

BOOTHAM - CYCLIST CROSSING FACILITY

Summary

1. This report advises the Executive Member of the results of further investigations into the possible installation of traffic signals at the junction of Bootham/St Mary's/Bootham Park Hospital to provide a priority crossing over Bootham for cyclists. The report highlights problems with a previous proposal to fully signalise all traffic movements at the junction, which was granted in-principle approval by the Executive Member for City Strategy at the Advisory Panel (EMAP) meeting in December 2008. Various alternative solutions have been explored, and the report proposes a combined pedestrian/cyclist "parallel" signalised crossing as the best option to take forward for further detailed design and public consultation.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that the Executive Member -
 - a) Notes the main problems associated with the previous full junction signalisation proposal detailed in paragraphs 5 and 6, and as summarised below:
 - The necessary listed building and planning consents to alter the Bootham Park Hospital entrance gates are unlikely to be obtained;
 - The high estimated cost for this option brings into question whether the scheme provides good value for money and could be justified.
 - b) Provides in-principle approval to the alternative option shown in **Annex D**. This involves the installation of a signal controlled 'parallel crossing' for both pedestrians and cyclists at a location between the existing pelican and the entrance to Bootham Park Hospital.
 - c) Authorises Officers to undertake further detailed design and public consultation on the scheme shown in **Annex D**, with the outcome to be reported to a future Decision Session meeting for a decision on implementing the scheme.

Reason: Officers consider that these proposals will provide significant improvements for cyclists, as they address a difficult crossing point over a major road on a strategic cycle route. The proposed measures would also make a significant contribution towards the aims of the Council as a Cycling City.

Background

3. Encouraging more people to cycle has been a long-standing priority for the Council, and this work has recently been boosted by our successful bid to become a 'Cycling City'.
4. As part of an action plan to address existing gaps in the cycle route network, improvements to the Haxby to Station route are considered a high priority. The overall route, which provide access to many employment sites, schools, leisure facilities, healthcare and retail sites, is shown in **Annex A**. Improving this route is thought to have the potential to significantly increase cycling levels in this sector of the city.
5. In December 2008, the EMAP considered feedback from consultation on proposals to install signals on Bootham to provide a priority crossing for cyclists. The aim was to resolve the difficulties currently being experienced by cyclists crossing Bootham from both St. Mary's and the hospital grounds via 'The Drive'. Consultation feedback highlighted the need to take account of safety concerns regarding potential conflicts between motorists emerging from Bootham Park Hospital ('The Drive') under a green signal, and pedestrians walking along the eastern footway. In view of this, Officers presented a revised proposal that had been developed through discussion with representatives of Bootham Park Hospital. The major change was to set back the entrance gates within Bootham Park Hospital land and to re-align the adjoining railings accordingly to improve intervisibility between pedestrians and cyclists.
6. After due consideration, Members gave in-principle approval for the revised design and gave Officers authority to progress this further, which included carrying out more detailed design work, preparing a revised cost estimate, and seeking the necessary planning consents for the proposed changes to the hospital entrance.
7. After further design work was carried out, the detailed scheme layout shown in **Annex B** was developed, and an updated cost estimate was prepared, which included input from specialist contractors who deal in works of this nature. The updated cost estimate was £175,000, which is substantially higher than the previous estimate of £75,000 for the original proposal. A large proportion of the difference between these two figures is directly due to the expense of setting back the entrance gates into the hospital grounds, re-aligning the adjacent railings, and undertaking additional highway works linked to these changes.
8. In the course of preparing the planning application, it became apparent that obtaining listed building consent would be difficult. Consultations were conducted with Officers in the Planning and Sustainable Development Section in relation to the Listed Building Consent. These discussions brought out several issues that gave them cause for concern. Principally, they considered that the proposed alterations to the hospital entrance would change the fundamental nature of the street's original design. As such, they would not be able to support a Listed Building Consent Application based on the revised scheme, which meant that the planning application was also very unlikely to be successful.
9. In light of the probable difficulty of obtaining listed building consent and the considerable increases in the estimate, it became apparent that the full signalisation scheme, in its revised form, may not be feasible, and would certainly require a substantially higher budget to be implemented. Officers

therefore refocused their attention on identifying an alternative scheme that would avoid the need for listed building consent and be more affordable.

