



Meeting of Executive Members for City Strategy and Advisory Panel

14 January 2008

Report of the Director of City Strategy

PETITION FROM RESIDENTS OF BRAMHAM AVENUE REQUESTING RESURFACING WORKS OF THE CARRIAGEWAY

Summary

1. This report advises Members of the receipt of a petition from 28 residents who live in Bramham Avenue, Acomb, York. It calls for the road to be resurfaced in order that it is better able to sustain the volume of bus traffic now using the road. A copy of the residents' petition is attached as Annex 1.
2. The residents also state that "the frequency of buses, particularly double deckers are responsible for the damage to the ceilings in their homes, first the timetable was altered from a half hourly service to a ten minute service. The number of buses now on this route varies from 85 to 100 per day".

Background

3. The carriageway will have been constructed in the 1950's when the estate was developed. It is a part composite road which was originally built as a concrete insitu road. Some time after that at a date unknown to the writer the road was overlayed using a bituminous macadam which was subsequently surfaced dressed. The section between Marston Avenue and Ridgeway is a flexible road, being constructed of dense bituminous macadam and subsequently surfaced dressed. Additionally some time in the last ten years the street has had speed cushions and build outs constructed on one side, the latter providing a chicane effect and trafficking everything to one side of the road. Generally speaking the road is in average condition when assessing it along its full length. However, the chicane sections of the road have deteriorated to a poor condition as it is showing early signs of sub-base and concrete bay failure. A plan showing the site location is attached as Annex 2.
4. Prior to September 2001 Service 7 (Chapelfields – Tang Hall) ran at fifteen minutes day time frequency. The current frequency is Service 1 runs at every ten minutes day time. I am informed by the Council's Public Transport Manager that at some point during the last six years Service 1 and 4 were both visiting Chapelfields every ten minutes in order to provide a direct as well as indirect bus service between Chapelfields and the Acomb centre.

5. The bus service is a commercial activity undertaken by a private sector company, First York Limited. They decide where and when the buses run, and which vehicles are appropriate for a particular route. Clearly, though they will make this sort of decision based purely on the economics of the route, i.e. if there is a demand for more and bigger buses then presumably this is what First York Limited will provide. Members will be fully aware this is not a matter over which the Council has any controlling powers.
6. It is a national policy as well as being a high local priority policy to increase bus patronage. I am pleased to report that as far as York is concerned bus patronage across the city has grown significantly. It is likely therefore that if First York withdraw double deckers from this route the frequency with single deckers would need to be increased or they would be forced to use if possible to use significantly heavier articulated single deckers to maintain an adequate capacity for the demand. At the time of writing it was not known whether either of these options would be commercially attractive to the operator.
7. Chapelfields is at the end of a busy cross city route to Wigginton, and it is the nature of typical bus routes not to be full at their extremities.
8. First York is currently carrying out a thorough review of its services, to explore what changes might be required to reflect changes in demand/travel patterns/improve service attractiveness. This may eventually involve changes to the routes in Acomb but the Transport Manager thinks it unlikely on the basis of what he currently knows, that the frequency and type of buses running to and from Chapelfields will change significantly.

Discussion

9. Clearly whilst the Council can talk to the bus operator First York and try and persuade them to reduce the frequency of buses along this route, is this something that Members would really want to do given their policy of promoting bus patronage? Additionally as previously indicated this is a commercial activity undertaken by a private sector company over which the Council does not have any controlling powers. With this in mind the rest of the report will concentrate on the road surface.
10. Ground borne and air borne vibrations rarely, if ever, cause damage to the fabric of foundations of properties. This is the conclusion of the Scientists at the Transport Research Laboratory who have carried out many studies into this issue. Therefore it is most unlikely that buses are the cause of any residents' ceilings being damaged.
11. Members will be aware that officers undertake an annual inspection in June of all the roads and footways within the Council's boundaries in order to get a snapshot of the condition of same.
12. This inspection together with all the safety inspection reports and other reports from members of the public, Councillors and other third parties is used to provide a base which shows the general condition of the Council's highway network.

