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

9 June 2016

Report of the Director of City and Environmental Services

**Better Bus Area Fund –
Clarence Street Bus Improvement Scheme**

Summary

1. This report is to update the portfolio holder with progress on the Clarence Street bus improvement scheme, particularly how it has been revised to provide better value for money for City of York Council and minimise disruption during construction. The paper also sets out when the scheme will be delivered in the 2016/17 year.

Recommendations

2. That the Executive Member notes progress with the scheme and supports the proposal to proceed with the revised, better value and less disruptive scheme.

Reason: To provide increased network capacity at a key junction on the Inner Ring Road.

Background

3. The Clarence Street Bus Improvement Scheme is a Better Bus Area Fund (BBAF) programme proposal, is intended to improve journey times for buses, taxis, private hire vehicles and emergency vehicles travelling inbound to York on Clarence Street. In line with CYC policies, the scheme has also considered how it can be used to also improve conditions for cyclists.
4. Implementation of the scheme was planned for spring 2015, but has been delayed after the position with utilities apparatus (which would have to be moved to enact the approved scheme) was revealed to be significantly more complex than anticipated. The delay to the scheme has allowed a

number of alternative approaches to the scheme to be investigated.

Revisions to the scheme

5. Appendix A to this report shows the current road layout. Appendix B shows the scheme approved by the Executive Member in November 2014 and Appendix C shows the revised scheme now proposed for delivery. A comparison between the “approved” and “revised” schemes shows the following changes to improve value for money, accept the recommendations of a Safety Audit of the “approved” scheme and reduce disruption from construction:
 - Deletion of 20m of cycle lane on the inbound approach to the Clarence Street/ Lord Mayor’s Walk/ Gillygate junction – this avoids the need to widen the junction mouth and move utilities equipment. This saves approximately £90,000 of capital costs and avoids the need for a complete closure of Clarence Street for 4 weeks whilst a power main is rerouted;
 - Retention of the existing island crossing south of the bus stops on Clarence Street (instead of replacing it with a toucan crossing). Retaining the island crossing saves approximately £13,000 of capital costs and gives pedestrians greater flexibility in crossing the road as they do not have to wait for their passage to be signalled by pedestrian crossing lights. Furthermore, a safety audit identified that, in this location, an island type crossing is likely to have a better safety performance than a signalled crossing;
 - Retention of the right turn ghost islands on Clarence Street for traffic turning off Clarence Street into York St John University or into Union Terrace coach park to retain good visibility of oncoming traffic for vehicles turning right, particularly from Clarence Street into the York St John University access road;
 - Small changes to the stop line and junction approach on Lord Mayor’s Walk, principally removing a short stretch of narrow cycle lane between the two approach lanes on Lord Mayor’s Walk, to allow sufficient space for vehicles to turn right out of Lord Mayor’s Walk into Clarence Street at the same time that vehicles are turning left from Clarence Street into Lord Mayor’s Walk. The advanced stop line at the junction head is retained.

Benefits

6. The benefits of proceeding with the revised scheme are:

- Traffic turning left from Clarence Street into Lord Mayor's Walk will have a separate signal phase. This will reduce waiting time for traffic turning left at this junction reducing overall queue lengths on Clarence Street at peak times;
- The proposed changes to kerb lines and signals will allow future installation of a bus lane at a significantly lower cost than building one from scratch to support existing or future development north of York or any potential future park and ride service for York District Hospital and York city centre from a site on Wigginton Road;
- Proceeding with the scheme will discharge CYC of its obligation under the Better Bus Area Fund to deliver a scheme to improve bus services at this location;
- The scheme will allow a number of improvements to be delivered concurrently including replacement of the life-expired carriageway surfacing on Clarence Street and the traffic signals at the Clarence Street/ Lord Mayor's Walk/ Gillygate junction which are close to the end of their operational life.

