



YORKSHIRE  
TRANSPORT  
ROUNDTABLE

& THE HUMBER  
ACTIVISTS

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**“SWITCHBACK TO ROAD BUILDING  
IN SOUTH YORKSHIRE”**

If, like me, you flipped straight to the financial tables to find the truth about the South Yorkshire provisional LTP you would have found £135 million going on major road schemes. Hey, you think, that's a bit steep but they've obviously done it for the best so let's find the evidence that all this road building will help the economy. You begin to plough through the 230 odd pages but get stuck in Chapter 2 (don't worry there is no evidence or mention of SACTRA for those of you who are still searching) where you find that worse is yet to come. Here the aspirations of the South Yorkshire Partnership are revealed: relief of capacity restrictions on the M1 and M18, development of the M18 link road to Finningley Airport, an improved trans-Pennine route through upgrading of the A628/616, and, if you read on, local bypasses and link roads. You sink back thinking of all those lost targets for safety, road traffic reduction, air pollution, development on brownfield sites... Then you think of the cost. And you recover a little. That's alright. Let them aspire. Mere pipe dreams – but wait! What's that whisper of Objective 1 funds? £2 billion to regenerate the economy?

Yes. And the powers-that-be have been planning how to spend it in a massive 600 page Single Programming Document (SPD). The version prepared for public consultation in October 1999 contained very little on transport and one could be forgiven for believing that all might be well. By contrast the most recent version available at [www.goyh.gov.uk](http://www.goyh.gov.uk) contains a brand new Chapter 11 entirely concerned with Transport, and a new Priority Six: *Realising strategic transport as a pre condition*

*for economic growth in the sub region.* According to this Priority, “opportunities to create the conditions for economic growth intend to focus on” the above road schemes, and air transport facilities at Sheffield City Airport and the former RAF Finningley.

Of course, Priority 6 also intends to enhance public transport and decrease the need to travel. But if the SPD was unsustainable with respect to the environment and use of natural resources without Priority 6, how much more unsustainable will it be with it? Not to mention all the conflicts that it has with the Y&H RPG and Regional Economic Strategy, and the fact that it looks set to pre-empt national and regional airport policy development, and the investigation of transport problems in South and West Yorkshire through the ongoing multimodal study.

Everyone wants the best for the severely deprived areas of South Yorkshire. But what about all those indicators of sustainability - reducing greenhouse emissions, ensuring that people's health does not suffer from air pollution, reducing road traffic, protecting wildlife and the countryside, and prudent use of natural resources, such as landscape, agricultural land, minerals and energy. People of South Yorkshire, wake up and start asking questions...

*Anne Robinson, CPRE Y&H*

**THE GOVERNMENT'S WALKING  
“STRATEGY”.**

The government has copped out of producing a national 'Walking Strategy' to match the Cycling Strategy. Instead, after two years of delay, it has produced 'Encouraging Walking, advice to local authorities'. Like the Speed Review and

Road Safety Strategy published in March, the document avoids questions about the resources that national government will allocate to walking, and instead passes the buck to local authorities without allocating them any extra money or powers.

The document acknowledges that 80% of short journeys are made on foot (even excluding walking to bus stops and stations) but goes on to say that walking makes no difference to car mileage or air pollution. Yet these short journeys are just the ones that cause a great deal of pollution and many traffic jams – trips to the shop or education. On short distance trips car engines are very inefficient and polluting.

The document makes it clear that the government's central target and strategy remains to 'reduce congestion' and 'to improve health' by encouraging walking. It wants councils to set local targets, but avoids a national target. It looks at three particular areas of 'partnership' – Health Improvement Programmes (HIPs), travel for education and employment, and promotion of walking as a leisure activity.

There are initiatives begun on all three of these in Leeds, with Greg Fell of Leisure Services recently making a start on ideas for promoting walking for leisure, but lack of resources means that very little can be done in practice. The Rights of Way officers tell me that it will take fifty years just to get all the rights of way applied for in Leeds settled at current rates of progress – and that is if they don't get any more! York is cited as an example of 'good practice', but in fact York's success has in some way been negative to the cause of pedestrians – it has convinced the government that you can have a 'user hierarchy' within current legislation, without the need for 'home zone' or pedestrian and cycle priority legislation.

The level of resources anticipated is clear from the comment later 'Is there a local authority officer with specific responsibility for walking?' Clearly, they don't anticipate more than one. They then go on to make a list of demands and queries which it would take a team of ten a year to answer, such as 'are pedestrian crossings sited on 'desire lines' to public transport interchanges?' and 'are the pedestrian routes interesting?'. Local authorities are at last recommended to improve the situation with regard to street furniture – by getting rid of it. This will no doubt be seized on by cash-strapped authorities as a good

argument for removing or not spending any money on flower beds, litter bins, bus shelters, lampposts, seats (is this cynical?).

