

## Zero Carbon Headingley response to Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy

**Key points at a glance** (see points B1 - B16 below for more details)

- A1.** Zero Carbon Headingley welcomes the strategy but notes that it **lacks the urgency and ambition** needed to tackle the challenges we face right now.
- A2.** **The strategy must have a compelling Vision** to capture people's imagination alongside a strategy to build essential public support, as well as setting out how to tackle the climate emergency and move rapidly towards a local sustainable green economy. Our experience of COVID-19 has demonstrated considerable public support for major lifestyle changes when people appreciate the wider benefits for their health and wellbeing,
- A3.** The issues of **access to employment, productivity, regeneration, travel and transport** must be more clearly linked to commitment to a sustainable and green model of economic growth for Leeds in which the health and wellbeing of Leeds people and of the planet are paramount.
- A4.** The present top-down approach will not achieve the change needed by 2030. As part of Headingley Development Trust, Zero Carbon Headingley is building up a strong record of community engagement. We would welcome drawing on our local knowledge to work with Connecting Leeds to trial strategic, coordinated development of Active Travel Neighbourhoods initially in the Headingley/Hyde Park/Weetwood/West Park areas. We think that by working together we could get increased community buy-in for this approach. Lessons learned might then be applied to other Leeds neighbourhoods and communities.
- A5.** The evidence-based recommendations of the diverse **Leeds Climate Change Citizens's Jury** <https://www.leedsclimate.org.uk/leeds-citizens-jury-recommendations-published> should be adopted in their entirety.
- A6.** We need a smart strategy covering objectives in a coordinated way including: reducing the need to travel; reallocation of road space away from motor traffic; promoting active travel and a hierarchy of road users suited to local roads and communities; routing heavy goods vehicles away from residential areas; resident parking zones; more School Streets; car-pooling; local distribution hubs; improving cycle networks; a seamless public transport network; promoting cycle-rail travel; reducing carbon emissions and other pollution; all with the purpose of creating pleasant, safe and healthy environments for local people. It is vitally important that pedestrians are able to walk freely and cross roads conveniently with safety and ease. **(See our more detailed response, from B10 onwards).**

- A7.** A8. In order to achieve these objectives we need to maximise our resources including through a combination of government Active Travel Funding, congestion charges, workplace and other parking levies, green bonds, a green new deal, and contributions from key stakeholders and engagement with the energy and expertise of local organisations and communities.

### **The Zero Carbon Headingley response in more detail:**

- B1.** The key page in the draft transport strategy is on page 25 which shows that, even with full implementation of the proposed “Big Moves and current ambitious targets”, **Leeds will be at least 57% short of achieving the reduction to zero CO2 emissions by 2030.** There is an alarming lack of clear proposals to close this gap.
- B2.** Connecting Leeds needs to demonstrate leadership by spelling out an exciting and ambitious **Vision for Travel and Transport which captures people’s imagination.** We want to see more visionary statements like “Leeds is to be a city where you don’t need a car/wouldn’t choose to use a car”. The public response to Covid has shown that radical large-scale social change is possible when people appreciate the need for it.
- B3.** The strategy needs proposals for **public communication, education and engagement** for the timescale of the strategy. (e.g. “YOU ARE NOT STUCK IN TRAFFIC ... YOU ARE TRAFFIC”). Zero Carbon Headingley would be happy to discuss with Connecting Leeds about how we can collaborate with you on advocating change locally.
- B4.** We need a **step change in active engagement and involvement of neighbourhoods, communities and access groups** so that Leeds people share ownership of changes. Local councillors have a vital part to play but they should not be expected to achieve change on their own. The necessary reduction in carbon emissions will not be achieved over the next ten years by the current top down approach.
- B5.** **Working together.** The consultation talks about “Our” Vision but power lies with “key stakeholders”, who often benefit from the status quo. For example, the **Leeds Climate Change Citizens’ Jury** last year was an excellent idea which enabled participation and discussion from a diverse group of people on the subject of tackling climate issues. Ultimately, however, Leeds City Council rejected ideas emerging from this Jury that did not fit in with Leeds City Council’s executive vision (the expansion of Leeds Bradford Airport being a prime example). We need positive proposals

from Leeds City Council to improve democratic participation in decision-making related to this transport strategy.

