

Northallerton Future Transport Engagement

10th February 2024

Summary Report

Introduction

As part of our longer-term engagement with North Yorkshire Council and the move to the appointment of a Mayor for York and North Yorkshire, Northallerton Town Council, jointly with Brompton and Romanby Councils have engaged directly with the public on transport issues facing the town. This was to test the initial views set out in Northallerton Town Council's document ***New Local Transport Plan Engagement 8th August 2023*** at Appendix i.

On Saturday 10th February 2024 a transport event was held in the Town Hall, the principal objective of which was to help guide the future of transport in Northallerton[#] and the surrounding area. In addition, and in the shorter term, the information would assist and positively influence the development of the new Local Transport Plan currently being developed by North Yorkshire Council.

It should be noted that additional support was provided at the Town Hall event by officers and members from North Yorkshire Council, Hambleton Strollers, Hambleton Community Action and bus user groups. Prospective candidates for the Mayoral election were invited and 1 attended.

This report provides a summary of all comments/suggestions received and proposes a way forward.

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In order to gain people's view at the event, transport was split into six categories to better allow comments to be gathered. The detailed findings, summarised below, are consistent with those envisaged in our initial view last August;

- A significant proportion of people at the event would use other modes of transport such as buses, walking and cycling but are either unable to do so because of the absence of a comprehensive bus service or do not wish to currently due to safety concerns and poor highway condition and layout.
- Congestion in the town is a key issue and needs to be lessened by a range of complementary actions that would also improve the move to more active modes of transport.
- Rail is a key transport mode for Northallerton as well as strategically in the North of England and services need to be protected. Rail traffic is, however, a key cause of congestion and the impact of the three level crossings in the town must not be worsened and opportunities should be identified to reduce the frequency of closures.

These findings point towards confirming a holistic approach to improvement through the Mayoral and Local Transport Plan process, again consistent with our original document in August 2023.

- Formally develop a delivery plan which incorporates an integrated transport strategy for Northallerton. To be developed jointly by the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority and the three local Parish Councils.
- Create and fund a much stronger bus network for Northallerton.
- Develop and fund improvements to existing highway and pedestrian infrastructure to improve wider travel choices such as walking and cycling as well as vehicular use.
- Investigate and fund better ways of improving existing and future vehicle movement in Northallerton.
- Use the Northallerton delivery plan to drive progress in transport and other key policy areas for North Yorkshire e.g. Land use planning, Health and Wellbeing, Climate Change and Nature Recovery

Following this approach would allow a clear benchmarking of the current position and the ability to measure progress and benefits achieved.

The relatively low cost of some of the measures, particularly the top two areas chosen by the public for investment, would deliver high benefit cost ratios and be an effective use of funding.

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Event Format and Results

The event was well attended by over 150 local residents providing a wide range of valuable comments and suggestions relating to all forms of transport throughout the town. Over 250 detailed comments were received, both at the event and also in writing from people who were unable to attend.

In addition, a number of comments suggesting immediate issues were forwarded separately to North Yorkshire Council.

Attendees were also able to indicate how they would allocate funding towards the options outlined at the event.

For each option a list of potential issues was set out, together with a range of potential solutions to resolve those issues and an indicative cost of those options. This background information is summarised at Appendix ii.

Funding Allocation Choices

Transport Topic	Suggested Funding Allocation (%)
Buses	36.0
Walking	16.5
Congestion	13.5
Roads	12.5
Rail	12.5
Cycling	9.0

Buses

A total of **41** responses were received from consultees with around **78** individual comments/issues highlighted. The following provides a summary of the most common comments received relating to bus services to, from and around the town:

- Increased frequency of services between Brompton, Romanby and the town centre services, including the new housing developments in the north of the town.
- Improvement of existing services and provision of new routes to better connect villages and towns that are dependent on the services and facilities in Northallerton.
- Essential that residents, especially the elderly and vulnerable, can access health facilities using either enhanced existing services or the delivery of new ones.
- Need for a regular bus service linking The Friarage and James Cook Hospital.
- Currently a lack of connectivity both between different bus services in the town and with Northallerton train station.

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The responses received clearly demonstrate that the existing bus services do not offer the opportunity for many residents of the town and local villages to travel by bus. This is particularly pertinent for the elderly, vulnerable and those wishing to access essential facilities.

