

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

13 October 2016

Report of the Corporate Director - Place

Heslington Lane – Danger Reduction Scheme

Summary

1. This report details the development of a danger reduction scheme on Heslington Lane, including consultation responses and seeks a decision on implementation of the proposals.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that the Executive Member approves Option (ii):
 - Implement the scheme as detailed in Annex A and B, but remove the lighting column opposite Holmefield Lane from the proposals. Also advertise the required speed limit and order with implementation to follow if no substantive objections are received. Any objections to be reported back to the Executive Member for a final decision.

Reason: To reduce the risk of road users colliding with the chicane which in turn reduces ongoing maintenance costs to the council. To improve the existing zebra crossing to better accommodate cycle users and improve the lighting for all users.

Background

3. In early 2015, concerns were raised about the frequency of collisions with a chicane on Heslington Lane. The chicane is positioned close to Newton Way which is the University vehicle access to the south west of the junction with Holmefield Lane, and forms part of a series of traffic calming between the Golf Club and the junction with University Road.

Investigations suggested the vehicles strikes with the chicane were due to drivers' attention being diverted by the amount of other features in the proximity of the chicane. This includes signing and road markings for the start of the 30mph speed limit immediately before the chicane and University direction signing behind the hedge at the back of the footway.

4. Once the investigation was complete a scheme was developed which aimed to reduce the risk of vehicles colliding with the chicane. This included relocating the 40mph speed limit gateway away from the chicane which would have reduced vehicle speeds on approach to the feature and reduced the number of signs close to the chicane, which distract from the existing road layout. Additional road markings and improved signage were also proposed to help emphasise the island and deflect traffic round it.
5. Members were consulted on these proposals at the time and an investigation into the reduction of the 40mph speed limit to 30mph was requested. Speed surveys were carried out and the results suggested that a 30mph limit for the full length of Heslington Lane was feasible.

Parking Restrictions

6. Shortly after the survey was carried out, a petition was received which asked CYC to take action to prevent parking on this stretch of Heslington Lane. This resulted in the installation of double yellow lines in late 2015.
7. The introduction of the parking restrictions was considered to be significant enough to have a substantial impact on vehicle speeds and so the original scheme was paused until after the new road markings could be installed and the speed survey repeated. Results from both speed surveys are presented below:

		LC 42		LC49	
		<i>E</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>W</i>
Feb-15 (No Parking Restrictions)	<i>Mean</i>	25.1	30.7	27.3	30.2
	<i>85%ile</i>	33	37	32	37
Jan-16 (Parking Restrictions in place)	<i>Mean</i>	31	31.5	29	32.3
	<i>85%ile</i>	36	36	34	38

8. The results demonstrate that the removal of the on-street parking has increased average vehicle speeds. Whilst this is only a small increase, importantly the speeds are now not low enough for a 30mph limit on this stretch of Heslington Lane to be supported by the Police. Therefore, the previous proposal to reduce the limit to 30mph is not considered feasible and was taken no further at this time.

Zebra Crossing

9. In early 2016 a resident contacted Road Safety to raise a concern about the quality of the lighting for the existing zebra crossing between the University vehicle access and Holmefield Lane junction. Investigations have determined the lighting to be below current specification. This is a well used zebra crossing and it is important that it is well illuminated for both pedestrians and drivers.
10. The lighting scheme was initially discussed with CYC officers who made a further request to convert the existing zebra crossing into a parallel crossing which operates in much the same way as a zebra crossing. The crucial difference is that it has a separately marked area for cyclists to cross the road without needing to dismount.
11. As the crossing point and chicane proposals are in close proximity and are both being funded from the Danger Reduction budget a decision was made to combine the development and consultation of the schemes from this point.