- B6.** The *Zero Carbon Headingley* response is the result of weekly zoom transport group meetings during lockdown, an earlier online survey with 286 responses, a zoom conference 'Towards 15-Minute Neighbourhoods', and checking out support for our response to this consultation via the ZCH newsletter from 160 local people. While this is not a random sample of local people it does demonstrate widespread concern and broad agreement on the way forward.
- B7.** As a result we would like to propose **collaboration between Connecting Leeds and community organisations in the Headingley area** to increase community engagement and buy-in, and trial innovative approaches to travel, with the lessons learned being applied to other Leeds neighbourhoods and communities. Such an active arrangement would help with Leeds applications for Active Travel Funding.
- B8.** The issues of **access to employment, productivity, regeneration, travel and transport** must be more clearly linked to commitment to a sustainable and green model of economic growth in which the health and wellbeing of Leeds people and of the planet is paramount. For this to be achieved the objectives of **tackling climate change, improving health/well being, and delivering inclusive 'growth' cannot be ranked** - they should be complementary aspects of an economy geared towards achieving wellbeing and preservation of the planet. The Dasgupta Review on the Economics of Biodiversity, published by HM Treasury, demonstrates how our economies are embedded within Nature, not external to it:  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/957629/Dasgupta\\_Review\\_-\\_Headline\\_Messages.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/957629/Dasgupta_Review_-_Headline_Messages.pdf)
- B9.** The draft transport strategy needs a **major update to reflect what has been learned during the Covid lockdowns** - namely that reduced road traffic and aircraft movements led to improved air quality, quieter neighbourhoods and to reductions in traffic collisions. These changes bring benefits to both health and to the environment, and should be a key aspiration for Leeds post-Covid. The pandemic also showed the potential for increased working from home and the positive effects that this can have on local facilities - in contrast to its effect on those in the city centre. It showed that the concept of "20-minute neighbourhoods" (in which people can access most of their needs within a 20 minute walk) requires local shops and services, employment, and green space. The pandemic also highlighted the fact that the trend towards increased online shopping necessitates changes to local distribution arrangements. Finally, it emphasised the dangers of having city centres overly focused on retail activities.

- B10.** There are a lot of positives in the **6 Big Moves** set out in the strategy but they are clearly insufficient to meet the reduction in CO2 emissions we need by 2030. We would like to see some principles which would clearly point towards:
- reducing the need to travel
  - an ambitious programme of reallocating significant amounts of road space to greenery, trees, play areas, street markets, pocket parks, quiet ways and public spaces
  - this has to include some road closures/restricted access/School Streets in respect of private motor vehicles in local neighbourhoods, not just the city centre
  - supporting active travel (walking, cycling or scooting), including through further investment in safe cycle routes across the city and creating a healthier and safer environment for pedestrians. Pedestrians should be able to cross the road with safety and ease and walk along pavements in a pleasant environment free from obstructions such as parked cars and rubbish bins. The strategy needs to emphasise the benefits of any physical activity for personal health and reducing the demands on the NHS.
  - recognising the hierarchy of road users by which we mean giving priority to the safety and mobility needs of road users: children, people with physical and sensory impairments, and older people; other pedestrians; and cyclists. In recognition of our growing very elderly population we need to give particular consideration to the genuine mobility needs of many older people (with and without blue badges) within their communities.
  - recognising the different purposes and capabilities of different roads; it is essential to restrict heavy goods vehicles to roads which can accommodate them, keeping through-traffic out of residential areas. Priority will be needed by emergency vehicles, buses, other public services, local business collection and deliveries, and residents' cars (with car pooling and parking permit schemes) over non-local traffic and Heavy Goods Vehicles (for example, traffic orders compelling HGVs to use the Outer Ring Road rather than the A660 or other inappropriate roads to cross the city)
  - acknowledging the opinions of local communities and a clear strategy to work with them to find desirable outcomes in relation to conflicts over priorities in relation to travel and transport
  - making sure that planned Big Move developments are coordinated within and between communities to reduce adverse impacts on the local people and the global environment.

**B11. Big Move 1 Reducing transport's emissions of greenhouse gases.** We suggest that it is essential to:

- Reduce the need to travel by supporting working from home, more services online, and encouraging 20 minute neighbourhoods with local amenities and employment and pleasant green environments.
- Encourage use of efficient public transport (see Big Move 4).
- Introduce congestion charging for vehicles including cars within the Outer Ring Road (with charges based on emissions, unladen weight and road space occupied) and using the income to subsidise other projects within this vision.
- Ensure low carbon mobility choices are available such as cycle-rail travel and maintaining and developing the National Cycle Network.
- Advocate clear measures to reduce the current support for air travel (ensure that flyers pay the full costs of necessary infrastructure, encourage local tourism as an alternative to foreign travel, lobby to have air craft fuel properly taxed). Additional air travel means more associated vehicle traffic, noise at day and night, and exposure of the public to increased pollution levels. *(The impact of an expanded airport cannot be conveniently left out of a transport strategy dealing with carbon emissions).*
- Encourage larger businesses to provide dedicated bus services or access to low carbon options for their staff.
- Reduce the number of cars in Leeds (while there are some positive aspects to Electric Vehicles, the production of EVs, their use of road space, their imported carbon footprint, the road wear they cause and particulates from brakes and tyres, have a very significant environmental impact. Such factors should be acknowledged in the Connecting Leeds transport strategy.
- Use all available powers and influence to restrict/forbid advertising which will encourage further climate degradation, for example the advertising and promotion of SUVs.

