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**Planning and Transport (City Centre Area)  
Sub-Committee**

5 January 2006

Report of the Director of City Strategy

**MILLENNIUM PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE ROUTE:  
BISHOPTHORPE ROAD CROSSING**

**Purpose of Report**

- 1 This report advises of the outcome of consultation on proposals aimed at making it easier and safer for pedestrians and cyclists to cross Bishopthorpe Road at its junction with South Bank Avenue and Butcher Terrace. As a result of comments received, a preferred proposal is put forward for Members' consideration. Subject to this being supported, authorisation is sought to advertise a Traffic Regulation Order covering waiting restrictions linked to the scheme.

**Background**

- 2 The Millennium Pedestrian and Cycle Route is a long, strategic east-west route joining areas as far away as the University and Acomb, and uses the Millennium Bridge to cross the River Ouse. As well as substantial lengths of off-road track, the route has some on-road sections. Although these are generally along quiet streets, in a few locations, busy roads have to be crossed. A plan showing the route to the west of the Millennium Bridge is included as **Annex A**.
- 3 The installation of a Toucan crossing on Tadcaster Road by Pulleyn Drive, in 2004, helped to fill in one of the gaps in the road crossing provision along the route. The construction of a refuge island on Knavesmire Road, in 2005, helped to address concerns over another key crossing point. To complete this provision, it is also considered important that cyclists using the Butcher Terrace/South Bank Avenue section are given some assistance in crossing Bishopthorpe Road.
- 4 In addition to forming part of the Millennium Pedestrian and Cycle Route, this junction is also used by many pedestrians and cyclists making local trips including to nearby schools. Indeed the need for improved crossing facilities at the junction was flagged up in a Safer Routes To School study for Millthorpe School.
- 5 To address this problem, an improvement scheme has been included in the cycling block of the Transport Capital Programme.

## Option Assessment

### *Site Characteristics*

- 6 Bishopthorpe Road is a busy access route from the south of the city. The key factors that make the Butcher Terrace/South Bank Avenue junction a difficult area for pedestrians and cyclists are highlighted on the layout shown in **Annex B**, and are summarised below
- It is a wide road to cross (over 10m).
  - Traffic flows along Bishopthorpe Road are high which makes the road difficult to cross (approximately 5200 vehicles recorded over 12 hours).
  - Surveys show that 27% of inbound traffic and 67% of outbound traffic exceeds the 30mph speed limit, with 85%ile traffic speeds of 32mph inbound and 35mph outbound.
  - Nearby shops/businesses attract parking close to the junction, leading to visibility problems for other road users.
  - The existing pedestrian refuge is off the natural desire line.
- 7 The combined result of the volume and speed of the traffic, plus the restrictions to visibility for road users on the minor roads, makes it difficult for pedestrians and cyclists to cross Bishopthorpe Road. A recent survey shows that around 280 cyclists cross Bishopthorpe Road at this junction in a typical day (based on a 7am to 7pm survey).
- 8 Since the opening of the Millennium Bridge, there have been two accidents at this junction. Both of these involved cars colliding with cyclists, resulting in slight injury to the cyclists.

### *Options Considered*

- 9 During 2004, Officers carried out a feasibility study on a range of possible solutions. The conclusions that came out of this work are summarised below:
- **Toucan crossing** – this was considered impractical due to the footway areas being too narrow to accommodate cyclists, and a Toucan on just one side of the junction would not provide a convenient facility for both directions of travel.
  - **Mini roundabout** – this was considered impractical due to the limited road space and awkward alignment of the side roads, and it would have few benefits for cyclists
  - **Central refuges and splitter islands** – these had the potential to help cyclists cross the main road, but would probably require certain traffic movements in and out of the side roads to be banned
  - **Build-outs** – these would do little to assist cyclists, other than enabling the side road give-way lines to be moved forward a little which would slightly improve visibility and reduce the road width to cross

- **Signals** – these seemed to offer the most help to pedestrians and cyclists, and should not cause major delays to the traffic flows on Bishopthorpe Road. The signals would make it much safer to cross the main road, particularly for younger and less confident cyclists, by giving them their own green phase. Therefore, this option was investigated further with a view to developing a scheme for consultation.