The advice asks the right questions, and it acknowledges things that I have argued for years – such as that pavement falls bring ten times as many people into accident and emergency departments as are injured in road traffic accidents. Yet all we ever hear about is 'road safety', and all the money goes into this. In Leeds there is a whole 'road safety' team and no-one with responsibility for reducing pavement falls, hence we have been running for the past year in Leeds a campaign to get the problem recognised ('Preventing Unnecessary Footway Falls' or PUFF) and to try and get some research into it.

It asks the right questions, but there are not many answers given, and no new money or powers. This means that in practice very little will happen, and walking is likely to continue to decline quickly in favour of car and bus use, because authorities simply cannot afford to do what they would like to and need to if our streets, parks and rights of way are to be convenient, safe and pleasant to walk and if facilities are to be within walking distance of people's homes. The best target that can be set is 'to reduce the rate of decline in walking' – to hope to increase walking seems rather pie in the sky in the circumstances.

*Claire Nash, Leeds Pedestrians Association*

## **Bradford - Dewsbury Cycleway**

A new cycleway, built to high standards, between Dewsbury and Bradford, via Cleckheaton is under development. part was opened last week, and it is proving very popular. literally hordes of the locals descend on it, many saying that they would use bikes more if only the roads were safer.

*Peter Crossley, Kirklees Cycling Forum*

## Letter to Lord Macdonald

Here is the letter I have written to Lord M, enlarging on the point I made to him at the regional consultation on the 10 Year Plan.

*Anthony Rae*

Dear Lord Macdonald,

### *TEN YEAR PLAN: ENHANCED ALLOCATION FOR MINOR WORKS SCHEMES*

I was pleased to have the opportunity to speak to you in the Government Office in Leeds on Friday 2nd June, as part of the regional consultation meeting, and to ask about the priority to be given to Minor Works funding in the Ten Year Plan (10YP). I was also glad to hear the positive nature of your response to my question.

Because participants only had a couple of minutes each to identify our area of concern I thought I would set out in this letter some of the background to the point I was making. Also, as I you acknowledged, these sort of minor works can be overlooked in the 'big picture' because they do not have an automatic sponsor sitting 'round the table' that many of the major schemes do.

This letter is in two parts; firstly dealing with the current position of Minor Works funding, and secondly the strategic significance of these sort of programmes. The examples are drawn from the West Yorkshire LTP - on which the TAR has done a great deal of analytical work - :but I believe the issues are more universal.

### *West Yorkshire within sight of stabilising traffic growth*

In West Yorkshire (WY) we have asked for the LTP to focus on the objective of road traffic reduction - in practice, stabilisation to zero growth by the end of the first LTP 5 year period. The local authorities responded that they thought this an unrealistic aspiration but in fact the outputs from their strategic model now show that even with their proposed LTP measures traffic growth to 2006 could be limited to just 3%. With a little more determined implementation, traffic growth in this important conurbation could be halted.

### *Insufficient focus on road traffic reduction and safety measures*

Our analysis of the provisional LTP (and previous Packages) has in fact demonstrated a lack of emphasis, and financial prioritisation, on precisely the measures most likely to reduce road traffic growth - Safe routes to school (SRSs), green travel plans (GTPs), area traffic calming and safety schemes, walking and cycling, bus priority, enforcement - and these are the measures funded from the Minor Works programme. Their treatment is fragmented, and mostly pushed to the margins of the LTP. It is interesting that in response to my question you cited the example of the success of the area traffic calming schemes in Hull. In our submissions for the provisional LTP we drew particular attention to the achievements of Hull and asked for similar treatments in WY, but our point was ignored.

### *Traffic reducing minor works are starved of money*

Three examples will suffice. In one WY local authority, our analysis shows that it would require five times the amount of money presently allocated to provide safe routes to school to every school that wanted one over a five year LTP period; or alternatively it will take a very long time indeed to provide for every school. Across WY - and you will know that the same applies throughout the UK - there is an almost infinite queue for local traffic calming and safety measures. Consequently some local authorities are now bringing in what amounts to rationing mechanisms. Finally there is not enough funding for enforcement measures which affects the performance of bus priority measures and of road safety.

