

Cabinet

6 May 2014

Report of the Director for City & Environmental Services

Lendal Bridge Traffic Restriction Trial – Final Evaluation Report

Summary

1. The Lendal Bridge traffic restriction was implemented using an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) and was in place between 27th August 2013 and 12th April 2014. The Order restricted most vehicles from using Lendal Bridge between 1030hours and 1700hours seven days per week.
2. This report provides information from the evaluation of the 6 month period up to 26 February 2014 and the subsequent period up to the decision to revoke the experimental order on 8 April. The report includes sections and annexes relating to:
 - Strategic Context
 - Trial Chronology
 - Evaluation Summary
 - Penalty Charge Notices
 - Overall Conclusions
3. Analysis of the data recorded during the trial suggests that in transport terms the trial achieved many of the original objectives to improve the environment for pedestrians and cyclists and reduce public transport journey times. However there was considerable concern from residents and businesses about the implementation of the trial.
4. The Traffic Penalty Tribunal on 1 April questioned the legality of the enforcement of the restriction using cameras. Legal advice suggests that their decision is incorrect and a request for the decision to be reviewed by the Chief Adjudicator has been submitted.

5. Following a presentation of the preliminary findings of the trial on 8 April 2014 the Leader exercised his powers to make a decision of the Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee, to remove the restriction from the bridge in order to swiftly address any potential confusion as to the status of the restrictions. The presentation is available on line at <http://www.york.gov.uk/downloads/file/12355/lendalbridgeapril2014>
6. The signs and lines associated with the restriction were removed on Friday 10 April. Following on from the removal of the bridge restriction it is proposed to set up an independent commission to review how traffic congestion should be addressed in the city. It is also proposed to undertake a review of the delivery of the Lendal Bridge Trial to understand any lessons which can be learnt for the implementation of future traffic schemes in the city. In particular the following will be reviewed: marketing/communication, signage, warning letters and enforcement levels.

Background

Strategic Context

7. The three main objectives of the trial were to: reduce congestion in the city centre and on the route between the Station and Gillygate/Clarence Street in particular; create a bus corridor that provides improvements in bus reliability and journey times, thus encouraging greater use of public transport and improve the public realm at the north end of the city centre by reducing the impact of traffic. Longer term the objective was to support the economy by creating a more attractive environment for pedestrians and cyclists and increase footfall in the city centre. These objectives were directly linked to the transport and economic strategies for the city and its ambition for growth.
8. The City has significant growth aspirations being taken through the Local Plan process in aiming to deliver, on average, 1000 jobs and 1090 dwellings per annum. The transport implications of these growth aspirations have been tested in a 'reference case'¹. The reference case included 'priority route measures on the inner

¹ *Transport Implications of the City of York Local Plan paper that supported the Local Plan Preferred Options*

ring road' (measures such as vehicle restrictions on Lendal Bridge). Modelling of the reference case predicted 41% increase in traffic across the city's transport network overall from 2010 to 2031. Other measures over-and-above the reference case are currently being investigated as there is a clear need to reduce traffic growth whilst maintaining economic growth for the city.

9. The Transport Implications of the City of York Local Plan paper suggested that significant investment in Smarter Choices (Behavioural Change, Sustainable Travel promotion, bus subsidy etc.) could bring the delay multiplier down from 2.0 by between 26% and 46% (in 2031). Improvements to sustainable travel infrastructure, incentives and planning have the potential to reduce delays in the long term but will be insufficient on their own.
10. A number of other demand management options were considered before progressing with the Lendal Bridge trial, including; congestion charging, which was considered by the Traffic Congestion Scrutiny Committee prior to the production of the current Local Transport Plan, but was ruled out in 2010 and again at the start of the current administration. A one-way system on the inner ring road was also considered, however it was considered to be more difficult to deliver, did not secure public realm improvements to enable bus or sustainable transport priority to be provided and may not encourage mode shift.
11. The project was part of the wider transformation of the economic, cultural and recreational offer in the city centre. A number of key city centre improvements will be completed over the next two or three years which, taken together, will help to improve the city's public realm and public transport system. In the longer term removal of traffic has the potential to open up opportunities for the York Central development and a bus interchange at the rail station, linked to options over Queen Street Bridge.
12. This is being taken much further with planned area improvements to King's Square, to be completed this year; to Exhibition Square and Duncombe Place/ St. Leonard's Place junction; and Fossgate, over the next year.

