

---

## Meeting of the Executive Member for City Strategy and Advisory Panel

10 September 2007

Report of the Director of City Strategy

### York Station Access Ramp

#### Summary

1. This report informs the Advisory Panel of the issues surrounding the construction of the proposed new access ramp into York Station and the potential to implement a scheme in the 2008/09 financial year.

#### Background

2. In 1999, Sustrans approached City of York Council with a proposal for an 'Access to Station' scheme as part of its "Safe Route to Stations" initiative, this was developed in association with Railtrack to provide improved access to the north-eastern end of York Station for cyclists and pedestrians. The Council supported the scheme and agreed to use the remainder of its 'Cycle Challenge' grant, which had been awarded by the Department for Transport (DfT) in 1997, to part-fund the project. (This DfT grant funding had originally been allocated for the development of a smartcard-controlled cycle locker scheme which, if successful, was to then be cascaded out to various points across the city. This scheme had to be abandoned when the company developing the infrastructure went into liquidation and an alternative supplier could not be found. Council officers subsequently secured permission from the DfT to spend the remainder of the funding on the station access ramp).
3. Planning approval for the original scheme was granted in June 2000. However, as the detailed design of the scheme progressed it became apparent that to overcome difficulties caused by the existing site conditions most notably to achieve an acceptable ramp gradient the design had to be significantly altered. These alterations increased the estimated scheme costs from £140,000 to £250,000.
4. Details of the original scheme and the revised scheme were reported in the 'Cycle to Work Challenge Funding' report to the 13 January 2003 EMAP (Transport), and the 'Cycle Challenge' project report to 28 February 2006 EMAP (Planning and Transport) respectively, as well as in the Capital Programme Report to EMAP on 18 April 2006.

5. In May 2006, the Council applied to the DfT for a £125,000 grant under the “Access for All” Small Schemes Funding (See Annex A) as 50% match-funding for implementing the scheme as part of the 2006/07 Capital Programme. In June 2006 the DfT notified the Council that the bid had been successful in securing the £125,000 sought (see Annex B). Conditions attached to the award of the funding included:
  - the funding was made subject to City of York Council consulting with all stakeholders with reference to the safety, security and practicalities of the proposed scheme and reaching agreement with Network Rail, the British Transport Police and station operator on how to implement the scheme;
  - funding was subject to delivering the works as detailed in the application and could be withdrawn or withheld if the scheme or timeframes change, and
  - the DfT had to be contacted if the scheme was delayed or if it became unlikely to be completed by the end of March 2007.
6. As the detailed design of the scheme progressed considerable efforts were made to ensure full engagement with Network Rail, the British Transport Police and GNER (the station operator) to enable the scheme to be fully (or at least substantially) implemented by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007 as per the “Access for All” conditions above.
7. Despite officers’ best efforts it became increasingly difficult to secure agreement from both Network Rail and GNER to a scheme design that would be acceptable. This led to unforeseen delays to undertaking the council’s planning approval process and the Network Rail Clearance Procedure process which ultimately resulted in the anticipated completion date for construction being well beyond the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007 deadline. The details of the difficulties encountered are dealt with in more detail in paragraphs 9 to 14 below.
8. In order to comply with the funding conditions above in paragraph 5, the DfT was notified on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2006 that the scheme was unlikely to be completed within the 2006/07 financial year. Advice was also sought regarding the DfT’s intentions to reallocate this funding (see Annex C). Subsequently, on 19 February 2007, the DfT was informed that the Council would not be seeking to use any of the “Access for All” Small Schemes Funding awarded for 2006/07 (see Annex D).

### **Examination of the issues**

#### **Failure to secure agreement with Network Rail and GNER**

9. As the access ramp was to be constructed on part of the operational railway and connect into York rail station, the agreement to the project and the design needed to be secured from Network Rail (formerly Railtrack) and GNER. When the original scheme was put forward it was not seen as a high priority by Railtrack. However, this initial reticence seemed to be replaced by a more positive attitude once ‘Cycle

Challenge' funding was secured, to the point where the main terms and conditions upon which a tripartite agreement between City of York Council, Sustrans and Railtrack could be set out to enable the scheme to proceed.

10. However, once this stage had been reached, the effects of the site on the design had become more apparent resulting in the need for the more complex and expensive scheme referred to in paragraph 3. As the predicted costs for the scheme increased, its attractiveness in terms of value for money decreased as it would have required a significant proportion of the cycling-related funding in the capital programme. For this reason the scheme was not pursued as vigorously as it had been previously by officers. Once the "Access for All" Small Schemes Funding stream had been identified and the grant secured the scheme became more attractive again as it demonstrated better value for money for the council and was pursued with renewed vigour. Officers also assumed that, as the "Access for All" funding was a DfT initiative targeted at improving access to Rail Stations, this would have encouraged Network Rail and the train operating company to be more receptive to the scheme.
11. Network Rail and GNER were contacted by the council's Engineering Consultancy early in June 2006 to secure support for the project and guidance in the type and format of information required to enable the project to progress through Network Rail's clearance procedure. It soon became apparent that Network Rail had some concerns over the establishment of an area of cycle parking on its operational land as part of the scheme, but the council's view was that through cooperation with network Rail these concerns could be addressed adequately (see Annex E).
12. On the 24th July 2006 Network Rail was advised that the council was close to submitting the scheme proposal to be put through its clearance procedure. On 10<sup>th</sup> August 2006, following this advice, and a meeting Network Rail had with GNER, Network Rail requested further clarification on a range of issues relating to feasibility work undertaken; consultation with disabled groups and a risk assessment. In response to this a comprehensive report was sent to Network Rail (See Annex F).
13. Following this submission Network Rail informed the council, on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2006, that GNER had stated that it was unwilling to accept the scheme as GNER had a responsibility to provide a safe route from the cycle parking area (north of the short stay car park) to the station concourse. In GNER's opinion no safe route could be established without some of the short stay parking bays being lost. The loss of parking revenue from the removal of bays was deemed unacceptable to GNER.
14. GNER's unwillingness to accept the scheme and the increased cost estimates as a result of having to accommodate a covered cycle area at the north end of the short-stay car park, as opposed to providing it on the station concourse (which was also deemed unacceptable to GNER), increased the council's concerns regarding the ability to deliver the