Yet local authorities have actually been warned by DETR to reduce their bids

In the December settlement letter the West Yorkshire authorities were advised as follows: "It is disappointing to note that the implementation programme is unrealistic about the level of available resources, as, excluding major schemes, the bid is around 60% greater than the current year's allocation. This over-bidding must be addressed in next year's full LTP. Only when the bid closely matches the likely allocation can the objectives be seen as realistic and achievable." We appreciate that, from one perspective, this is simply ensuring that LTPs do not become unrealistic wishlists; but from another, it is sending a stark message

to local authorities - that this year, and covering the next five, they must actually reduce the scale of their bids in those areas where there is the greatest demand and greatest need. In the context of the 10YP, this is really unfortunate

### *This is undermining the LTP process itself*

Our work, which we have presented to the Government Regional Office, demonstrated how the DETR funding mechanism was actually distorting the LTP bids that were now being prepared. It was causing the traffic reducing minor work schemes, and some public transport schemes, to be downgraded, delayed, cut back in scale or quality, or forced to compete against each other for limited funds. (By contrast, some major schemes and particularly road schemes, were being over-emphasised. For example, seven out of the ten proposed major schemes for the full LTP were road schemes, we were told in May. With the exception of Leeds Supertram, there was only one other major public transport investment scheme in all of West Yorkshire, for the period until 2006!). It seems clear that there is not a level playing field in the assessment of which schemes to include in the LTP.

The reasons for this are complicated but arise essentially because of the scarcity of funding. This is why the Ten Year Plan - a unique opportunity when funding is being uplifted - is so important.

### *Perverse Disincentives exist*

Our analysis has demonstrated that the 'bread and butter' Minor Works schemes - which paradoxically are most effective at reducing road traffic and increasing safety - are the losers. We believe that the local authorities feel that they are trapped in a situation where they cannot prioritise minor works programmes, for funding reasons, and therefore tend to marginalise them in the LTPs

We appreciate that this is primarily not the responsibility of DETR - local transport plans are meant to reflect the priorities of local authorities - but if the funding allocation system itself is sending the wrong signals, this does become the responsibility of central government. Furthermore, government has set important targets and directions for policy, the chief of which are improved safety, increased transport choice, and tackling local traffic reduction and congestion. The 10YP provides a special opportunity to boost the achievement of

these targets and policy objectives. Finally, there is no reason why the government should not emphasise particular measures that it wants to see prioritised, such as safer streets and SRSs. That is a proper purpose for policy.

### *Consequences of not investing enough*

In West Yorkshire these are clear. The Minor Works programme and all that it could achieve will languish, starved of funding and interest; implementation will dawdle and dissatisfactions will increase. In the case of the area traffic calming schemes, you noted the tremendous safety payback that can be achieved; but the opposite is also the case. Without these schemes, quality of life and often life itself, is lost - traffic reduction or stabilisation will not be achieved. Local communities across the country will bear the brunt.

The conclusion must be: to allocate a substantial real increase to the Minor Works programme in the Ten Year Plan - up to a level where effective rationing is removed and real achievements can be made - and also to set clear government priorities and targets as to how it should be spent.

### *The Strategic significance of Minor Works*

One of the welcome aspects of the discussion at the regional meeting was the consensus that the 10 Year Plan should be based on a clear strategy. But because Minor Works, as you agreed, are the 'Cinderellas' of transport investment, often overlooked and without an obvious sponsor, it might be thought that they do not serve a strategic purpose. This is not the case, as you will know.

Firstly, minor works are very cost effective, meaning that they usually have a tremendously positive payback period, they are inexpensive, they deliver measurable and positive outcomes, and they are low risk. As they eat into traffic growth, they will render unnecessary much higher future expenditure on road measures. All these qualities should make them very attractive to both DETR and the Treasury.

Secondly, they contribute to the strategic concern of reducing traffic or congestion. The government has placed the onus on delivering road traffic reduction or demand management, and the response to congestion, on local authorities. You indicated at the meeting that there had been no U-turn in government transport policy, so one of the strategic purposes of the Plan is to put a price tag on

this task (and then provide for it, to the maximum extent possible). Using these effective measures, how much will it cost to reduce annual traffic growth to/by X%?; or how much to apply specific measures to obtain the required national coverage (e.g. a SRS for every school in the country that needs it)?

By this means, government would have some security of knowing that at the end of a five or ten year period a particular group of desirable measures would actually have been implemented; otherwise this is being left to chance. I'm sure this approach is being taken to the strategic networks or major schemes, so why should it not be taken to the minor works measures as well?