New Scheme Proposal: A “Parallel” Crossing

10. In the course of these investigations, Officers have examined a variety of possible options, which are summarised in **Annex C**. Through this work, a scheme based on the concept of a “parallel” crossing for both pedestrians and cyclists emerged as having the strongest potential to deliver the desired benefits for cyclists at an affordable cost, whilst avoiding most of the problems identified with other scheme options.
11. The plan in **Annex D** shows the layout of the proposed “parallel” crossing. This configuration uses standard traffic signal equipment to control the movement of all road users. Although there are currently no good examples of such a crossing in York, it is a well-established form of combined crossing and is covered in design guidance from both the Department for Transport (DfT) and Cycling England.
12. The more commonly used Toucan crossing facility requires a "shared use" area to accommodate both cyclists and pedestrians either side of a single crossing point. The "parallel" crossing arrangement is therefore more suitable where there are clearly separated cycle and pedestrian paths leading to and from the crossing point, as would be the case at the Bootham site.
13. To maximise the potential for the parallel crossing facility to be well used by cyclists, it is proposed to position it as close as practically possible to the natural desire-line between St Mary’s and The Drive. It is also considered important to keep the pedestrian and cyclist elements of the crossing close together, which will make the whole crossing facility more compact and easy for drivers to identify, and thereby more likely to be kept clear of queuing traffic. The cycle part of the crossing would be highlighted by the use of large square road markings (known as "elephant footprints") and green surfacing. The pedestrian part of the facility would be identified by smaller road markings, as at the existing Pelican crossing, and would be positioned a little further north compared to its current position.
14. The signals would have a simple two-stage mode of operation, similar to the existing Pelican crossing. The default stage would provide green lights for traffic on Bootham. When a demand to cross the road is received by the signal controller, either by approaching cyclists (using loop detection), or by pedestrians (using push button), the traffic on Bootham would quickly be stopped by red lights. Both crossings would then receive green signals. After people have crossed, the signals would revert back to the traffic movement stage. During both stages, traffic on St. Mary's and The Drive would continue to operate on a priority "give-way" basis, as at present.
15. An important feature of this proposal is the retention of the existing tree on the west side of Bootham, which is made possible by the angle of the cycle crossing over the road. This would be a slightly unusual arrangement, but fits in well with the cyclist's desire-line and other site constraints. Another advantage is that a new signal pole associated with the crossing can be located further away from the tree

16. Cyclists using the crossing from the Bootham Park Hospital side would be directed to join the existing on-road cycle lane on the west side of Bootham. A short length of additional cycle lane is proposed to facilitate the left turn into St. Mary's. A short length of cycle lane is also proposed in the middle of St. Mary's to provide eastbound cyclists with a convenient place to wait before turning right to access the crossing facility. The short length of new cycle path linking St Mary's and the crossing would just be for eastbound cyclists to use.
17. Although pedestrians and cyclists would cross the road simultaneously, there should be no conflicts because they will effectively be using separate facilities, and will not be sharing the same spaces on either side of the crossing. Potentials for conflict would only arise if cyclists coming from Bootham Park Hospital use the facility to turn left to proceed towards the city centre, or those coming from St Mary's use the crossing to turn right, because this would require them to pass through the pedestrian section of the parallel crossing. However, very few cyclists make these movements, and it is thought unlikely that many would choose to do so via the crossing facility. This is especially so for the left turn from Bootham Park Hospital because the existing give-way arrangement will provide easy access on to Bootham. However, to reduce the chances of any problems occurring, advance signs would be provided advising city bound cyclists to stay on the carriageway, and a "No Left Turn"/"No Right Turn" signs as appropriate would also be provided at the cycle crossing signals. This should ensure that cyclists either do not make these movements, or at least do so cautiously knowing that they shouldn't be.
18. It should also be noted that on this type of signal arrangement, the normal zig-zag markings that are used to prohibit parking and overtaking on the approaches to Zebra, Pelican, or Toucan crossings are not permitted. However, this section of Bootham is already covered by no waiting (double yellow line) restrictions, and it is thought very unlikely that there would be safety problems linked to overtaking manoeuvres in this location (any that do occur are likely to be at low speed).
19. The estimated cost for this scheme is approximately £72,000.

Consultation

20. Initial consultation on the "parallel" crossing scheme has taken place with relevant councillors and the Police.

Ward Member Views

21. Councillor Watson has indicated that he supports the proposals, but has reservations that some cyclists may use the "Keep Clear" area opposite the entrance to Bootham Park Hospital to help them cross the road rather than use the signalised facility.

Councillor Looker is very much in favour of the scheme.

Councillor Scott - no comments received at the time of finalising this report.

Councillor King - no comments received at the time of finalising this report.

Councillor Douglas - no comments received at the time of finalising this report.

Other Member Views

22. Councillor Gillies has given his in-principle support.

Councillor Potter is also in agreement with the scheme.

Councillor D'Agorne - no comments received at the time of finalising this report.