**B12. Big Move 2 Creating healthier streets, spaces and communities.** We see the need for clear plans to:

- Achieve phased implementation of Active Traffic Neighbourhoods across the city with a 20 mph speed limit in all residential areas. We support the aims of Vision Zero.
- Ensure that local roads and streets are designed for the convenience of pedestrians rather than that of motor vehicles; and that pedestrians can cross roads and streets in safety and ease at convenient points.
- Persuade events managers to include public transport in their ticket price.
- Promote local distribution hubs using cargo bikes and electric vehicles.
- Fund the development of Active Travel Neighbourhoods, 20-Minute Neighbourhoods and School Streets. This needs both capital and revenue funding to allow for continuous improvement.
- Encourage car pooling and car clubs as an alternative to car ownership.
- Develop “quiet ways’ as well as dedicated cycle routes.

- Promote integrated cycle-rail travel.
- Provide a safe, attractive and well-signed cycle network comprising direct routes along main roads - segregated where possible - together with quieter routes through local communities.
- Improve the walking environment by beautification of the street-scene, including restoration and protection of grass verges including addition of bushes and trees, and removal of obstructions such as refuse bins and parked cars.
- Introduce continuous pavements across the roadway where a minor side street joins a more major road.
- Education and enforcement against inconsiderate cycling and use of scooters on pavements, as this poses danger to vulnerable pedestrians.
- Parking management measures to ensure that a desirable reduction in the number of cars using the city centre does not result in surrounding neighbourhoods being used as car parks.
- Provision of local Electric Vehicle charging hubs that avoid the risk of unsafe trailing leads on pavements.

**B13. Big Move 3 Transform the city centre.** We support the new traffic control measures and the increase in green space but believe that:

- Private cars should be banned within the city centre (with specific exceptions such as blue edge holders). Failing this, a workplace parking levy, or some other means of charging for the use of private vehicles within the city centre, is essential with the income reinvested back into active travel strategies.
- HS2 should not be a priority. It is casting a long term blight on planning. One priority should be investment in rail electrification between northern towns and cities instead, including the local travel-to-work area which affects all of Leeds, not just the city centre.
- Following Covid, more detail is required regarding the proposed balance and relationship between retail, cultural and residential aspects. We would like to see a more residential city centre with its own green economy.
- Investment in the city centre should not be at the expense of funding for local neighbourhoods. We do not believe that reduction of motor traffic in the city centre will inevitably 'trickle down' into surrounding areas. We want to see a strategic approach where 20-Minute Neighbourhoods and thriving local economies in other areas complement life in the city centre. One aspect of this would be the encouragement of people to work from home or in local IT hubs.

**B14. Big Move 4 Enhance public transport.**

We believe that Public transport must become affordable, reliable and comfortable with competitive door-to-door journey times. The transport strategy needs to ensure that bus services are operated for the benefit of users rather than for private profit. Leeds City Council should lobby the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and the incoming West Yorkshire Mayor accordingly.

The “Seamless network” requires:

- through ticketing,
- timetabling to promote transfer between modes and services,
- feeder bus services to local stations,
- Park and Ride in appropriate locations
- promoting integrated cycle-rail travel

We see a need for demand-responsive public transport (particularly for places/journeys which cannot be served efficiently by more conventional services and for people with impaired mobility).

The strategy should ensure that buses have priority on all their major routes. This requires measures such as bus lanes and priority at traffic signals.

Public transport vehicles should have low environmental impact - mass transit may have a role in high volume corridors but electric bus services will often be better suited to local conditions and demand patterns

#### **B15. Big Move 5 New mobility solutions**

There are good measures in this section. However it could be developed further via:

- Innovative solutions to last mile deliveries
- Support for businesses which are setting up, allowing greater access by bikes and use of cargo bikes
- Enhancing shared ownership models

#### **B16. Big Move 6 Mass transit**

A mass transit scheme may be desirable in the longer term but this should not distract from prioritising improvements to the bus and rail network.

Any mass transit system needs to clearly complement a rapid EV local bus service and electrified rail service (such as the Leeds - Harrogate line) that serves the needs of local communities.

If the reasons why people need to move around are changing (particularly since the experience of Covid) and an increase in the growth of 20-Minute and Active Travel Neighbourhoods is a genuine commitment, it is important to envision what sort of an economy rapid mass transit would be serving before developing a plan.