## Signals Scheme Proposal

10 **Annex C** illustrates how the junction could be signalised. The junction lends itself to a relatively simple and straightforward signal arrangement. There would be three phases on these signals: main road, side roads, and pedestrians. The side road phase would give priority, when needed, to side road traffic, including cyclists crossing Bishopthorpe Road, while the pedestrian phase would allow pedestrians a similar right of way across all arms of the junction. Some of the key issues linked to signalising the junction are discussed below.

- It has been shown by computer analysis that the signals should not produce excessive delay to the Bishopthorpe Road traffic flows even in peak periods.
- Detection measures on the South Bank Avenue and Butcher Terrace approaches would ensure that the side roads would only receive priority when there is a demand, and that this would happen quickly when needed to avoid long delays for cyclists.
- The current parking close to the junction would need to be removed to enable this option to be implemented safely. Measures to introduce no waiting at any time would be required. The layout in **Annex C** shows restrictions which would affect a total kerb length equivalent to about 37 parked cars. However, since parking should not take place within 10m of the junction under the rules of the Highway Code, the restrictions would effectively result in the loss of around 23 legitimate parking spaces in the area.
- This option would also need the bus stop outside no 162/164 Bishopthorpe Rd to be relocated to a proposed alternative position, near to the Cameron Walker Homes between Aldreth Grove and Cameron Grove, where a bus boarder would be built. First York, the bus operator, supports the relocation of this bus stop.
- There would need to be several signal poles erected in the vicinity of the junction to support the signal heads. These would be close to some of the properties adjacent to the junction, and may have some visual impact.

## ***Consultation On Signals Scheme***

- 11 Councillors will recall that towards the end of 2004, public consultation took place on signalling the junction. Approximately 150 letters were sent out to the area shown on **Annex D**. There were 36 replies: around 30% of these objected to the loss of parking and its consequences on local businesses, while approximately 20% expressed the view that signalisation of the junction was a disproportionate response to the problem. Additionally, some considered that signals would lead to unnecessary delays to traffic, and one respondent commented that the signals would be visually intrusive.
- 12 Given this feedback, it became clear that there would be a major problem in taking signals forward. In response to this situation, Ward Members requested that Officers give further thought to other ways of producing a more balanced solution.

## **Current Proposals**

- 13 Further examination of the situation confirmed the conclusions set out above on the mini-roundabout and build-out options. This led Officers to look more closely at a possible solution based on providing central refuges on Bishopthorpe Road.
- 14 In producing a refuge scheme, Officers were guided by two key criteria. Firstly, the scheme must keep the refuges close to where cyclists and pedestrians need them, and secondly the design must maintain the maximum number of vehicle turning movements in order to minimise the possible knock-on effects on the surrounding road network. Several variations were explored and the layout that was considered to achieve the best overall solution is shown in **Annex E**. The key features and design considerations are summarised below.

### *The Refuges*

- 15 A central refuge island for both pedestrian and cycle use would be located just north of the junction. The placement of the refuge is governed by the requirement to accommodate vehicular turning movements at the junction. This forces the refuge to be slightly away from the most direct line for cyclists wishing to cross from South Bank Avenue to Butcher Terrace, but still provides a convenient facility to allow Bishopthorpe Road to be crossed in two halves. This should be a big improvement in busy traffic conditions, but it is anticipated that in periods of light traffic flow many cyclists will choose to cross without the aid of the refuge. With this new facility in place, the existing pedestrian refuge located a little further north could then be removed, thereby enabling some on-street parking to occur in that area.
- 16 The requirement to accommodate vehicle turning movements causes more difficulties on the south side of the junction due to the awkward alignment of

