



GOVERNMENT OFFICE  
FOR YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER

David Hoggarth  
Director of Development  
West Yorkshire PTE  
Wellington House  
40-50 Wellington Street  
Leeds  
LS1 2DE

**Margaret Jackson**  
**Deputy Regional Director**  
**Economy and Strategy**

Government Office for Yorkshire & The  
Humber  
Lateral  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Esk  
8 City Walk  
Leeds  
LS11 9AT

**Direct Line: 0113 341 2745**

**Email:**

**Margaret.jackson@goyh.gsi.gov.uk**

Date: 19 January 2009

Dear

**LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 2006 – 2011: MID-TERM PROGRESS REVIEW**

Thank you for submitting West Yorkshire's mid-term progress report covering the first two years of the second Local Transport Plan (LTP). The ongoing engagement during the preparation of the report, together with the report itself, has provided the Government Office and the Department for Transport with a good opportunity to review progress towards targets and objectives, as well as to consider how the West Yorkshire Authorities have addressed some of the issues that have arisen since the LTP was written. We welcomed the opportunity to discuss progress with you and partners at our meeting on 18 November.

As was explained at the meeting on the 18 November, neither the review itself nor this letter are intended as a formal assessment and therefore they do not carry any implied grading of your performance or reward funding. A key focus for us is the extent to which the mid-term report matches the original aims set out in your LTP, and how its delivery coincides with and complements the priorities set out in the West Yorkshire Local Area Agreements (LAAs) and the Department for Transport's 'Towards a Sustainable Transport System' (TaSTS) document.

The progress report shows that just under half (8 out of 17) of your mandatory indicators are on track to be met with a further 6 out of 17 classed as having no clear evidence to make a firm judgement. The majority of those classed as 'no clear evidence' are where there have been changes in the way indicators are measured and it is recognised that not all these changes have been within your control. Having said that, there is evidence that some of these indicators are moving in the right direction and the overall picture of achievement is probably more positive than the overall assessment at first suggests. However, two indicators do give cause for concern: bus patronage and the total road casualties where people are killed and seriously injured. Both these indicators have some ground to make up if your targets are to be achieved and I would encourage you to develop remedial action plans for these in the last two years of the LTP. This is not to say that some significant achievements are not being made. The Free City Bus initiatives in Leeds, Wakefield, Huddersfield and Bradford,



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE





GOVERNMENT OFFICE  
FOR YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER

together with the introduction of bus real time information, are making improvements both to the range of travel options available to the travelling public and their ease of use.

The introduction of the new LAAs has in general been a challenge for those working in the transport field. This is primarily because it is the first time transport has been fully included in these agreements, but also because metropolitan areas like West Yorkshire have a history of joint and sub-regional LTPs while LAAs can be seen as more locally focussed. However, we were particularly pleased to reach an agreement that tackling congestion was a priority for all the LAAs and that three out of the four authorities where we identified casualty reduction as an issue agreed an LAA target in this area. Looking forward, the debate about LAAs will inevitably move more towards the delivery of the chosen targets and reviewing performance against the whole indicator set to see whether new priorities emerge over time. I would encourage you to strengthen your engagement with all the Local Strategic Partnerships and other LAA stakeholders in West Yorkshire, so that transport considerations are fully considered in any revisions to existing agreements.

At the review meeting, each of the four shared priorities plus asset management were discussed and while I cannot capture the full content of the discussion in this letter, I would like to highlight some of the key points we discussed:

Congestion

As you know, delivery of the national PSA target related to congestion is a priority for Government. West Yorkshire's contribution to the PSA target relates to 13 specific routes, with each local authority having a contribution to make. The initial results for 2006/07 showed that performance as a whole was below your forecast and, as a result of our subsequent discussions, you identified several improvements to your processes. I would encourage you to implement these in line with your action plan so that you give yourself the best chance possible of achieving your target for 2010/11. The provisional results for 2007/08 look more promising and I hope the final results confirm that your forecasts are now being met.

While the national focus is on the PSA target, the West Yorkshire Authorities monitor and manage congestion on a broader front locally. Your monitoring report contains some interesting data and it would be worth a separate discussion on what conclusions we can draw from this. One of the most noticeable factors is the continued decline in bus patronage and, while this is in line with past trends in West Yorkshire, we are seeing increases in bus patronage elsewhere and it is not absolutely clear what is making the situation different across West Yorkshire as a whole. I would encourage you to think further about this and to consider how the provisions of the Local Transport Act 2008 can be best used to increase bus patronage.

