
**Executive Member for
City Strategy and Advisory Panel**

30 October 2006

Report of the Director of City Strategy

**A1079 (HULL ROAD) / YORK ROAD (DUNNINGTON) –
JUNCTION IMPROVEMENT SCHEME**

Summary

1. This report summarises the results of consultation on proposals to install traffic signals at York Road junction with the A1079 (Hull Road) at Dunnington, in conjunction with the introduction of a 40mph speed limit along the A1079 on both approaches to the junction.
2. The recommendation is to install traffic signals and speed management measures at the York Road junction, as the proposals put forward for public consultation.

Background

3. In February 2006 the Executive Member for Planning and Transport and Advisory Panel considered a report outlining options for improving the above junction, and recommending a combined traffic signal and speed management scheme to be included in the Transport Capital Programme for 2006/2007.
4. A solution based on signalisation of the current junction layout, but with a banned right turn off the A1079 into York Road, was approved as the preferred option. This option also included sections of 40mph speed limit on the A1079 approaches to the junction.
5. The Executive Member therefore authorised public consultation on the preferred scheme, including the advertisement of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) covering the proposed 40mph speed limit and banned right turn for all vehicles into York Road.

TRO/Consultation feedback

6. The TRO Notices covering the proposed 40mph speed limit and banned right turn were advertised from 23 August for three weeks. No objections were received for either proposal.

7. At a similar time to the TRO advertisement, approximately 1,400 leaflets describing the proposed scheme (*see example at Annex A*) were circulated to residents of Dunnington during August (*see distribution plan at Annex B*), inviting views and comments within a three week period which ended on 8 September. Copies were also supplied to the local Parish Council and Ward Councillors. The same information was made available on the City of York Council web-site.
8. In addition, the emergency services, travel related organisations, and other interested parties were sent copies of the information leaflet and asked for their views or any concerns (*see covering letter at Annex C*).

Responses from Residents

The distribution of around 1400 leaflets generated a total of 69 responses. These are discussed below.

9. **29 responses expressed support for the scheme**, although 11 of these raised some minor concerns or reservations about certain aspects of the current proposals. Most of these respondents believe the traffic signal scheme should overcome the present difficulties experienced by drivers joining the A1079 from York Road due to the volume and speed of traffic on the main road, and make the area safer overall.
10. **40 responses expressed objection to the proposals**. The most pertinent comments are outlined below under headings which summarise the common themes raised: -

A need for the scheme has not been established.

11. The volume of traffic leaving Dunnington via York Road is insufficient to justify traffic lights.

The proposals may create more problems than they solve.

Improving the Common Road junction should be a higher priority.

12. Although improvements are needed at both A1079 junctions, Common Road should be done first because it is busier and has a poorer safety record.
13. Although signalling the Common Road/A1079 junction may cost more, it would benefit the village more in the long term.
14. Introducing traffic lights at Common Road would break up the constant flow of traffic on the A1079 heading towards York, and thereby assist vehicles turning out of York Road as well.

Traffic lights at the York Road junction will cause unwelcome ‘rat-run’ effects through the village.

15. Making it easier to access the A1079 from York Road will attract extra traffic through the village causing increased congestion and dangers on narrow roads like York Street.
16. To avoid peak time queuing to join the Grimston Bar roundabout from the A166, some drivers would cut down Church Balk and travel past the primary school to use the traffic signals on York Road.
17. If York bound queues on the A1079 back-up towards Common Road at peak times, some drivers might turn off into the village to take a ‘short cut’ to exit via York Road.
18. Drivers from the Common Road industrial estate area are likely to go through the village to take advantage of the York Road traffic signals despite the presence of the existing weight restriction, which is already disregarded

The closeness of the proposed York Road traffic signals to the Grimston Bar junction will cause problems.

19. The proposed traffic signals will not make it easier to exit York Road at peak times because vehicles on the A1079 will queue back from Grimston Bar roundabout preventing cars or buses from moving out of York Road when a green light is given to them.

The banning of the right-turn into York Road will cause problems.