Walking

A total of **24** responses were received from consultees with around **59** individual comments/issues highlighted. The following provides a summary of the most common comments received relating to walking around the town:

- Improved and safer crossings for pedestrians required, particularly in the vicinity of the main junctions.
- Poor standard of existing footways, including maintenance of surfacing, adjacent vegetation, and lighting.
- Cars parked on pavements cause obstructions to pedestrians and should be banned.
- Cyclists using pavements can result in safety issues.

The above comments confirm that the quality and type of pedestrian infrastructure in Northallerton does not encourage people to walk and is likely to lead to unnecessary car journeys. Increased investment in relatively low-cost infrastructure could ensure that many of these shorter journeys could be undertaken by more sustainable modes without impacting on road capacity.

Congestion

A total of **12** responses were received from consultees with around **25** individual comments/issues highlighted. The following provides a summary of the most common comments received relating to delays and congestion in and around the town:

- Promote more active travel initiatives to encourage residents to use alternative modes of transport.
- Consider some form of relief road around the west of the town to remove through traffic.
- Closure of the High Street on Wednesdays and Saturdays.
- Changes to the level crossings to reduce the impact of the closures and associated delays/congestion.

The responses received suggest that a range of initiatives should be adopted to reduce congestion in the town. This includes the funding of measures to encourage residents to use more sustainable modes of travel as well as ways to better manage vehicular traffic in and around the town.

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Roads

A total of **13** responses were received from consultees with around **18** individual comments/issues highlighted. The following provides a summary of the most common comments received relating to roads in and around the town:

- The poor condition of roads both in and out of town was highlighted by many comments, this included not only the road surface but road markings and signs.
- High Speed of traffic in town was highlighted as an issue that discouraged walking and cycling. Reduction of speed limits to 20mph in appropriate areas was suggested by several comments.
- Considering having more signals at junctions to improve traffic flow in town.
- Address the issue of delays caused by level crossings.
- More yellow lines to prevent inappropriate parking to improve traffic flow.

A relatively large number of comments highlighted the existing poor condition of roads across the town and the need for greater maintenance funding. Junction improvements were suggested as a way to better manage traffic flows, whilst also offering safer crossing opportunities for pedestrians and cyclists.

Rail

A total of **13** responses were received from consultees with around **29** individual comments/issues highlighted. The following provides a summary of the most common comments received relating to rail services and associated infrastructure:

- The importance of Northallerton station as a key transport hub for a wide area of North Yorkshire should be highlighted and protected in any transport plan.
- The station, particularly the ticket office, is a key resource and should not only be protected but its operation enhanced. Location of ticket machines should be improved.
- The number of trains stopping at Northallerton should not be reduced.
- The impact of level crossing closures on the town should be recognised and plans developed to reduce that impact.
- Other transport links to the station, particularly by buses and taxis, should be improved.
- Pressure should be put on train operators to improve their service and punctuality.

The comments show that residents fully recognise the importance of the rail service for the future of Northallerton and that existing service levels and ticket office facilities should be maintained or improved. It was also clear from the above responses and elsewhere that the closure of the level crossings in the town create significant problems, in terms of congestion, pollution and access and that mitigation measures should be investigated.

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Cycling

A total of **11** responses were received from consultees with around **20** individual comments/issues highlighted. The following provides a summary of the most common comments received relating to cycling in and around the town:

- Cycling did not feel safe on roads across the town and on routes leading into Northallerton and all users felt there should be more separated provision for cyclists to stop cycling on pavements.
- Current cycle tracks were seen as disjointed and poorly maintained.
- There was a need for a clearer, segregated cycle network in and around Northallerton.
- Thought should be given to clearer routes and safer provision out of town into the surrounding countryside where there are safer cycling routes but getting to them involves busy roads where cyclists feel unsafe.

The lack of a safe and integrated cycle network in the town was considered a major impediment to those residents wishing to cycle. As with walking, increased investment in relatively low-cost cycle infrastructure could have a significant positive impact with minimal impact on road capacity.

