
**Decision Session - Cabinet Member for
Transport, Planning and Sustainability**

17 October 2013

Report of the Director of City and Environmental Services

**BETTER BUS AREA FUND –
PROPOSED ALTERATIONS TO MUSEUM STREET BUS STOP**

Summary

1. This report sets out proposals to make improvements to the Museum Street bus stop, outlines the consultation feedback and seeks approval to implement the proposed alterations.

Background

2. Improving York's local bus services is identified as one of 6 key actions in the Council Plan in support of Get York Moving. Funding has been provided via the Better Bus Area Fund (BBAF) and this will assist in enabling City of York Council (CYC) to take a significant step forward in delivering the corporate priorities and the outcomes set in the Local Plan, and Economy Strategy.
3. As part of the BBAF programme, improvements have been identified at a number of key bus interchanges within the city centre, one of these being the Theatre Interchange. £400,000 is nominally allocated to the Theatre project from CYC's Economic Infrastructure Fund. The three schemes making up the Theatre Interchange project are:
 - Improvements to the park and ride stop on Museum Street;
 - Changes to the bus pull-in layby at Exhibition Square and Theatre; and
 - Improvements to passenger facilities at Exhibition Square and adjacent to York Theatre Royal.

This report relates solely to the Museum Street bus stop.

4. The bus stop at Museum Street is the main city centre stop for Rawcliffe Bar Park & Ride. The current facility is very congested due to a combination of high pedestrian flows along Museum Street and Park & Ride passengers waiting to board outbound services.
5. The problem is exacerbated when buses arrive as passengers move forward and bunch up near the stop, which happens relatively frequently with a 10 minute service. Pedestrians are often forced to step into the carriageway to avoid queuing passengers.
6. A further issue is the absence of a passenger shelter at the location. As this is a busy bus stop, it would be highly preferable and would satisfy policy to provide a shelter at this facility.
7. The bus stop was altered in 2011 as part of improvements to Library Square. However, the project did not address the issues with pedestrian and passenger conflicts.
8. A plan showing the existing arrangement as at early 2013 is shown in **Annex A**. Some minor advanced works have since been carried out to remove the telephone kiosks and sycamore trees.
9. The objectives of the Museum Street scheme are to:
 - improve the flow of pedestrians along the northwest side of Museum Street and reduce the conflict with bus passengers; and
 - improve passenger waiting facilities at the bus stop.

Proposals

10. Proposals have been developed to achieve the aims of the project. Whilst considering options, discussions were held with officers and key stakeholders such as English Heritage and York Civic Trust.
11. The proposed alterations comprise localised removal of the existing stone walls and raised beds to facilitate widening of the footway to provide an improved waiting area off the line of the existing footway with integral seating. The proposals also include options for providing a canopy to give shelter to passengers.
12. The annexes illustrate the proposed layout without shelter (**Annex B**),

with a wood frame canopy (**Annex C**) and with a steel frame canopy (**Annex D**).

13. Existing stone walling will be reused where possible to retain the fabric of the original walling and a new curved section of walling provided to ensure security to Museum Gardens is maintained. New railings will be provided on the curved wall to match the existing (the railings which are to be removed will be retained for future maintenance).
14. The mature cherry tree will need to be removed as the excavation will encroach into the tree's root zone. Its removal can be justified as it has been proven that its roots are damaging the adjacent drainage system and are penetrating into the monument's wall joints. Removal of the tree will open up the view of the adjacent Willow tree, which is considered to be the dominant and more attractive tree, as well improving the view to the Minster.
15. The proposals will widen the footway locally at the head of the queue and provide approximately 16m of covered seating. Widening at this location will relocate the head of the queue away from the pinch point in the footway, and hence remove the area of conflict between passengers and pedestrians.
16. The existing bus bay and road markings will remain unchanged and traffic will be unaffected.
17. If a canopy is provided, there will be a need to relocate the existing downpipes on the adjacent face of the monument. Because of the poor condition of the gutter, it is necessary to replace the gutter and downpipes. The downpipes are of no heritage significance.

