

---

**Decision Session – Executive Member for  
Transport**

**14 February 2022**

Report of the Director of Transport, Environment and Planning

**Pedestrian Controlled Traffic Signal Crossings**

**Summary**

1. City of York Council has undertaken a review of its approach in relation to the use of near side or far side pedestrian signal assets. The Council has indicated through a position paper (Annex A) that it has a preference towards the installation of near side signals.
2. The final decision on the type of technology used in an installation will lie with the Principal Designer of that scheme, as per the Construction Design and Management Regulations 2015.

**Recommendations**

3. The Executive Member is asked to:
  - 1) Note to content of this report and the attached Annex

**Background**

4. Officers have prepared a Position Paper (Annex A) to indicate the Authority's preference with regards to the type of pedestrian indicator technology (red / green men) used at pedestrian crossings.
5. This paper does not cover issues such as deciding when a pedestrian crossing should be installed in the first place, or whether a crossing should be a 'zebra' or a fully signalised solution.
6. The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 prescribes the conditions for design of traffic signals. The directives noted include the option of two types of pedestrian signal crossings that are:
  - **Far Sided:** Traditionally associated with 'Pelican' crossings. The crossing indicator for pedestrians is located on the opposite side of the road from the pedestrian waiting to cross. It is mounted on a traffic signal pole at

approximately 2.4m to the base of the unit and shows red / green man in 200mm diameter signals. These crossings run on defined phase lengths for each stage of movement. This type of crossing layout has been gradually phased out by City of York Council in favour of the alternative near sided solution.

- **Near Sided:** Utilised in 'Puffin' type crossings. The crossing indicator for pedestrians is incorporated into the pushbutton unit on the same side of the road as the pedestrian waiting to cross. These units are mounted at 1.2m to the base of the unit. High level repeater signals are sometimes installed at 1.7m clearance to the base of the unit to ensure the signals can be viewed even when a pedestrian is stood in front of the lower units. On-crossing detectors identify pedestrians in the crossing area and extend or cancel the clearance period. City of York does not use kerbside detectors to cancel pedestrian demand when pedestrians activate the pushbutton then move on.

7. Far-sided crossings were used exclusively until the 1990s when the Department for Transport (DfT) introduced the near sided Puffin crossing. Puffin crossings were formally allowed to be installed at mid-block crossing under The Zebra, Pelican and Puffin Pedestrian Crossing Regulations in 1997 and at junctions in 2002 under the updated Traffic Sign Regulations and General Directions. Following this a number of subsequent guidelines and best practice for the design and installation of puffin crossings followed and culminated in March 2005 in the DfT Traffic Advisory Leaflet 05/05 – Pedestrian Facilities at Signal Controlled Junctions. This stated:

*“In general terms, it is anticipated that nearside signalling will become the standard form but there may be situations where farside signalling may be necessary.”*

8. In 2014 Transport for London stopped installing Puffins in favour of far sided indicators. This has led to a wider discussion on the benefits of the differing types of crossing. In 2019 the Traffic Signs Manual Chapter 6 Traffic Control left the choice of which type to use to the Local Highway Authority. It stated:

*“Both nearside and farside crossing facilities are prescribed in the Regulations. It is for the local authority to consider which type of crossing to provide, both in individual circumstances and as an area-wide policy. Consistency and safety are key factors in these decisions. Authorities should consider adopting a policy setting out which types of crossing are to be provided in what circumstances, and why. It is important that local policy is applied consistently so that road users are clear what is expected of them.”*

9. City of York Council commissioned a safety analysis on the use of near sided vs far sided signals which was unable to find any statistically significant outcome.

## Consultation

10. In July 2020, Our Big Conversation held a consultation on the topic with the following question;

*For pedestrian crossings, where do you think the crossing signs (green/red person) should be?*

The results of this survey showed a preference for Far side with 47% of respondents choosing this option.

Each individual scheme is also subject to its own consultation process where opinions are sought and evaluated.

## Options

11. No options are presented for a decision.

## Analysis

12. The Construction Design and Management Regulations 2015 place defined responsibilities on organisations and individuals involved in the design and construction of various projects. Installation of traffic signals and the associated civil construction elements are subject to these regulations.
13. Every traffic signal scheme is therefore assigned a 'Principal Designer', as per the regulations. Design decisions relating to safety are ultimately made by the Principal Designer and this includes the choice of technology to use for pedestrian crossings.
14. The Principal Designer will refer to relevant guidance, legislation and other sources of information when making these decisions.
15. Through the attached position paper (Annex A), City of York Council is presenting a preference on the type of technology used, however the final decision on any given scheme will remain with the Principal Designer, as per the regulations.
16. Furthermore, each scheme is normally subject to a formal Road Safety Audit process where the scheme designs are evaluated by independent third party professionals
17. The TSAR (Traffic Signal Asset Renewal) Programme exists as a mechanism to replace life expired traffic signal assets within the city. Since the start of the programme in 2015, the council has replaced over 45 sites out of the 125 sets of traffic signals in York.

18. This programme has replaced a significant backlog of life expired and failing infrastructure. As part of the programme, Puffin crossings have been used to replace far sided signals, this meaning that approximately 75% of all sites within York are now near sided signals with the expectation to reach close to 100% conversion from far side by 2026.

## **Council Plan**

19. This report supports the 'An open and effective council' objective by demonstrating transparency in a sensitive area of activity.
20. Ensuring traffic signal installations are safe and comply with relevant legislation is also in support of the 'Safe communities and culture for all' objective.

## **Implications**

- **Financial**  
Financial implications relating to communications cost.
- **Human Resources (HR)**  
There are no HR implications
- **Equalities**  
There are no Equalities implications
- **Legal**  
There are no Legal implications
- **Crime and Disorder**  
There are no Crime and Disorder implications
- **Information Technology (IT)**  
There are no IT implications
- **Property**  
There are no Property implications
- **Other**  
NA

## **Risk Management**

22. Individual highway construction schemes are subject to risk management in line with the corporate risk management strategy. Project Managers maintain and manage a risk register for items relevant to those specific projects.

## Contact Details

**Author:**

**Christian Wood**  
**Smart Transport Programme**  
**Manager**  
**Transport**  
01904 551 652

Connor Malone  
Project Assurance Officer  
Transport

**Chief Officer Responsible for the report:**

**James Gilchrist**  
**Director for Transport, Environment and**  
**Planning**

**Report**  **Date** 02/02/2022  
**Approved**

**Wards Affected:** List wards or tick box to indicate all

**All**

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers:**

None

**Annexes**

Annex A - Position Paper Pedestrian Signal Crossings

**List of Abbreviations Used in this Report**

DFT – Department of Transport

TSAR – Traffic Signal Asset Renewal (Programme)