2016 Proposals

12. *Chicane*: Following the speed review in January 2016 the original proposals were reconsidered and the scheme shown in **Annex A** was issued for consultation. This includes retaining the 40mph limit, but with the terminal point repositioned further away from the chicane, as in the original scheme. In addition, the proposed location for the western 30/40mph gateway is slightly further east than in the original proposals. This addresses concerns raised by Local Councillors during the original consultation that the gateway was positioned too close to the uncontrolled pedestrian and cycle crossing and the mini-roundabout meaning vehicle entry speeds into the area would increase.

13. *Crossing Point:* The lighting improvements include belisha beacons with integrated lighting which directly illuminates the crossing area, plus an additional lighting column opposite the Homefield Lane junction. Details of these proposals and the conversion of the existing zebra crossing to a parallel crossing are shown in **Annex B**.

Consultation

14. A letter and a copy of the plans shown in **Annex A and B** were issued to properties with frontages on Heslington Lane and Main St in the vicinity of the proposals, along with the Parish Council, Ward Councillors, political party spokespersons, the emergency services and other external interest groups. A summary of the responses received is given below.
15. North Yorkshire Police

North Yorkshire Police commented on the adjustment to the 30/40 speed limit boundary. It is their understanding that all such speed limits within the Council's area have been constructed to be compliant with the current law, DfT guidance and the National Police Chief's Council (formerly ACPO) enforcement policy. If so, there is a high possibility that the limit should have a high level of driver compliance. It is the responsibility of the Council as the local traffic authority to effectively manage the road network (under the Traffic Management Act 2004) and to ensure that speed limits are correctly installed. Any compliance issues would and should be addressed by additional and effective engineering.

Officer Response

The January 2016 speed survey data suggests that the proposed alterations to the 40mph limit should have a high level of driver compliance. It is recognised that the length of the 40mph speed limit is below the suggested minimum, however this is considered unavoidable with the current road environment.

16. Ward Councillors / Political Party Spokespersons

Cllr. A. D'Agorne

Objected to the 30mph entry on the approach to Fulford being brought closer to the cycle crossing and mini roundabout. Concerned that this will lead to greater speeds at the crossing point and entering the mini roundabout.

Cllr. K. Aspden

Supported the proposals for the new chicane markings on Heslington Lane and new belisha beacons. He also repeated Cllr D'Agorne's objections to the 30mph limit boundary relocation close to the Broadway junction.

Officer Response

The proposals for the 30mph limit boundary do bring it closer to the cycle crossing and roundabout than in the existing arrangement. This has been minimised in the 2016 proposals. Additionally the speed limit is now more closely associated with a feature in this case the hatching and subsequent islands, which may help to reduce speeds. If the scheme is approved speed surveys will be carried out post implementation to determine whether drivers are adhering to the limit. Further changes to the layout will be considered if speeds are higher than projected.

17. Parish Council and Village Trust

The Parish Council and Village Trust raised the following concerns:

Parish Council / Village Trust

"The proposed cycle crossing appears very dangerous, allowing and encouraging cyclists to cross Heslington Lane without either looking or stopping. The expectation of motorists is that cyclists will stop, dismount, look and safely cross."

Officer Response

The new crossing is a standard design which has been introduced in The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016.

It operates as a zebra crossing would do with pedestrian and cyclist users expected to check that vehicular traffic is stopping before proceeding on to the crossing. Whilst visiting the site a number of cyclists were witnessed using the existing crossing without dismounting this proposal legitimises this movement. Additionally the crossing includes cycle markings to indicate to drivers that cyclists can use the route.

Parish Council / Village Trust

“The extra lampstand opposite Holmefield Lane is not required as the area is already sufficiently illuminated”

Officer response

Following concerns from a number of consultees it is now recommended that the lighting column be removed from the scheme.

Parish Council / Village Trust

“An extra light at the zebra crossing would be beneficial. Could it be reduced in height, the preference would be for it to be 3-4 m high, and targeted so that maybe only one light would be required.”