Consultation

18. Consultation has taken place with ward councillors, party spokespersons, emergency services, bus operators, equality groups, affected businesses and key stakeholders such as York Civic Trust, English Heritage, York Archaeological Trust, York Museums Trust and York Philosophical Society.

19. Consultees were asked to consider and offer views on the proposed scheme as a whole and express a preference on key issues:

- *Choice of canopy*

Attempts have been made to have a canopy that compliments the setting of the ancient monument whilst also being fit for purpose. Two styles were offered for consideration - a stained wooden frame or a steel framed arrangement based on the Foster type shelter, both with a strengthened glass or polycarbonate roof.

- *Style of railing*

There are two main types of railing present at this location. It is proposed to provide new railings on the new curved walling to match the adjacent Brierley railings that link between the bus stop and the Library, as this is the natural continuation. Alternatively, the original railing (which extends from the Museum Gardens entrance to the bus stop) is an option being considered.

20. The responses to the consultation are summarised below:

Member Views

21. Councillors Watson and Looker were consulted as Members for the affected ward (Guildhall), whilst the views of Councillors D'Agorne, Reid and Galvin as Party Spokespersons were also sought.

22. Councillors Watson, D'Agorne and Galvin did not offer any comments.

23. Councillor Looker welcomes the proposal to extend the bus stop area and provide seating but she considers that providing a canopy may interfere with the view of the Hospital. However, she recognises the need to provide a shelter at this location. She didn't express any preferences on type.

24. Councillor Reid states that, if the alterations can be achieved without any damage to St Leonard's Hospital, the Lib Dems are happy to support the proposals. She adds that a shelter would be a useful addition, but does not express a preference on the style of canopy.

Emergency Service Views

25. No responses were received from Yorkshire Ambulance Service or North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue. North Yorkshire Police did reply albeit to say that they had no comment to make on the proposals.

Bus Company Views

26. Each of the bus companies operating from this bus stop were consulted, but none offered any comments.

Road User Group Views

27. None of the road user groups were consulted, as the proposals have no impact on them.

Residents/Business Views

28. Each of the businesses fronting Museum Street were consulted. Only NRG recruitment offered comments.
29. NRG expressed a preference for the stained wooden canopy option as it would give a better feel for the area and be more aesthetically pleasing for residents and tourists. They consider that the option to replicate the original railings (which extend from the Museum Gardens) would be better suited to the surroundings and keep with the theme and feel of the area.

Other Stakeholder views

30. Responses were received from York Civic Trust (YCT), York Philosophical Society (YPS) and English Heritage (EH).
31. The **Civic Trust** recognises the need for better facilities for bus passengers and understands the motivation behind the proposals.

They identify that the proposals involve removal of two sections of the 19th century wall, which defined the perimeter of the land held by York Philosophical Society at the time, and which is consistent with the walling leading to Lendal bridge. They add the point that the walling adjacent to St Leonards Hospital was breached in the early 20th Century to facilitate the introduction of a taxi rank, and that the re-entrant was constructed using the reclaimed walling materials, maintaining an architectural coherence along this facade.

- The Civic Trust are concerned that this small piece of York's historic realm will be lost in the arrangements now proposed, and the evidence for the past history of this area destroyed. They have requested that a proper archaeological and photographic record be made of the structures and the three types of existing railings, and that any

removed sections of railing are retained for future maintenance.

Officer comments:

The proposed alterations will utilise as much of the existing stone walling as possible. The railings being removed will be retained for future maintenance.

An archaeological watching brief will be required and York Archaeological Trust will be able to record the facility before and whilst it is being altered. English Heritage was involved in early discussions during design, and has been included in the consultation. Scheduled Monument Consent will be needed to permit the alterations to be made, and English Heritage will need to be completely satisfied with the proposals, materials being used and construction methods being employed.

- Although YCT recognise the need for a shelter, they are concerned that the addition of a bus shelter would significantly inhibit views of St Leonard's Hospital. They consider that a modern structure would normally not be allowed so close to a building of such importance, and would prefer that the proposal for a bus shelter be dropped.