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Appendix i

Northallerton Town Council, Brompton Town Council and Romanby Parish Council

New Local Transport Plan Engagement 8th August 2023

Introduction

Further to your email dated 7th July 2023, we are grateful to have the opportunity to actively engage in the development of the new Local Transport Plan (LTP). Given that transport and travel are not restricted by parish boundaries, the three local Parish Councils, Northallerton, Romanby and Brompton, have been working together for some time now, to identify opportunities and initiatives to improve the movement of people across the town along with associated environmental benefits. As such, this document has been prepared and jointly submitted by all three parish councils.

We believe that the development of the new LTP is a crucial policy document to positively and innovatively change the way we move to, from and around the three adjoining towns. Travel and transport are essential to almost every aspect of our daily lives, connecting people to work, education, healthcare, shops and other services and facilities, and transport is therefore fundamental to the recovery of our economy and to enhance the lives of our residents.

Maintaining and improving our transport network also has other benefits in terms of reducing carbon, encouraging residents to adopt healthy lifestyles, improving road safety and increasing accessibility.

Whilst we have completed the on-line survey, we have taken the view that providing this supporting submission will provide you with a better understanding of our initial thoughts on how the new LTP could positively influence Northallerton, Romanby and Brompton and indeed, similar towns in North Yorkshire.

As mentioned in your introduction to the stakeholder on-line survey, we would be extremely keen to be involved in the ongoing development of the LTP. As mentioned above, Northallerton is the County town and is probably the key market town in North Yorkshire and has many of the issues and challenges experienced in other towns. In addition, a number of councillors have a thorough understanding and extensive knowledge of travel and transport matters at a local, regional and national perspective which may be of some assistance.

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Background

Northallerton, Romanby and Brompton parish councils work closely on matters that impact across the towns, demonstrated by the work undertaken by the Active Travel Working Group. In addition, Northallerton Town Council formally adopted its first Strategic Plan in November 2021. It is a statement of the Council's vision for Northallerton, outlining the objectives for the period 2022 to 2027. It sets out what the Council wants to achieve, either directly or by working with key partners including North Yorkshire Council, Northallerton Business Investment District (BID), the Police and, importantly, the local community. The principal aim of the Strategic Plan is to provide residents, businesses and users of the town with a clear understanding of what the Council aims to achieve and how it will be delivered.

We firmly believe that the delivery of an enhanced transport network, for all users, is crucial to improve the lifestyle for local residents and to support a vibrant and sustainable local economy. At present, there are transport related issues that are having a significant adverse impact on the town and its residents, which need to be addressed. These include:

- Significant congestion, leading to delays, a poor urban environment, road safety issues and discouraging visitors.
- A lack of real choice of transport mode, especially for those willing to walk, cycle or use buses.
- The existence of three rail level crossings which, at times, have a hugely detrimental effect on air quality and traffic movements throughout the town.

The development of the new LTP is expected to work towards three national priorities: reducing carbon, improving transport for the user and improving the economy. It is our view that all these priorities are valid drivers and it is difficult to rank them in any manner, given their importance and the way they are interrelated.

The engagement process for the new LTP is welcomed by the three parish councils, as input from those actually living and working in and around Northallerton will be crucial to its future success and ultimate delivery of schemes and projects. North Yorkshire is a hugely diverse area, with differing challenges and requirements across the County. Engagement and input from local residents and stakeholders need to be maintained throughout the process – Northallerton, Romanby and Brompton parish councils are keen and willing to assist.

Key Issues for the LTP

It is accepted that the current NYC engagement is at the very earliest stage of the new LTP process and, as such, the following comments simply identify the key issues that we believe should be addressed within the policy document – it represents an initial and high-level response but hopefully assists the process.

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Whilst the comments are pertinent to Northallerton, many of them may well be applicable to other market towns in North Yorkshire.

1. Development of a Northallerton Integrated Transport Plan

We consider that it is important for a long-term integrated transport plan to be developed for the town, identifying (at an indicative level) what infrastructure and service levels are required to achieve the stated objectives. This would ensure a holistic, rather than piecemeal approach, is adopted and that all potential projects/schemes are fully understood and consulted upon. It would also allow the targeting of potential funding opportunities, from both public and private sector sources.

The requirement for town plans should, in our view, be included within the new LTP. Given that Northallerton has many of the issues and challenges experienced in other towns, we would welcome the opportunity to work with NYC to pilot an Integrated Transport Plan for the town.