The availability of a relatively comprehensive rail network obviously has some impact on bus patronage and the modal split figures suggest there may be a transfer from bus to rail in Wakefield and Leeds. Growth in rail patronage into Leeds has been a success and, as far as resources allow, I am sure you are looking to build on the improvements made so far in terms of capacity enhancements on the Harrogate and Caldervale lines and refurbished rolling stock. However, buses remain the most viable option to the private car for a large majority of people in West Yorkshire and I know you will wish to look critically at what can be done to make this option more attractive. I know that you are planning to prioritise the implementation



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE





GOVERNMENT OFFICE  
FOR YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER

of bus priority measures in the remainder of the LTP, and this is something we very much support, but I would also ask you to consider taking a stronger and more co-ordinated approach to demand management and Smarter Choices measures.

It is good to see progress on Network Management Plans and initiatives such as Performance Improvement Plans. I agree with your analysis that the delivery of the Network Management Duty needs to be more fully integrated with the LTP but would also suggest that other local authority disciplines, such as planning and environmental services, need to be involved. There may be merit in having a further discussion about Network Management once DfT's Network Management Team publishes its regional summary reports from the September Traffic management workshops (expected sometime in February). In the meantime, I would like to acknowledge the significant amount of work that the Yorkshire Traffic Managers Group has done to co-ordinate this work across the region and particular the progress that has been made in developing Network Management Plans in West Yorkshire. It is encouraging that the plans have been developed to a common framework based on the intervention criteria and this should help facilitate action on a more sub-regional basis where you deem this to be appropriate. Both DfT and Government Office will continue to liaise, support and challenge this area of work through the Yorkshire Traffic Managers Group meetings.

Accessibility

The mandatory list of LTP indicators includes only one that directly relates to accessibility issues and your chosen variant of this relates to public transport accessibility of hospitals. I understand that the reason this indicator is performing poorly is because bus operators have lengthened schedules in response to more accurate information from the bus real-time system, coupled with a desire to meet punctuality targets.

However, this indicator was never meant to capture the wide range of issues addressed by your accessibility strategy and your progress report does show significant activity and achievement in other areas, such as work to improve passenger accessibility on rail services, the introduction of more MetroLocal bus routes to link communities to local facilities and audits to identify where local initiatives can be implemented to improve accessibility to hospitals. The establishment of an accessibility partnership involving a wide range of partners is also an achievement and something to build on for the future.

You have identified the issue of accessibility not being prioritised in LAAs as a threat in your SWOT analysis. However, all authorities will have to report on the two accessibility indicators in the LAA set and this provides an opportunity to secure greater engagement on this subject if the indicators are made more meaningful. The access to employment indicator shows high levels of accessibility across the whole of West Yorkshire and this is unlikely to change so its use to you may be limited. However, the access to services indicator can be derived locally, with agreement from DfT. You may wish to consider whether, in the longer term, more locally based indicators would help engage partners and secure more commitment and resource to this area of work. It may be possible to agree an indicator at a sub-district level if that is what you feel is appropriate – and if agreement at this level cannot be reached for inclusion in the national LAA indicator you could always suggest local indicators are included in LAAs to reflect identified priorities.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE





GOVERNMENT OFFICE  
FOR YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER

Safer Roads

As your report makes clear, the safer roads agenda seeks to tackle a broad range of issues relating to the safe operation of the transport network. Obviously there is a focus on casualty reduction, but providing an environment in which people are safe and feel safe is important, as this can help the take-up of more sustainable forms of transport and contribute to other priorities such as reducing congestion, encouraging healthy lifestyles and improving accessibility.

There has been significant activity in terms of scheme delivery, engagement of partners and communities and the monitoring /analysis of casualty trends. I am also encouraged by the move to establish Safer Roads Steering Groups in each local authority area and look forward to seeing these develop further during the rest of the LTP period. All this has helped lead to some positive outcomes in terms of reduced slight casualty numbers, increased pedestrian/cycling activity and initiatives to tackle the anti-social use of vehicles. However, I share your disappointment that the two KSI indicators have shown little progress over the first two years of the LTP. This must be a cause for concern given the good progress made during the first LTP for 2001 to 2005.