Officer comments:

The proposal to include a canopy would provide significant benefits by providing much needed shelter for passengers at one of the busiest stops in York city centre. Currently, for many passengers, the last impression they have of York is waiting for a bus in the rain. Officers recommend that a canopy is provided.

English Heritage's response is given below (item 32).

- YCT add concerns that the soil build-up against St Leonard's Hospital may contain archaeological evidence of the ruins, and that construction works may encounter further evidence. YCT assume that the work will be done under archaeological supervision and, in recognition that elements of the St Leonard's building may be revealed that should not be removed, may inhibit the proposals or require special provision to be made for their preservation.

Officer comments:

As mentioned above, an archaeological watching brief will be required and YAT will be able to record the facility before and during the works. Whilst it is recognised that there may be evidence of the original structure present, the ground has been previously disturbed and therefore it is unlikely that there will be a need to retain any ground insitu. The

archaeologist suspects that some original wall footings may be encountered on the line of the existing footway or near the outcropping section of roman wall, but these are unlikely to be affected by the works.

- YCT regret the loss of the cherry tree, though in addition to the reasons given by CYC they add that its removal will open up important views of York Minster.

32. **York Philosophical Society** has commented that the solutions proposed are tastefully done. They added that comments received from YPS members on these proposed alterations reflect a concern for any lost historic fabric to the city.

YPS asked to note their comments, as follows:

- Normally no such thing (a shelter) would be countenanced so close to an important national monument.

Officer comments:

The proposals will need to satisfy English Heritage and will require Scheduled Monument Consent. EH are not opposed to the provision of a canopy at this location.

- The proposals will remove about 14 metres of the 19th century Millstone Grit perimeter wall which defined the perimeter of the land held by YPS at the time and will remove physical evidence for YPS's works and former boundary.

Officer comments:

The Council's Terrier records indicate that the land concerned is currently owned by CYC, although works appear to have been undertaken by different groups such as YPS implying that ownership of the land may have been in different hands before now.

An archaeological watching brief will be required and YAT will be able to record the facility before and whilst it is being altered.

- With regards the replacement of the railing, YPS are concerned that some of the historic fabric will be lost and suggest that the railings be saved for re-use to repair sections of the 19th century railings around Museum Gardens.

Officer comments:

As mentioned above, the lengths of railings that will be removed will be

saved for future repair work.

- The new canopy will be a modern structure built close to an important Scheduled Ancient Monument and it will make the (overall) monument more difficult to see and read even than it is at the moment.

Officer comments:

The canopy will comprise a simple frame (wood or steel) with a glass or polycarbonate roof. It will not have any back or side panels to ensure access is always available for maintenance of the monument. As such it will have limited impact on the viewing of the facade.

The view of this south-eastern face of the monument has already been improved by the removal of two sycamore trees and two phone kiosks. The removal of the cherry tree will further open the view of the facade. Before these initial works we undertaken, the facade was severely obscured.

- On the wood/tubular construction option, YPS consider that, in this case, the steel tubular construction will probably be preferable in terms of "blending in" with the monument behind the shelter.

Officer comments:

The proposal for a canopy has attracted a split response from consultees and officers, and there has been no clear preference given on the style of canopy.

33. **English Heritage** has commented on the proposals. Although having been involved in the development of the proposals their comments largely related to the requirements of the scheduled monument consent application to have a structural assessment undertaken to demonstrate that the works will not affect the stability of the monument.

The only comment relevant to the consultation was that

- they considered it disappointing that the proposed shelter does not take the opportunity to interpret the standing ruins. They confirmed that the possibility of doing something that echoed the vaulting arrangement was discussed, and would therefore act as piece of interpretation, but that a standard canopy can be thought of as an opportunity lost.