Butcher Terrace. It is proposed to re-align the western kerb of Bishopthorpe Road to help incorporate this island, but to avoid the need to ban the left turn out of Butcher Terrace, its size needs to be restricted such that it could accommodate cyclists only. However, this would be no worse for pedestrians than the current situation, and in practice it is likely that any pedestrians especially wanting to cross the road at that point would use the island anyway, with minimal risk of conflict with cyclists. Again, the refuge would be slightly away from the most direct line for cyclists wishing to cross from Butcher Terrace to South Bank Avenue, but would still provide a convenient facility to use when needed.

- 17 The refuges would be accompanied by some hatching and other road markings to help offer protection to right turning vehicles on Bishopthorpe Road, including cyclists. By narrowing the effective width of Bishopthorpe Road, the refuges and road markings should also help to reduce the speed of vehicles.
- 18 The swept paths of various vehicles passing through the refuge layout have been tested using computer modelling. These show that vehicles travelling along Bishopthorpe Road, including bendi-buses and pantechicons, should not conflict with the proposed refuges or any of the parked vehicles. The only turning movement into or out of the side roads which looks to be a potential problem is the left turn from Butcher Terrace. With the refuge in place, the driver of a large vehicle would need to be positioned on the opposite side of the road before making the left turn. This is not thought likely to be a significant problem in practice, and is a situation faced in many narrow residential streets by drivers of large vehicles.

#### *Parking*

- 19 Any parking close to the junction and refuges would need to be prohibited to maximise safety for all road users, and minimise the risk of traffic congestion. The layout in **Annex E** also shows the minimum extent of parking restrictions considered necessary to achieve these aims. However, since parking should not take place within 10m of a junction under the rules of the Highway Code, and some additional parking could take place nearby to where the exiting refuge is located, there would be no resulting change to the number of valid spaces. This should be compared with around 23 which would be lost if signals were introduced.

#### *Relocation of Bus Stop*

- 20 As for the signals scheme, the refuge option would also require the bus stop outside no 162/164 Bishopthorpe Road to be relocated. The best alternative position is considered to be at the Cameron Walker Homes, between Aldreth Grove and Cameron Grove, where a bus boarder would be built. First York, the bus operator, supports the moving of this bus stop. The footway width outside the Homes is quite narrow, so the bus boarder would also have additional benefits to passengers alighting from southbound buses and those waiting to travel on southbound buses, by allowing other pedestrians to pass them comfortably.

## Consultation on the Refuge Scheme

- 21 The refuge scheme layout shown in **Annex E** was put forward for consultation in November 2005. A letter and plan showing the proposals were sent out to the same local residents, businesses, and external organisations as were consulted previously on the signals scheme. Local Ward Councillors and key Officers were also consulted. The outcome of the consultation process is outlined below.

### ***Local Residents/Businesses***

- 22 A total of 10 responses were received. Of these, two were in full agreement, six gave qualified support, and two were opposed to the proposals. The main issues raised are discussed below.
- 23 *Issue A* – two respondents raised concerns over the problems that parking restrictions might cause for local businesses.
- 24 *Officer Response* - The waiting restrictions would mean that customers and clients would need to park a little further away from some of the business premises. However, many are currently parking in unsafe locations very close to the junction in contravention of Highway Code guidance. The proposed restrictions seek to strike a balance between the optimisation of safety, traffic movements, and the retention of parking space. It is worth noting that concerns have previously been raised about the parking situation in this area and, as part of the Annual Review of Traffic Orders, the junction is programmed to have waiting restrictions considered irrespective of this scheme.
- 25 *Issue B* – The proposed pedestrian/cyclist refuge island is not safe enough, especially for groups crossing with children, and therefore signals would be a better option.
- 26 *Officer Response* – Refuge are a very common crossing facility with a good safety record. Although signals can be used to give positive priority to pedestrians and cyclists, they are not without safety risks. They can also result in unnecessary delays for users, especially in quieter traffic conditions.
- 27 In response to the concern over groups of people using the crossing, the design of the northern refuge has been re-examined. It is thought that it can be extended slightly to give more space for pedestrians without affecting traffic movements. A revised scheme layout, including a bigger refuge island, is shown in **Annex F**.