20. One local farmer, who has farmland on both sides of the A1079 and currently turn right at the York Road junction, feels that the option of using the Grimston Bar roundabout, or driving agricultural machinery through the village would be inconvenient and potentially dangerous.

The proposed speed management measures should be extended.

21. Extending the proposed 40mph limit on the A1079 out beyond Common Road would make it easier and safer to enter or exit several road junctions and access many residential and commercial premises.
22. York Road will remain a 60mph road between the proposed traffic signal junction and the existing 30mph village ‘gateway’, which will encourage high speeds especially by drivers using it as a short-cut.

Responses from Organisations

23. **Ward Member** – The Ward Councillor supports the proposed scheme and has carried out a resident’s opinion survey covering 526 households in the village. This asked people if they would prefer to see York Road junction signalised or the status quo retained. In response 190 households expressed support for the introduction of traffic signals at York Road, whilst 72 said they

would prefer to see the status quo retained. The remaining 264 households did not express a view one way or the other.

24. **Dunnington Parish Council**, following a special meeting held on 30 August, have expressed strong opposition to the introduction of traffic signals at the York Road junction. The Parish Council are concerned that the current proposals have not been thought through, and more significantly, that a far better alternative site for traffic signals at Common Road has not been seriously or properly considered. Their more specific comments and concerns expressed are outlined below :-

- The introduction of signals at the York Road junction will result in vehicles 'rat running' through the village. Such traffic is notorious for speeding and causing accidents involving children and other vulnerable groups.
- Banning the right turn into York Road would cause serious difficulties for farmers needing to access fields on the opposite side of the A1079 to their farm.
- The proposed traffic lights would cause traffic to back up to the Grimston Bar roundabout at evening peak times, adding to current congestion.
- The proposed 40mph zone should extend beyond the existing lay-by to the east of the York Road junction for safety reasons.
- Spending money on signalling the York Road junction will reduce the chances of any significant improvements happening at Common Road.
- There is a more pressing need for traffic signals at the Common Road junction because it has a worse accident record and is busier, including turning by Heavy Goods Vehicles linked to the industrial estate.
- Signalling the Common Road junction should be feasible without any significant road widening costs because there is already a central right turn lane on the A1079.
- The A1079 already has street lighting near Common Road to help facilitate the introduction of a 40mph speed limit which would make a real contribution to safety in this built-up area.
- Traffic signals at Common Road would not affect flows at the Grimston Bar roundabout because of the greater distance between them.

The Parish Council also circulated a form to residents (see the copy in **Annex D**) This explained their views on the matter and invited people to either sign in support of the Parish Council, or write their own comments on the proposal. In response, 300 signed forms were returned from households supporting the Parish Council's views. In addition 10 forms were returned expressing disagreement with the Parish Council's views.

25. **North Yorkshire Police** object to the proposals for the following reasons:-
- Despite a number of injury accidents over the last few years, the junction does not have a significant accident problem. The Police's remit is casualty reduction and safer roads, whereas the proposed scheme has the potential to make the road less safe.
 - To satisfy Department of Transport guidelines, the installation of traffic signals on a high-speed road require the 40mph speed limit to be introduced. This will cause problems for North Yorkshire Police, because it will be unenforceable due to its length, and thereby could bring the law into disrepute, as well as encouraging motorists to flout the law specifically where it is important that they should comply.
 - Resources will not be available to enforce the banned right turn, and drivers may be reluctant to take the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile diversion, currently involving a further four sets of traffic signals. Unless physical measures prevent drivers from being tempted to turn into oncoming traffic from Dunnington, this situation has major safety implications,
26. **First York** fully support the scheme, particularly in view of the bus priority measures which would be introduced to assist services that use the junction.
27. The **York Cycle Campaign** support the principle of introducing traffic signals, but seek assurance that the needs of cyclists will be taken into account at the detailed design stage, to compliment existing cycle facilities in the area. In particular they hope that cyclists would be able to turn right off the A1079 into York Road, and see the alternative route around the Grimston Bar interchange as unacceptable.
28. The **Cyclists' Touring Club** are concerned that the signals may not detect cyclists, and feel that the proposed speed limit should extent farther east. They also feel that the York Road proposals represent a piecemeal approach to a much wider problem affecting numerous locations along Hull Road, and could simply transfer hazards elsewhere.
29. The **National Farmers Union** welcomes proposals that aim to improve road safety, as long as the design does not impinge or exclude the legal movement of agricultural vehicles and equipment on the public highway. They advised us that they had contacted farmers in the area and suggested that those with any specific concerns should contact us individually (which they have, as mentioned above).
30. **Action Access A1079** is a Regional Community Partnership addressing local issues of safety, access with, and congestion on the A1079 between Grimston Bar and Beverley. In their view the introduction of traffic signals at the York Road junction will not solve the problems that they are intended to, and will increase 'rat running' through Dunnington via Common Road and the A166.