Officer comments:

The early discussions with EH included suggestions about the style of the canopy, an option being to reflect the arched vaulting arrangement as mentioned above. This was considered further during design and proposed canopy posts have been positioned to reflect the spacing of the arches. The design of the canopy posts can accommodate details to reflect the arch detail, however the heights of the arches cannot be replicated as they are around 4 metres high and a canopy of this height would neither be compatible with standards nor be functional. It would also be detrimental to the aesthetics of the monument. The canopy being provided will be bespoke and not be a standardised shelter.

34. **Options**

The Cabinet Member is being asked to consider the following options:

- Option 1 – approve the scheme as shown in **Annex B**, without a canopy.
- Option 2 - approve the scheme as shown in **Annex C**, with a wooden frame canopy.
- Option 3 - approve the scheme as shown in **Annex D**, with a steel tubular frame canopy (based on the Foster type).
- Option 4 - do nothing

In addition, a decision is also required on the style of railing to be provided to the new curved section of boundary wall, the choices being:

- Brierley railing (type 1 shown on the **Annex A** plan), as a natural continuation of the railing from the library to the stone pillar positioned at the commencement of the new curved wall. Aesthetically this would be the preferred selection.
- Museum Gardens railing (type 2 on the **Annex A** plan) which is the original railing extending from the Museum Gardens entrance and across part of the St Leonard's Hospital frontage. Historically this would be the preferred choice.

Analysis of Options

35. Option 1 would satisfy the objectives in providing a widened footway waiting area to reduce the conflict between passengers and pedestrians. However, the objective of providing shelter at this busy bus stop would

not be achieved.

36. Options 2 and 3 would fully satisfy the objectives and aims of the project. It is considered that the implementation of the proposed alterations to widen the footway would benefit the many passengers using the Park & Ride bus service and reduce the conflict with the numerous pedestrians who use the route along Museum Street. Provision of a canopy would provide the required cover from the elements, benefitting many passengers.
37. The Council's design guide indicates that the "standard" shelter design for the city centre is the JC Decaux "Foster" shelter. This is available in a number of different widths and configurations and ultimately the choice of the appropriate configuration is left to the officer assigned to the task. However, the following is one of the specified guidelines that should be followed:
- *"Whilst the Foster shelter is the default design, in some high amenity locations a bespoke shelter design might be more appropriate.*

38. Due to the wedge shape of the new recess and the desire to introduce low stone walling for seating, it would be impossible to utilise a standard rectilinear Foster-style shelter with a roof pitched from front to back without having to considerably change the design. The option shown in Annex D incorporates the general ideas and style of the Foster and the same materials, except that the stanchions would be central and the roof pitched from the front and back edges towards the centre.
39. Officers recommend the provision of Brierley style railings along the new curved wall as this would be the natural continuation of the section of railings between the Library and the bus stop and aesthetically this would be the most appropriate selection. There is no physical link between the Museum Gardens railing to the west of the bus stop to the new railings and so the historical link is broken.
40. Option 4 would not satisfy any of the scheme objectives.

Council Plan

41. The potential benefits for the priorities in the Council Plan are:
- Get York Moving – improvements to the bus stop facility will further encourage use of the Park & Ride service, and improve pedestrian movement by reducing the conflict between pedestrians and

queuing passengers.

- Protecting the environment – the improvements will serve to open up the views of St Leonard’s Hospital and, indirectly, views of the Minster. The choice of materials for the improved bus stop facility will be sensitive and consistent with the existing historic fabric of the monument, with much of the existing materials being reused.

Implications

42. This report has the following implications:

Financial

43. The Museum Street scheme forms part of the BBAF Theatre Interchange project, which has an overall budget of £400,000 and includes proposals to improve the bus facilities at the Theatre and Exhibition Square.

The Reinvigorate York programme is proposing to undertake public realm improvements to Exhibition Square and to the junction of St Leonard’s Place with Museum Street / Duncombe Place / Blake Street. Details of the proposals are still under consideration and the scope of the proposals has not yet been determined. £150k of the BBAF budget is being allocated to the Exhibition Square element of the scheme.

Although a firm estimate has not been undertaken for Museum Street due to various uncertainties in the design, it is estimated that the Museum Street project will cost circa £75-£80k. The £400k budget appears to be adequate to cover the costs of the Museum Street project.