Officer response

6m poles are required to provide the correct level of lighting for the crossing area. The lamps specified in the design are directional LEDs which will light the crossing only with very little light pollution to the surrounding area.

18. *Residents*

Three residents responded to the consultation and all made the same comments / objections detailed below.

- Requested the 40mph speed limit section be done away with altogether. To save money and reduce the confusion of too many signs on this very short stretch of road.

Officer response

The January 2016 speed surveys indicate that this short length of Heslington Lane, does not meet DfT guidance for a 30mph limit.

Therefore without further engineering measures a significant number of vehicles would exceed the posted limit bringing the limit in to disrepute and creating an enforcement issue.

- *Considered the extra lighting column opposite Holmefield Lane excessive and could cause damage to the hedge and trees in the area.*

Officer response

Following concerns from a number of consultees it is now recommended that the lighting column be removed from the scheme.

- *Agreed that there is a need for better lighting to the waiting areas at the ends of the crossing. Enquired if 6m lighting columns are really necessary? Or could something be done at a lower level.*

Officer response

6m poles are required to provide the correct level of lighting for the crossing area. The lamps specified in the design are directional LEDs which will light the crossing only with very little light pollution to the surrounding area.

- *Considered the cycle crossing dangerous. Noted that motorists expect cyclists to dismount and will not expect them to swing out across the road. Also suggested that cyclists need to dismount to negotiate the barrier on the north side so will this be removed?*

Officer response

The new crossing is a standard design which has been introduced in the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016. It operates as a zebra crossing would do with pedestrian and cyclist users expected to check that vehicular traffic is stopping before proceeding on to the crossing. Whilst visiting the site a number of cyclists were witnessed using the existing crossing without dismounting this proposal legitimises this movement. Additionally the crossing includes cycle markings to indicate to drivers that cyclists can use the route. The cycle barrier is not to be removed it is designed to slow cycle traffic as it approaches the shared footway / cycleway and should be negotiable without dismounting for most standard bicycles.

One resident also raised the following additional points.

- *Requested that the chicanes be removed as they considered the features create substantial delays at times, with many drivers feeling compelled to take risks to avoid waiting at the chicanes for long periods, including sometimes entering the chicanes too quickly.*

Officer response

The scheme did not include a full review of the traffic calming system on Heslington Lane and Main St. However, the issue of vehicles colliding with the chicane itself is isolated to the western most island so it is not considered that the traffic calming system in its entirety requires removal.

- *The hedges and other vegetation around the crossing obscure people emerging from either side until they are almost on the crossing. In particular many students seem not to appreciate this and seek to cross without giving approaching drivers adequate opportunity to stop. The problem would be best resolved by the installation of a light controlled crossing of the type found widely in York. The problem would be exacerbated if a zebra-type crossing is installed for cyclists.*

Officer response

The vegetation has been considered and where appropriate will be cut back. Hedges which are not within the Public Highway are the responsibility of the landowners and they will be contacted to cut back the vegetation as appropriate. A signal controlled crossing would introduce further delays to traffic travelling along Heslington Lane and Main St, which could lead to frustration from drivers leading to the problems the respondent described in their previous comment. The zebra / parallel crossing is considered to offer a good compromise which allows traffic to flow freely until a pedestrian or cyclists needs to cross and will not hold them up any longer than required.

19. *York University*

A site visit was conducted with a representative from York University who indicated they are supportive of the proposed scheme.

Options

20. Option (i) - Approve the implementation of the scheme as detailed in Annex A and B, including approval to advertise the required speed limit and order, with implementation to follow if no substantive objections are received. Any objections to be reported back to the Executive Member for a final decision.
21. Option (ii) - Approve the implementation of the scheme as detailed in Annex A and B, but remove the lighting column opposite Holmefield Lane from the proposals. Also approve advertisement of the required speed limit and order, with implementation to follow if no substantive objections are received. Any objections to be reported back to the Executive Member for a final decision.
22. Option (iii) – Approve the scheme as option (ii) with any minor amendments deemed necessary by the executive member.
23. Option (iv) - Do nothing, and reallocate the funding to other programmes of work.

