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**Meeting of Executive Members for City Strategy  
and Advisory Panel**

16 March 2009

Report of the Director of City Strategy

**CRICHTON AVENUE: PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS FOR CYCLISTS**

**Summary**

1. This report highlights the strategic importance of Crichton Avenue as a cycle route, examines options for making the route more cycle friendly, develops an outline scheme proposal, and discusses how this might be taken forward towards implementation.

**Background**

2. There has been a long-standing desire to improve cycling facilities along Crichton Avenue because of its strategic location in the city's cycle network. An extract from the cycle network plan is provided as **Annex A**, which shows how Crichton Avenue lies between the Sustrans' Foss Islands Path at one end, and Kingsway North at the other end (which is traffic calmed, near to several schools, and also has a direct link to an off-road path to the Clifton Moor area).
3. In 2005 a feasibility study was carried out by Halcrow. The study pointed towards the development of a mainly off-road cycle route as the best way of improving conditions for cyclists. This approach was based on the existing carriageway width being inadequate for on-road cycle lanes, and the wide verge areas along most of the street provided space for off-road paths to be built. However, many difficulties were identified. These included: potential conflicts where an off-road route would cross existing side roads, driveways, and lay-bys areas; difficulties crossing the busy Burton Stone Lane junction, which could require full signalisation; and problems associated with linking the scheme in to the existing cycle route network at either end of the street. All this pointed to a difficult and expensive scheme to take forward and, due to other priorities and funding limitations, no further progress was made during 2006/07 or 2007/08.
4. In 2008, CYC was successful in achieving "Cycling City" status, which means that additional funding will be available over the next two years to promote cycling in York. This provides an excellent opportunity to develop our cycle route network in a more strategic way. Our bid for Cycling City status included the concept of developing an 'Orbital Cycle Route' to help provide safer and more convenient cycling links to many employment sites, schools, leisure

facilities, healthcare and retail sites. The orbital route will take advantage of existing cycle friendly infrastructure where available, but will also necessitate the infilling of gaps in cycle provision at various points along its length. Crichton Avenue has been identified as a key part of the orbital route where significant improvements for cyclists are needed.

5. Given this new situation, a more detailed study of Crichton Avenue was programmed for the autumn of 2008 with a view to developing firm proposals to take forward towards implementation. At around the time that officers began work on this, a petition signed by 162 people was received asking the Council to "... *provide a shared cycle/footpath on the highway at Crichton Avenue from Burton Stone Lane, on both sides of the carriageway, to the junction of Crichton Avenue and Wigginton Road.*" The receipt of the petition was reported to EMAP in October 2008 and reference was made to the on-going study. It was therefore agreed that a further report should be brought forward in early 2009 to set out scheme proposals which could be taken forward within the 2009/10 Capital Programme.

### **Study Findings/Proposals**

6. In carrying out this study we have reviewed best practice guidance on providing facilities for cyclists, which includes design advice from Cycling England. This guidance recommends accommodating cyclists on the road wherever this can be done safely. Measures to facilitate this might include, traffic reduction, speed reduction, or the re-allocation of road-space in favour of cyclists. Where this is not achievable, off-road facilities should then be considered.
7. With this in mind, we have looked closely at the situation in Crichton Avenue. Due to its importance in the overall road network, it is not though feasible to restrict traffic access, or to introduce physical traffic calming measures. Currently the existing carriageway widths are inadequate to install on-road cycle lanes. However, there is sufficient overall highway width to look at road widening to accommodate these. Indeed the only section where this does not look feasible is over the bridge, where it would be very difficult and expensive to alter the road width. Fortunately, the bridge does have good width footways, and cyclists could share this space with pedestrians.
8. Following these principles, the specific problems cyclists experience along Crichton Avenue are discussed below, and solutions developed. As highlighted by the 2008 petition, there are particular concerns about the section from Burton Stone Lane and Wigginton Road for cyclists. Possible solutions in this section are strongly influenced by the presence of the bridge and the operation of the Burton Stone Lane and Wigginton Road junctions. The section from Burton Stone Lane junction to Kingsway North has very different characteristics, with the presence of side roads, driveways, and lay-bys being an important consideration. For these reasons, the study findings and recommendations for the two sections of Crichton Avenue are presented separately below.

