
18th July 2013

Council

Report of the Director for City & Environmental Services

Lendal Bridge Restrictions Trial

Summary

1. A paper was presented at Cabinet on 7th May 2013 seeking approval to proceed with a trial to restrict access across Lendal Bridge between 10:30am and 5:00pm for an initial period of six months. The full report can be found at <http://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=733&MId=6884&Ver=4>
2. Following approval to proceed with the trial two e-petitions were established on the City of York Council website, one in support of the restriction, the other against. The petition supporting the restriction finished on 10th June and was supported by 143 signatures. The petition against the restriction finishes on 28th September 2013 and is currently supported by 1218 signatures. Any petition generating over 1000 signatures initiates a discussion of the subject at full council.
3. This briefing note sets out the reasons for undertaking the trial and the detail of implementation as currently agreed. Detailed design of some elements of the trial is still to be determined.

Background

4. A paper setting out the objectives of the trial and initial proposals on how the trial would operate was presented and discussed at 7th May Cabinet meeting. The full paper can be found at the link in paragraph 1. An overview of the paper can be found at Annex A attached to this report.

5. The reasons for pursuing the idea of a trial are several fold. Firstly, there is significant investment planned or taking place or scheduled in York, including the Art Gallery, Theatre Royal and the former council offices at St. Leonard's Place which it is anticipated will be converted into a hotel. Much of this funding from public and private purses (in the region of £14m), is on the route from the station to the Minster and to Bootham, which a reduction in traffic will support by enabling the public spaces to be altered and used for maximum benefit.
6. Secondly, there is evidence that a general improvement in the quality of public spaces, making them much more pedestrian friendly, such as Duncombe and St. Leonard's Places and Exhibition Square will support economic growth in the city centre, which is under particular challenge at the moment. Many cities in the UK and elsewhere, including nearby Sheffield, where there has been significant investment in public realm projects, have reported increases in footfall, spend and business interest.
7. Thirdly, traffic levels are increasing and congestion will spread further across the city with the expected growth agenda for York increasing jobs and housing, unless there is provision of some marked improvements to alternative ways of getting about. As cities grow they inevitably have to become more public transport based, although a flat compact city like York could also sustain a lot more cycling as well.
8. Fourthly, the council is currently in receipt of substantial funding from the Government to improve local bus services in the city and other low carbon ways of getting about which will help to fund a number of other improvements as well as this trial. Part of the trial will be to look at whether we can gain improved bus reliability and continuity of service. Improving these facilities encourages those residents who can change how and when they travel to do so, freeing up road space for essential vehicular trips.
9. Two petitions were established on the Council website. One in support commenced on 29th April 2013 and finished on 10th June 2013 and attracted 143 signatures. The other against the trial, commenced on 28th June, finishes on 28th September 2013 and has attracted 1218 signatures so far, thus requiring a discussion at Council. The person establishing the petition decides how long it is to run. The Council facilitates the provision of a petition but not the

detail of what is included or how long it runs. The difference in running time of the two petitions may explain some of difference in support.

10. Against the restriction, the Council is petitioned to:

‘Rethink the Council Cabinets plan to close Lendal Bridge for a 6 month trial and stop the ensuing gridlock in York. The planned closure of Lendal Bridge will have a dire effect on pollution, traffic and business in York. Motorists will be forced to use the 3 already busy bridges crossing the river Ouse causing more traffic build up and pollution’.

11. In support of the restriction the Council is petitioned to:

‘Close Lendal Bridge during peak hours and enforce measures to only allow essential services to use the crossing.

The aim is to improve the quality of life in York through reducing traffic volumes and positively promoting and encouraging sustainable modes of transport’

Consultation

12. A full communications plan has been developed and further detail can be found in the 7th May Cabinet report. Extensive stakeholder and public consultation will be undertaken during the trial and prior to any decision made to make the scheme permanent.

13. As the trial is being undertaken through an experimental TRO process the formal consultation period occurs once the Order is in place. This allows for evidence to be collected on which to understand and base decisions rather than expectation.

