed, but this is crucial to any future sustainable plan for Leeds. It is now well established that the expansion of Leeds Bradford Airport is incompatible with a zero-carbon target by 2030.

Unless there are significant changes in technology – which seem unlikely in the timescale discussed – allowing for the expansion of air travel will be incompatible with meeting zero carbon targets. But this strategy does not address what it intends to do about this. This must be addressed as allowing increased air travel will make achieving already very onerous targets almost impossible.

The strategy directly indicates that there will be a commitment to all new infrastructure being carbon neutral and carbon negative where possible. It is hard to see how this is consistent with allowing increased flights from LBA.

Additionally, in spite of efforts to increase public transport connectivity, airport expansion will generate further traffic across and within the whole of Leeds. Focusing on LBA as an employment hub doesn't make sense, compared to investments in community-based employment hubs. It also generates avoidable car journeys.

Cars

Our main response is that the 30% reduction in car use target does seem bold and exciting, but in the context of a climate emergency and our pathway to zero carbon

emissions, it is simply not bold enough. To realistically achieve a journey to zero carbon by the 2030s would have to equate to a 50% reduction within 4 years and 70% within a decade; with the ultimate goal to almost eliminate non-electric vehicles by the late 2020s. Put simply, Leeds needs to commit and fund an end to petrol/diesel cars within this decade.

Clear targets are also needed for reducing car park space in the city centre down to 10% of current provision in 4 years and to zero (above ground) over the next 10 years. We suggest that every park-and-ride space be accompanied by reduction of at least one city centre parking space, with a net overall reduction in city centre-related car parking.

The Leeds Transport Strategy reports savings in tonnes of carbon emissions which do not reflect the road map to carbon neutrality for Leeds. This is the key element of the strategy that needs monitoring and scrutiny. Further, not enough is said either about all the negative consequences of car use including noise pollution, congestion, the erosion of street life, loss of biodiversity etc., nor the new environmental impacts of relying too much on electric vehicles. Leeds, therefore, needs to be clearer about the basket of benefits that it is offering to replace car journeys.

We have highlighted many here and these include:

- Almost zero priced public transport.
- A transformed bus service.
- A citywide roll out of Active Travel Neighbourhoods, with priority in these areas for walking, bus, cycling.
- Improved transport interconnectivity of communities by creating a seamless and equitable mobility system.
- Demand-led community buses.
- Wide use of MaaS App (such as Birmingham's Whim).
- New funding streams such as workplace parking levy that can be used to subsidise a transformed public transport system.
- Car-sharing clubs.
- Increase in e-bikes, e-scooters, and pedal bikes.
- Substantial improvements in buses, in context of Bus Rapid Transit.
- Financial incentives to supercharge the transition to electric vehicles, especially non-passenger electric vehicles.
- Hard and specific targets need to be used to ensure these measures are adopted.
- These need to go hand-in-hand with increased penalties for car use including.
    - No passenger cars in the city centre during the daytime by 2025.
    - A clear date beyond which only electric vehicles are permitted across the whole city. We propose January 2027.

Bus

Our essential message is simple - a transformed bus service based on three principles - publicly owned, fully electric and free (or in the interim a flat fare of £1 which is accessible to all).

Excellent examples of free city bus systems already exist in, for example, Dunkirk, Tallinn and Luxembourg. We also support Bus Rapid Transit – which while not as good as trams, is quick and cheaper to roll-out.

Cycling and Walking

The proposed Leeds-wide cycle network is an important step forward, along with a focus on walking routes. But there are still concerns that this is seen as an additional mobility network rather than one which replaces the current primary road network. The city needs a cycling and walking network that makes active travel the quickest and safest option - and replaces car-based travel. There needs to be more accurate network design of active travel networks connecting where people live and work. There is also a serious shortfall of bikes, bike training, maintenance and secure storage infrastructure in the city which needs urgently addressing.

The target of increasing cycling by 400% is to be welcomed, but Leeds envisages that this will bring bicycle use to 4% of all travel. As the national average is currently 3.2%, this is low. A target of over 10% would seem more appropriate when lowering emissions and distancing from the use of cars.

Proposed measures to achieve this target:

- Providing good quality and clear on and off road cycle lanes.
- Education of motorists, a citywide campaign on street signage to give respect and space to cyclists (and other vulnerable road users) is of importance.
- There is a role for LCC, the Police, employers and potentially others to play a part in this. There is no mention of such an approach in the strategy.
- Training of cyclists both to ride safely and maintain their cycles could be a valuable part of the strategy (including in schools).
- Junctions and priorities can be better designed for cyclists.
- Cycle theft is a major issue and acts as a disincentive to cycle, particularly to city centre areas. Introducing a provision of secure cycle parking - particularly at key destinations, including the proposed transport hubs - seems of importance.
- Cycle hire is also likely to benefit from increased safe storage facilities.