13. All those areas of highway identified as being in poor condition, or picked up by one of the various surveys, or requested by Councillors or members of the public or other parties are subsequently reassessed, usually in October and November to prioritise our planned programme of work for the forthcoming financial year.
14. The June survey 2007 did indicate that the condition of the carriageway in Bramham Avenue was condition 2 (average condition). The last safety inspection carried out in May 2007 did pick up some minor defects within the carriageway but did not pick up the initial onset of this sub-base failure which was probably still so minor as it still does not breach the Council's intervention levels. Members will note intervention levels help us to prioritise the worst defects and ensure the basic maintenance budget lasts the year. In view of the petition and the writer's latest inspection it was decided to include Bramham Avenue on the Council's provision list of street for a future resurfacing scheme. Therefore, I can confirm a more detailed inspection was carried out in October with a view to including the street in this year's resurfacing programme.

Consultation

15. All the ward members support the recommendation to re-surface this particular road surface.

Option

16. Officers have now completed their assessment of the Council's provisional list of streets and I can confirm that the carriageway surface of Bramham Avenue having deteriorated significantly since June, is one that is being recommended to Members for approval in this year's Advanced Programme development report which is being considered by the same committee. Photos of the road surface will be made available for Members to inspect at the meeting.
17. Option 1: Members may agree as part of their Advanced Programme of works to reconstruct/resurface this road in the financial year commencing April 2008.
18. Option 2: Members may decide they would like to see this road reconstructed/resurfaced this financial year in preference to one of the already approved schemes.

Analysis

19. Should Members choose Option 1 then the £36,000 cost to reconstruct/resurface this road will be borne by the Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP) Capital Programme budget and the works will be programmed as early as possible in the new financial year. This work will include replacing the traffic calming and will mean the present speed cushions will be reconstructed in line with today's standard which will mean a slight lowering of the speed cushions. This work will improve the ride quality and reduce if not eradicate all ground borne vibrations and the new traffic calming measures should reduce airborne vibrations, both of which will bring increased customer satisfaction. At the time of writing it is believed there is very little scope to substitute this road

in this year's programme for an existing one as all of the existing programme has been widely publicised and advertised and as such the Council would incur adverse publicity from many sources should they decide to adopt Option 2.

Corporate Priorities

20. Maintenance of the cities highways has a direct impact on several of the Council's corporate aims and priorities:
- Decrease the tonnage of biodegradable waste and recyclable products going to landfill
 - Increase the use of public and other environmentally friendly modes of transport
 - Improve the actual and perceived condition and appearance of city's streets, housing estates and publicly accessible spaces
 - Improve the health and lifestyles of the people who live in York, in particular among groups whose levels of health are the poorest

Implications

Financial

21. The cost to resurface this section of Bramham Avenue will come from the 2008/09 LTP Local Roads Capital Programme budget.
22. Alternatively should Members decide to do the work this financial year it would have to be funded out of this year's capital programme budget.

Human Resources (HR)

23. Should Members decide to maintain the recommended programme there will be no human resource implications.
24. Should Members decide to substitute this for one of the recommended schemes then Consultancy Services would if feasible have to design the scheme.

Equalities

25. There are no equalities implications.

Legal

26. The City of York Council in its capacity as the Highway Authority has a statutory duty under Section 41 of the 1980 Highways Act to maintain the public highway.

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.

Other

30. There are no other implications.

Risk Management

31. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy, the main risks that have been identified in this report are:
- Strategic Risk, arising from judgements in relation to medium term goals for the service
 - Physical Risks, arising from potential underinvestment in assets
 - Financial Risk, from pressures on budgets
 - People Risks, affecting staff if budgets decline

Measured in terms of impact and likelihood the risk score for all of the above has been assessed at less than 16. 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

32. That the Advisory Panel advise the Executive Member to:
- (1) Note the receipt of the petition
 - (2) Approve option 1 (paragraph 16).
 - (3) Advise the lead petitioner of the decision taken.

Reason: To comply with current Council policy and ensure that highway maintenance budgets are expended in the most cost effective way based on the Council's assessed priorities.

Contact Details

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Report Approved **Date** 28/12/07

Specialist Implications None

Officers:

Wards Affected: Westfield

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

There are no relevant background papers.

Annexes

Annex 1 – Resident's letter and petition

Annex 2 – Site Location Plan