Looking forward, three of the five local authorities have included casualty reduction indicators in their LAAs and these should help secure a broader, authority wide commitment to achieving the targets you have set – as well as providing a platform to engage other named delivery partners. Should performance not begin to improve, I think we would want to discuss with the authorities that do not have casualty reduction targets, whether they wish to reconsider this in any refresh of their LAA priorities. Your monitoring report indicates that you are analysing accident data to identify which particular groups are most at risk from serious injury and I am sure this will provide the basis for future informed discussion and targeted action, such as the successful Seat Belt On campaign in Calderdale that was aimed at the Asian Community.

Air Quality

As you make clear in your report, the objective to improve air quality is closely related to the congestion shared priority. Progress against your suite of air quality indicators is good, although it will remain a challenge to hit the target for nitrogen dioxide emissions in the Leeds Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) given the difficulty in implementing any specific measures to reduce traffic in that location.

I would recommend the main focus across West Yorkshire should be on completing Air Quality Action Plans (AQAPs) for those locations declared as AQMAs and the continued investigation of the locations identified as Areas of Concern. The completion of the AQAPs should raise the profile of air quality management and provide the impetus for integrating this area of work more closely with the LTP. Your report recognises this by identifying the need for better links with the work of the West Yorkshire Transport Emissions Group and that it may be useful to review your performance management framework so issues coming out of the Strategic Environmental Assessment work are more fully accounted for. It may still prove difficult to implement specific and targeted initiatives in a particular location but the need to do this may help open the debate with other service areas that have a role to play in delivering air quality improvements or at least not making the situation any worse.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE





GOVERNMENT OFFICE  
FOR YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER

Asset Management

I acknowledge that recent changes to the methodologies for calculating highway condition have made it difficult to establish meaningful long term trends. However, the data reported does seem to show condition across all three categories of highway has improved from 2006/07 to 2007/08. This is to be welcomed, as is the investment over and above that provided from the LTP maintenance block, which is being made to improve highway condition.

There has been some progress in the development of asset management plans for each authority and you acknowledge that this is an area you need to continue to work on. I agree that this is a priority as these plans will be needed to inform the third LTP, for which you will have to begin preparing in the next 12 to 18 months.

The asset management plans will also link in with the emerging network management plans and your report recognises this when it says there is a need for better co-ordination of asset management plans with the LTP delivery processes. This need to improve the integration of maintenance and integrated transport strategies is something we are aware of in several places and we have been encouraging all local authorities to consider how they can make progress with this – not just so that cost savings can be achieved but also to secure better value for money and achievement of outcomes. The suggested establishment of a West Yorkshire Asset Management Group to link with the more established LTP structures may be a starting point to help deliver this more integrated approach.

Finally, I would like to thank you for the time and commitment all the West Yorkshire authorities have put into this review. It is obvious from the report that you have taken this as an opportunity to consult and reconnect with your delivery partners and stakeholders as well as taking a self critical look at your own performance. The report helpfully identifies a series of actions for the remaining years of the LTP and if we can assist you in any of these please do not hesitate to ask. I am particularly interested in the plan to strengthen your performance management system and hope this will help you to target resource to the most needed areas and help secure the best value for money and improved outcomes. I hope you find our comments helpful and if you would like any further advice or support please do not hesitate to contact myself or Phil Jones in the Sustainable Transport Team. We have found this review process extremely useful and I hope you have too. Our view is that these review documents should be made available to the public and I trust that you will want to publish the mid-term progress report on your website.

I am copying this letter to those listed in the accompanying annex.

Yours sincerely

**MARGARET JACKSON**  
Deputy Regional Director, Economy and Strategy



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE





GOVERNMENT OFFICE  
FOR YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER

**Annex**

Gary Bartlett  
Chief Highways Officer  
Leeds City Council  
Selectapost 6  
Ring Road  
Middleton  
Leeds  
LS10 4AX

John Blackburn  
Transportation, Design and Planning Director  
City of Bradford MDC  
Jacobs Well  
BRADFORD  
BD1 5RW

Jaqui Gedman  
Highways & Transportation Manager  
Kirklees MBC  
Flint Street Offices  
Fartown  
HUDDERSFIELD  
HD1 6LG

Martin Hibbins  
Engineering Services  
Calderdale MBC  
Northgate House  
Northgate  
HALIFAX  
HX1 1UN

Ian Wiper  
Service Director Transportation and Highways  
City of Wakefield MDC  
Council Offices  
Newton Bar  
Leeds Road  
WAKEFIELD  
WF1 1XS



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