14. Initial discussions with businesses through the City Team have taken place and a Lendal Group sub group has been established.

15. Initial high level consultation with bus operators has already commenced. Continued engagement is through the Quality Bus Partnership performance group. Discussions so far have been broadly supportive of the proposal and, in order to take advantage of the improved reliability on Lendal Bridge, First York have indicated that they would consider operating: fare promotions,

marketing initiatives, experimental re-routing of commercial services (including P&R). Both Reliance and Stephenson's have responded positively to early discussions and have indicated that trialing the rerouting of services would be something they would welcome.

16. Essential areas of communications development include: press features (June 2013) and releases, leaflets and posters, website pages (FAQs updated as the project progresses), information, twitter feed, presentations, discussions meetings with user groups, drop-in-sessions, and feedback / comment channels.
17. A leaflet that will be distributed around the city is being designed and will begin circulation in late July. A business sector information pack is also being developed.
18. Information and consultation events will be taking place in the city centre (including early mornings and evening openings) in early August and early September with a Saturday consultation event in early October.
19. Discussions with North Yorkshire Police have also taken place and the Police are supportive of the trial. Further discussions are to take place regarding the potential for a Police presence if traffic issues around the Footstreets or immediately adjacent highway arise.

Options

20. There are no options for Council to consider the report and information contained within it are provided as information for the debate of the e-petition.
21. The petition provides no additional evidence to amend the decision made by Cabinet. The basis for that decision which is set out in the Annex to this report (and in more detail at <http://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=733&MIId=6884&Ver=4>) still remains valid. The purpose of the trial is to provide evidence to understand how and whether the network can cope or could cope with the restriction if other alterations were made. That evidence will provide the basis on which to make a decision about whether such a restriction should be made permanent. The evaluation of the trial will be based on data

collected throughout the trial period and comments based on experience of the situation. Without the data from the trial any petition to prevent the trial or amendment to the Cabinet decision is based on personal expectation.

Council Priorities

22. The decisions made in relation to the trial agreed at Cabinet in May are aimed at supporting the priorities in the Council Plan.

Implications

23. Financial - The capital and revenue costs of designing and implementing the works around Lendal Bridge total approximately £170k and will be funded from the capital programme and the revenue elements will be funded from the Better Bus Area Fund and from existing public transport resources.

The project management will be funded from the BBAF, the network staff, monitoring and consultation will be funded from existing public transport resources and the signing, orders and cameras will be funded from the capital programme.

Human Resources (HR) - Depending on enforcement issues a potential requirement for new staff.

Equalities - Access to the city centre is still available to all users (subject to the operation of the footstreet hours) and all users are equally impacted where a different route to the city centre will need to be used. Exemptions to the bus only lane restrictions will be permitted where specific access to premises is required. Access to all current areas will remain but trip lengths will increase for some users (i.e. those not permitted to use the bus only lanes). Consultation and a full equality impact assessment will be carried out prior to making the scheme permanent.

Legal - Traffic orders will need to be advertised to make the restrictions legal. Enforcement of access restrictions in York can only currently be carried out by the police. Application for powers for the highway authority to enforce certain moving vehicle offences would require government authorisation. Application to carry out

enforcement by CCTV of bus lanes has been granted to some authorities, including York as regards Coppergate.

Crime and Disorder - See Legal above. Implications for police resources unless powers are sought for civil enforcement of restrictions.

Information Technology (IT) - Any future 'back office' Systems for enforcement and revenue collection will require IT input.

Property - No implications

Risk Management – Risks are predominately reputational and stakeholder and will be monitored frequently throughout the project.

Recommendation

24. The report is provided for information purposes only.

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Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex A – Overview of Lendal Bridge Trial

Annex B - Plan

Annex C – Modelling analysis

Background papers

- Cabinet report 7th May 2013. Improving Movement and Public Realm in the City Centre
- York New City Beautiful: Toward an Economic Vision, 2010
- Reinvigorate York, Cabinet Decision Session, 1st December 2011
- Disappearing Traffic? The story so far. Cairns et al (2002) Municipal Engineer 151 issue 1