

Report of the Director of City Strategy

Footstreets Review – Progress Report

Summary

1. This report informs the Executive of the progress to date of the various stages of the Footstreets Review. The review was commissioned to assess the current operation of the pedestrianised area and suggest improvements which could be made to it.
2. Following extensive consultation with many stakeholders the review has identified potential short, medium and long term interventions to improve the operation of the Footstreets zone and will also contribute to other pieces of work whose aim is to help shape and reinvigorate the City Centre such as Renaissance York, the City Centre Accessibility Framework (CCAF), the Public Realm Improvement Strategy and the City Centre Area Action Plan (CCAAP).

Background

3. There are numerous studies ongoing whose aims are to shape and reinvigorate the city centre as listed in the paragraph above. Most of these studies have different reporting periods and also address differing levels of strategy. The Footstreets Review deals mainly with the operation and coverage of York's pedestrianised area and although it may touch on other areas such as potential usage and the look of the city centre these will be taken much further by the other studies mentioned above.
4. The Footstreets pedestrianisation scheme was first introduced in 1987 and has changed relatively little over the intervening period. The major changes since its introduction being slight amendments to its' operating times and the extension of the zone to include High Petergate.
5. The council have received several requests in the past few years from businesses sited on streets on the periphery of the Footstreets area for the zone to be expanded to include their streets. There have also been complaints from various quarters about the operation of the scheme and its abuse both in terms of parking and access.
6. A report was taken to City Strategy EMAP in January 2007 informing members of the receipt of a petition from Fossgate traders requesting that

Fossgate be included in the scheme, one of the recommendations of that report was that a review of the Footstreets scheme, its coverage and operation should be undertaken.

7. Given the potential scale of the review due to the large number of stakeholders a decision was taken to split it into several phases as shown below:

Phase 1 : This phase was progressed in parallel with Phase 2 and has also formed the first phase of the City Centre Accessibility Framework (CCAF). It comprised **a high level strategic review of access routes into and within the city centre for all modes of transport**, together with an overview of key drivers for change. This was followed by analysis of how and where these modes might access the city centre in the future, in conjunction with the aspirations for land use in the city centre within the Local Development Framework (LDF) City Centre Area Action Plan (CCAAP). This phase was completed in 2008/09.

Phase 2 : Done in parallel with Phase 1. This phase involved much more **in-depth analysis of the operation of the Footstreets zone** through surveys of its use and discussions with stakeholders and internal officer groups to **identify the issues** and consequently inform Phase 3 proposals. This phase was completed in 2008/09.

Phase 3 : **Further analysis of the issues** identified in Phase 2 through further consultation with specific stakeholder groups. **Review of other towns and cities' pedestrianised areas** to identify potential solutions. **Preparation of potential options for improvements** to the operation of the city centre Footstreets Area. As signing and lining play a large part in the operation and enforcement of the Footstreets zone a parallel study has been commissioned to look at this particular area in more depth.

Phase 4 : **City-wide consultation** on the preferred options. Analysis of the outcome of the consultation and preparation of responses to objectors. If objectors' concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved undertake public inquiry. If the inquiry returns a positive decision prepare detailed scheme and **seek appropriate permissions** from relevant committees prior to **implementation**.
8. Phases 2 and 3 of the study have been undertaken by external consultants (Halcrow) due to the large amount of resources required to undertake the consultation with the significant number of stakeholders. In addition to the consultation Halcrow were also requested to review the operation of other historic towns and cities' pedestrianised areas in order to identify not only long term solutions but also a range of interventions which could be delivered in the short term. Many of the historic towns and cities initially approached were also found to be undertaking their own reviews therefore the net was spread wider to include Kingston-upon-Thames, Leeds, London, Manchester, Newcastle and Sheffield.
9. The main issues identified during the consultation exercises and surveys undertaken in Phases 2 and 3 of the review are shown below and have

been grouped under themed headings to enable potential solutions to be better targeted. Many of the same issues have been identified in other towns and cities and their approaches to solving them noted by the consultants and used to shape the potential solutions they have put forward for York. Examples include the use of “human-scale” signing on the zone boundary, improved entry treatments to distinguish the zone better and cut down abuse by vehicles, also trials over a set time period of cycle access on certain designated street.

