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**Decision Session - Cabinet Member for  
Transport, Planning and Sustainability**

**12 July 2013**

Report of the Director of City and Environmental Services

**JOSEPH ROWNTREE SECONDARY SCHOOL – ZEBRA CROSSING AND  
OFF-ROAD CYCLE LINKS**

**Summary**

1. A key aim of highway improvement schemes outside schools is to facilitate and encourage walking and cycling on the school journey to reduce the number of cars on the network at key times, and promote sustainable travel habits at an early age. Walking and cycling in the vicinity of Joseph Rowntree Secondary School has been reviewed, and pupils who live south of the school were found to have fewer direct facilities. To address this, a highway improvement scheme has been developed to provide a raised zebra where most pedestrians cross, and off-road cycle links to give less confident cyclists an alternative on this busy narrow road. There have been no objections to the principle of the scheme during consultation.

**Background**

2. Joseph Rowntree Secondary School is situated on Haxby Road, New Earswick, a busy road linking Haxby and the A1237 with the city centre. Haxby Road is classified as a mixed priority route under the Council's speed management plan. The speed limit on this type of route would usually be 30mph except where there are schools or other areas with large numbers of vulnerable road users where 20mph with traffic calming is permitted. It is recognised that the emergency services and bus operators may have concerns about the number of raised features on such busy routes.
3. Following the opening of the new school building in 2010, travel patterns and arrangements for safe walking and cycling to Joseph Rowntree

Secondary School were reviewed. A plan of the area is shown as **Annex A**.

4. Around half of the pupils live in Haxby and Wigginton and are well catered for in terms of pedestrian and cycle facilities, with good width cycle lanes on the approach to the school, and a raised toucan crossing at the northern end of the site. In addition, a cycle route is currently proposed between Haxby and Clifton Moor which would also benefit pupils north of the school.
5. However, pupils who travel from New Earswick and further south tend not to walk or cycle up to the toucan crossing. Surveys and site observations have indicated that most of these pupils cross between Lucombe Way and the southern access to the site via Park Lodge. At present, there are no controlled crossing facilities on this section of road, and cycling facilities consist of narrow lanes and an off-road mini-roundabout bypass.

## **Proposals**

6. Proposals have been developed to improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists at the southern end of the Joseph Rowntree Secondary School site as shown in **Annex B**.
7. A zebra crossing is proposed on the pedestrian desire line. A zebra is considered to be the most appropriate type of crossing in this instance, as it would provide an almost instant, on demand facility, where vehicle speeds are low. Zebra crossings also operate more safely close to junctions, as drivers pulling out of side roads can see approaching pedestrians more easily than traffic signal heads. The crossing would be wide enough for use by cyclists, and cyclist dismount signs would be installed in line with advice in the Highway Code.
8. To link the existing off-road cycle facilities on the west side of Haxby Road to the crossing, it is proposed to widen the 0.8m footway into the verge to create a shared use unsegregated footway / cycle track with a width of 3.5m. Use of this facility by cyclists would be predominantly one way being of more benefit to northbound users, and also tidal, dependent on whether it is school arrival or leaving time. On the east side, a new section of 4m wide footway / cycle track would be provided to link the crossing to Park Lodge and the southern entrance to the school. The widening of the existing 1.5m footway on the east side requires the dedication of a small strip of land from the Joseph Rowntree Trust, which has been agreed in principle.

9. Haxby Road outside the school is traffic calmed, with a pair of speed cushions just south of Park Lodge. To ensure vehicles of all sizes slow down on the approach to the new zebra, it is proposed to replace the speed cushions, with a raised table, which would also focus driver attention on the crossing area. As the zebra crossing would be very close to the start of the existing 20mph zone, the scheme also includes a slight extension to this speed limit. This would require changes to the speed limit order. Please note there is also an extension to the speed limit and additional traffic calming proposed at the northern end of Haxby Road as part of the Haxby to Clifton Moor cycle route.

### **Consultation**

10. Consultation has taken place with relevant Councillors, the Parish Council, the School, the emergency services, public transport operators, road user groups and local residents. The responses are summarised below:

### **Ward Member Views**

11. Cllr. C. Runciman – appreciates the potential benefits of a zebra crossing for the increasing numbers of pupils moving up from New Earswick Primary, and for the residents of Hartrigg Oaks.
12. Cllrs. K Hyman and K Orrell – No response received.