## Eastern Section (Burton Stone Lane junction to Wigginton Road)

### Problems

9. The main problems for cyclists in the eastern section are those associated with travelling over the railway bridge, using the Burton Stone Lane junction, and crossing the road near the Wigginton Road junction to access the Foss Islands route.
10. The railway bridge has steep embankments which slows down cyclists and makes them less stable as they ride uphill. This can make cyclists feel vulnerable and intimidated as they are often followed very closely by traffic, with some drivers trying to squeeze by. In response, many cyclists choose to ride on the footways which creates conflicts with pedestrians.
11. The junction of Burton Stone Lane is also a problem area for cyclists. At peak times the junction is busy, with many pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles all wishing to pass through the junction at the same time. This congestion makes cyclists vulnerable to being overlooked by drivers making turning manoeuvres, or being blocked from their intended route by queuing traffic.
12. The main destination for cyclists travelling east on Crichton Avenue, is the access ramp to the Foss Islands route located just before Wigginton Road, on the southern kerblines of Crichton Avenue. Although the Wigginton Road junction is signalised, there is no crossing facility to help cyclists access the Foss Islands route. Also, the junction tends to have queuing traffic at most times of the day which often blocks the progress of cycles, leading to further footway cycling.

### Proposals

13. The plan in **Annex B** illustrates a scheme proposal which has been developed to address these problems. The main elements are explained below:-
  - Where practical and safe, it is proposed to widen the carriageway on both sides to allow the provision of 1.5m wide on-road cycle lanes. This approach is best suited to areas where cyclists will be travelling downhill because their speed will be closer to that of motor vehicles.
  - On the uphill approaches to the bridge it is proposed to pave the verge areas to provide wide shared use paths. This physical separation from traffic will give additional protection to cyclists when they are travelling slowly and are more prone to wobbling.
  - The existing footways over the bridge would be converted to shared use.
  - At the Burton Stone Lane junction some road widening is proposed to allow green coloured cycle lanes to be marked out to provide a direct route through the junction. These lanes will highlight the presence of cyclists, and reinforce their existing priority over side road traffic.

- It is proposed to retain the existing Zebra crossing near the Burton Stone Lane junction.
  - A Toucan crossing is proposed at the Wigginton Road junction. This is mainly intended to serve eastbound cyclists who wish to move to the southern kerblines to access the Foss Islands route, but it will also help pedestrians travelling along Wigginton Road who currently have great difficulty crossing at this point. This crossing can be incorporated into the existing signalised junction, but it will have some impact on capacity leading to slightly longer delays for motorists. (In the longer term, linked to the re-development of the southern end of the Nestle site, it is hoped that a major improvement scheme can be carried out at this junction, which would provide significant additional capacity and further cycle and pedestrian facilities.)
14. In summary, the eastern section takes a road widening approach where appropriate, but also proposes shared use off-road facilities due to the constraint of the bridge, and to give further protection to cyclists travelling uphill. The proposals respond directly to the request of petitioners by providing cycle facilities on both the northern and southern kerblines.

### **Western Section (from Burton Stone Lane to Kingsway North)**

#### **Problems**

15. The main problems for cyclists in the western section of Crichton Avenue are those associated with sharing a relatively narrow carriageway with a high level of quite fast moving traffic. Cyclists are often squeezed by overtaking vehicles, and face additional hazards arising from the many vehicle movements in and out of side roads, driveways and lay-bys. A low level of on-street parking can also present additional difficulties. Negotiating the large roundabout at the Kingsway North junction also presents another set of difficulties, and therefore many cyclists currently choose to cycle on the footways in this area.

#### **Proposals**

16. The plan in **Annex C** illustrates a scheme proposal, which has been developed to address these problems. The main elements are explained below:-
- It is generally proposed to widen the carriageway on both sides to allow the provision of 1.5m wide on-road cycle lanes. This extra dedicated space for cyclists should make them feel far less intimidated by passing traffic and generally make cycling on the road much more attractive. The presence of the cycle lane is also thought likely to deter the low level of on-street parking that currently takes place (parking restriction could be considered at a later date if this proved to be a persistent problem).
  - The cycle lanes would include green coloured surfacing where they pass side roads to highlight the presence of cyclists to motorists.

- At the large roundabout, it is thought that off-road provision for cyclists is more appropriate. This will involve widening existing footways and paths to accommodate shared use. To provide access to these facilities the existing pelican crossing would be converted to a Toucan facility.
17. In summary, the western section generally takes a road widening approach to provide good on-road facilities for cyclists, but proposed shared use facilities as the best approach to help cyclists at the large Kingsway North roundabout.
  18. An overview plan showing how the full combined scheme would link into the wider cycle network, including the proposed Orbital Route, is provided in **Annex D**.

