
**Decision Session – Executive Member for
Transport and Planning**

9 June 2016

Report of the Director of City and Environmental Services

**Review of Enhancements to the University Road Pedestrian
Crossing and Cycle Route Scheme**

Summary

1. This report presents a review of how the scheme is currently operating following implementation of a number of enhancements in the autumn of 2015. It also considers the relocation of the westbound bus stop into the nearby lay-by.

Recommendations

2. The Executive Member is requested to note the findings of the report, and approve the scheme being retained in its present form.

Reasons:

3. Council Officers and the University consider that the existing layout is improving the safety of all road users, in particular university students crossing University Road, and encouraging greater use of the new cycle route. The suggestion to relocate the bus stop into the lay-by is not supported by bus operators or the University.

Background

4. The scheme shown in **Annex A** was implemented during the autumn of 2014. The key elements of the scheme included improvements to the bus stops, creating a 20mph Zone with speed cushions and speed table crossing points, and building a shared use pedestrian/cycle route along University Road.
5. Shortly after the scheme became operational an independent Road Safety Audit led to some changes to the scheme. However, there were still some unresolved issues, and to investigate these further and help develop possible solutions, a comprehensive set of

surveys was commissioned covering traffic speeds, pedestrian movement, and cycle flows. The results were discussed with the University and a plan of action agreed. The key findings and proposals were presented to a Decision Session meeting on 10 September 2015, and implementation of the following measures was approved on a trial basis:

- Two extra pairs of speed cushions with central islands, as shown in **Annex B**, to make the 20mph Zone more effective.
 - A new crossing refuge located at the speed table near the bus stops, as shown in **Annex C**, to increase pedestrian safety in the busiest crossing location.
6. In addition, the Executive Member noted that officers were working with the University to encourage greater use of the new cycle path. This involved installing various additional direction signs, plus extra signs and markings at all the entry points to make the status of the path more obvious, and publicising the facility to students.
7. At the meeting representations were made requesting that the existing lay-by on the south side of University Road, which is currently used mainly for deliveries to the Market Square shops, should be made a bus lay-by. The Executive Member asked for this to be looked at in more detail as part of the report back on the trial measures.

Assessment of the Trial Measures

A set of repeat surveys was recently carried out, and the results are summarised below.

8. Traffic Speeds – recent surveys show that the additional sets of speed cushions have further reduced average traffic speed by about 1mph, to approximately 21.5mph. This compares to an average speed of 27mph outside the 20 Zone. Extensive research of traffic calming schemes over many years has shown that a 1mph reduction in speed generally equates to around 5% fewer accidents. So, although the extra cushions have only achieved a small additional speed reduction, it is recommended that they are now retained to make the scheme as robust and safe as possible.
9. Pedestrian movements – the recent surveys confirm that, as before, most road level crossing movements take place between the bus stop.

However, since the introduction of the refuge island more movements are concentrated on the speed table with fewer taking place to the side if it.

On-site observation show that the refuge is being well used and providing a safer crossing for pedestrians. Before the refuge was introduced people cross behind a waiting bus then had to stand in the middle of the road waiting for a gap in the traffic on the other side. If the bus on their side then pulled away they would be left in a very vulnerable position in the middle of the road without protection. The results tend to show that it is now more attractive to cross on the speed table,

The refuge was also expected to reduce the opportunity for drivers to overtake waiting buses. Observations show this to be the case and at times small queues develop and drivers experience a short delay before the bus move off enabling them to proceed.

Overcoming this issue is the main reason for people proposing the relocation of the west-bound bus stop into the nearby lay-by, which is discussed later in this report.

10. Cycle movements - The latest surveys show that usage of the path in an easterly direction has doubled (133 in 12 hours), but usage in a westerly direction is still very low (12 in 12 hours). This indicates that the improved signing and lining has had a positive effect. However, many cyclists are still staying on the road rather than using the new path, particularly in the westerly direction. Looking to the future, there are plans being developed to provide a cycle link path between University Road and the East Campus, and this has the potential to make use of the University Road path more attractive for many journeys.