Table 1

Headline Issues	Main Issues Arising from Consultation
<i>Hours of operation</i>	Lack of consistency across the week, limited enforcement, servicing during periods of high footfall, pedestrianised hours do not include the morning and evening peaks
<i>Access and parking</i>	Significant levels of abuse, confusing signing, two-tier disabled access, poor enforcement, presence of vehicles reduces appeal of the zone to pedestrians
<i>Enforcement</i>	Lack of resources, improving partnership working between police and council officers, lack of physical access controls
<i>Signing and lining</i>	Need to rationalise signing to reduce street clutter whilst still maintaining sufficient to be able to enforce restrictions properly, current signing unclear
<i>Appearance of the Public Realm</i>	Car-centred approach adopted initially now outdated, existing infrastructure now looks dated and worn, no consistency across the city centre in terms of colour scheme or materials used
<i>Safety and security</i>	Need to provide a safe environment that is attractive and inclusive, especially important if attempting to promote an evening or twilight economy, need to ensure vulnerable groups aren't marginalised especially when city centre events are taking place
<i>Diversification of uses</i>	Current events spaces sometimes inappropriate to needs of organisers, need to widen the appeal of the city centre to other audiences
<i>Cycling</i>	High levels of abuse currently, cyclists actively encouraged across the city but not into the central core gives an inconsistent message, diversion routes around periphery of zone

	sometimes inappropriate due to high traffic levels, "Cycling City" aspiration to have a city centre which is permeable to cyclists
<i>Extent and boundary of zone</i>	Number of peripheral streets requesting to be included in the zone, high levels of conflict between pedestrians and vehicles on peripheral streets, need to link up current zone to peripheral development sites (Hungate, Castle Piccadilly, York Central)
<i>Marketing, promotion and wayfinding</i>	Poor understanding of visitors of the restrictions and operation of the zone, mapping within and to the zone inconsistent and insufficient, attractions need to be capitalised upon

Options

10. The main objectives of this review are to increase use of the Footstreets whilst reducing abuse and misuse. To address these objectives and the issues identified in the table above a toolkit of potential solutions has been suggested, this toolkit comprises a large number of individual interventions. It is considered that the most beneficial means of achieving these objectives is to clarify and simplify the operation of the city centre's pedestrianised zone, reduce unnecessary street clutter and improve the experience for users of the zone. Although the resources available in any given financial year will restrict the number and scale of interventions which can be progressed when viewed as a whole they have the potential, in parallel with the CCAAP work, to help reinvigorate the city centre and make it a much more pleasant environment for visitors, shoppers, businesses and their employees.
11. In order to identify which of the interventions could be delivered and over what timescales they were first split into short, medium and long term and then the short term ones prioritised against several criteria (economic impact, accessibility impact, affordability, deliverability and how much influence CYC have in the implementation of them) in order to identify those which could be progressed in the 2010/11 financial year with the funding available.
12. Many of the other potential interventions with longer delivery times or which may be more contentious and will be considered as part of the development of plans and strategies for the city centre (in particular the City Centre Area Action Plan and the City Centre Renaissance project). These include such things as the inclusion of additional streets, alterations to servicing arrangements for city centre businesses, improvements to the Newgate market area and better enforcement regimes, to name a few. The wider implications and future findings of these interventions can then be assessed in an integrated way with the outputs of other studies. It will not be possible

to resource all the interventions shown on the list therefore further prioritisation will be necessary to tease out those which will have the greatest impact whilst still being affordable and deliverable. The “first stage” schemes identified through the prioritisation process are listed in Table 2 below.

13. Other schemes which have also been suggested for short-term improvements but which would involve more work over longer timescales include: updating the signs and lines database, clarifying city centre maintenance roles and budgets, development and trialling covered city centre cycle parking, design highway schemes to reduce conflicts at the zone boundaries, develop a hierarchy for extension areas, develop dedicated footstreets webpages, these are listed in full in Annex A.

