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

25 October 2018

Report of the Corporate Director of Economy and Place

North York Bus Improvement Scheme

Summary

1. This Decision Session report:
 - Summarises the outcomes of a consultation exercise with residents and businesses affected by proposed works to improve bus service reliability on Wigginton Road.
 - Requests permission to deliver a scheme which has been amended in the light of feedback received through the consultation exercise.

Recommendations

2. The Executive Member is recommended to approve the works at the Haxby Road/ Wigginton Road/ Clarence Street/ Lowther Street junction, but take the works to remove the Wigginton Road/ Fountayne Street mini-roundabout out of the scheme.

Reason: This allows delivery of a scheme which will improve reliability of bus services on Wigginton Road without a deterioration to access to properties on Fountayne Street, Brigg Street and Hansom Place.

Background

3. The North York Bus Scheme is intended to improve the reliability of bus services by improving junctions and traffic features on Wigginton Road. A report taken to a Decision Session in May proposed three interventions on Wigginton Road:
 - Working with the bus operators to reduce their dwell times at the Feversham Crescent bus stops.

- Removing the existing mini-roundabout at the Wigginton Road/ Fountayne Street/ Hospital northern access junction to improve the flow of traffic at this location.
 - Re-engineering the junction between Wigginton Road, Haxby Road, Clarence Street, Lowther Street and the foot/ cycle path from the Scarborough Terrace footbridge to improve traffic flow, particularly to/ from Wigginton Road.
4. Collectively, the proposed measures were estimated to reduce journey times by 90 seconds for AM peak movements on Wigginton Road, giving a value for money benefit cost ratio of approx 2.8:1, assessed on the basis of benefits to bus services and their passengers alone. This placed the proposed scheme in the high value for money category for transport schemes (BCR >2:1), something that is consistent with the nationwide finding that small, targeted traffic management schemes often offer high value for money in comparison to larger projects.

Consultation Exercise

5. Approximately 400 consultation letters were delivered to affected properties on Clarence Street, Union Terrace, Wigginton Road, Fountayne Street, Brigg Street, Hansom Place, Townend Street, Haxby Road, Lowther Street and Markham Crescent. Meetings were held with York District Hospital and ward Councillors. The consultation letter and plans is attached to this report at Annex A. Respondees were asked to send comments back to the Sustainable Transport Service by letter, phone or e-mail.
6. Through the consultation, the project manager received:
- 63 e-mails, one of which included a 106 signature residents' petition objecting to the removal of the Fountayne Street mini-roundabout
 - 8 letters
 - Approximately 25 phone calls
7. These were from a mixture of local residents and businesses, and interest groups such as York Bus Forum. A number of topics emerged from the consultation, as follows:
- Local residents in Fountayne Street, Brigg Street and Hansom Place were overwhelmingly opposed to the removal of the mini-roundabout because they feared that doing so would make it harder for them to turn into and out of Fountayne Street, a movement which many residents commented is already difficult. Residents thought this was because vehicles on Wigginton Road often have a high

approach speed to the existing mini-roundabout – and this makes it difficult for vehicles heading into/ out of Fountayne Street to turn across the main stream of traffic. Discussion with the Hospital also suggested that removing the Fountayne Street mini-roundabout would have the same effect on vehicles turning into/ out of their northern access. Letters/ phone calls and e-mails about the Fountayne Street/ Wigginton Road junction made up the bulk of the correspondence received (>90%), although some of the communications received raised other points about the scheme.

- Local residents, when they commented on them, generally supported the proposed changes to the Haxby Road/ Wigginton Road/ Clarence Street junction, although there was some concern that the scheme needed also to be used to address conflicts experienced by cyclists as they turned from Wigginton Road into Clarence Street – in particular that they could be overtaken by motor vehicles travelling from Wigginton Road into Lowther Street. There was also a concern that green time for pedestrians might be reduced as a result of the proposals for this junction. There was also an interest in how changes at this junction could be used to reduce the approach speeds of motor vehicles travelling into Lowther Street from Wigginton Road.
- A number of respondents commented that, generally, they felt the proposals were poor value for money or were insufficiently ambitious compared to the congestion problems experienced on Wigginton Road – or were mistargeted – for example, some consultees, including York Bus Forum, felt that providing additional bus services or working with York District Hospital to reduce car trips to the Hospital would be more effective decongestion measures, or that the Crichton Avenue junction with Wigginton Road could be modified to greater benefit than the proposed scheme. A number of consultees pointed out that the number of new developments in the area of the scheme (e.g. the Nestle South development) meant that a more ambitious set of interventions was merited on Haxby Road/ Wigginton Road.
- A small number of respondents suggested that reopening Fountayne Street to allow traffic to travel more easily between Wigginton Road and Haxby Road would reduce congestion levels on Wigginton Road, and some respondents also suggested that decongestion could be

achieved by opening the proposed link through the Nestle South site to general traffic.

- Cyclist groups were keen that the measures did not lead to removal of any of the existing facilities for cyclists, and that facilities should, where possible, be improved.
8. As such, it can be concluded that the consultation process for the scheme was effective and engaged with local residents and businesses. A number of clear conclusions can be drawn:
- Residents and businesses did not support removal of the Fountayne Street mini-roundabout because they felt this would lead to a worsening of the traffic conditions they experience. There was also, however, a clear view that the current arrangement was not working effectively either.
 - There is general support for reconfiguring the Haxby Road/ Wigginton Road/ Clarence Street/ Lowther Street and Scarborough Terrace cycle/ footway. However, detailed design for the measure seems to be cognisant of cyclists' needs and take advantage of opportunities to reduce conflict between cyclists, pedestrians and vehicles on the approach to Lowther Street from Wigginton Road.
 - There was a general view that traffic conditions in the Haxby Road/Wigginton Road area were poor, and residents experienced significant frustration about this. Because there is other development in the area (principally on the Nestle South site), there is an appetite for the Council to look at traffic congestion in the area more generally – not simply what can be achieved by alterations to existing junctions and signals, but what could be achieved through working with York District Hospital, use of development gain from Nestle South etc.

