
**Meeting of Executive Members for City Strategy
and Advisory Panel**

8 December 2008

Report of the Director of City Strategy

BECKFIELD LANE – PEDESTRIAN / CYCLIST IMPROVEMENTS

Summary

1. This report summarises the outcome of consultation on proposed cycle and pedestrian measures on Beckfield Lane aimed at promoting safe and sustainable travel to nearby schools, shops, and other local facilities. Issues arising are discussed, and approval of a scheme for implementation is sought.

Background

2. At the EMAP meeting on 8 September 2008, approval was given to implement a package of highway improvements aimed at providing safe and sustainable links to the new Manor School development on Millfield Lane. This included widening the existing footway along Beckfield Lane on the east side from Boroughbridge Road to Newlands Drive, to provide an off-road segregated cycle track (see **Annex A**).
3. At this meeting approval in principle was given to the long-term aim of introducing off-road cycle tracks along either side of Beckfield Lane over its full length. As a first priority, it was also agreed that Officers should bring forward detailed proposals for extending the proposed cycle track on the east side of the street from Newlands Drive to Ostman Road for possible implementation in 2008/09. Some concerns were raised about the difficulty some cyclists travelling north along Beckfield Lane may face in accessing an off-road cycle facility along the east side of the street, and it was suggested that a crossing facility should be included in the scheme to help overcome this.
4. Coincidentally, the provision of a pedestrian crossing on Beckfield Lane in the vicinity of Almsford Road has previously been requested to improve access to the Carr Infant and Junior Schools, and funding for a scheme has been included in the 2008/09 LTP Capital Programme under the Safe Routes to School programme.

Proposals

5. The approved segregated shared use facility along the east side of the street between Boroughbridge Road and Newlands Drive involves widening the existing footway from around 2.2m to 3.8m and then allocating 1.8m for footway and 2.0m for the cycle track. Cyclists will be positioned on the carriageway side of the footway. It is therefore logical to base the proposed extension of the cycle facility on the same basic layout and dimensions. The details of the proposed scheme are shown in **Annex B**. Key features include:-
 - Short sections of the cycle facilities around bus stops and pedestrian crossing points will be unsegregated as pedestrians are expected to cross the full width of the footway / cycle track.
 - Across side road junctions, the crossing point will be set back from the junction to allow one car to wait at the give way line without blocking the crossing point.
 - A zebra crossing is proposed between Grayshon Drive and Almsford Road. This is primarily to assist pupils and parents from the northern end of Beckfield Lane walking to Carr Infant and Junior Schools, but would also be useable by cyclists, after dismounting, for accessing the off-road cycle path.
 - In order to introduce a zebra crossing at this location it will be necessary to relocate the existing bus stop on the west side of the road further south to ensure pedestrians waiting to cross can see and be seen by oncoming vehicles.

Consultation Feedback

6. Public consultation on the package of proposals was carried out in October 2008. This involved a letter and plans being sent to around 150 households and businesses which would be most directly affected by the proposals. Details were also sent to various other interested parties for comment, such as Ward Councillors, the emergency services, local schools, and road user groups.

Emergency Services

7. The Police are concerned that cyclists seeking to use the zebra crossing will not dismount, and may ride out in front of on-coming traffic before it has stopped. This would put themselves at risk, and also increase the chances of a rear end shunt accident if a driver brakes suddenly. Therefore they wish to see the short length of cycle track on the west footway leading cyclists to the zebra crossing removed.