11 Lay-By Usage

A survey over a 12 hour period showed the lay-by was used on 4 occasions by vehicles unloading goods. This closely matches information supplied by the University, which indicates that the supermarket in Library Square has about 4 deliveries of various products every day, including a main delivery by a large articulated HGV which brings frozen, chilled, and ambient temperature food. In addition the survey recorded 24 other uses of the lay-by, mainly for the dropping off or picking up passengers

Consultation

The views of various interested parties and key Councillors have been sought. The responses are summarised below:

12. *York University*

The University support the additional speed cushions and refuge, and consider that the present scheme has brought risk on University Road down to an acceptable level. The University also comments that feedback from both staff and students about the recent changes has been positive, mainly because the refuge allows crossing of the road in two stages and makes accessing the bus stops easier and safer.

The University is strongly opposed to the relocation of the bus stop into the lay-by which is important for deliveries to the shops in the Market Square area. It is considered that there are no practical alternatives, and not having the lay-by available would lead to delivery vehicles stopping on the main carriageway where they would cause problems.

The University are also concerned that relocating the bus stop would alter the pedestrian desire lines, resulting in more crossing movements at road level away from the speed table and refuge crossing point.

13. *North Yorkshire Police*

The Police support the additional speed cushions and refuge.

The Police are strongly opposed to the relocation of the bus stop into the lay-by. They are concerned that this would lead to uncontrolled and unpredictable parking of large delivery vehicles on University Road, which would create problems for buses to negotiate. This would also increase danger for the operators of the lorries, who will be forced to unload into the live carriageway.

It is considered that the relocation of buses into the lay-by from the main carriageway would alter the whole balance of the present scheme, and increase the speed of traffic along University Road. This would increase the risk to students, staff, and the general public in this area.

Overall, it is felt that the present scheme creates a slow moving traffic situation, which has improved road safety and discourages unnecessary through traffic from the middle of the University Campus. Hence the scheme is proving to be highly effective in reducing the risk of conflict.

14. **Councillors**

Hull Road Ward councillors (Cllrs Levene, Barnes and Shepherd)

No responses had been received at the time this report was written.

Fulford Ward councillor (Cllr Aspden)

Welcomes the review, which needs to address the concerns raised when the scheme enhancements were approved.

Considers the use of the lay-by for buses to be important, and would like the Council and University to work together towards this.

Green Party spokesman on transport (Councillor D'Agorne)

Strongly opposed to moving the bus stop into a lay-by due to the likely increase in delays to the bus service at peak times, and an increase 'attraction' of the route for traffic.

Considers that smart ticketing and travel passes for university students should be the preferred method of addressing boarding time for these services.

15. **Heslington Parish Council**

The Parish Council's response is summarised below, along with officer comments:-

- the refuge is not used by many students,
Officer comment – Surveys and observations show that the new refuge is very well used, and the response from The University gives very positive feedback about this measure (see paragraph 12).
- a Zebra crossing should be provided,

Officer comment - a Zebra crossing would require the bus stops to be located well away to ensure that a bus would not obstruct visibility of the beacons or people at the crossing. It is likely that most people would then cross the road close to the bus stops and not at the Zebra.

- the southern bus stop should be moved into the nearby lay-by,

Officer comment – This is strongly opposed by the University and Police (see paragraphs 12 and 13), and officers share the concerns raised about this.

- a Zebra crossing would control traffic speeds and allow the removal of the speed humps,

Officer comment – the surveys show that the traffic calming measures are reducing average traffic speeds by more than 5mph throughout the safety zone. A zebra crossing would only have a very local influence on driver behaviour and, as explained above, pedestrians would still be crossing at other locations along the road. Hence the removal of the traffic calming measures would lead to increased speeds, and a higher risk of accidents with potential for more serious casualties.

- the measures to encourage use of the cycle path have not worked.

Officer Comment – as explained in paragraph 10, recent surveys show that use of the path has increased significantly, but it is acknowledged that usage is still relatively low and future increases are likely to rest on the extension of the cycle route to create better links with the East Campus.

16. **Local Residents**

Eight emails have been received from local residents, and the main points raised are summarised below, along with an indication of how many times each was mentioned :-

- Support moving the bus stop into the lay-by to reduce traffic delays. (7)
- Alternative provision needed for deliveries if the bus stop was moved into lay-by.(3)

- Support the refuge.(2)
- Provide a Zebra crossing instead of the refuge.(2)
- Better signing needed for the cyclepath.(2)
- Remove some or all of the traffic calming measures.(2)
- The speed cushions cause pain to people with back problems (2)
- The extra speed cushions are ineffective, especially for large vehicles.(1)
- Keep the bus stop on the road because it helps reduce traffic speeds.(1)
- A bus lay-by should also be provided on the other side of the road.(1)

17. **Bus Operators**

The bus stops are used by First York and Transdev. Both are opposed to the bus stop being relocated into the lay-by.