Taking the scheme forward

9. Accordingly, the VISSIM traffic model developed for the scheme by AECOM, but now held in house at City of York Council, was rerun to assess the potential benefits of the scheme without replacing the Fountayne Street/Wigginton Road mini-roundabout with a conventional priority junction. This exercise showed that the value for money of the scheme was only slightly reduced by its change of scale (2.8:1 original intervention, 2.3:1 intervention without Fountayne Street junction change), and the scheme's value for money still exceeds the 2:1 good value threshold. Consequently it is sensible to proceed with the scheme.

10. Therefore, it is proposed to:
 - Continue with the modifications to the Wigginton Road/ Haxby Road/ Clarence Street/ Lowther Street junction; but
 - Not proceed with replacing the mini-roundabout at the Fountayne Street/ Wigginton Road junction with a conventional priority junction; and
 - Continue to work with the bus operators to reduce dwell times at the Feversham Crescent stops.
11. Detailed comments about how the Wigginton Road/ Haxby Road/ Clarence St junction can be made a better environment for cyclists will be taken forward as part of the detailed design stage of the project, within the parameters of the scheme General Arrangement drawing at Annex A.

Further comments

12. Much information and data has been collected through the consultation exercise for this project, and City of York Council now also has a detailed micro-simulation model of the Wigginton Road/ Haxby Road area which can be used to test theories and develop future interventions in the area.
13. The consultation highlighted three areas for more general consideration:
 - Firstly, whilst this report recommends that the Wigginton Road/ Fountayne Street mini-roundabout is retained, talking to residents suggests there are shortcomings with the existing junction arrangement. Consequently, it is proposed that it is reviewed by CYC's road safety team to assess whether an improvement to the performance of the junction is possible in the short to medium term;
 - Secondly, with much development taking place in the wider Haxby Road/ Wigginton Road area (expansion of York District Hospital, development of the Nestle South site, development of local plan allocation ST14 (Land West of Wigginton Lane) there is clearly a need to consider the area more widely. There are a range of potential interventions here, but these are not affordable with the funding allocated to this project. This should take place through the Local Plan Infrastructure Study/ Local Transport Plan 4, and use CYC's SATURN model and the VISSIM model developed for this project.

- Thirdly, there is a need to continue the work CYC has been undertaking to date, with York Hospital, looking at ways to increase the use of sustainable modes by people travelling to/from the Hospital. The York Bus Forum's proposals for using a portion of the funding for the junction scheme to support bus services to the Hospital is not deliverable – this allocation of funds is available only for capital/ infrastructure measures under the terms of the funding award from the Department for Transport.

Scheme delivery

14. Initial engineering feasibility studies have shown that the proposed interventions in this phase of the scheme are broadly feasible and deliverable within a budget of £200,000.
15. The scheme has been shared with bus operators, who are supportive of the measures.
16. If the Executive Member approves the recommendation of this report, then the scheme can be delivered during the first four months of 2019.

Council Plan

17. The 2015-19 Council Plan is supported by the North York Bus Improvement Scheme in a number of ways. Firstly, the scheme has been arrived at through a detailed evidence-based evaluation which has been used to assess the value for money of the scheme. This supports the principle expressed in the Council Plan to “Ensure business cases for all projects are assessed in a robust and evidence based way. The project then supports the following Council Plan objectives:
 - By improving bus journey times and service reliability it supports the objective under “A prosperous city for all” for “efficient and affordable transport links enable residents and businesses to access key services and opportunities”. This is particularly important because the bus services which will be improved by the scheme serve York's Hospital, which is visited by many people who are not car available or are unable to drive. It also supports the objective of “continued inward investment in transport”.
 - By replacing signals equipment which will soon become life expired the scheme also supports the objective of “A focus on frontline services” because it is improving safety-critical equipment in a timely and managed fashion, rather than waiting for the equipment to reach

the end of its life and fail before replacement takes place.

18. The scheme also supports the general principles of improving bus services as expressed in the Local Transport Plan and publication draft Local Plan.

Implications

19. The following are the only identified implications.
 - **Financial** – A budget of £250,000 has been identified for delivering this project, funded by York's Better Bus Area. Approximately £50,000 has been spent on scheme development so far, and it is anticipated that the scheme will cost around a further £200,000 to deliver. It should be noted that the expenditure on scheme development also supports the development of further interventions on the corridor as detailed in the paragraphs above, and the replacement of traffic signals equipment which is nearing life-expiry and would have to be replaced in the short term in any case.
 - **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 as all works are taking place within public highway boundaries.

Risk Management

20. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy there are no risks associated with the recommendations in this report.

Contact

Details:

Author

Julian Ridge
Better Bus Manager
Tel No. (01904) 552435

Chief Officer Responsible for the Report

Neil Ferris
Corporate Director of Economy and Place

**Report
Approved**



Date 15.10.18

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Financial: Patrick Looker, Finance Officer, 01904 551633

Wards Affected: Clifton, Guildhall, Haxby & Wigginton, Heworth, Huntington & New Earswick.

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None

Annexes:

Annex A: - Consultation letter and plans