Officer response

The zebra crossing is primarily for use by pedestrians. The number of cyclists who would use it is expected to be low for three reasons:-

- Most users of the proposed cycle track will originate from side roads to the east of Beckfield Lane, and will not need to cross the road.
- It is thought that most cyclists travelling north along Beckfield Lane are likely to continue on-road until a suitable gap in the traffic flow allows them to turn right to access the off-road cycle track via one of the many driveways situated along the road. It will probably only be less confident cyclists who would look to use the zebra crossing, and it therefore follows that they will be more likely to use the crossing sensibly by dismounting, waiting for the traffic to stop, and then walking over.
- As part of the longer term plans to extend cycle facilities right along Beckfield Lane, it is thought that it would be attractive to establish a toucan crossing slightly south of Ostman Road where there is a higher volume of usage expected. If this was provided then the potential usage of the proposed zebra crossing by cyclists would be even further reduced.

To promote correct usage of the zebra by cyclists, the scheme includes an 'end' marking and 'cyclists dismount' signs at the end of the short length of cycle track.

8. The Fire and Rescue Service wrote to confirm that they have no objections to the proposals. At the time of writing the report, no response had been received from the Ambulance Service.

*(formal responses from the **local schools** are awaited)*

Road User Groups

9. The Cyclists Touring Club (CTC) would prefer the cycle track to be fully continuous, with cyclists having priority over the side roads.

Officer response

Such arrangements at side roads are fairly unusual in the UK, and there are very few examples in York (e.g. Muncastergate on Malton Road). Giving priority to cyclists can be appropriate where there are low traffic volumes on the side road, low vehicle speeds, and good forward visibility. In most situations, the biggest safety concern is potential conflict between cyclists and vehicles turning left into the side road. Unfortunately, on Beckfield Lane trees would affect visibility between cyclists on the side road and drivers turning in left off Beckfield Lane, and therefore giving priority to cyclists could not be recommended on road safety grounds.

10. York Access Group would prefer to see a signalised crossing for the benefit of wheelchair users and the visually impaired.

Officer response

Flush kerbs and tactile paving in line with national guidance are proposed at the zebra crossing. Reasons for providing a zebra crossing rather than a toucan crossing are discussed in paragraph 13 below.

Member Views

Ward Members

11. Councillor Horton's comments were forwarded via Councillor Potter and are detailed below in paragraph 14. Councillor Simpson-Laing had not responded at the time of finalising this report.

Other Members

12. Councillors Gillies, Potter and Stephen Galloway were also made aware of the proposals and asked for their comments. Councillor Gillies as Chair of the meeting preferred not to comment beforehand.
13. Councillor Galloway has no objections in principle to the proposals but questions if a toucan would be a better choice of crossing facility.

Officer response

The expected usage of the crossing facility and longer term proposals for Beckfield Lane is discussed in paragraph 7. In addition, a toucan crossing could not be recommended for this site, as it would not be possible to meet specific national design guidelines. These state that for a pelican or toucan the minimum safe distance between the crossing and the position of a driver waiting at the give-way line of a nearby side road is 20m. This is to ensure drivers exiting from the side roads can see the signal heads. A zebra crossing can be located closer to a side road because it is easier for an emerging driver to see someone standing nearby waiting to cross. National design guidance recommends a minimum separation of 5m for a zebra crossing, and at the proposed site on Beckfield Lane this distance would be around 12m. Other potential sites for locating a toucan in the vicinity, further away from side roads, would all require trees to be removed to allow adequate visibility of the signal heads.

A zebra crossing is considered more suitable than a signal controlled crossing in this instance because it would provide an on-demand crossing facility giving more immediate priority to pedestrians. In contrast, pedestrians and cyclists at a Toucan crossing typically have to wait at least 7 seconds (more at peak times) from pushing the button to the green man to cross. Also, at less busy times impatient pedestrians and cyclists may be tempted to cross against the signals putting themselves at increased risk and frustrating drivers who face a red signal when no-one is crossing. Pelican/Toucan crossings are preferred on safety grounds when the approach speeds are high, but surveys show that average speed levels are not excessive on this section of Beckfield Lane.