2. Linking Transport, Land Use Planning, Climate Strategy and Health

It is crucial that transport is fully integrated with other NYC's identified priorities such as the Climate and Health Strategies as well as land use planning, within both the new LTP and the developing county-wide Local Plan. The responsibility for these initiatives all sit with NYC which should offer a real opportunity to better support the development of sustainable and healthy communities and transport, rather than separate policy areas.

Northallerton Town Council has submitted a response to the NYC Climate Strategy consultation process, within which we highlighted the need for better integration of all policy areas to address the many challenges brought about by climate change.

A significant amount of new development has already happened within Brompton and more is proposed in and around Northallerton, it is essential that the opportunity is taken to ensure the necessary transport infrastructure is funded and delivered by developers, in accordance with the town's long-term plan.

We would also like the LTP to acknowledge that transport related infrastructure can assist in the enhancement of public spaces and green corridors within towns such as Northallerton, through the management and control of vehicular traffic, appropriate use of parking provision and sensitively designed cycle and pedestrian schemes, including well maintained Public Rights of Way. It has been demonstrated elsewhere that high quality public spaces have a direct positive impact on both 'Active Well Being' and economic activity.

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3. Travel Choices

Offering a genuine choice of travel for all users should be a key objective of the new LTP, balancing the needs of all residents and visitors. Historically, like many market towns in North Yorkshire, existing pedestrian and cycle infrastructure in Northallerton does not encourage people to walk or cycle. Many of these shorter journeys could be undertaken by more sustainable modes without adversely impacting on road capacity.

Any switch to more sustainable travel modes benefits everybody by minimising car trips, reducing pollution and actively improving health and wellbeing.

We are aware of the LCWIP study which has undertaken some initial concept designs for improved pedestrian/cycle infrastructure along some key corridors. Such schemes should be incorporated into any future Integrated Transport Plan for the town.

4. Offering an Effective Public Transport Offer

The Government's 2021 National Bus Strategy clearly demonstrated its commitment to the delivery and funding of transformational bus services, though it acknowledges that much more still needs to be achieved.

We fully accept and understand that the provision of bus services in rural areas can be challenging given the level of funding available and the scale of demand. However, we believe that the new LTP should set out a clear, staged plan for the delivery of bus services for market towns throughout North Yorkshire.

A growing town the size of Northallerton, which serves a wide rural hinterland, should offer the opportunity for local residents and visitors to travel by bus. Whilst this may require consideration of innovative solutions (such as community transport and demand responsive services), alternative funding sources and closer working with operators and passengers, the potential benefits for the town would be significant – improving the general environment within the town, less cars on the road and encouraging visitors to the town.

Northallerton Rail Station is a key transport hub for both Northallerton and a much wider rural hinterland. Any depletion of train services stopping at Northallerton would have a huge adverse impact on commuters and less frequent passengers utilising the station, and ultimately on the future growth and economy of the town. We would therefore strongly suggest that the new LTP emphasises the importance of rail services to key service towns such as Northallerton.

It is noted that Transport for the North (TfN) is currently consulting on its second Strategic Transport Plan, which includes a Strategic Rail Report. The draft report states that Network Rail is developing a programme of measures to enhance capacity on the ECML North following the April 2020 Church Fenton to Newcastle Strategic Advice and specifically

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highlights that the existing rail network has *'a crucial impact on Northallerton town centre due to multiple level crossings in the immediate vicinity of the town'*. The report recommends exploring options for the level crossings in Northallerton, as *'backed-up traffic has an adverse impact on air quality in the town, and if more freight is routed via Eaglescliffe this is only likely to get worse'*. Given that the rail study confirms the strategic importance of Northallerton to TfN meeting its strategic objectives as well as addressing problems within the town, we consider that this should be recognised in the new LTP.

5. Managing Vehicle Movements

Most people are, and will continue to be, dependent on the private car as their main way of travelling around large parts of North Yorkshire. The key challenge for the new LTP in terms of reducing carbon emissions from transport should therefore be to address the heavy reliance of local residents on car travel, particularly for short journeys, by encouraging modal shift away from car use towards more sustainable transport options.