scheme within the 2006/07 financial year at an acceptable cost. At this point a decision was made by officers that, given the above factors, the DfT should be advised that the council could not make use of the "Access for All" funding awarded (See Annexes C and D), despite some reassurances from a representative of GNER that the issues were not insurmountable.

Potential for future progression of the scheme

15. Although the DfT was advised that the council would not be using the "Access for All" funding awarded in 2006/07, the DfT's view was that this should not prejudice any future applications for this funding. The opportunity to secure funding in 2007/08 elapsed while the 2006/07 grant award was still available, so no application was made. However, an invitation to bid for funding in 2008/09 has been received from DfT, and if this is to be pursued an application needs to be submitted by 28<sup>th</sup> September 2007.
16. GNER's franchise to run the East Coast Inter City (ECIC) service has been revoked by DfT, although GNER will continue to run the franchise until November 2007, when the new franchisee, Stagecoach, will take over. The council made all of the ECIC bidders aware of the need to improve access to York station and that a scheme had been investigated to provide a new access point.

### **Consultation**

17. Continuation of negotiations with Network Rail, British Transport Police, other stakeholders and Stagecoach (as the new ECIC franchisee) will be required.

### **Corporate Priorities**

18. The scheme, if successful, would contribute to the following Corporate Priorities:
  - Increase the use of public and other environmentally friendly modes of transport.  
*The proposals will make cycling and walking to York more attractive for current and potential commuters and visitors. In particular it would assist those people with a mobility impairment by providing a route that minimises the number of road crossings encountered.*
19. The scheme would also contribute to several of the aims of the recently submitted Local Transport Plan 2006-2011(LTP2) , namely:
  - To reduce the need to travel, especially by car, and encourage essential journeys to be undertaken by more sustainable modes;
  - To improve economic performance in a sustainable manner;
  - To reduce the levels of actual and perceived safety problems;
  - To enhance opportunities for all community members, including disadvantaged groups, to play an active part in society;
  - To improve the health of those who live or work in, or visit, York;

- To reduce the impact of traffic and travel on the environment, including air quality, noise and the use of non-renewable resources.

## Implications

20. This report has the following implications:

- **Financial** - This report has potential implications for the allocation of the LTP capital programme in 2008/09 if a bid for match funding under the Access for All Small Schemes Funding is successful the latest estimate for the scheme is £375,000.
- **Human Resources (HR)** – There are no HR implications for the council
- **Equalities** – The scheme would assist those people with a mobility impairment by providing an additional route to York station that minimises the number of road crossings encountered.
- **Legal** – It is likely that a formal agreement will need to be made with Network Rail and Stagecoach (as the new station operator)
- **Crime and Disorder** – The route provides an additional access into York station, which may be in conflict with any future station operator intentions regarding implementing barrier controls
- **Information Technology (IT)** – There are no IT implications
- **Property** – No comments.
- **Sustainability** – No comments
- **Other** - None

## Risk Management

21. In compliance with the Council's Risk Management Strategy the main risk that has been identified in this report could lead to the inability to meet the council's objectives (Strategic).
22. Measured in terms of impact and likelihood, the risk score for the recommendation is less than 16 and thus 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.

## Recommendations

23. That the Advisory Panel advise the Executive Member to:

- i. Note the reasons for the delay in implementing the York Station Access Ramp scheme;

- ii. That officers continue to liaise with Network Rail and Stagecoach to establish a workable scheme agreed by all and that future funding is bid for from the DfT.

Reason: To update the Executive Member on the issues surrounding the construction of the proposed new access ramp into York Station.

### Contact Details

**Author:**

Ian Stokes  
Acting Joint-Head of Transport  
Planning  
Transport Planning Unit  
Ext. 1429

**Chief Officer Responsible for the report:**

Damon Copperthwaite  
Assistant Director (City Development & Transport)  
City Strategy

**Report Approved**  **Date** 24 August 2007

**Wards Affected:** Mainly Guildhall, Micklegate, Acomb

**All**

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

**Specialist Officers Consulted**

**Financial –**

Patrick Looker  
Finance Manager  
City Strategy

**Crime & Disorder -**

Jane Mowat  
Director  
Safer York Partnership

**Sustainability –**

Kristina Peat  
Sustainability Officer  
City Strategy

**Equalities –**

Heather Johnson  
Asst. Equalities Officer  
Chief Executives

**Property –**

Neil Hindhaugh  
Head of Property Services  
Resources

**Background Papers:**

None

**Annexes**

- Annex A Access for All Small Schemes Funding bid  
Annex B Access for All Small Schemes Funding award  
Annex C email seeking DfT 's advice regarding alternate use by DfT  
Annex D email confirming intention not to draw down Access for All Small Schemes Funding awarded  
Annex E to Various emails between City of York Council and network rail during the detailed design process  
Annex F