14. The following options are available to members to further the delivery of the review’s proposals;

Option 1 – progress scheme development and consult on detailed proposals for all the schemes listed below in Table 2

Option 2 - progress scheme development and consult on detailed proposals on some of the schemes listed

Option 3 - reject the proposed schemes or progress other ones from the list in Annex A

Option 4 - continue further investigation of other schemes with longer lead times. (When and whether these other schemes will be able to be delivered will depend on available funding and whether during further consultation they are deemed acceptable).

Table 2 : Key Short Term Proposals

Proposal	Description	Justification	Next Steps	Issue(s) Addressed	Estimated cost to implement
Standardise Footstreet operation hours	Currently we have three separate operation periods depending on the day of the week, Mon to Fri 11am to 4pm, Sat 10.30am to 4.30pm and Sun 12 noon to 4pm. There are also separate restrictions for Stonegate and Shambles. To reduce confusion and help reduce sign clutter it is proposed to have a standard operating period for the whole week. This operating period could be as per the current Monday to Friday hours or over an extended period as per the proposal below.	The standardisation of the footstreet hours will not only cut down confusion amongst potential city centre users but will also better reflect current trading hours and operation of businesses and attractions throughout the zone, many of which are open 7 days a week. There may be some resistance to extending the hours on a Sunday from city centre churches but their congregations may already have to compete for parking space with shoppers and visitors anyway.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of detailed options. • City-wide consultation to assess whether these changes would be acceptable to the various stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hours of operation • Access and parking • Signing and lining 	~£30K
Extend the Footstreet operation period	Both the morning and evening peak periods are outside the current Footstreet hours therefore walking to, within and through the zone is not attractive to many pedestrians as this tends to be when the majority of servicing takes place. The operating period could be extended to start at 10am and finish at 5pm to give users of the zone an extra two	Extension of the operational hours will help to improve the York experience for visitors as they will extend the period during which the pedestrian is the priority user in the zone, it will also enable many commuters to travel through, to, or within the city centre without encountering vehicles servicing city centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of detailed options. • City-wide consultation to assess whether these changes would be acceptable to the various stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hours of operation • Access and parking • Safety and security • Diversification of uses 	~£30K

	hours during which they have priority over vehicular traffic.	businesses. This scheme may face some opposition from some of the businesses as it will alter the hours in which they can be serviced but this will bring York more in line with other towns and cities across the UK.			
Investigate the practicalities of removing signing and lining from the city centre	Rationalisation of the Footstreet hours across the whole week should help reduce the size of some of the signs and may enable others to be removed. A separate study has been commissioned by Network Management looking at City Centre Signing and Lining and will be investigating whether the conversion of the pedestrianised area to a Restricted Parking Zone or Pedestrian Zone are viable solutions as they would potentially enable the removal of most of the yellow lines and many of the signs.	Removal of signs and lines will not only improve the aesthetics of the city centre but may also help to clarify where people can and can't park through use of differing paving types or placement of street furniture.	Further investigation of proposals put forward by the signing and lining study including wider consultation with stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access and parking • Enforcement • Signing and lining • Appearance of the public realm 	Dependent on what options are deemed appropriate and then whether a public inquiry is needed
Trial of cycle access along designated routes within the Footstreets zone	One of the pre-requisites for the Cycling Town Bid was that the council would seek to make their pedestrianised areas permeable to cyclists. The current signing on the edge of the zone is widely abused by large numbers of cyclists either through a lack of	Cycling groups have for some time campaigned for a designated route to be established through the Footstreets zone to cater for cross-city centre trips, however there will be opposition from groups representing both the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop detailed proposals. • Include within the city-wide consultation exercise mentioned in the first two proposals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cycling 	£5K to £10K

	<p>understanding as to the meaning of the signs or because they choose to ignore them. A trial of relaxing the cycling ban on one or two designated routes (to be decided) over a set timeframe of perhaps twelve or eighteen months is suggested through the use of an experimental traffic regulation order.</p>	<p>elderly and blind and partially sighted people who have already voiced their concerns. For this reason a trial is proposed which if unsuccessful can be taken out again. The use of similar trials has been used successfully elsewhere in the UK e.g. Cambridge, a trial here identified the issues to be addressed. Fewer issues materialised than envisaged and the trial managed to allay most of the concerns of other user groups prior to the decision to implement on a permanent basis.</p>			
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Analysis

Scheme Analysis

15. The justification for each of the proposals is detailed in Table 2 above.
16. Of the numerous schemes suggested by the study the four listed above are the most easily deliverable as they do not involve major changes to infrastructure and do not pre-empt the outcome of other studies as listed in Paragraph 3 above.
17. Even though all four schemes are deemed “first stage” they may take some time to deliver if significant opposition is encountered and there is a distinct possibility that if concerns cannot be addressed satisfactorily that a public inquiry may be required.