14. Councillor Potter welcomed the zebra crossing but in conjunction with Councillor Horton raised a number of issues, which are detailed below along with officer comments:-
 - There is potential for increased conflict between different users of the footway/cycle track. Firstly between cyclists and motorists entering/exiting

driveways, and secondly between pedestrians and cyclists, particularly in busy areas such as around the post office where elderly people could feel intimidated.

- A safety risk would be created if pedestrians and cyclists do not follow the arrangements at the side roads where they are routed behind the first waiting vehicle.
- Works to widen the footway may damage the trees and prevent residents from parking between kerb and footway.

Officer response

It is not particularly unusual to have shared use footway/cycle tracks running in front of residential driveways. Similar cycle facilities on Boroughbridge Road and Hull Road (near Holgate School), for example, have been in operation for many years with no known reports of difficulty leaving driveways. The footway is already used by many cyclists and this proposal will ensure that if there are cyclists using the cycle track they will be at least 2m beyond the property boundaries for most of the length of the cycle facilities, giving a little more visibility to the drivers of emerging vehicles. It is also hoped that this increase in width of the footway and dedication of one half to cyclists, will reduce the present potential for conflict between pedestrians and cyclists.

The side road arrangement helps to ensure that a single car waiting to join the main road will not block the crossing point for a pedestrian or cyclist, certainly if this does occur the natural desire line will be to go behind the vehicle. Normal rules regarding priority will still apply.

The arboricultural officer has been consulted and will agree methods of construction to minimise the likelihood of any damage to tree roots should construction go ahead. Where trees would be very close to the footway/cycle track some short lengths may need to be slightly narrowed locally to avoid damage to roots.

Some residents use the area between their dropped kerb and the existing footway as a parking area, widening the footway will reduce the length of this area. However affected residents all have off street parking and as this area is public highway, there is no legal entitlement to park there.

Residents / Businesses

15. Ten responses were received from local residents and businesses, with a number of issues raised. Some residents raised the same concerns as those detailed above, and the other main issues from the consultation are discussed below. Some additional comments and concerns are summarised along with officer comments in **Annex C**.
16. The removal of verge to widen the footway will add to the existing problem of water running off the highway onto private property.

Officer response

A variety of measures will be used to alleviate water runoff along this section of Beckfield Lane. This will include reprofiling the footway so it runs away from properties, the installation of a footway drainage system, permeable paving and where appropriate, reinstating the 25mm kerb check at existing vehicular dropped crossings. These measures should significantly improve current drainage problems.

17. The zebra crossing is sited in an unsafe location, too close to junctions and surrounded by trees.

Officer response

The recommended absolute minimum distance from the position of a driver waiting at the give way line of a side road to a zebra crossing is 5m. The trees at this location would not mask pedestrians waiting to cross or obscure their visibility, so whilst some low branches may require trimming, the trees can remain.

18. The zebra crossing would be better located where there is more demand outside the shops, or nearer to Ostman Road where it will be of most benefit for pupils at Carr Infant & Junior Schools.

Officer response

The zebra crossing was originally initiated to assist with the school journey to Carr Infant and Junior Schools for children and parents living off the northern section of Beckfield Lane. A crossing facility central to the shops would be beneficial to pedestrians from north and south, but the extent of the zig zag lines would prohibit parking for a distance of about 40m, where there is high demand for on street parking. If implemented, this would displace existing parking in all directions and as a result generally leads to opposition from local shopkeepers/businesses who have a lot of passing trade. As a compromise, a zebra crossing was considered further north outside the Green Tree pub, but the location of driveways would mean that the only way to implement a zebra crossing would be to remove a mature tree on the western footway, which was not considered desirable. There are existing pedestrian refuges near to the junction of Ostman Road, which will continue to assist pedestrians who wish to cross to the south of the shops. In the longer term, there may also be additional crossing facilities provided on Beckfield Lane as part of the possible future plans discussed in paragraph 7.