### ***Organisations***

28 Consultation was also undertaken with other, interested organisations. A total of 5 responses were received. Of these, two were in support, one was unable to comment prior to their December monthly meeting, and two were against the proposal. The key issues raised are discussed below:

29 **York Older People's Assembly.** – are concerned that pedestrians could be at risk of injury if not fully segregated from cyclists

*Officer Response* – The proposed scheme should not give rise to any conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists. The only shared facility is the northern refuge, but within this the spaces for pedestrians and cyclists will be clearly defined and segregated.

30 **North Yorkshire Police** – support the scheme in principle, subject to clarification of a number of detailed design issues.

*Officer Response* – The issues raised have been answered/resolved, and the Police have confirmed their support for the scheme.

31 **North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service** - support the proposals.

*Officer Response* – Noted.

32 **Sustrans** - support the scheme.

*Officer Response* – Noted.

33 **York Cycle Campaign** –

a) The refuges are not in a direct line that cyclists would use when crossing the junction; this may lead to drivers misinterpreting cyclists' intentions and so may cause accidents.

b) The refuges are not large enough.

c) Some form of traffic calming is required.

d) Our preference is for some form of signalisation.

*Officer Response* –

a) As discussed in paragraphs 15 and 16 above, the proposed refuge positions seek to minimise problems for vehicle movements whilst providing a useful facility to help pedestrians and cyclists to cross the road. It is expected that a cyclist seeking to use one of the refuges would align himself or herself with the refuge such that a following motorist will naturally sense where they are heading. To further highlight that these refuges are facilities for cyclists to use, green surfacing and cycle markings would be applied to them.

b) The refuges sizes are considered adequate for purpose, and there is little scope to make them bigger due to the physical constraints of the two locations. However, as explained in paragraph 27, it is possible to increase the size of the northern refuge slightly, but it is proposed that the extra space should be designated for pedestrians.

c) Bishopthorpe Road is designated as a Traffic Route under the Council's Speed Management Plan, and is therefore not a suitable road for the introduction of vertical traffic calming measures. However, the presence of the

refuges will narrow the available width of carriageway and should help to reduce vehicular speeds in this area.

d) The issue of signalisation has been thoroughly investigated, as discussed in points 10 to 12 above, but is not recommended.

34 ***Internal Consultation***

In addition to the above, internal consultation has been carried out with the relevant departments within the Council. The only significant issues raised are discussed below.

35 ***Network Management*** - have some concerns that the refuge islands may impede the free flow of traffic unless more extensive waiting restrictions are introduced.

*Officer response* – As part of the design process the swept paths of large vehicles was modelled to confirm that the proposed scheme layout would not impede traffic flow. However, in seeking to maximise on-street parking the layout was kept very tight, and it would rely on people properly respecting the parking restrictions to enable large vehicles to pass freely. Given the strategic importance of Bishopthorpe Road in the city's road network, which includes forming a key route within the traffic plan for managing race-day traffic, the concerns raised by Network Management are understandable. Therefore the parking layout has been looked at again with a view to further safeguarding traffic flow and minimising the risk of any conflicts around the junction. The revised layout shown in **Annex F** shows some additional parking restrictions which effectively result in four fewer on-street parking spaces being retained than in the original layout put out for public consultation. Network Management have confirmed that this revised layout would overcome their concerns about the scheme.

