

**Decision Session – Executive Member for  
Transport**

**9 February 2021**

Report of the Assistant Director Transport, Highways and Environment

**Response to Cycle Courier Proposal to Permit Access to Footstreet  
Area**

**Summary**

1. This reports presents an initial review of a proposal submitted by the Independent Workers' Union of Great Britain (IWGB) York Group to City of York Council in January 2021, to create a courier pedal cycle permit scheme to enable cycle couriers to gain access to the footstreet area.
2. This report recommends that the Executive Member approves the continuation of the existing arrangements and approves undertaking a detailed review of the proposal during the assessment of options for any potential permanent changes to the footstreets.
3. An additional proposal for the provision of a parking permit to allow courier vehicles an extended period for waiting on double yellow lines and in loading bays in the city centre has also been received from the IWGB. It is considered that the existing restrictions permit sufficient time for loading however the enforcement guidance will be reviewed to ensure the existing arrangements operate effectively for delivery/pickup. It is proposed to work with the delivery couriers to understand whether there are alternative arrangements which could be introduced to resolve their concerns.

**Recommendations**

4. The Executive member is recommended to approve:
  - a. The continuation of the existing arrangements (including Temporary Traffic Regulation Order restrictions until 8pm outside of Lockdown/Tier 3 periods); and
  - b. The commissioning of a detailed review of the proposal, alongside other cycle access options to the footstreets, as part of the process to potentially make permanent changes to the restrictions on access to the footstreets area.

5. Reason: To ensure that the concerns of all stakeholders are adequately considered prior to making any changes to footstreet restrictions in accordance with the decision by the Executive on The Future of the Extended City Centre Footstreets on 26/11/2020.

## **Background**

### Existing footstreets restrictions

6. Pre-Covid 19, the footstreet area was closed to all vehicles (including cycles), between 10.30am and 5pm, with exemptions for Blue Badge holders to access and park on Blake Street – Lendal, Goodramgate – Church Street – Colliergate, and Castlegate. Access on Fossgate was restricted to allow vehicular access to premises, Blue Badge parking and cycling (one way only).
7. During footstreet hours, these restrictions mean that cyclists have to dismount and push their bike if they want to access the footstreets and deliveries have to take place on streets located in the vicinity of the footstreets, using loading bays, parking on double yellow lines for the duration of the loading activity (where permitted and without causing an obstruction), or using on or off-street car parking facilities. Cycling is however permitted on the following streets:
  - a. High Petergate (one-way towards Duncombe Place, experimental order);
  - b. Minster Yard (both ways); and
  - c. Fossgate (one way towards Pavement).
8. Temporary changes to the Traffic Regulation Order were introduced as part of the Covid 19 response in June 2020, including a removal of Blue Badge exemptions on some streets, supported by a loading ban where required, and an extension of the footstreet period to 8pm (taken back to 5pm during lockdown/Tier 3 periods).
9. This was reviewed by City of York Council's Executive on 26th November 2020, with the Executive approving:
  - a. The continuation of the extension of the footstreets (removal of exemptions) on Blake Street – Lendal, and Goodramgate – Church Street – Colliergate until the end of September 2021;
  - b. The continuation of the temporary arrangements for Castlegate and Fossgate until the end of September 2021;
  - c. The removal of temporary access restrictions from Monk Bar through to College Green and Deansgate; and

- d. The continuation of the extension of the footstreet hours to 8pm until September 2021, except when hospitality venues are required to close due to Covid-19 restrictions, when the hours will revert to 10:30 am – 5:00 pm.
  - e. Initiate the process to make Castlegate and the phase one temporary footstreets permanent, with decisions on the final proposals, mitigations, and process delegated to the Executive Member for Transport.
10. Some exemptions to these restrictions are currently in place, allowing limited vehicular access to the area during footstreet hours. These include:
- a. Emergency services;
  - b. Cash & postal deliveries (Parcelforce/Royal Mail – limited number of trips/day to meet universal postal service requirements);
  - c. CYC Waste Collection;
  - d. Dial & Ride vehicles;
  - e. Market fish stall (deliveries are linked to tide times);
  - f. Vehicles bringing and taking hotel guests to and from Judge's Lodging and Galtres Lodge (exemption included in the original Traffic Regulation Order for the footstreets);
  - g. Annual waivers registered to emergency tradesmen (e.g. locksmiths, emergency plumbers);
  - h. CYC waivers/permits, issued for:
    - i. Workmen/utilities if the vehicle is required to carry out the operation on site;
    - ii. Between 5pm and 8pm, waivers may be issued to:
      - 1. Market traders, in conjunction with Make it York;
      - 2. Residents with off street parking in the footstreet area (including residential/holiday lets); and
      - 3. Workmen who require access to collect tools/materials.