Option Analysis

18. Option 1 – Progression of schemes through to detailed design. Progression of the first two schemes through consultation to detailed design will be dependent on the levels of objections from stakeholders. The signing and lining study work in itself would not be controversial but if the council do go along the route of declaring a city centre Restricted Parking Zone¹ or Pedestrian Zone² then this could provoke objections from businesses or other users which if they can't be satisfactorily satisfied may lead to a public inquiry. Provision of designated cycling routes through the current pedestrianised zone may not be popular with some user groups. A similar proposal in Cambridge was successfully trialled with no significant issues encountered, despite initial reticence over the proposals. Issues were able to be resolved before the cycle route was implemented on a permanent basis. A trial could take place in the Footstreets over a set time period which should identify the issues which may then lead to a scheme which all parties can sign up to, however, if this is not possible the scheme may not be pursued. Batching all four schemes together may create more objections but if a public inquiry ensues these can all be dealt with in one go thus saving time and expense.
19. Option 2 – Members may wish to consider the progression of the schemes in a phased manner rather than all at once to lessen the blow to any objectors, however, this may result in increased expenditure in the long run due to having to amend change signing and produce new literature explaining the alterations more than once. If there are significant levels of objection to any of the schemes which cannot be satisfied by tweaking the

¹ Restricted Parking Zones - allow waiting and loading restrictions (which must be uniform throughout the zone) to be indicated by zone entry signs and time plates within the zone, dispensing with the need for yellow lines or kerb marks.

² Pedestrian Zones – pedestrianised areas may be subjected to similar removal of internal lines and kerb marks by providing signage on entry and repeaters throughout the zone.

proposals than any of them may lead to a public inquiry. By considering all the measures at once only one public inquiry will be needed if at all.

20. Option 3 – Members may decide that all the suggested schemes are too controversial or do not take the city centre in the direction they wish, however, the suggested schemes were formulated to address the concerns of the stakeholders. Members may also decide to progress other schemes from the list in Annex A instead.
21. Option 4 – This option can be run in parallel with all the other options and will work other suggested schemes up to a point where they can be put forward for potential implementation.

Consultation

22. A great deal of consultation has taken place over the past couple of years with internal council officers and numerous stakeholder groups all of whom have an interest in the operation of the city centre. The consultation has taken the form of face to face meetings, focus groups and written submissions depending on the stakeholder groups involved. As there were a large number of stakeholders consulted who have very varied views on how the city centre should be used and who should have access there have been several views expressed which are polar opposites and the consultants have tried to take a balanced view in formulating the potential improvement schemes.
23. Consultation is also ongoing through the City Centre Renaissance project which is considering the best way to invigorate the city centre economy. The further work needed to progress the four scheme proposals to detailed design will ensure that timescales for the City Centre Renaissance, Footstreets and other City Centre studies are aligned.
24. If members are happy with the proposed initial schemes then council officers will undertake a wider public consultation to gauge York residents' views. If the outcome of this is positive then the schemes will be progressed or work started on the ones which will take longer to deliver.

Corporate Objectives

24. Improvements to the city's pedestrianised area will help contribute to many of the council's corporate objectives
25. Thriving City – improvements to the public realm and extension of the Footstreet hours will help make the city centre more attractive to visitors and residents and thus may help city centre businesses through greater footfall and longer hours to spend their money during.
26. Sustainable City – walking is the most sustainable form of transport and improvements to the city centre to encourage more walking will have a positive impact. Trialling cross city-centre cycle routes will hopefully also encourage residents to cycle for some of the trips which they might currently

do by car or public transport especially if they don't have to use parts of the inner ring road to get from one side of the city to the other.