31. The **Confederation of Passenger Transport UK** support the introduction of traffic signals which will provide an opportunity to incorporate bus priority measures.
32. **Dunnington Primary School Governors** are concerned that the proposed traffic signals could result in Dunnington being used as an alternative route to avoid congestion on the A1079 and A166, and for traffic accessing the industrial estate on Common Road. They believe this would result in significant increase in traffic both around the school and on major walk to school routes. They also supplied a plan highlighting areas of concern and some potential conflict locations for pedestrians and cyclists.

Discussion

33. The key issues arising from the consultation exercise are discussed below.

Issue One – Scheme Justification

34. In the February 2006 EMAP report the scheme was appraised using the Local Transport Plan prioritisation framework to assess how the scheme might contribute towards achieving the Council's overall LTP objectives. The overall result was a low positive score (+7) which led to the scheme being supported in principle by EMAP and was subsequently allocated funding in the 2006/07 Capital Programme.

Issue Two – The Common Road Junction

35. Like the York Road junction, this junction experiences difficulties associated with egress on to the busy A1079. It also has a high number of drivers making a right turn off the main road into Dunnington. The accident record of the junction is poor, so there is a case for considering this junction for an improvement scheme. At the time of the EMAP report in February, no detailed study had taken place to investigate the feasibility of signalling this junction, but a brief assessment pointed to several difficulties that would probably be very expensive to tackle. The main issue would be the need to maintain a high operating capacity to avoid worsening of the existing traffic congestion and delays experienced on this section of the A1079. Introducing signals to give priority to both the side road traffic, and the significant amount of traffic turning right off the main road, would inevitably introduce new delays to the main road traffic. In order to minimise these delays it is considered important to achieve the highest possible flow capacity within the physical constraints of the site. This points to a layout needing to have two traffic lanes on each approach. This would require lengths of road widening on both the A1079 and on Common Road. These are likely to be very expensive to achieve because of the presence of many underground pipes and cables, which would need altering to accommodate the new areas of carriageway construction.
36. Another clear difficulty with the signalisation of the Common Road junction is the presence of a private access road directly opposite Common Road, which would lie in the middle of the signalised junction. Overcoming the additional

safety and capacity issues linked to this private access would add to the complexity of the junction design and increase costs further. The simplest solution would involve signalling the access road with vehicle detection to let drivers out on demand, but this could affect the operating capacity of the junction in the peak periods, and turning right into the access road would remain a safety issue. Ideally, the access road would be closed off with an alternative access formed on to Common Lane (if the residents involved were supportive, and land ownership issues could be resolved), but this would be a more expensive solution.

37. In summary, it does appear to be technically feasible to introduce traffic signals at the A1079/Common Road junction. However a scheme which optimises both operational capacity and road safety would be very expensive to implement, with initial estimates putting the likely scheme cost between £500,000, and £750,000. Within this, the likely cost of diverting underground services is the hardest element to assess accurately without more detailed design work taking place.