### Current options for cyclists

11. Cyclists who want to access the footstreet area can currently cycle to the edge of the footstreet area and are then required to park or push their bike across the pedestrianised area during footstreets hours.

12. Cycling is permitted in the pedestrian area outside of footstreet hours which are:
  - a. 10.30 – 17.00 during lockdown and Tier 3 restriction periods (as per the permanent order in place);
  - b. 10.30 – 20.00 during other periods until the end of September 2021 in response to Covid-19 (to facilitate the use of the highway for pavement cafes for hospitality venues and enable social distancing)
  
13. Cyclists travelling across the city centre area can use alternative routes shown in Figure 1, with approximate distances and cycle journey times shown in Table 1. These include routes such as:
  - a. Skeldergate, North Street, Wellington Row, Riverside Walk to Scarborough Bridge;
  - b. Piccadilly/Fossgate (one way), Pavement/Stonebow, Aldwark, St Andrewgate, Deangate and Duncombe Place.

**Figure 1: Extract from the York Cycle Route map showing existing cycle routes in the city centre**



**Table 1: Indicative distances and cycle journey times**

<b>Routes considered</b>	<b>Distance</b>	<b>Cycling time</b>
<b>Lendal/ Museum Street junction, Tanner’s Moat, Wellington Row, North Street, Bridge Street, Spurriergate/ Bridge Street junction</b>	Approx. 815 metres	Approx. 2 to 3 minutes
<b>Lendal/ Museum Street junction, Lendal, Coney Street, Spurriergate/ Bridge Street junction</b>	Approx. 430 metres	Approx. 1 to 2 minutes
<b>Lendal/ Museum Street junction, Duncombe Place, Minster Yard, Deangate, Goodramgate, Aldwark, St Saviour’s Place, The Stonebow, pavement, Coppergate, Nessgate, Spurriergate/ Bridge Street junction</b>	Approx. 1,480 metres	Approx. 3 to 6 minutes

IWGB proposal for cycle couriers

14. The IWGB York Group has put forward a proposal to support pedal cycle couriers by enabling them to access the footstreets to pick up food delivery. The proposal (see Annex A) can be summarised as follows:
  - a. A permit scheme for cycle couriers, to enable cycle couriers to cycle through the footstreets during pedestrianised hours;
  - b. Administered by City of York Council with free permits issued to couriers;
  - c. Based on a “Share with Care” approach for couriers issued with permits;
  - d. Implemented in three stages, including Blake Street and Lendal using the one way system in stage 1, including Coney Street, Spurriergate, Goodramgate, Low Petergate and Colliergate in stage 2, and also including Stonegate in stage 3.
  
15. The author of the proposal also spoke at the Executive Member Decision Session on 18 January 2021 (transcript attached as Annex B). This additional information indicates that the request is for initial access to be permitted to cycle couriers on Blake Street, Lendal and Coney Street.
  
16. City of York Council has engaged with the author of the proposal to better understand the proposed changes. The author of the proposal has expressed his willingness to work with the Council to overcome any

of the concerns that are raised. The promoter of the proposal has indicated that a mechanism to report incidents and remove licences if the permit holder did not use the footstreets area responsibly would be expected.

17. The primary reason identified for introducing a permit scheme is the financial impact of the current restrictions, due to the increased journey time as a result of the need for cyclists to dismount and push their bikes in the footstreets area.

## **Consultation**

18. A wider consultation process is already planned to be undertaken as part of the consideration of potential changes to the footstreets area approved by the Executive (decision on the Future of the Extended City Centre Footstreets taken on 26/11/2020).
19. It is not considered acceptable to consult on the potential introduction of a permit for cycle couriers in isolation to the rest of the potential changes. It is therefore proposed to include a review of the potential for a permit access scheme for cycle couriers as part of that consultation.

## **Analysis**

20. An initial review of the proposal has identified a number of significant concerns, which require further investigation prior to any decision being made on the proposed permit scheme. These relate mainly to:
  - a. The principle of cyclists being allowed in the pedestrian area; and
  - b. The options for effective administration/enforcement of a potential permit system.
21. The footstreets are a vibrant area in the heart of the city, where, during footstreet hours, pedestrians can move freely, generally without being concerned about potential conflicts with vehicles (including cycles). Exemptions for vehicle access are granted for very limited activity; this is very tightly controlled to ensure that the principle of the area as a pedestrian safe space is not undermined.
22. Recent consultation with disabled groups has confirmed how important this space is for pedestrians – particularly those with sight impairment. Specific consultation would need to be undertaken with disabled groups for any proposed changes to access arrangements for the footstreet area.

