

03 March 2021

Attn:

The Project Team, Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy, Leeds City Council.

Copy To:

Councillor Helen Hayden, Executive Lead for Climate Change, Transport and Sustainable Development, Leeds City Council

Dear Councillors and Officers

We wish to respond to the Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy document. We did respond to the Transport Supplementary Planning Document in February 2020. In that response we listed a number of issues to which we requested answers. We got no acknowledgement and no answers either specific or in general. In short, we felt ignored. During other interactions with Leeds City Council departments the residents of Wetherby and the surrounding villages have felt ignored. We would seek to assert that this is the feeling of the average resident of Wetherby and its surrounding villages. This is many thousands of your constituents.

Firstly, I believe you should recognise that there is support in this area to address environmental issues and to recognise the need for policies to address climate change. That recognition would be made apparent by useful dialogue between the delegated representatives of Leeds City Council in all its forms be they a department, a project entity or a nominated consultant and the residents of Leeds Outer North East. Wetherby is identified as a significant/major settlement and a designated town centre.

Previous overtures from those tasked by the Council to address Climate Change, Transport and Pollution have sought to indicate equity and inclusion in their proposed efforts and they have exhorted residents of Leeds to respond. One such communication stated, ***“The geographic scope of this Transport SPD is the entire Leeds Metropolitan District which includes the City Centre as well as the main urban area of Leeds and many designated towns.”***

Another contained in the document to which we now respond i.e., ***“for the Leeds City Region to be a globally recognised economy where good growth delivers high levels of prosperity, jobs and quality of life for everyone.”***

Working to ensure that the physical character of Wetherby and District is protected and developed for the benefit of the community of both current and future generations.

In the Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy document, we see developed the idea of Six Big Moves. In general, we would support all these aspirations. The document explains how these “Moves” can be delivered and it points towards twelve policy areas. Those moves cover:

- *Where walking and cycling are the first and easy*
- *With a fully integrated low carbon transport network with a network of modes – each of them accessible, viable and sustainable, which together will connect everybody with everything.*
- *With decreased car dependence, and with a “go anywhere” active and public transport network.*
- *With efficient land use for a well-connected, productive city centre, moving more people, not more vehicles – prioritising mass transit, buses and active modes of travel.*
- *That enables everyone to have equal access to the same opportunities. Where the cost of travel is reduced and people need to travel less.*

These explanations then concentrate very much on the Leeds City centre and where they broaden, they seldom, if at all, refer to areas outside the Leeds Outer Ring Road.

The residents of the Outer Areas of Leeds currently are and for some time in the future will be dependent on the Leeds City centre for places of employment, for education, for healthcare, for transport connection, for retail and wholesale trade, for services and for leisure. For these reasons constituents also travel from Leeds to the outer areas. If Leeds City centre is to be car free what are the planned transport alternatives to accommodate these many thousands of travellers. Where are they addressed in the strategy document? The historic ways, cultural habits, daily needs of all these many thousands of people need to be addressed and cannot be wished away. There are twenty to thirty thousand inhabitants in each of Leeds Outer areas, swelled by visitors and transients each day.

The BWP would like to know when, and where and how were the duties to consider the needs and wants of the people of Wetherby and the villages in the Leeds Outer North East area performed and how was information gathered, considered and evaluated for this report? Were the future needs of this area thought through in parallel to the multi million pounds solutions proposed for the Leeds City Centre and its inner suburbs?

We would like to be informed of, or guided to, the trawl and gathering of facts in this area, the community contact, the groupings, the meetings used as conduits to inform the Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy.

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Is it recognised that Wetherby is adjacent to the A1(M) and the A58 Trunk Road connects to Leeds centre and the A659 connects the A1(M) to the Wharfedale and Bradford routings through the LONE area? This traffic continues despite any wishes in the Authorities transport aspirations for traffic to exit the motorway elsewhere.

Is it recognised that car use has remained high in this area? Associated pollution is a consequence now and in the future throughout the routes. The ideas to reduce this car use appear to be non-existent, left on a shelf or the empty promises of new build developers.

We ask where are the plans, past or present, the delivery bodies, the financial commitment, the incentives to promote Active Travel in the Wetherby and its surrounding areas?

We also ask where are the plans past or present to enhance Public Transport schedules from the area to and from Leeds Centre, to and from York centre, to and from the Wharfedale and Airedale areas? This and the provision of parking near to the Wetherby “Transport Hub” should have been, and will surely be, a great incentive for car users in the area to leave their vehicles at home. It will reduce multiple car ownership within households. Additionally, it will be there for the use of other car drivers destined for Leeds, mid journey from A1(M) and northern routes.

The Bus Services Act 2017 indicates the use of Advanced Quality Partnerships and Enhanced Partnerships. We ask what AQPs or EP schemes in the Outer North East area have been discussed or considered by Leeds, WYCA, Metro and the bus companies where improved bus routes do not initially appear profitable? What Rural Proofing has been considered?

Mark Smith
on behalf of **Better Wetherby Partnership**