We are not proposing that car use should be actively controlled, but that residents and visitors should be offered a genuine choice of transport modes - ensuring a balanced approach is realised to meet the town's objectives.

Whilst there are limited opportunities to increase road space within the town centre, which may not be a sensible approach, the new LTP could provide the opportunity for consideration of schemes to remove some through traffic from the town centre and/or remove/improve the constraints resulting from the level crossing closures.

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Appendix ii

Traffic Congestion

Rising Motoring Costs

Poor Public Transport

Pollution & Carbon Emissions

The answer – Better Bus Services



harbus@hambletoncommunityaction.org

Join us in campaigning for a network of bus services that - meets the needs of people in Northallerton, Brompton & Romanby - entices people out of their cars and onto the bus - brings people from out of the area into town

Brompton should have a regular half-hourly bus service to Northallerton during the day Monday to Saturday, hourly evenings, Sundays and Bank Holidays. This could be achieved by retiming and increasing the frequency of existing services 72 (Northallerton to Darlington) and 80/89 (Northallerton to Stokesley). A direct service to James Cook Hospital and Middlesbrough would further increase the provision for Brompton.

Romanby should have a regular half hourly bus service during the day Monday to Saturday, hourly evenings, Sundays and Bank Holidays. This could be achieved by retiming and increasing the frequency of existing services 73 (Northallerton to Bedale) and 856 (Northallerton to Hawes). **Northallerton** town bus should be diverted after Mowbray Road to serve the North Moor Way development continuing into town along Darlington Road. It should be a regular half-hourly bus service during the day Monday to Saturday, hourly evenings, Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Thirsk and beyond Service 70 should be increased to hourly between Northallerton and Thirsk with two hourly extensions to both Ripon and York via Easingwold Monday to Saturday daytimes. Evenings Sundays and Bank Holidays a two hourly Northallerton to Thirsk and Ripon should operate. Service 153 (Northallerton to Thirsk) should run throughout the day. **Scruton, Kirkby Fleetham, and Richmond** The 'temporary curtailment' of the 54 at Kirkby Fleetham needs to end with the service once again extended to Catterick and Richmond. Both the 54 (Northallerton to Kirkby Fleetham and Richmond) and the 55 (Northallerton to Brompton-on-Swale and Richmond) should be increased to two hourly Monday to Saturday day times. In addition the services should be linked in Northallerton to create a circular service thus giving passengers from all points on route direct access to the Friarage Hospital, High Street and Station in Northallerton. Evenings, Sundays and Bank Holidays a two hourly service should operate from Northallerton to Richmond via Kirkby Fleetham.

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Bedale and beyond Service 73 should be increased to half-hourly between Northallerton and Bedale with hourly extensions to both Leyburn (replacing service 155) and Masham (replacing service 144) Monday to Saturday daytimes. Some journeys would deviate via Leeming Village replacing service 53. Evenings, Sundays and Bank Holidays an hourly Northallerton to Bedale service should operate with two hourly extensions to both Leyburn and Bedale. On Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays the Leyburn service should be extended through to Hawes.

Osmotherley, Stokesley and Darlington Service 72 Northallerton and Darlington should run hourly on Monday to Saturday, two-hourly evenings, Sundays and Bank Holidays. Service 80 and 89 Northallerton and Stokesley should be extended to Great Ayton and Guisborough replacing service 18. It would run hourly Monday to Saturday and two-hourly evenings, Sundays and Bank Holiday.

Hospitals The need for a regular bus service linking The Friarage and James Cook Hospitals has long been expressed. Various options have been suggested. There should be a new limited stop bus that starts at the Boroughbridge Road roundabout in Northallerton and travels via Northallerton Station, High Street, Buck Inn and Friarage Hospital to Brompton from whence it travels direct via the A684 and A19 to James Cook Hospital and then Middlesbrough Bus Station. This service would run hourly daily with last departures around 8pm from each end.

Villages North of Northallerton – Deighton, Appleton Wiske, Welbury, East and West Rounton These villages are currently without public transport. A two hourly service providing commuting and shopping opportunities in Northallerton is required. Yarm is the logical northern terminus of a route from Northallerton via Danby Wiske, Deighton, Appleton Wiske, Welbury, West Rounton, East Rounton and Crathorne to Yarm.