Analysis

24. *Option (i)* – The scheme as consulted upon changes the approach to the chicane which should reduce the chance of it being struck thereby reducing ongoing maintenance costs to the Council. The alterations to the speed limit reduce its length from 415m to 400m, which keep it within Department for Transport guidance on setting local speed limits. Retaining the 40mph limit will help to achieve a good compliance rate and minimising the length will reduce the impact on other users. However, the concerns raised with regards speed close to the roundabout are considered sensible and speeds should be monitored here to ensure they continue to be low. If they do increase further alterations may be needed in the area.

The proposed alterations to the zebra crossing seek to make it safer and improve the route for cyclists. The Parallel crossing is a new standard of crossing introduced in the newly published 2016 regulations. As such this will be monitored closely but it is considered that it will have a positive impact on safety.

25. *Option (ii)* – This option proposes a small change to the scheme based on consultation feedback. This minimises the potential impact on residents and the conservation area through the removal of the lighting column opposite Holmefield Lane from the scheme. It should also be noted that in both option (i) and (ii) the specification for the new lighting at the crossing is energy efficient and minimises light pollution through the use of LEDs and light sensors.
26. *Option (iii)* - This option allows the member to consider the points raised by the consultees and suggest further changes to the scheme for investigation by officers if considered necessary. Officers have listened to all consultees views, taken them on board and amended the scheme where feasible to address their concerns. This has not been possible in all cases but it is considered that Option (ii) offers a balanced scheme therefore Option (iii) is not recommended.
27. *Option (iv)* - Failure to address the concerns raised by residents could result in users continuing to feel at risk, and further maintenance costs to replace damaged signing at the chicane, therefore taking no action is considered inappropriate.

Council Plan

28. The potential implications for the priorities in the Council Plan are:
 - **A Focus on Frontline Services.**
Reducing the amount of time and money spent dealing with vehicle strikes to the island frees up frontline staff to deal with other issues.
 - **A Council That Listens To Residents**
Concerns for safety at this location have been raised by local residents. Improving pedestrian and cycle facilities and making the existing traffic calming feature safer demonstrates that the Council is listening to residents.

Implications

29.

- **Financial** – The Danger Reduction allocation for the scheme in 16/17 is currently £12k. Spend to August 2016 is £1.65k and the estimated cost of the scheme is £13.5k. To cover the increased spend it is proposed to reallocate £3k of the Local Safety Schemes budget to this scheme. This proposed change will be included in the next Capital Programme monitoring report for approval.
- **Human Resources (HR)** There are no human resources 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.

Risk Management

30. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy, the following risks associated with the recommendations in this report have been identified and described in the following points, and set out in the table below:
31. Authority reputation – this risk is in connection with the public perception of the Council if work is not undertaken following the receipt and acknowledgement of the issues raised by members of the public and is assessed at 10.

Risk Category	Impact	Likelihood	Score
Organisation/ Reputation	Minor	Probable	10

32. This risk score, falls into the 6-10 category and means the risk has been assessed as being “Low”. This level of risk requires regular monitoring.

Contact Details

Author:

**Ben Potter
Engineer**

Transport Projects

Tel No. 01904 553496

**Chief Officer Responsible for the
report:**

Neil Ferris, Corporate Director-Place

**Report
Approved**



Date 19.09.16

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

None

Wards Affected: Fulford & Heslington / Hull Road

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Heslington Lane Petition,

Cabinet Member for Transport Decision Session 26/03/2015

<http://modgov.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=738&MId=8974>

Annexes

Annex A – Danger Reduction Scheme, Heslington Lane Plan 1 – Chicane and Speed limit alterations.

Annex B – Danger Reduction Scheme, Heslington Lane Plan 2 – Upgrade of zebra crossing and street lighting.