### **Other Member Views**

13. Cllr. A. D'Agorne is happy to defer to Ward Councillors local knowledge on this issue, but has concerns regarding:
  - The legality of cyclists using the zebra crossing, especially as they are unlikely to take heed of the signs and dismount.

### *Officer comments*

In law pedestrians have priority over all other vehicles (including cyclists) when they are on the crossing. Therefore, it is not illegal to cycle over a zebra crossing provided you give way to pedestrians, but it is contrary to the highway code, which advises cyclists to dismount. Some of the Highway Code is not law but any breach could be used as evidence of another offence. As more confident cyclists are likely to stay on-carriageway, the cyclists who would benefit most from the zebra are likely to proceed sensibly, although a minority may choose not to

dismount. However, the installation of cyclists dismount signs would ensure that they are aware of the safest way to proceed.

- He suggests trying an alternative zebra crossing layout with an adjacent crossing point indicated by elephants feet markings.

*Officer comments*

There have been trials of zebra / cycle crossing hybrids in the country, including the layout described, however DfT permission has not been sought for these, nor is it likely to be granted. Official studies assessing cyclists use of standard zebra crossings have been carried out, and although not particularly conclusive, they considered that if certain parameters were adopted such as measures to restrict cycle speed and toucan width (minimum 4m) facilities, that there was little difference in risk to all parties between walking a bike over a zebra crossing and cycling over. The proposals feature a relatively short length of off-road facility making it difficult to gather much speed, and a 4m wide zebra crossing. These studies will be considered by the DfT when developing the new regulations (due to be published in 2015 following consultation). However, it is not known if any changes will be made to relax the restrictions regarding cycling over zebra crossings. In addition, it is considered that providing a more familiar zebra crossing layout, will give a clearer indication to drivers of what is expected, and in turn they would be more prepared to stop.

- Another alternative would be a right turning facility for cyclists protected by an island, with associated carriageway widening.

*Officer comments*

A right turn facility for cyclists has been considered but unfortunately there is very little scope for widening on this section of road. Land would be required, and there are services in the verge which would need to be diverted. This work is likely to be prohibitively expensive.

- The usefulness of the off-road mini-roundabout bypass was questioned.

*Officer comments*

The proposals should increase the usefulness of the mini-roundabout bypass by providing a more continuous facility.

14. Cllr. J. Galvin – defers to Ward Councillors on this issue.

15. Cllr. A. Reid – is happy to support the comments of Ward Councillors.

### **Parish Council Views**

16. New Earswick Parish Council are in support of the principle of the scheme, but raise the following issues:

- Would the proposals affect the trees on the corner of Park Lodge?

#### *Officer comments*

The trees are far enough back from the existing boundary line not to be affected by the footway widening works, although some lower branches may require trimming.

- There is currently a signpost near the mini-roundabout bypass which obstructs the existing cycle facility.

#### *Officer comments*

This signpost would be relocated as part of the scheme.

- What enforcement would there be of the cyclist dismount signs?

#### *Officer comments*

Technically, it is not illegal to cycle over a zebra crossing provided that priority is given to pedestrians, so police enforcement is unlikely. However, it is expected that less confident cyclists would benefit most from the zebra and are therefore likely to proceed more sensibly when crossing. If implemented, user behaviour would be monitored.

### **Emergency Service Views**

17. North Yorkshire Police's Traffic Management Officer raises no objections to the scheme, but has made the following observations:

- At peak times school children using the crossing may bring vehicular traffic to a stand still for some considerable time.

#### *Officer comments*

Twelve hour pedestrian crossing surveys have been undertaken and show that the maximum numbers crossing in the area in one hour are somewhere in the region of 60, although this number occurred at school leaving time just after 3pm when traffic levels are not at their peak. The numbers crossing in the morning when traffic levels are higher, were

around half this (it is suspected that some pupils call in at the shops in the morning and as a result are already on the correct side of the road). Pupils tend to travel in twos or small groups so there would not be a continuous flow of pedestrians, and the road is narrow so only takes a few seconds to cross. These factors suggest that any delay will be a matter of a few seconds, and should certainly be less than that already existing at the toucan further north, where more pupils cross. There would also be no unnecessary delay when children have cleared the area, as drivers do not have to wait for a green light.