Trial Chronology

13. Approval to proceed with a six month trial to restrict traffic on Lendal Bridge was agreed at Cabinet on 7th May 2013. The trial commenced on 27th August 2013 with the restriction operating between 10:30 and 5:00pm seven days a week. Buses, taxis, cyclists, pedestrians and emergency vehicles were permitted to cross the bridge during this period as well as a limited number of other vehicles specifically exempted within the Traffic Order.
14. Advance warning and information was provided in the form of Press (York Press and Yorkshire Post) and radio adverts, business information sessions, three city centre consultation events, creation of new pages on the Council website, information released to accommodation providers through Visit York and a citywide leaflet drop to all residents.
15. The restriction was enforced by Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras situated at the Rougier St/Lendal Bridge junction.
16. There are a number of standard Department for Transport (DfT) approved regulatory signs in place immediately adjacent to the restriction that makes the trial enforceable. Advance direction signs are also in place indicating a camera enforced restriction ahead and AA information signs are in place across the city.
17. An online and paper feedback form (in all libraries and West Offices) was available for residents and visitors to provide feedback. A separate online form was set up for businesses.
18. A grace period on the enforcement of the trial was agreed until 4th September 2013 consistent with a similar approach taken at Coppergate . A number of alterations were also made as the trial progressed, signing was reviewed and improved and a number of steps were taken to try and raise awareness of the restriction and its location.
19. The regulatory signs on the bridge were increased in size and placed on yellow backing boards to make them more obvious and visible. A second change was made later to indicate 'Lendal Bridge' at the top of the sign as an additional help to motorists unfamiliar with the city and the bridge.

20. Additional yellow directional lane signs were placed at a number of locations including at the Gillygate/Bootham junction and the approach from the station.
21. A variable messaging sign was placed at the junction of Station Rise/Station Avenue advising:

Lendal Bridge, ← closed, 10:30am – 5pm
22. Network Operators monitor the CCTV camera network in relation to traffic flow and queues. Alterations to the traffic signals plans at Bootham/Gillygate, Lord Mayor's Walk/Gillygate, Lendal Arch Gyratory and Micklegate Bar were made to take into account lower flows and reduce delays for all vehicles at these junctions. Alterations at Clifton Green, Walmgate Bar, Layerthorpe Bridge and Water End / Salisbury Road were made to take into account increases in traffic flows and minimise the impact of the additional traffic on these routes. Alterations to Hospital Fields Road and Broadway were made to address some (pre existing) issues of queuing outbound during the PM peak.
23. To increase awareness larger advanced direction signs were proposed, however it was decided to delay the installation until a decision on the trial had been reached due to the size of the signs and foundations.
24. To avoid confusion and allow time for analysis of results, restrictions remained in place during the interim period between the end of the trial on the 26th February and the removal of the restriction on the 12th April, enforcement was undertaken on a 'part time' basis (approx. 70% reduction), whilst still maintaining compliance levels at a similar level to full enforcement.
25. Following a presentation of the preliminary findings of the trial on 8 April 2014 the Leader took the decision to remove the restriction from the bridge with effect from 12th April 2014, to give sufficient time to remove the enforcing signing and lining, again in order to avoid confusion. The presentation is available on line at <http://www.york.gov.uk/downloads/file/12355/lendalbridgeapril2014>
26. On 27th March 2014 Councillor Reid brought a motion to Council in relation to Lendal Bridge. Councillor Reid's motion in respect of Lendal Bridge was referred to Cabinet, as the data on the trial was

still being collated and analysed. The motion is included as Annex H.

27. The Leader made the decision, follow approval from the Scrutiny Management Committee Chair, under delegated powers within the Councils Constitution which provides authority to the Leader to exercise all Cabinet functions.

Summary of Results

28. A monitoring and evaluation plan was put in place at the start of the trial covering all of the objectives for the restriction and to enable the impact to be assessed.
29. Data was collected from automatic traffic counters, traffic master, Bus Location system, speed recorders etc. Opinions of the trial were obtained from on-line surveys for residents/visitors and businesses and on-street pedestrian surveys on the bridge.
30. The table below provides a high level summary of the results - full details are included in the Annexes.

Item	Summary Review – Comparison with previous year
Note: Summaries should be read with detailed results provided in Annexes	
Accommodation Occupancy Levels in City	Increase
Footfall (Parliament Street)	Increase
Parking in City Centre Car Parks	Static
Citywide Traffic Counts	Static
Journey Times	Increases/Decreases
Bus Journey Times	Increases/Decreases

Bus Reliability	Improvement
Bus and Park & Ride Patronage	Increase
Air Quality	Improvement
Consultation Responses – General	Very Negative
Consultation Response - Business	Very Negative

31. It is noted that whilst the data shows that the trial achieved most of its aims in relation to the potential for improving public transport journey times, reductions in traffic at key locations, improvements to the environment for cyclists and pedestrians there was very strong public and business opposition to the trial in terms of the impacts experienced and the potential for future impacts on the City.