Police View

23. The Police support the scheme in principle.

Cycling Evaluation Tool

24. The Cycling Evaluation Tool is a means of scoring cycling schemes on a range of criteria so that schemes may be ranked and compared against each other. It was approved at the City Strategy Decision Session on 20 October 2009. The proposed Bootham “parallel” crossing scheme has been evaluated using this tool and achieves a score of +23. This compares very favourably with other, similar projects, as shown in the table below:

Scheme	Total points
Beckfield Lane - Boroughbridge Road to Ostman Road - completed section	+16
Crichton Avenue – scheme under construction	+21
Clifton Green - completed scheme	+24
Wigginton Road – proposals approved in principle	+25
Moor Lane Bridge - completed scheme	+26

Options on the Way Forward

25. The options for the Executive Member to consider are:

- Option One – progress the “parallel” crossing scheme proposal shown in **Annex D** through more detailed design and public consultation.
- Option Two – develop one of the alternative scheme options in **Annex C** in preference to the parallel crossing.
- Option Three – abandon plans to provide an improved cycle crossing facility at this location.

Analysis of Options

26. This report has highlighted problems with full signalisation of the St. Mary's/Bootham junction and further feasibility work has led to the development of the “parallel” crossing option. Officers consider that this would provide a good solution to address a difficult crossing point on this important strategic cycle route. It would not require any planning/listed building approvals, and also is more affordable than other options. Initial consultation has produced positive feedback from relevant councillors and the Police, and it also achieves a good score under the Cycling Scheme Evaluation Tool.

27. Various alternatives have been explored in the course of developing the current “parallel” crossing proposal, as summarised in **Annex C**. Each option offers certain advantages, but all of them have one or more disadvantages. For example, some are thought unlikely to be very attractive for cyclists to use, are very expensive, or are unlikely to gain the necessary approvals.
28. Abandoning plans to improve this difficult crossing for cyclists would do nothing to promote cycling. This would be a failure in terms of the Council’s Cycling City objectives, which include encourage more people to cycle more often, and to address the gaps in connections and cycle routes.

Corporate Priorities

29. The scheme would contribute to the following Corporate Priorities:
 - Sustainable City – the scheme should encourage more residents to ride into the city from Haxby, and in addition, to Nestle and the hospital, in preference to using motorised forms of transport.
 - Safer City – the scheme would make Bootham easier and safer for cyclists to cross.
 - Healthy City – the scheme should encourage more cycling which would have a beneficial effect upon peoples’ health.
30. The scheme would also contribute to several of the aims of the Local Transport Plan, namely:
 - Encourage essential journeys to be undertaken by more sustainable modes where possible;
 - Reduce the level of actual and perceived safety problems;

Implications

Financial/Programme

31. The 2009/10 City Strategy Capital Programme initially included an allocation of £75,000 to fund a cycle crossing scheme on Bootham. However, given that it had become very unlikely that any scheme could actually be implemented by the end of the financial year, the budget allocation was reduced at the Decision Session meeting in December, as part of the routine Capital Programme monitoring process. The reduced budget is sufficient to cover further design / consultation / approvals work in 2009/10, but the allocation of funding for constructing a scheme will need to be considered as part of 2010/11 Capital Programme process.

Human Resources (HR)

32. There are no human resources implications.

Equalities

33. There are no equalities implications.

Legal

34. The Council has powers to implement the proposals under the provisions of the Highways Act and the Road Traffic Act.

Crime and Disorder

35. There are no crime and disorder issues.

Information Technology (IT)

36. There are no information technology implications.

Property

37. There are no property implications.

Risk Management

38. Physical - there is always a potential for new safety issues to arise whenever an existing highway layout is altered, but risks are minimised through careful design and the road safety audit checking process.
39. Organisation/Reputation - there is a risk of criticism from the public in implementing a scheme to which some people may have objections, but there could also be criticism from potential supporters of the scheme if it is not implemented. Good quality consultation should ensure that well informed decisions are made about the scheme and reduce the risk of public criticism.
- 40.

Risk Category	Impact	Likelihood	Score
Physical	Medium	Unlikely	6
Organisation/Reputation	Medium	Unlikely	6

Measured in terms of impact and likelihood, the risk scores have all been assessed at lower 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.

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Report Approved



Date 14/12/09

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

There are no special implications

Wards Affected: Guildhall, Clifton

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

“York Cycling City” – report to the Meeting of Executive Members for City Strategy and Advisory Panel on 8 September 2008

“Links To Cycle Route Through Hospital Grounds: Proposed Traffic Signals At Bootham To Cater For Cyclist Crossing Movements” – report to the Meeting of Executive Members for City Strategy and Advisory Panel on 8 December 2008.

“Cycling Infrastructure within York – Standards, Evaluation Tool, and Cost/Benefit Matrix” - report to the Executive Member for City Strategy Decision Session on 20 October 2009.

Annexes:

Annex A – Overall Route Plan

Annex B – Bootham Signal Proposals

Annex C – Summary of Alternative Options Considered

Annex D – Proposed “Parallel” Crossing Layout