Issue Three – Traffic Patterns in the Village

38. Recent traffic surveys, which involved tracking the movement of vehicles through the village using registration numbers, confirm that drivers do not currently choose to cut through the village from the A166 to access the A1079 via York Road, nor do drivers from the Common Road industrial estate. There is an understandable concern that these movements may be encouraged if the introduction of signals at York Road make it easier and quicker to access the A1079 and then get to the Grimston Bar junction. However, this is considered very unlikely to happen for the following reasons. Firstly, the alternative routes would involve greater distances, which immediately build-in some additional delay. Also, the signal calculations show that the average delays for drivers exiting on York Road will be slightly longer than currently experienced under the give-way situation. This would also become worse if traffic levels on that route increased, so it would be somewhat self-regulating. Also, it is known that the Highways Agency are soon going to carry out an improvement scheme at the Grimston Bar junction. Although this will not involve signalling the A166 entry, it has been confirmed that the other alterations will actually make it slightly easier than now to exit from the A166. This should make it less likely that drivers would look to divert through Dunnington.
39. Nonetheless, if the signals were implemented at York Road further traffic surveys would be carried out to monitor any changes in local traffic patterns. Clearly, if significant problems were identified, further detailed assessment would be carried out with a view to identifying possible remedial measures and implementing them as soon as possible.

Issue Four – Interaction with the Grimston Bar junction

40. The junctions are considered far enough apart for their controllers not to be directly linked. However, they will use extensive queue detection devices to

monitor what is happening and automatically adjust the signal timing to maximise efficiency and safety.

Issue Five – Banning the Right Turn into York Road

41. Very few vehicles currently make this turn. In a traffic survey carried out on 19 July 2006 covering the morning and evening peak hours, plus another off-peak hour, only 4 vehicles in three hours were recorded. None of these were agricultural vehicles. The prohibition of the right turn will help to make the signals more efficient, safer, and much cheaper (road widening would be needed to provide a separate right turn lane). Given the low numbers of vehicles involved, the alternative of using the Grimston Bar junction is not thought to be unreasonable,

Issue Six – Provision for Cyclists

42. Cycle movements between York and Dunnington through the York Road junction are currently made via an off-road path, and this would not change with the introduction of traffic signals. It is thought that very few cyclists are ever likely to want to turn right into York Road from the A1079 (none were recorded making this movement in our traffic surveys). The provision of facilities to accommodate this movement within the signalised junction would complicate the layout and add to costs. Given the likelihood that the facilities would not be used very often, and they could be viewed as a waste of money, it is felt that the provision of such facilities could not be recommended. In practice, it is very unlikely that any cyclist wanting to access York Road from the east would continue westward to use the Grimston Bar roundabout. More realistically they would simply pull up at the side of the road at a convenient point after passing through the York Road junction, and then wait for a suitable gap in the traffic before crossing over to access the off-road path on the opposite side of the road. This is not considered a significant safety concern.

Options

43. There would appear to be the following options for Members to consider:-
 - a) Approve the introduction of traffic signals and speed management measures at the York Road junction, as the proposals put forward for public consultation.
 - b) Approve the introduction of traffic signals at the York Road junction with amendments or additions in response to the concerns raised through the consultation exercise.
 - c) Abandon plans to introduce traffic signals at the York Road junction.

Analysis

44. It has been stated earlier in the report that the signalisation of the York Road junction would have an overall net benefit in transport terms, and is therefore considered to be justified.
45. The consultation exercise has shown that whilst many Dunnington residents would welcome the signalisation of the York Road junction, there is opposition to the idea and residents have concerns about possible adverse effects. These include concerns over possible traffic diversions, interaction with Grimston Bar, difficulties with the banned right turn, and provision for cyclists have all been discussed in detail above. Following careful assessment, Officers consider that none of these issues warrant changes to the current scheme plans.
46. Based on the above analysis, the recommended way forward is to adopt option a).

If approved, it is anticipated that the traffic signal scheme, including the associated speed management measures, could be implemented early in 2007.

During the construction period, road works carried out on the A1079 would generally be restricted to 'off-peak' times, between 9.30am and 4pm. To further minimise disruption to through traffic, some work on site might be arranged in the evenings and at weekends, so long as local residents would not be unduly disturbed or inconvenienced by the activities involved.