Options on the Way Forward

19. Officers consider that Members have three basic options to consider:

Option One – implement the proposals as shown in **Annex B**;

Option Two – make any changes to the proposals that Members consider necessary;

Option Three – no pedestrian or cycle improvement measures to be implemented.

Analysis of Options

20. Cycle facilities linking the new Manor School site to Beckfield Lane as far south as Newlands Drive are already approved for implementation. The proposals discussed in this report will complement those already approved to provide another phase to the eventual aim of having cycle facilities over the full length of Beckfield Lane. Consultation on the scheme proposals highlighted several concerns and issues, the most significant being the type of crossing facility to be implemented and drainage problems. The expected low usage of the crossing by cyclists, along with possible future plans to provide a toucan crossing further south, suggest that a zebra crossing is the most appropriate type of crossing facility. The scheme will also present an opportunity to alleviate problems experienced by residents with water run off onto their properties. It is therefore recommended that Members approve these proposals for implementation (Option One).

Corporate Priorities

21. The scheme will help towards achieving the council's priority of increasing the use of public and other environmentally friendly modes of transport. It will also help with improving the health and lifestyles of many people by providing facilities to encourage walking and cycling.

Implications

22. This report has the following implications:

Financial

23. The scheme is being funded from the 2008/09 LTP capital programme with £150,000 allocated to Beckfield Lane cycle route and £22,000 allocated to safe routes to Carr Infant and Juniors Schools. It is estimated that the scheme can be delivered within budget.

Human Resources

24. There are no human resources implications.

Equalities

25. The proposed measures will benefit vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists. In particular improved crossing facilities will benefit the young and the elderly as well as the mobility and visually impaired.

Legal

26. City of York Council, as highway authority for the area, has powers under the following Acts and associated Regulations to implement improvements to the highway and any associated measures:

- The Highways Act 1980
- The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984
- The Road Traffic Act 1988

Crime and Disorder

27. None.

Information Technology

28. None.

Land & Property

29. All the proposed works would be within the adopted highway.

Risk Management

30. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy, the main risks linked to this report are discussed below:-

Strategic

31. None.

Physical

32. The main physical risk to achieving implementation on time is thought to be the need to move or protect services in the ground, where the layout of the highway is being altered. Close liaison with the Utility companies is taking place to identify and programme any necessary works to fit the overall implementation timetable. In addition, work around the trees may lengthen construction time to minimise the potential for any damage. Methods of working will be devised in conjunction with the Council's arboricultural officer.

Financial

33. There is also a potential risk that the scheme costs may exceed current estimates. Again, the need to move or protect underground services poses the main area of financial uncertainty about the overall cost of the scheme. Residents have also reported problems with drainage and water running off the highway onto private

property, we are seeking to implement measures to improve this which would ordinarily not be integral to such a scheme and consequently will inflate the cost.

Organisation/Reputation

34. None.
35. Measured in terms of impact and likelihood, the risk score for all these risks has been assessed at less than 16 (see table below). 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.

Risk Category	Impact	Likelihood	Score
Physical	High	Possible	15
Financial	High	Possible	15

Recommendations

36. That the Advisory Panel consider the consultation feedback and advise the Executive Member to approve the proposals for Beckfield Lane as shown in **Annex B** as the preferred package of measures for implementation.

Reason: To provide further safe and sustainable facilities for cyclists and pedestrians on Beckfield Lane, which will complement the previously approved package of highway improvement measures in the area linked to the Manor School relocation.

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All

For further information please contact the author of the report.

Background Papers:

“Manor School – Highway Improvements” - report to the meeting of the Executive Members for City Strategy and Advisory Panel held on 8 September 2008.

Annexes

- Annex A Beckfield Lane – Boroughbridge Road to Newlands Drive - pedestrian/cycle facilities, approved at EMAP 8 September 2008.
- Annex B Beckfield Lane – Newlands Drive to Ostman Road - pedestrian/cycle facilities.
- Annex C Issues raised by residents during the public consultation and officer response.