23. Effective administration and enforcement would be critical elements of a successful permit based system. Under the proposal the permits would be issued by the Council and enforcement would ultimately lie with the police as a moving traffic offence. Both these areas would need careful consideration before any system could be progressed.
24. Other issues to consider during the detailed review of the proposal, as part of the process to review the temporary changes, include:
  - a. The need to review the suitability of certain streets for cycling (if allowed during footstreets hours) due to pedestrian volumes (e.g. Stonegate) and considering the need for segregation between pedestrians and cyclists;
  - b. Options to sign the changed restrictions effectively, particularly if certain streets were excluded and some changes to one-way systems were required;
  - c. Monitoring and evaluation requirements to assess the impact of any changes on a trial basis;
  - d. Potential need for registration numbers on cycles to aid with the reporting of incidents and enforcement;
  - e. Criteria for eligibility for a permit and required checks (reference documents, proof of employment, days where couriers might be off duty);
  - f. Use of footstreets as a through route without a pick up location within the area;
  - g. Equality issues – how would access for couriers be justifiable compared to disabled cyclists/ all cyclists.

## **Council Plan**

25. This section explains how the proposals relate to the Council's outcomes, as set out in the Council Plan 2019-2023 (Making History, Building Communities) and other key change programmes.
26. The Council Plan's key objectives of relevance to this proposal are:
  - a. Good health and wellbeing – considering the role of the pedestrianised area for residents and visitors to support walking, cycling, and active lifestyles, and the role of delivery couriers in providing access to food/key services;
  - b. Well paid jobs and an inclusive economy – considering the impact of footstreet restrictions on delivery couriers' working conditions;

- c. Getting around sustainably - considering the role of the pedestrianised area for residents and visitors to support walking and cycling;
- d. A greener and cleaner city - considering the role of the pedestrianised area for residents and visitors to support walking and cycling as an alternative to motorised modes of transport;
- e. Safe communities and culture for all - considering the role of the restrictions for residents and visitors on their experience of the pedestrianised area (safety, comfort);
- f. An open and effective council – recommending to include the proposed scheme into a wider consultation to be undertaken as part of the consideration of potential changes to the footstreets area approved by the Executive (decision on the Future of the Extended City Centre Footstreets taken on 26/11/2020).

## Implications

27. This section provides an initial review of the potential implications of the proposed permit scheme (if implemented). This will be considered in more detail as part of the wider consultation and review of the potential changes to the footstreets area approved by the Executive (decision on the Future of the Extended City Centre Footstreets taken on 26/11/2020).
- a. Financial – Financial implications for the Council of setting up and managing a permit scheme (staff and associated resources), additional costs associated with changes to signage, monitoring and evaluation of a trial;
  - b. Human Resources (HR) – Potential need for additional staff resource to set up and manage the permit scheme;
  - c. Equalities – An Equality/Community Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the wider review, including consideration of the impact of the scheme on specific communities of identity;
  - d. Legal – Changes to current order might be required, consideration of permit set up and enforcement options;
  - e. Crime and Disorder – The Police has raised issues relating to potential conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians and difficulties in enforcing the scheme;
  - f. Information Technology (IT) - Limited IT implications (IT set up required for permit scheme and application process);
  - g. Property – No direct implications to Council properties identified.



## Risk Management

28. This section provides an initial review of the potential risks to consider if the proposed permit scheme was implemented. Key risks identified at this stage include:
- a. Safety – Concerns with pedestrian safety in the footstreet area, especially for more vulnerable groups;
  - b. Regulatory – Lack of compliance with latest national cycling guidance (Cycle infrastructure design Local Transport Note 1/20), which states in its Summary Principle 2: *“Cycles must be treated as vehicles and not as pedestrians. On urban streets, cyclists must be physically separated from pedestrians and should not share space with pedestrians. (...) Shared use routes in streets with high pedestrian or cyclist flows should not be used. Instead, in these sorts of spaces distinct tracks for cyclists should be made, using sloping, pedestrian-friendly kerbs and/or different surfacing”*;
  - c. Reputation - Reputational risk for the Council and the city if the footstreet area was to be perceived as less pedestrian friendly/safe, the scheme is difficult to administer, and enforcement/sanctions are difficult to implement or have a limited impact;

## Contact Details

### Author:

Helene Vergereau  
Traffic and Highway  
Development Manager  
Economy & Place  
Tel No. 01904 552077

Tony Clarke  
Head of Transport  
Economy & Place  
Tel No. 01904 551641

### Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

James Gilchrist  
Assistant Director of Transport, Highways  
and Environment

Report  Date 21/01/2021  
Approved

**Wards Affected:** Guildhall Ward (where footstreets are located) and all wards as residents from all/most wards access the footstreets and can receive cycle deliveries.

All

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers:**

None

**Annexes**

Annex A – IWGB Couriers York City Centre Access Proposal, Courier Pedal Cycle Permit

Annex B - Transcript of Annex A's author contribution to the Executive Member Decision Session on 18 January 2021.