Corporate Priorities

47. The proposals support the Council's corporate priority for improving quality and sustainability, by improving safety in travelling and getting around, plus potentially increasing the use of public transport.
48. The scheme also contributes towards achieving the aims and objectives of the Road Safety Strategy and Bus Strategy within the Council's Second Local Transport Plan (LTP2). However, the scheme is unlikely to have a large effect on overall congestion because the positive benefit of traffic signals for York Road has to be balanced with an increase in congestion on the A1079. Also, it is predicted that the rate of injury accidents will not be significantly altered by the introduction of traffic signals.

Implications

The specific implications of the proposals are considered below :-

Financial

49. £250,000 has been allocated for the proposed traffic signals and associated speed management measures at York Road, Dunnington under the

'Accessibility and Village Traffic Schemes' block within the 2006/07 Planning and Transport Capital Programme. (Approved 18 April 2006). The latest cost estimate following more detailed design work is £250,000.

Human Resources

50. There would be some HR implications in terms of manpower and resources for future maintenance and to undertake monitoring of the effectiveness of the junction improvements. However, although these activities involve extra work, this should be readily accommodated within existing staffing levels.

Equalities

51. There are no equality implications.

Legal

52. The Council, as Highway Authority for the area, has powers under the Highways Act 1980, The Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984, and Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 1994 and 2002 to implement the proposals covered by this report.

Crime and Disorder

53. The police have expressed concern over the potential for drivers to make illegal right turns at the York Road junction, and difficulties in enforcing the 40mph speed limit. However, officers consider that both the banned right turn and reduced speed limit will have sufficient engineering features built in to the scheme to make them largely self-enforcing.

Information Technology

54. There are no IT implications.

Property

55. There are no property implications.

Road Safety Audit

56. An independent risk assessment of the scheme proposals has identified some potential road safety issues which warrant closer scrutiny to ensure that the safest possible solution would be implemented. Therefore, should the scheme be progressed, Road Safety Audits would be carried out on the final detailed design drawings, and then on the completed scheme.

Risk Management

57. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy the risks arising from the recommendations are assessed below :-

Governance Risk

58. There are no risks associated with the recommendations of this report.

Strategic Risk

59. There are no risks associated with the recommendations of this report.

Legal and Regulatory Risk

60. There are no risks associated with the recommendations of this report

Physical Risk

61. The potential for signalisation to increase injury accidents at the junction is a cause for concern. This risk will be minimised through the prohibition of the right turn off the A1079 into York Road, and the introduction of speed management measures and good early warning of the signals. However, even with such measures in place to minimise the risks, it is anticipated that the overall accident rate at this junction will not be improved by the introduction of traffic signals, and is likely to remain at around one accident per year.

Financial Risk

62. There are no risks associated with the recommendations of this report

Competitive Risk

63. There are no risks associated with the recommendations of this report

People Risk

64. There are no risks associated with the recommendations of this report

System and Technology Risk

65. There are no risks associated with the recommendations of this report

External Risk

66. There are no risks associated with the recommendations of this report

Organisation / Reputation Risk

67. A key priority for the Council is casualty reduction and safer roads. The Parish Council, a significant number of local residents, and North Yorkshire Police oppose the proposed scheme to introduce traffic signals at the York

Road junction because improvements at the Common Road junction are perceived to be more of a priority. Therefore, there is potentially a risk that the Council's reputation will be criticised, and Officer judgement and professionalism could be questioned.

Risk Category	Impact	Likelihood	Score
Physical	Medium	Possible	9
Organisation	Medium	Probable	12

Measured in terms of impact and likelihood, the risks scores have 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

68. The Advisory Panel advises the Executive Members for City Strategy to:

Approve the installation of traffic signals and speed management measures at the York Road junction, as the proposals put forward for public consultation (see Annex A).

Reason: To make it easier and safer to exit from York Road

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Specialist Implications Officer(s)

There are no specialist implications.

Wards Affected:

Derwent Ward

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

“A1079 (Hull Road)/York Road (Dunnington) – Junction improvement scheme”
Report to Executive Member for Planning and Transport : 28 February 2006

Annexes

Annex A Information Leaflet

Annex B Distribution Plan

Annex C Covering letter sent with Information leaflet to external organisations.

Annex D Parish Council form