27. Safer City – removal of some traffic from the city centre if the Footstreets hours are extended will cut down the risk of casualties as pedestrians will be able manoeuvre more easily around the city without having to cross between parked lorries or with service vehicles trying to squeeze through gaps to access businesses. As discussed above if cyclists don't have to use the inner ring road then the risk to them will be reduced.
28. Inclusive City – standardisation and extension of the footstreet hours will give vulnerable road user groups a longer period over which to use the city centre in relative safety free from the majority of traffic. Trialling cycle centre cycle access routes will enable them to cross the city centre much more easily compared to the present situation.
29. City of Culture – longer footstreet hours will potentially enable more events to take place in the city centre and over a longer time period.
30. Healthy City – encouraging residents and visitors to walk and cycle will have a positive effect on the city's health and longer hours of operation will potentially reduce the potential of pedestrian / cyclist collisions with vehicles especially during the morning and evening peak periods.

Implications

31. **Financial** – It is anticipated that funding for the delivery of the improvements to the footstreets will be made available from the City Strategy Capital Programme over the next few years. It is proposed to fund the £70k required for the implementation of the measures which have been costed in table 2 (Cycle access trial and operating hours standardisation/extension) from the Footstreets Review, Minor Pedestrian Schemes and City Centre Accessibility Improvements allocations in the 2010/11 programme. The allocations would be rationalised under the Footstreets Review line when the entire programme is consolidated to incorporate the carryovers from 2009/10 in a report to the Executive Member at the 6 July Decision Session.
32. Further allocations may be required if the signing and lining study being undertaken by Network Management results in a recommendation to make changes to the arrangements within the footstreets area. Proposals for the funding of any measures will be presented for approval at future decision session meetings.
33. **Human Resources (HR)** – The work generated can be accommodated into existing staff workloads.
34. **Equalities** – A full Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) will be required for the project. Further consultation on all the recommended schemes needs to be carried out and the EIA will be undertaken as part of progressing the schemes.

34. **Legal** – Both as Local Highway and Road Traffic Authority, the Council would act within the law in talking forward any settled proposal or proposals.
35. **Property** – The Council has a number of operational and commercial properties within the Central Area so it is important that consultation takes place with the Corporate Landlord and the business tenants and occupiers of the Council's commercial portfolio on any proposals to extend the hours of operation of the Footstreets restrictions.
36. **Crime and Disorder** –Tackling crime, the fear of crime and perceptions of crime should be a fundamental issue in respect of the footstreet review. Community Safety within York City Centre extends beyond traditionally recorded crime to encompass a variety of threats and nuisance such as illegal street trading, touting, aggressive begging, busking, nuisance skateboarding/cycling, rough sleeping, car crime, petty street crime, organised retail crime, misuse of drugs and other anti-social behaviour. It is also important to recognise that the day and night time periods experience different crime and disorder issues. Research also shows that crime and community safety is a priority for businesses, visitors and residents. Making York Safer should include carefully managing the location of new evening venues in pedestrian areas in relation to toilets, taxi ranks, bus stops, takeaway premises and car parks etc. It is important to ensure that crime and anti-social behaviour is 'designed out' of all new developments within the city centre including footstreets.
37. **Information Technology** – No implications.

Risk Management

38. 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

39. The Executive is asked to
 - a. Note the progress thus far with the Footstreets review.
 - b. Support Option 1 to begin to progress all four suggested schemes concurrently to a point where a city-wide consultation can be undertaken and request officers to bring a further report back to Members once detailed options have been developed.
 - c. Support Option 4 to continue investigation of some of the schemes with a longer lead time.

Reason: To increase use and reduce abuse and misuse of the Footstreets by reducing confusion about the operation of the Footstreets zone, improving the appearance through reduced street clutter and

accommodating cross city centre movement by cyclists along set routes. Progression of all four schemes at once could reduce the amount of additional consultation needed.

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Wards Affected: Guildhall

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annex A – List of “first stage” schemes identified during Phase 3 of the review

Background Papers:

York Footstreets Review (Phase 3) Final Report – March 2010, Halcrow