Penalty Charge Notices (PCN)

32. The trial was enforced by Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras. The cameras were located at the junction of Rougier Street and Lendal Bridge. An initial grace period was agreed and enforcement commenced on Wednesday 4th September 2013.
33. The PCN was issued for £60, reduced to £30 if paid within 14 days (or increased to £90 if not paid within 28 days). If an appeal was made within the 14 days the 'clock is stopped' and the charge remained at £30 until the appeal is resolved.
34. For most of the trial the number of PCNs being issued varied with a peak of approx. 4,000 per week in October falling to approx. 1,500 per week in the final months. The high number is considered to be mainly due to the number of visitors to the city unfamiliar with the layout of the city centre. Residents appeared to be aware of the trial and the split between YO postcodes and others is approximately 20/80. The receipt of a PCN generated a significant proportion of emails/complaints. The numbers issued began to reduce in January and February.

35. In the interim period between the 26th February and the removal of the restriction on 12th April, enforcement was undertaken on a 'part time' basis (approx. 70% reduction), whilst still maintaining compliance levels at a similar level to full enforcement.
36. The main reasons for drivers advising that they crossed the bridge are: they did not see any signs; they were following their SATNAV (SATNAV companies were asked to include the restriction but declined due to the trial status of the restrictions) or they were following the traffic in front of them and didn't realise the restriction was in place.
37. The original intention of the trial had been to issue warning letters for a first offence but CYC had been advised by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) and subsequently by ICES (camera operating company) that it was not possible to do so. Subsequently, after the trial was underway, the advice was amended to inform CYC that the issuing of warning letters was possible so long as it was the intention to pursue it if further contraventions occurred. However, at this point the terms of the trial had already been set.

Adjudicator

38. On 1 April the Council received a decision on a PCN appeal from the Traffic Penalty Tribunal Adjudicator. Whilst the appeal related to Coppergate the adjudicator widened his decision to cover issues at Lendal Bridge. In his opinion the enforcement of the bus lane restrictions at both locations using cameras was not legal. Legal advice has been taken, which refutes this, and an application for the decision to be reviewed by the Chief Adjudicator has been submitted. Pending the result of the legal process it is not advisable to make decisions on the receipts from the PCNs.

Finance

39. 48,525 Penalty Charge Notices were issued during the period when the restriction was enforced. This has generated approximately £1,046k of income (net of processing costs).
40. A number of costs have been incurred as part of the delivery of the trial. Capital costs including cameras, signs, electric and fibre connections and surveys and monitoring are approximately £156k. This includes additional costs not included in the original

budget for items such as early receipt of TrafficMaster data, additional traffic surveys required to consider complaints and comments, additional signing (AA and replacement regulatory signs to increase conspicuity). Revenue costs are currently £189k including project management and advertising. This includes costs for additional items of advertising, bank costs for PCN payments and police support in the early stages of the trial, not originally included within the budget.

41. The additional funding required for these items is considered to be a legitimate use of the PCN income under section 36(a) of the Bus Lane Contraventions (Penalty Charges, Adjudication and Enforcement) (England) Regulations 2005. Support for the trial is the first use of the income ahead of other schemes that could be developed.
42. There are a number of schemes/proposals for which the PCN income could be used for delivery. However, use of PCN funding will be brought forward in a separate report following the conclusion of the legal process relating to the Adjudicator.
43. It is recommended that no expenditure is incurred from PCN receipts without approval from the Council's Section 151 Officer.

Overall Conclusions

44. In transport planning terms the restriction achieved most of the aims of the project and the network demonstrated that, generally, it was able to cope with the restriction. However there was clear opposition from the public and businesses.
45. Economic indicators of, parking, footfall and accommodation stays all remained static or showed increases which indicates that residents and visitors did not avoid the City centre during the restricted period. It is difficult to rationalise the data with some business consultation responses stating that footfall through the door and revenue had decreased as this is not reflected in the general data. There may be other explanations that do not relate directly to the Lendal Bridge restriction and that have therefore not been identified through the data collected.
46. The 85th percentile journey time is a good indicator of what drivers experience day to day. Results varied by route but across the day increases in 85th percentile journey times were generally modest,

however peak times, particularly 5:00-6:00pm did see more significant journey time increases on some routes.