- There is a footpath running behind the hedge from Lucombe Way, which emerges north of the proposed crossing. Is it possible to link this footpath directly to the crossing point to discourage crossing in its shadow?

#### *Officer comments*

The footpath emerges from the hedge 12m north of the proposed zebra crossing, which is not considered to be a long diversion to walk to cross the road. In addition, as the main users of this path are the residents of Hartrigg Oaks retirement village, it is considered that they would be less likely to take risks by crossing away from the zebra.

- Cyclists dismount signs should not be used. If there is an issue identified after the crossing is installed, then the school should be approached with a view to educating pupils on how to use the crossing.

#### *Officer comments*

Cyclists dismount signs would advise cyclists of the safest way to proceed, and as the majority using the facility would be teenagers who may be less familiar with the Highway Code, a reminder is considered beneficial. All pupils are offered cycle training which includes the use of facilities near the school.

18. Yorkshire Ambulance Service and North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service – no response received.

#### **School Views**

19. The school supports the proposals.

**Bus Company Views** - no response received.

## **Road User Group Views**

20. The York Cycle Campaign has no objections to the proposals.

## **Residents Views**

21. The 170 most directly affected residents received a consultation letter and plan of the scheme. Nine responses were received, mainly in support of the principle of a crossing facility with comments as detailed below. Issues unrelated to the scheme have been dealt with separately.
22. Five residents requested that the zebra crossing be located south of Lucombe Way for the benefit of residents of Hartrigg Oaks retirement village (approximately 150 households) walking to the bus stop and shops.

### *Officer comments*

Residents who live in the southern half of Hartrigg Oaks would have to make a diversion of 120m if they wished to use the crossing and were heading to the shops. If they wished to cross to the nearest bus stop, the diversion would be 90m as there is another bus stop further north. Residents in the northern half would have no diversion to use the facility.

Residents suggested two alternative locations as follows:

- Between Lucombe Way and Willow Bank. Two residents suggested that a crossing here could be combined with similar off-road cycle facilities.

### *Officer comments*

At Lucombe Way there is a mini-roundabout and Willow Bank is situated on the apex of a bend, with a distance of about 70m in between. To operate safely zebra crossings should not be located very close to roundabouts. This is to ensure that drivers coming off the roundabout have time to appreciate any pedestrian movements. The proposed crossing is about 40m north of the roundabout, and to site a crossing this distance south would be very close to the bend where forward visibility is poor. Not only may drivers not see pedestrians in good time, they may also not be aware of small queues forming around the bend with the associated risk of rear end shunts. In the DfT guidelines, the recommended absolute minimum visibility distance to a crossing where 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds are 30mph is 50m.

A 12 hour pedestrian count was undertaken prior to the development of these proposals. This also included the section of road between Lucombe Way and Willow Bank. Only 15 pedestrians were recorded crossing in this 12 hour period compared to 140 pedestrians crossing north of the mini-roundabout. No pedestrians were classified as elderly or disabled. This identifies the pedestrian desire line as being north of the junction. It is considered safest to install a crossing where pedestrians actually cross, otherwise the facility could be underused and pedestrians could continue to cross where drivers are not expecting it.

As the proposals stand, to create a shared use footway / cycle track on the east side requires a 15m strip of land from the adjacent landowner. It is not known if they would be agreeable to dedicating a length of land in excess of 75m. A short section of shared use footway / cycle track on the west side of the road is likely to be more used by pedestrians than the footway further north, thereby increasing the potential for conflict with cyclists. The footway and verge is also narrow on the west side, so adjacent land would be required.

- Between Willow Bank and the bus stops near Rowan Avenue.

*Officer comments*

The distance between Willow Bank and the bus stops is about 60m. The same issues with visibility around the bend would apply here as between Lucombe Way and Willow Bank. It is also not recommended to locate zebra crossings close to bus stops as a stopped bus would also affect driver's visibility of pedestrians crossing and pedestrian's visibility of oncoming vehicles.

In addition, the available footway width on both sides is even more restricted at this location, and off-road cycle links would not be possible without acquiring land from adjacent resident's gardens.

23. One resident asked if the zebra crossing could be located north of Park Lodge so the walk from the Lucombe Way footpath was shorter.