## **Options**

19. The options for Members to consider are:
  - a) Support the scheme in principle
  - b) Support the scheme with some changes
  - c) Abandon the existing approach

## **Analysis**

20. The outline proposals set out in this report are thought to offer a very positive response to the problems cyclists currently experience on Crichton Avenue. The proposals are considered feasible, follow good practice design guidance, and will contribute to delivering the overall orbital cycle route concept the Council is seeking to implement.
21. The proposed scheme could cost in the region of £575K to implement. This is a considerable sum, but there are not thought to be any cheap alternative ways of significantly improving conditions for cyclists on Crichton Avenue because of the limitations presented by its current carriageway width and bridge structure.
22. Subject to Member views on the outline proposals, the next step would be to develop the plans in more detail and carry out a major consultation exercise, with a view to arriving at an agreed final scheme layout for future implementation (subject to funding).
23. Based on this analysis, Option a) is recommended.

## **Corporate Priorities**

24. The scheme, if successful, would contribute to the following Corporate Priorities:
  - Increase the use of public transport and other environmentally friendly modes of transport.

The scheme would make Crichton Avenue easier and safer to cycle, and may encourage more residents to ride to Nestle and the hospital.

- Improve the economic prosperity of the people of York with a focus on minimising income differentials.

Cycling is one of the cheapest forms of personal travel and switching to this mode from either private car or bus could potentially save people money.

- Improve the health and lifestyles of the people who live in York, in particular among groups whose levels of health are the poorest.

The scheme will encourage more cycling and walking which will have a beneficial effect for health.

The scheme would also contribute to several of the aims of the Local Transport Plan, namely:

- To reduce the need to travel, especially by car, and encourage essential journeys to be undertaken by more sustainable modes;
- To reduce levels of traffic congestion;
- To reduce the level of actual and perceived safety problems;
- To enhance opportunities for all community members, including disadvantaged groups, to play an active part in society;
- To improve the health of those who live or work in, or visit, York;
- To reduce the impact of traffic and travel on the environment, including air quality, noise and the use of non-renewable sources;
- To provide a transport system that is affordable and achievable in practical terms, and offers value for money.

## **Implications**

### **Financial/Programme Implications**

25. The likely cost of implementing the proposals for Crichton Avenue is estimated to be £300K for the eastern section, and £275K for the western section. Hence the total scheme cost would be £575K.
26. The proposed Transport Capital Programme for 2009/10 is currently being developed and will be considered at a meeting of the Executive to be held on 31 March. As part of this process spending options are currently being assessed by Transport Planning Unit, and Crichton Avenue is likely to figure as a high priority given its strategic importance to the overall cycling network. Hence it is likely that the recommended Capital Programme will include an allocation to allow a scheme covering all of Crichton Avenue to be progressed.
27. If the scheme is supported, but full funding cannot be allocated in 2009/10, it would also be feasible to progress the two sections separately. The first priority would be to progress the eastern section, where cyclist face the greatest difficulties, and the petition has highlighted public concerns. However, given the importance of improving conditions for cycling over the

whole length of Crichton Avenue, and the contribution this will make towards the wider orbital cycle route, it would clearly be preferable to take forward both sections as a single scheme.

### **Human Resources**

28. There are no Human Resources implications.

### **Equalities**

29. There are no Equalities implications.

### **Legal**

30. There are no Legal implications.

### **Crime and Disorder**

31. There are no Crime and Disorder implications.

### **Information Technology (IT)**

32. There are no Information Technology implications.

### **Property**

33. There are no Property implications.

### **Risk Management**

<b>Risk Category</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Score</b>
Organisation/Reputation	Medium	Possible	9

34. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy, the main risks that have been identified in this report are the potential damage to the Council's image and reputation if scheme proposals are not brought forward, especially in view of the petition received last year. This means that at this point the risks need only to be monitored, as they do not provide a real threat to the achievement of the objectives of this report.

### **Recommendations**

35. That the Advisory Panel advise the Executive Member to give in principle support to the outline scheme proposals put forward in this report and, subject to funding being allocated for the scheme to progress in 2009/10, agree that officers arrange to carry out public consultation on the proposals.

**Reason:** Officers consider that these proposals will provide significant improvements for cyclists on Crichton Avenue, support the Council's aspiration of providing an orbital route and contribute to the aims of the Council as a Cycling City.

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### Chief Officer Responsible for the report

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Report Approved



Date 27/2/09

## Specialist Implications Officer(s)

There are no specialist officer implications.

Wards Affected: Clifton

All

For further information please contact the author of the report.

## Background Papers:

“Petition from Residents Requesting the Provision of Formal Cycle Facilities on Crichton Avenue” – a report to the meeting of executive member for City Strategy and Advisory Panel on 20 October 2008.

## Annexes:

- Annex A Plan showing “Crichton Avenue and the wider Cycle Network”
- Annex B Plan showing “Crichton Avenue Cycle Route Scheme: Eastern Section Proposals”
- Annex C Plan showing “Crichton Avenue Cycle Route Scheme: Western Section Proposals”
- Annex D Plan showing “Crichton Avenue Cycle Route Scheme: Long term overview - the Orbital Route”