Thirdly, they will make a specific contribution to particular government policy targets. I will cite climate change and safety targets. You will recall that one of the conclusions of Tackling Congestion and Pollution - The Government's First RTR Report was that: "Even under the most intensive scenario considered, road traffic emissions are estimated to be only slightly below 1990 levels" para. 55. I am writing this letter on the day of publication of the Royal Commission for Environmental Pollution's report on the UK response needed to climate change, a report already accepted by your colleague Michael Meacher. Amongst the recommendations are:

"Local authorities which are considering implementing [charging regimes] will need sustained political and financial support from the UK government. Progress will also depend on adequate government support for other aspects of local transport plans. We continue to be disappointed at the slow progress in implementing the measures required [from the Integrated Transport WP] We welcome the recent increases in public investment in transport and hope these will be further enhanced (paras.50, 52-3)

The new safety target is expressed as a 50% reduction in child KSIs over 10 years; expressed the other way round it means an acceptance that over that period some 45,000-50,000 children will be killed or seriously injured on our roads. Since the Prime Minister has rightly said: "Last year, 103 children were killed as pedestrians on our roads - 103 too many", surely you must do as much as you possibly can to reduce this appalling casualty prediction. Our view is that success will be achieved, substantially, in proportion to the

amount of money put into the full range of local safety measures.

Finally, and this is something that a government will always want to consider, Minor Works measures are popular. For the government to be able to say as it announced the Plan that its intention was, by the end of the ten year period, to have implemented SRSs and GTPs for everyone, and genuinely safer streets for children to grow up in, and so on, would be a tremendously powerful statement. I am sure that you will be indicating the ten year outputs or end situations for the strategic networks etc., why not also for the minor works programmes? The Plan would surely be deficient without this.

This is a genuinely strategic point, for if people (including motorists) are to accept the various measures associated with transport and climate change policy, they need to understand - in very tangible terms - what they are going to get out of it, and how they and their families will benefit. A funding uplift and presentational prioritisation of these minor works measures, alongside the larger measures, would humanise the Plan and allow it to stretch out into every street, every school and every workplace.

I hope you have found these points constructive, and that you will be able to respond to them as you finalise the strategy and funding allocations in the 10YP. On 2nd June you replied that these sorts of schemes 'should not be forgotten'; I hope that will be the case when you announce the Plan!

Yours sincerely

Anthony Rae

on behalf of the Yorkshire and the Humber TAR  
(Transport Activists Roundtable)

## **NORTH YORKSHIRE: ONE STEP FORWARD, TWO STEPS BACK**

Transport in rural areas is supposed to be improving with the provision of the rural bus grant, much has been done to improve recreational transport to the county's two National Parks. The Dalesbus network continues to expand with more services linking the Eastern Dales with Wharfedale and Wakefield, Dewsbury, York and Lancaster being brought into the network. In the North York Moors the Moorsbus network linking Teeside, Darlington York and Hull the has been

strengthened with addition of Thirsk and Northallerton. Services run at weekends for both Dalesbus and Moorsbus, and Wharfedale has a greatly improved weekday service.

Despite this good news the fact remains that North Yorkshire villages remain some of the most isolated in the country because of the poor provision of public transport. In North Yorkshire the rural bus grant has now been spent. However, ordinary services far from seeing improvement have seen decline. In a county where total dependence on the car is seen as part of the deal when living in rural areas, the state of affairs has finally been noticed by one of the national papers...

**If you haven't got a car, they don't care - Stuck in the countryside: 'North Yorkshire county council regards rural public transport as poor law provision, nothing more'**

*From the Independent on Sunday*

By Elaine Williams 4 June 2000

*The rough beauty of the North York Moors attracts increasing numbers of tourists. And their cars. On most days in summer the elegant market towns and otherworldly stone villages are jammed with overheated traffic, vehicles squeezed into every available space.*

*The lack of public transport is bad enough for the visitors, but for locals it's even worse. You need a car to get into the area – and increasingly you need one to get out as rural bus services dwindle.*

*Last week, the elderly residents of Ampleforth village, nestling on the southern slopes of the Moors, met in the White Swan pub outraged that they have been all but cut off on three points of the compass. Their bus lifelines to York, 20 miles to the south, to Thirsk, 12 miles to the west and Helmsley, four miles to the north, have been either slashed or abolished.*

*Thanks to the Independent on Sunday's Passenger Power campaign, North Yorkshire County Council has just agreed to reinstate the vital 5.15pm service from York to Ampleforth.*

*But this minor victory is not enough for Anne Pickles, an Ampleforth pensioner who cannot drive. Mrs Pickles is desperate about the poor service and may be forced to move as a result.*

*She came to Ampleforth when her husband died, attracted by its transport links, however imperfect. She said: "I can no longer get to Thirsk any more where I bank and where I have my dentist. The service to York is still hopeless. I believe I will have no option but to sell my house and move."*