*Officer comments*

Surveys recorded fewer pedestrians crossing north of Park Lodge than immediately south, so a crossing here could be underused and pedestrians may cross where drivers are not expecting it. However, the diversion from the footpath is a distance of 12m, which is not considered excessive.



24. Three residents questioned if the delay to vehicular traffic stopping at the zebra would be acceptable?

*Officer comments*

Please see the response to Police concerns in paragraph 17.

25. Two residents had concerns about the existing behaviour of school pupils. Could the shared use facility be segregated to reduce the potential for conflict with pedestrians?

*Officer comments*

Around the zebra crossing would have to be unsegregated to allow for flush kerbs and correct tactile paving. The remainder of the shared use facility on the east side would be about 10m in length and on the west side around 40m, which are both considered too short to make segregation useable and beneficial. It would also result in a proliferation of tactile paving, signs and lines which would be quite difficult to understand.

If the scheme is implemented, the use of the facilities by pedestrians and cyclists would be monitored, and action would be taken as considered necessary.

26. Could the 20mph speed limit be extended even further, so it incorporates Lucombe Way, makes the mini-roundabout safer and provides more opportunities to cross the road.

*Officer comments*

The city wide 20mph speed limit project will be looking at this area later this year. As Lucombe Way appears to have been designed to encourage low vehicle speeds, it is highly likely that this road would be designated as 20mph as part of this work. However, it is considered that moving the speed limit south of the mini-roundabout would reduce the association that drivers have between the lower speed limit and the school, which is not recommended.

27. Will the trees on the corner of Park Lodge need to be removed when the footway is widened?

*Officer comments*

Please see the response to New Earswick Parish Council in paragraph 16.

## Options

28. The Cabinet Member has three options to consider:

Option One – approve the scheme as shown in **Annex B** to improve conditions for walking and cycling south of the school, and enable the amendment to the speed limit order to be advertised;

Option Two – approve the scheme as shown in **Annex B**, with any amendments considered necessary, to improve conditions for walking and cycling south of the school, and enable the amendment to the speed limit order to be advertised;

Option Three – note the contents of the report, but take no further action.

## Analysis of Options

29. Pupils who live south of the school have fewer facilities directly on route. It is considered that the implementation of the zebra crossing scheme with cycle links would help improve conditions for these pupils. Consultation has shown no objections to the principle of the proposals with only minor issues raised. Option one to approve the scheme as shown in **Annex B** would benefit pupils walking and cycling to school, and is therefore the preferred course of action. No suggested amendments to the scheme are considered to be practical, so as a result, option two is not recommended. Option three to take no action would bring no improvements to the route and is also not recommended.

## Council Plan

30. The potential benefits for the priorities in the Council Plan are:

31. Get York moving – Highway improvements that encourage walking and cycling, particularly at busy times, should result in less unnecessary car use and reduce local congestion.

32. Protect vulnerable people – A safer highway environment would benefit the local community.

## Implications

33. This report has the following implications:

34. **Financial** – The scheme (which was carried over from 2012/13) is included in the Transport Capital Programme for 2013/14 and is estimated to cost in the region of £60,000 including fees, which is in line with the amount currently budgeted for.
35. **Human Resources** – None.
36. **Equalities** – It is likely that more vulnerable road users would benefit the most from safety improvements.
37. **Legal** – The City of York Council, as Highways Authority of the area, has powers under the Highways Act 1980 and associated Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 to implement the measures proposed.
38. **Crime and Disorder** – None.
39. **Information Technology** - None.
40. **Land** – None.
41. **Other** – None.

### **Risk Management**

42. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy, no significant risks associated with the recommendations in this report have been identified.

### **Recommendations**

43. That the Cabinet Member gives in principle approval for the implementation of the proposed highway improvements shown in **Annex B**, subject to the advertising of the speed limit order. Any objections to the order would be brought back to an Officer in Consultation meeting for a decision on the way forward. If there are no objections, approval is requested to implement the scheme.

Reason: To improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists who live south of the school.

## Contact Details

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**Report Approved**  **Date** 14 June 2013

## Specialist Implications Officer(s)

There are no specialist implications.

**Wards Affected:** Huntington & New Earswick

**All**

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

## Background Papers

None.

## Annexes

Annex A Joseph Rowntree Secondary School – Location plan  
Annex B Joseph Rowntree Secondary School – Zebra crossing & cycling facilities