

**Decision Session – Executive Member for
Transport and Planning**

12 May 2016

Report of the Director of City and Environmental Services

Petition – Mill Lane Heworth Ward

Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to consider a petition by 29 residents of Mill Lane Heworth requesting that City of York Council take action to dramatically reduce traffic into Mill Lane Heworth.

Recommendations

2. The Executive Member is asked to approve:

Option 1 – Carry out a vehicle count / speed survey and undertake diffusion tube monitoring prior to construction of the new link road and again 12 months after completion at a cost of £1250. Take no immediate action to restrict vehicles using Mill Lane.

Reason: To gauge the current number and speed of vehicles using the highway. To also obtain air quality information for Mill Lane.

This information can then be used to identify any changes that may be required once the new link road is completed.

Background

3. The street for at least the past 30 to 40 years was a mixture of residential and retail properties. Over the past 2 to 3 years the street scene on Mill Lane has changed considerably as a petrol station / convenience store, newsagents, hairdresses and taxi private hire office have all closed. The majority of the retail properties which have closed have been replaced or will be replaced with residential properties. This should in turn reduce some of the vehicle movements into the street.

4. Mill Lane does though provide a link from Heworth Green to East Parade and Layerthorpe both of which contain retail and residential properties.
5. Currently Mill Lane is one of three roads that can be used to access East Parade, Layerthorpe and beyond from Heworth Green, the others being Heworth Road and Foss Bank.
6. Construction is due to commence and be completed this year on the final section of a link road which will provide a more direct route between Heworth Green, Layerthorpe, James Street and beyond. This should significantly reduce any through traffic using Mill Lane.
7. Traffic calming cushions and a speed table are currently in place on Mill Lane to slow vehicles. Mill Lane was approved as a 20mph road with 20mph signage recently being erected. There is also a traffic regulation order signed at each end of Mill Lane prohibiting vehicles over 7.5 tonnes using the street unless they require access to a property on Mill Lane or John Street
8. Up to date records are not available for vehicle use and speeds on Mill Lane. As such a new survey could be commissioned where by automatic vehicle detectors could record both the speed and number of vehicles in each direction. If carried out prior to the construction of the new road and 12 months after completion a picture of usage of Mill Lane will be obtained. Cost will be approximately £150 per survey.
9. City of York Council do not have an air quality monitoring site on Mill Lane itself. Some nitrogen dioxide diffusion tube data is available for a number of sites in the surrounding area on Heworth Green and Villa Grove. The levels of nitrogen dioxide in the surrounding area are well below the 40ug/m³ health based objective level, hence why this area of the city has not been included in the current AQMA (Air Quality Management Area) declarations. Based on evidence from other parts of the city it is not expect any exceedance of the PM₁₀ objectives as the busiest locations in York do not exceed the PM₁₀ objectives.
10. Emissions of CO₂ are generally of concern in relation to accumulation in the upper atmosphere and the impacts of this on global warming.

It is not generally associated with health impacts, unless emitted in large quantities in an enclosed environment with poor ventilation. CO2 is not usually considered an air pollutant and is not monitored by City of York Council.

11. The guidance the environmental protection team work to suggests that there is potential for exceedance of air quality objectives on narrow congested roads with daily traffic flows greater than 5000 vehicles per day with residential properties on both sides of the road. As the street scene on Mill Lane has changed considerably in recent years it is possible that the ability of pollutants to disperse in this area has reduced in recent years and that this in turn may have resulted in residents perceiving deterioration in air quality. City of York Council environmental protection team could undertake some diffusion tube monitoring in Mill Lane to establish current pollutant concentrations. This would require a budget to fund their officer time and the cost of the tubes. Generally at least 6 months monitoring is needed to get a reasonable indication of annual concentrations. The cost for monitoring before and after the new roads was constructed would be £948.90. Network Management does not have funds available from its budgets for this type of work.

Consultation

12. Consultation would be carried out should any restriction on usage be proposed.

Options

13. The options available are :
 - Option 1 – Carry out a vehicle count / speed survey and undertake diffusion tube monitoring prior to construction of the new link road and again 12 months after completion at a cost of £1250. Take no immediate action to restrict vehicles using Mill Lane.
 - Option 2 – Design a scheme to introduce traffic calming and restrictions on vehicle movements.
 - Option 3 – Take no action.