- Greater mention of the use of electric bikes. Leeds is a relatively hilly city and e-bikes improve cycling convenience by making it much less effort and arguably safer (because of the reduced differential speed between cyclist and motor vehicle) than a conventional bike. An active programme to promote their use would seem highly desirable. This could arguably be done in conjunction with or in the lead up to the launch of a cycle hire scheme.
- Improvements needed to assist bike users wanting to access trains. Addressing the booking system of cyclists wanting to use trains is important for encouraging the mode of cycling over cars when travelling to and from the station.
- Employers could encourage cycling to work, and for business purposes by providing safe storage, providing lockers and shower facilities, accessing cycle to work funding for cycle purchase, paying cycle mileage for business use, providing charging for e-bikes.

Meeting the Climate Emergency Target

This is one of the key parts of the strategy which needs absolute watertight evidence that what is proposed meets the city's ultimate aim of becoming zero carbon by 2030. It is clear that reducing road traffic by 30%, or the total transport emissions by 43%, will not lead to a zero carbon transport system, nor help Leeds meet its Climate Emergency declaration.

Given that Leeds as a whole needs to reduce carbon emissions by at least 13% year on year from 2021 onwards, then transport emissions need to follow this emissions reduction profile. In the context of the size of transport within the city's budget it could also be suggested that transport needs to embark upon an even steeper and more rapid emissions reduction profile.

Even though the strategy suggests their car reduction targets are ambitious, they amount to about eight 3% annual reductions per year to 2027 rising to about 6% thereafter. In other words, for the next seven years what is needed is at least four times faster reductions than what the ambitious target scenario delivers.

Our proposals would create a greater reduction of emissions, with substantial reduction in car use, an end to petrol/diesel cars in Leeds within this decade, a reduction in cars in city centre overall, and all non-passenger vehicles to be electric by early 2025.

Any reduction in emissions in ground transport would be wholly undermined if the expansion of Leeds Bradford Airport is approved.

Moreover, current investments such as the East Leeds orbital and inner ring road maintenance need to be urgently rethought and reallocated.

Achieving and Delivering the Vision

Outreach and Consultation

First, there needs to be a radical new approach to consultation - co-producing an action plan to implement the strategy, particularly paying attention to how to engage with a diverse range of people across Leeds. This needs to be owned by the whole city and justice needs to be embedded. It's a huge piece of work and Our Future Leeds offers to help here. This shift from consultation to co-production would require a brave and bold change of direction, but one which we know the city is able to embark upon.

More stories and examples should be used to bring the stats to life and show what they mean on the ground - this would make it more accessible and may increase the ability of different audiences to engage with it. Case studies of how people's transport options might/should change would really help (e.g. night shift workers, working parents, people with disabilities who rely on their car to participate in city life, commuters etc.).

Governance

Ambition in this strategy needs to be met with an ambitious change in governance. The current institutional and working setup is simply not fit for purpose to deliver such an ambitious step change. Leeds needs a new directorate of 'Sustainable Mobility' sat at the top level of Leeds City Council, alongside new executive posts for walking and cycling that supports this new CEO for sustainable mobility.

This kind of new governance arrangement would come out of a new strategy and planning process for the whole city which shifts away from growth as the central narrative towards quality of life, health and thriving places.

This new directorate requires backing up with a permanent citizen-led scrutiny panel to oversee progress targets, and clear annual milestones backcasted from 2030 to monitor progress. It also relies on cross department working to align toward this vision and create strategic buy-in.

Accountability

At the moment there is no way to judge the success or failure for aspects of this strategy. As an operational plan is developed, measurable deliverables and a timeline are additionally required. In particular, an accounting model must be embraced moving

away from cost benefit analysis to a whole life cycle approach to measure what works, especially public health, nature, social justice and climate targets. Citizen-led panels for scrutiny and oversight will be needed as mentioned in the governance section.

Climate Justice

A key aspect for this strategy and any future operational plan needs to be climate justice. Social justice outcomes of the climate emergency response need to be embedded throughout the strategy and delivery - not just seen as an add-on, but is integral to the strategy.

In summary, the strategy needs to recognise it is building a new mobility network which enhances the lives of the most vulnerable.