47. As part of the trial it was not possible to alter the bus timetables to take account of any journey time savings or reliability improvements. This may account for some of the mixed response from the consultation about public transport improvements. However, that data demonstrated that journey time savings would be possible and reliability did improve considerably. These factors combined with a service review and reduced fares produced a 7% in patronage.
48. Air quality has improved across the City, even at locations where traffic flows increased, although the improvements cannot be attributed to the Bridge restriction as the improvements fall within normal tolerances and are likely to be due to weather conditions.
49. The majority of negative consultation responses were from car drivers, who experienced more negative impact than other users. Cyclists were generally supportive with pedestrians providing a mixed response. Visitors to the City reported that the pleasant environment was the main reason for visiting (97%) and non car based visitors considered improvements to the pedestrian environment more important than improving vehicle speeds. Consultation responses were predominantly negative. In particular the business responses stated negative economic impacts.
50. Whilst the trial was able to demonstrate success in relation in a number of transport areas the Council has an obligation to consider the consultation responses and it was considered to be significant enough to outweigh the benefits flowing from the trial and this was directly responsible for the decision to lift the restriction.
51. It is anticipated that removing the restriction will mean that traffic flows will return to pre-trial levels with the consequential loss of the bus journey time reductions and environmental benefits achieved with the restriction in place. The delays and traffic flow increases experienced in some areas would return to pre-trial levels. In the long term delay levels are expected to increase.
52. The Reinvigorate York schemes proposed for Exhibition Square and Duncombe Place had been designed to be compatible with

continued use of the bridge as a traffic route, although it may reduce the ability to attract additional footfall to the city centre. Other transport aspirations could also be curtailed, in particular options for, and the operation of, a public transport interchange at the station and the ability to provide journey time and reliability improvements for public transport.

Traffic Congestion Commission

53. Traffic congestion is recognised as a significant impediment to the economic prosperity of the city. However a consensus on measures to resolve the issues are much less easy to agree. It is therefore proposed to set up a cross-party traffic congestion commission to review options for tackling traffic levels in the city and develop a consensus on measures to resolve. It is also proposed that the commission is independently led. The Leader has written to all Group Leaders to invite them to take part in order to build this consensus moving forward.
54. The scope of the traffic congestion commission could include: an overall assessment of the current transport agenda and approach adopted by the Council; the scope of the transport portfolio of planned future schemes; implications of the city congestion management strategies; the political position in York and how this positively influences outcomes or conflicts with operational delivery, and lessons learned from delivery of major schemes and projects and how this can be fed into influencing future performance. A separate report will be prepared to fully scope and agree the parameters for the commission.

Council Plan

55. Delivery of the proposals will help to achieve a number of the themes of the Council Plan, including :-

Get York Moving – the establishment of an independently chaired, cross-party congestion commission will allow the building of a consensus on how to address the city's traffic problems.

Build strong communities – demonstrating that the Council had listened and responded to public opinion.

Implications

56. Implications are set out below

- **Financial** The net surplus from the Lendal Bridge trial totals c£700k at 31st March 2014. The ongoing legal process however means that the council will need to be prudent in the use of these resources prior to the resolution. The Director of CBSS in consultation with the council auditors will need to consider the treatment of this income in the final accounts and therefore it is prudent that no expenditure funded from the net receipts is committed at this time.
- **Human Resources (HR)** There are no implications
- **Equalities** There are no implications
- **Legal** The appropriate legal process is being pursued in relation to the Adjudicator.
- **Crime and Disorder** There are no implications
- **Information Technology (IT)** There are no implications
- **Property** There are no implications
- There are no other implications

Risk Management

57. The immediate risk is one of reputation and is considered to be low as the decision reflects public opinion. There may be future risk associated with the pending legal process and will require ongoing monitoring.

Recommendations

Members are asked to consider the following recommendations:

- 1) To note the Leaders decision made on 8th April 2014 to end the trial from 12th April 2014.

Reason: As a result of significant public interest that emerged on the issue and the need for urgent clarification

- 2) That no expenditure is committed from the net receipts at this time prior to the resolution of the legal process. This will be subject to a future cabinet report.

Reason: This is the most prudent approach to treating the income at this time

- 3) That Councillor Reid's motion is referred back to Council in July 2014 together with details of any discussion on the issues raised.

Reason: In accordance with the Council's Constitution

- 4) To note the Leaders decision to establish an independently chaired, cross party congestion commission and to request that the scope of the commission be brought to a future meeting.

Reason: To consider how the impacts of future congestion can be mitigated.

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Wards Affected: All			√
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Background Papers:

ITS Final Evaluation Report

Annexes

Annex A – Data Evaluation Summary

Annex B – Traffic and Public Transport Data

Annex C – Traffic Speed Data (Lendal Bridge)

Annex D – Casualty Accident Data

Annex E – Air Quality Data

Annex F – Consultation results

Annex G – ITS Evaluation Reports