HarBus is a voluntary group within Hambleton Community Action working with North Yorkshire Council and bus operators to improve and promote public transport.

Spring 2024

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Appendix iii Event Slides

Bus Services

What are the problems?

- Time/Frequency of services
- Not enough routes/coverage
- Not convenient for many people
- Very complicated timetabling and routes

What might make things better?

- Fund more frequent services
- Better information for passengers
- Identify and fund new routes
- Investigate and fund demand responsive services
- Develop and fund more community-based services to complement existing
(e.g. Hambleton Community Action Car Scheme)

What might improvements cost?

- Initial studies and research - Low
- Better Information
- Ongoing subsidies to new routes and new arrangements – Low - Medium
- Fare subsidies at a local level across all routes - High

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Congestion/Crossings/Road Closures

What are the problems?

- Level crossings at each end of town create congestion
- More traffic in town with limited option but driving due to lack of alternatives
- More frequent closures of roads due to flooding
- Congestion/closures means people drive more to find alternative routes
- People avoid town centre and its shops
- Junction layout in town not efficient when busy

What might make things better?

- Fund improvement to rail lines and station to reduce the need for so many level crossing closures
- Fund more routes for vehicles to avoid town
- Fund improvements to avoid road closures due to flooding
- Encourage more walking and cycling to reduce car trips
- Investigate more efficient town junction layouts

What might improvements cost?

- Improved rail layout – High
- Alternative vehicular routes around town Medium/High
- Improvements to avoid road closures Medium/High
- More efficient junction strategy – Medium/High

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Cycling

What are the problems?

- Too few dedicated cycle routes and disjointed
- Cyclists on pavements
- Having to use busy roads in town
- Best routes to other villages and towns not clear

What might make things better?

- Identify and fund clear separated cycle routes in and around town from Romanby and Brompton
- Give clear space to cyclists on main routes.
- More information/campaigns/training about safe cycling for all road users
- More cycle parking in town and villages

What might improvements cost?

- Planning and Consultation on options on new routes– Low
- Better signage out of town – Low- Medium
- More information for road users – Low
- Cycle parking - Low
- New routes and removal of gaps in routes – Medium to high

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Rail Services

What are the problems?

- Threat to ticket office opening hours
- Cost of parking
- Non car travel to/from station
- Reliability of some services very poor
- Safety and Accessibility at the station
- Cost of tickets

What might make things better?

- Make sure Northallerton station is key on the East Coast line
- Support longer opening hours at the ticket office
- Improve PT links to station
- Subsidise parking costs

What might improvements cost?

- Confirming the importance of Northallerton as a key hub for the region – Low
- Improved ticket office hours – Medium/Low
- Improved rail layout and PT layout at Station – High
- Subsidise parking costs - Medium

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Road Traffic/Parking

What are the problems?

- Poor road surfaces and drainage
- Speeding an issue on some routes
- Parking options complicated and seen as expensive
- Mixture of vehicles/cyclists and pedestrians difficult to manage

What might make things better?

- Fund improved road surfaces and drainage for all users
- Consider and fund 20mph zones where appropriate
- Clarity of usage for cyclist and pedestrians by better markings and crossings
- Fund better and cheaper parking when appropriate, including on street

What might improvements cost?

- Improved road surfaces and drainage across town - Medium/High
- Better markings – included in above but on its own – Low/Medium
- 20 mph - Low
- Funded Parking Strategy – Low/Medium

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Walking/Pedestrians

What are the problems?

- Routes dominated by road traffic
- Crossing busy roads difficult
- Pavement parking sometimes makes it difficult
- Public Rights of Way not easy to use
- Walking routes other than next to roads not available or not signposted nor lit

What might make things better?

- Improve the quality of surfacing and drainage on pavements
- Create well signed and lit pedestrian routes across town
- Produce clear maps and signs of pedestrian routes with journey times
- Create and improve existing Public Rights of Way around town and create new walking routes through green spaces
- Give more space and crossings for pedestrians on busy roads
- Better gritting of footways during cold weather

What might improvements cost?

- Planning and consultation on options -Low
- Better information – Low
- Improvements and creation of new routes – Medium
- Better crossings and lighting – Medium
- Address pavement parking – Low
- More gritting of key pavements - Low