Disruption to traffic

7. The previously approved scheme would require a complete closure of Clarence Street for 4 weeks, followed by a partial closure (of the left, inbound lane) for 8 weeks, assuming an alternative location can be found for an electricity main, which, having consulted Northern Powergrid, appears unlikely. The amended scheme requires partial closure (left inbound lane) for 6 weeks, plus overnight working to replace traffic signal ducting and resurface Clarence Street. It is contended that this is an acceptable level of disruption which is proportionate to the benefits of delivering the proposed scheme.

Risks

8. If the scheme is not taken forward then CYC will be unable to fund the improvements on Clarence Street from the Department for Transport (DfT) grant received in 2012. As such, CYC would need to find an alternative funding source for the work done on the scheme to date and to meet, from its own funds, the replacement costs for the life expired carriageway surfacing and traffic signals in due course.
9. Not delivering a scheme on Clarence Street would also:

- Cause reputational damage to CYC with key external stakeholders, including bus operators and the DfT, who have a realistic expectation that CYC will deliver a scheme at this location;
 - Require CYC to find alternative funding for a scheme at a later date to increase capacity at this location to meet future demand.
10. The revised scheme has already been subject to a Stage 1 Safety Audit, but it should be noted that it may be subject to minor amendment following detailed design and completion of a Stage 2 Safety Audit.

Financial

11. The future cost of delivering the previously approved scheme was calculated to be £373,000. The cost of delivering the revised scheme is £270,000 funded principally from the Better Bus Area Fund, of which around £150,000 relates to the costs for new traffic signals and resurfacing/ patching the carriageway. As such, the revised scheme represents a reduced cost of £103,000, plus a very substantial reduction in disruption during construction.

Programme for the Scheme

13. The programme for the scheme is:
- Decision Session meeting 9th June
 - Issue TMA notice mid June (3 months notice)
 - C4 returns by mid July. Raise and issue orders for Stats diversions
 - Lead-in times for Public Utilities 6 -12 weeks
 - Stats diversions begin mid September
 - Stats diversions completion end October
 - Construction of main works in January (after December works moratorium).

Council Plan

14. The potential benefits of this scheme for the priorities in the Council Plan are:
- A prosperous city for all – improvements to bus services have a generally beneficial impact on economic growth and GVA. This scheme directly improves access to a number of key employment sites in York, including York city centre, York District Hospital, Clifton Moor, Nestle and York St John University. Also, improvements to the junction and highway will improve traffic flow

for both bus services and other road users.

This includes for emergency vehicles travelling westbound from York District Hospital (for example, to respond to emergency calls).

The measure will improve the attractiveness of bus services and will encourage modal transfer from cars to buses, reducing vehicle emissions in the city centre. The measure will reduce congestion more generally, which will reduce emissions from vehicles standing in traffic. The scheme will result in the removal of two existing silver birch trees, although two new trees will be planted on Clarence Street to replace them.

- A focus on frontline services – the Social Exclusion Unit identified that good bus services are an effective means of reducing social and economic isolation and hence building stronger communities. Improvements to Clarence Street will improve access travel to and from York District Hospital, assisting those who need to travel to the Hospital either for outpatients appointments, emergency care or to visit friends and relatives receiving care at the hospital
- A Council that listens to residents: this scheme will assist in addressing concerns that travel times on Clarence Street, both for bus services and other road users, are variable and will also address concerns about the condition of the carriageway on Clarence Street.

Implications

15. This report has the following implications:
16. **Human Resources** - none
17. **Equalities** - none
18. **Legal** - none
19. **Crime and Disorder** - none.
20. **Information Technology** - none.
21. **Land** - all land lies within the adopted highway.

22. **Risk Management** - no significant risks associated with the recommendations in this report have been identified.

Contact Details

Author:

Julian Ridge
Programme Manager, BBAF
Sustainable Transport Service
Tel: (01904) 552435

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Neil Ferris
Director
City and Environmental Services

Report Approved **Date** 27 May 2016

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

None

Wards Affected: Guildhall (site of scheme), Clifton Ward **All**
(adjacent to scheme)

For further information please contact the author of the report.

Annexes:

Annex A Clarence Street existing layout
Annex B Scheme approved in November 2014
Annex C Revised scheme