*Until last week the Reliance bus company ran regular services to and from York five times a day, between 9am and 7pm, building up customers with attractive new buses.*

*But now North Yorkshire County Council has handed the contract to a company called Stephensons, which offered to run the service on a commercial basis, requiring no subsidy. Predictably enough, the result is fewer buses. There are now only two a day to York – one mid-morning, one in the early afternoon – on a journey that takes more than an hour-and-a-half. It costs more than £4 for a return.*

*Until the IoS intervened, the last bus back from York left at 2pm. On Friday, the council described this as "an oversight" and rushed out a new timetable with a 5.15pm service. Stephensons said it was "a last minute change of heart".*

*Meanwhile buses to Thirsk have been completely removed and if you want to go to nearby Helmsley you have a four-hour wait for the bus back. Nancy Bowes, a fellow pensioner, can no longer visit relatives because of the limited service. Emily Gallagher, 18, says young people can no longer leave the village to go out at night without relying on their parents.*

*Ampleforth residents have already seen the services reduced to nothing at all in areas such as Bilsdale, to the north of Helmsley, which once boasted regular bus connections – four times a day – to Middlesbrough. No longer. For the past 10 years there has only been a bus up and down the valley on a Friday.*

*The Government recognised the problem facing country areas when, last year, it released the first tranche of a new £100m rural bus grant. This only served to infuriate residents of North Yorkshire, where the council said it was unable to spend the cash – it returned £600,000, nearly half of its allocation, to the Government. Lincolnshire, in contrast, used the grant to improve the service to 79 of its isolated villages.*

*The North York Moors area is not the only one to suffer. Over to the west in the Yorkshire Dales, the Wensleydale Railway Company used to run modern, low-floor, easy-access buses between Garsdale – which has a station on the Settle and Carlisle railway line – along Wensleydale through to Northallerton in the east. It ran 18 hours a day, seven days a week, and was gaining passengers at the rate of 1 per cent a day. This was until, last year, NYCC gave the contract to an operator who agreed to run it for less. Now the route from Hawes to Garsdale runs only once or twice a week in a van-style minibus cutting Wensleydale off from Garsdale station.*

*North Yorkshire will be criticised for its poor bus services in a forthcoming report by the Council for the Protection of Rural England and the lobby group Transport 2000.*

*NYCC's transport manager, Richard Owen, said it embarked on a major consultation exercise asking rural parishes what sort of bus service they wanted before agreeing the current schedules. "We already have a lot of new services in place over the county, attracting nearly 100,000 new passengers."*

*But Colin Speakman of the Yorkshire Dales Society, a transport consultant to the Countryside Agency, said the council had allowed its local bus services to fall into a vicious cycle of decline: "When services do run they are so poor nobody wants to use them apart from the desperately poor, the elderly and the young. NYCC regards rural public transport as poor law provision – nothing more."*

## Have Your Say!

### *Public Transport in West Yorkshire*

Metro are running a consultation questionnaire about public transport services in West Yorkshire. This gives you a golden opportunity to let it be known your exact views about standards - such as bus reliability, transport information and so on. If you have not got a copy of the questionnaire ring 0113 251 7396 or visit the Metro website at **www.metro-wyorks.co.uk** .

## Consultation on The M62 Motorway

As some of you will have gathered from the email discussion list, the Highways Agency are running the M62 Route Management Strategy Web-Site. For those not on the internet telephone 0800 018 2888 to get information on the consultation. So if you think that adding extra lanes to the M62 might be a bit of an ill-conceived idea - let them know through the questionnaire!

## National Conference - Transport Campaigning in the 21st century

A national conference for activists will be held on Saturday October 14<sup>th</sup>, in central Birmingham run by Transport 2000. Speakers will be talking on Local Transport Plans, better bus partnerships, rail strategy and traffic taming; there will be also a dialogue session for activists voice their views and questions.

Costs are £17 waged, £7 unwaged (price goes up after 7<sup>th</sup> August). For more information call Susan Dye on 020 7613 0743 or email [susan@transport2000.demon.co.uk](mailto:susan@transport2000.demon.co.uk) .

## YHTAR's email conference

You can subscribe to the email conference to find out news as it is happening, and engage in topical discussion on events in our region.

To subscribe, send an email to: **majordomo@foe.co.uk**

- leave the subject line blank
- in the body of the email, type:

### **subscribe yorkshumb\_transport**

You should receive back an instant response from the FOE computer, telling you that you have successfully registered, and how to use the network.

It will help if you could post a short email onto the network saying that you have now joined. Of course, if you have any transport news or comments please add them straight away.

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