Analysis

14.

- Option 1. Information will be gathered as to the current number and speed of vehicles using Mill Lane. It will also provide air quality information for Mill Lane. The information and data acquired can be used to identify any changes that may be required once the new link road is completed.
- Option 2. Work on the new link road is expected to be completed in the next 12 months. To allow for detailed design work and consultation funding would need to be committed prior to knowing what effect the new road will have on Mill Lane. Staffing resources would require identifying and allocating to allow for the project to be progressed.
- Option 3. This would not address the concerns of the petition or provide any information for possible future action.

Council Plan

15. A council that listens to residents with the use of evidence-based decision making.

Implications

16. **Financial** Funding of £1250 will be required for the surveys and a budget would need to be identified for this.

Human Resources (HR) There are no HR implications

Equalities There are no equalities implications

Legal There are no legal implications

Crime and Disorder There are no crime and disorder implications

Information Technology (IT) There are no IT implications

Property There are no property implications

Other There are no other implications

Risk Management

17. There are no risk management implications.

Contact Details

Author:

Phil Irwin
Traffic Engineer
Network Management
Transport
Tel No. 551654

Chief Officer responsible for the report:

Neil Ferris
Director of City and Environmental
Services

**Report
Approved**



**5
April
2016**

Specialist Implications Officer(s) N/A

Wards Affected:

Heworth Ward

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None

Annexes

Annex A: Copy of front page of the petition

Annex B: Reducing Traffic on Mill Lane with the Heworth Green- James
Street Link Road

Abbreviations used in the report

AQMA- Air Quality Management Area

Annex A

**From Residents of Mill Lane, York
YO31**

By Email & post to:

Cllrs. Barbara Boyce, and Tina Funnell (Heworth Ward)
cc/ Head of Transport Planning Unit

Dear Councillors,

Reducing Traffic on Mill Lane

I write on behalf of the 29 signatories of the attached letter, who are all residents of Mill Lane.

As you know, we wrote recently expressing our support for the completion of the Heworth Green-James Street Road link, and our petition was presented to, and favourably received by The Planning Committee on 21st January.

We now petition concerning the second request in that letter, namely
To dramatically reduce traffic into Mill Lane.

Our reasons for this are several:

- **Volumes:** Traffic volumes along Mill Lane have reached unacceptable levels for what is a narrow area of domestic housing.
- **Strategic links:** With the (positive) economic development of commercial businesses in James Street, Mill Lane is increasingly used as the main link between the A1036 (Heworth Green) and Layerthorpe. It was never designed for this.
- **Fitness for purpose:** The number of domestic dwellings and local inhabitants on Mill Lane has increased significantly with the removal of a petrol station and completion of new houses. This is an entirely domestic area.
- **Air quality:** Levels of harmful pollutants (CO₂, NO_x and NO₂) are abnormally high. We estimate that the number of vehicles using this road as a 'cut-through' exceeds 7,000 per day; many thousands more cross the small roundabout at the junction with East Parade. Air quality is at peak times deeply unpleasant, almost certainly now exceeding legal requirements in what should be a low emission area. This is injurious to health.

- **Safety:** The volume and speed of through traffic also presents an unacceptable level of danger to those on foot and cycle. Mill Lane's 'speed patches' are ignored and do nothing to reduce or deter vehicle speed.

While the completion of the above road link will provide an alternative route which is both fit for purpose and also much safer, we propose that measures to calm and reduce traffic through Mill Lane should not await this. The issues of safety and of health are already too pressing.

We therefore request and petition that measures are designed in consultation with residents to reduce and calm traffic now. While making the road one-way (East to West) is one option, one preferred by residents is simply to close entry to the road for traffic turning left (north to south) from Heworth Green. This may be a suitable and effective compromise. Explicit 20 mph speed restrictions should also be clearly posted. (Similar measures already apply to Harcourt Street, which continues Mill Lane, and Eastern Terrace which is parallel). We request that these (and any other suitable options) are now set out by council officers.

It is the strong feeling of residents that the current volumes of traffic cannot be allowed to continue, and that safety and health measures are now overdue. We hope for your strong and active support and look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,
(List of signatories attached)