It is pointed out that current location is well established, has a bus shelter which would have to be moved, and in the current location the bridge acts as additional shelter during bad weather.

There is also a concern that the bus will have to navigate back into traffic once loaded with passengers, slowing the service down further.

It is considered that the disruption caused by buses at the current location is minimal and only occurs to a limited extent at busy periods of the day. The dwell time of buses at this stop is minimal but they can be passed safely if required.

18. **Accidents**

The police have not recorded any accidents in the area since the scheme was completed in October 2014. Before the scheme was implemented there were four accidents resulting in injuries over a three year period.

Options

19. The options for the Executive Member to consider in relation to the proposed scheme additions are as follows:

Option 1 - Approve the retention of the current scheme layout

Option 2 - Amend the current scheme layout.

Analysis

20. Option 1 – the scheme has achieved its main objective of making this area safer for students, and the introduction of the refuge and additional speed cushions are considered to be useful additions which have improved the operation of the scheme. Heslington Parish Council and many local residents are in favour of relocating the southern bus stop into the nearby lay-by, but this is strongly opposed by both the bus operators and the University.

Option 2 – the scheme could be altered in-line with some of the suggestions, with moving the southern bus stop into the lay-by being the most popular. However, this would have significant drawbacks and is likely to result in the scheme being less safe. Based on the review findings, and the analysis above, Option 1 is recommended.

Council Plan Priorities

21. This report contributes to one of the three key Council Plan priorities, demonstrating that it is a “**Council that listens to residents**”. Consultation has resulted in a range of views about the changes to the scheme and the suggestion to locate the bus stop in the lay-by. Summarising feedback in the report shows that the council is listening, and issues raised will be considered alongside the survey results presented in the report.

Implications

Financial/Programme Implications

22. The cost of the review has been about £3K, which includes survey costs and staff fees. This can be accommodated within the 16/17 Capital Programme without any significant impact on other priorities.

There would be no extra cost involved in retaining the existing scheme, as recommended.

If the scheme were to be altered, there would be significant additional costs, for which there is currently no budget provision. Therefore, consideration would need to be given to allocating sufficient funding from the 16/17 Capital Programme and reviewing other spending priorities.

23. Human Resources

24. There are no Human Resources implications.

Equalities

25. There are no Equalities implications.

Legal

26. 20mph Zones are not enforced by the Police, but rely on driver compliance which is strongly influenced by the design of the physical measures within the scheme. It is the aim to bring average speed down to 20mph or less for a Zone to be considered fully effective and self-enforcing. The additional speed cushions have lowered speeds to bring the University Road scheme closer to this target.

Crime and Disorder

27. There are no Crime and Disorder implications.

Information Technology (IT)

28. There are no Information Technology implications.

Property

29. There are no Property implications.

Risk Management

Risk Category	Impact	Likelihood	Score
Organisation/Reputation	Medium (3)	Possible (3)	3x3=9

30. In compliance with the Council’s risk management strategy, the main risk that has been identified in this report is the potential damage to the Council’s image and reputation if effective safety improvements for pedestrians, bus passengers and cyclists along University Road are not achieved.

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Chief Officer Responsible for the report

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Services

**Report
Approved**



Date

12 May 2016

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Not applicable

Wards Affected: Hull Road

All



For further information please contact the author of the report.

Background Papers:

“University Road Pedestrian Crossing Improvement Scheme Proposals”: Cabinet Member Decision Session report, meeting on 13th March 2014.

<http://modgov.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=738&MId=8436&Ver=4>

“University Road Pedestrian Crossing Improvements and Cycle Route”: Cabinet Member Decision Session report, meeting on 7th August 2014.

<http://modgov.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=738&MId=8528&Ver=4>

“Proposed Enhancements to the University Road Pedestrian Crossing and Cycle Route Scheme”: Executive Member Decision Session report, meeting on 10 September 2015

<http://modgov.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=738&MId=9028&Ver=4>

Annexes:

Annex A:

Plan showing the scheme as originally implemented.

Annex B:

Plan showing the original scheme layout with two extra pairs of speed cushions/ central islands.

Annex C:

Plan showing the central crossing refuge at the speed table near the bus stops.