The provisional cost estimates for the canopies indicate that the wooden frame and steel frame canopies will be of a similar cost to purchase and that the installation costs will also be similar. The main consideration, therefore, would be the whole life costs. It is considered that the wooden frame could more readily attract vandalism and require more regular treatment; hence there could be greater liability with the wooden frame canopy.

44. **Human Resources** - none

Equalities

45. The Centre for Accessible Environments (CAE) have undertaken an Access and Mobility Audit, based around key issues of coach travel, streets and spaces, street furniture and clutter, heritage and other cultural attractions, blue badge parking and shopmobility. The audit has

highlighted a number of key challenges around improving the public realm environment for disabled pedestrians and wheelchair users.

46. Museum Street is one of the main pedestrian routes between the railway station and the Minster. The main area of concern regarding accessibility at Museum Street is the footway congestion footpath due to bus passenger queues obstructing the footway. The proposed BBAF scheme will serve to relieve the congestion caused by the queuing and thereby meet the objectives of the CAE study.
47. The lack of seating along key routes is also identified in the CAE report. There is currently no seating at the Museum Street bus stop but the proposed scheme will introduce new seating for passengers. Some new benches have recently been installed near the Museum Gardens entrance.
48. CAE consider that the quality of the existing paving at the bus stop is very good, and that the footway is generally free of street furniture obstructions and off-road cyclists. The new construction will utilise the same high quality materials, and create more available space for the passage of pedestrians.

Legal

49. The proposed works would fall within the Local Highway Authority's Permitted Development Rights outlined in Part 13(b) to Schedule 2 of the 1995 Town and Country Planning General (Permitted Development) Order. A grant of planning permission will not be required for the works.
50. The land is located within the scheduled monument area for St Leonard's Hospital and any alterations will require Scheduled Monument Consent from English Heritage.

Crime and Disorder.

51. Reports indicate that, on occasions, youths climb on to the roof of the monument and throw stones and other debris, as well as abuse, to pedestrians. Continuation of this would result in further abuse to passengers and pedestrians, and could result in the bus stop canopy being prone to similar vandalism. It is understood that this problem is low risk.
52. A wood frame canopy may be more prone to vandalism than a steel frame and so the choice of a wood frame canopy could result in greater

maintenance costs.

Information Technology.

53. The existing real time information unit mounted to the bus stop pole is to be retained.

Land.

54. The land to the rear of the footway, comprising the footway recess and raised planting areas, does not lie within the adopted highway. The land is owned by the Council, and it is intended to have the area of land dedicated as highway upon completion of the project.

Risk Management.

55. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy, no significant risks associated with the recommendations in this report have been identified.

Recommendations.

56. That the Cabinet Member gives approval for:
- the implementation of the proposed bus stop improvements as shown in **Annex D** subject to the necessary Scheduled Monument Consent being obtained, and
 - the new railings being provided within the scheme to match the Brierley style of railing.

Reason:

- to improve the facilities at this very busy bus stop and to reduce the conflict between pedestrians and queuing passengers.
- it would also offer greatest aesthetic benefit to the monument and its setting.
- although the overall supply and installation costs of the canopies would be similar, it is considered that the whole life costs for the wooden frame may be higher than those for the steel canopy due to possible vandalism and because of the requirement for regular treatment to preserve the wood.
- the provision of replacement Brierley railings would be natural continuation of the section of railings between the Library and the bus stop and aesthetically this would be the most appropriate selection. There is no physical link between the Museum Gardens railing to the west of the bus stop and so the historical link is broken.

Contact Details

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Specialist Implications Officer(s)

There are no specialist implications.

Wards Affected: Guildhall

All

For further information please contact the author of the report.

Background Papers - None.

Annexes:

- Annex A Existing layout and Front Elevation.
- Annex B Option 1: Proposed Layout and Front Elevation (without canopy).
- Annex C Option 2: Proposed Layout and Front Elevation (with wood canopy).
- Annex D Option 3: Proposed Layout and Front Elevation (with steel canopy).