36 ***Transport Panning Unit*** - support the scheme, but the Public Transport Officer has raised a slight concern over the position of the bus boarder near Cameron Grove. The concern is that a driver may attempt to pull out of Cameron Grove whilst a bus is at the boarder with the potential for conflict with another vehicle overtaking the bus.

*Officer response* – It is thought that in this situation the restricted visibility from the side road will encourage a driver to wait until the bus pulls away. However, it could be made more unattractive for a driver to pull out of the side road by restricting the visibility even further. This could be done by moving the bus boarder even closer to the junction. An amended layout is shown in **Annex F**. This would also have the advantage of enabling more on-street parking space to be retained.

## **Options**

37 The options available to the Sub-Committee would appear to be as follows:



- 1 Implement the scheme as sent out for consultation as shown in **Annex E**.
- 2 Implement the revised scheme as shown in **Annex F**, plus any other amendments Members consider necessary.
- 3 Implement the signals scheme.
- 4 Do nothing.

## **Analysis of Options**

- 38 The do nothing option would not offer those pedestrians and cyclists wishing to cross Bishopthorpe Road any increased assistance.
- 39 The implementation of the signals scheme would provide good crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. However, it is known to be strongly opposed by many local residents and businesses, mainly due to concerns over the loss of on-street parking near the junction. Signals would introduce some delays to the traffic flow along Bishopthorpe Road, but this would not be great.
- 40 A refuge island scheme would appear to offer a worthwhile, realistic and proportional response to the problems currently encountered by pedestrians and cyclists wishing to cross Bishopthorpe Road. The number of consultation responses from the residents and local businesses was significantly lower than it was when signals were proposed (14 responses compared to 37 last time). This could be interpreted as an indication that many of those consulted either have no strong views about the refuge scheme, or that they broadly agree with it.
- 41 The main disadvantages of the refuge scheme are that it would still require a certain loss of parking space, and some large vehicle types would have difficulty turning left out of Butcher Terrace. The original scheme, as sent to consultation, also carries some risk of potential difficulties arising for traffic flow if any indiscriminate parking was to take place. However, the revised refuge scheme would minimise this risk at the expense of a small number of additional parking spaces.
- 42 Overall, the revised refuge scheme appears to offer a good compromise solution that has the potential to help vulnerable road users whilst minimising any adverse effects on local residents/ businesses or traffic flow.

## **Safety Audit**

- 43 Independent Safety Audit Risk Assessments have been carried out on the proposed signal scheme and the two refuge island layouts. No fundamental concerns have been highlighted with any of the schemes, but full safety audits would be undertaken at the detailed design and scheme completion stages of

any proposal taken forward for implementation. Significant changes to the preferred scheme layout are thought unlikely to occur through this safety checking process, but if a significant problem were to arise, it would be reported to a future Sub-Committee for Members' consideration.

## **Financial Implications**

- 44 Funding for these works has been allocated within the Local Transport Plan Capital Programme for 2005/06.

## **Legal Implications**

- 45 The City of York Council, as highway authority for the area, has powers under the following Acts and associated Regulations to implement the measures in this report:

- The Highways Act 1980
- The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984
- The Road Traffic Act 1988

A Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) would be required for the proposed waiting restrictions.

## **Human Resources (HR) and other implications**

- 46 The proposed scheme complies with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, in that there is better provision for access and road crossings. There do not appear to be any implications for Crime and Disorder. The proposed measures encourage sustainable forms of transport.

## **Recommendations**

- 47 That Members:
- (a) note the contents of the report;
  - (b) approve the layout of the revised refuge scheme and associated measures, as shown in **Annex F**;
  - (c) approve delegated authority for the Acting Director of Environment and Development Services to advertise the Traffic Regulation Order for the "At Any Time" waiting restrictions linked to the scheme shown in **Annex F**, and to make the Order subject to their being no substantive objections (any objections will be reported back to a future Sub-Committee meeting);
  - (d) Approve implementation of the scheme, subject to the TRO being made.

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**Background Papers**

None

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