

<b>Meeting:</b>	Executive Member for Transport Decision Session
<b>Meeting date:</b>	11/06/2024
<b>Report of:</b>	James Gilchrist Director of Transport Environment and Planning
<b>Portfolio of:</b>	Cllr Ravilious, Executive Member for Transport

## **Decision Report: Response to the Petition entitled “Reopen The Groves Roads**

### **Subject of Report**

1. An e-petition entitled “Reopen The Groves Roads” was presented to the Council in April 2024 (“the Petition”). 19 people signed the e-petition. The petition is available in Annex A (signatories’ names have been redacted).
2. This report acknowledges and responds to the Petition, as required by the Council’s Petitions Scheme. This Scheme can be viewed here: [www.york.gov.uk/downloads/file/1421/city-of-york-council-petitions-scheme](http://www.york.gov.uk/downloads/file/1421/city-of-york-council-petitions-scheme)

### **Benefits and Challenges**

3. The recommended option is to retain the Low Traffic Neighbourhood scheme for The Groves and decline the request to reopen the roads which were closed to through travel by motorised traffic as part of the scheme.
4. The pros and cons of the Low Traffic Neighbourhood scheme were considered in detail when the decisions were made to trial the scheme and then make it permanent. This information is available here: (see Item 82):  
<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=733&MIId=12799&Ver=4>

## Policy Basis for Decision

5. When the Low Traffic Neighbourhood scheme for The Groves was developed and implemented, the aims of the scheme were aligned with the objectives of the Council's Local Transport Plan 2011 to 2031 (available here: [www.york.gov.uk/LocalTransportPlan](http://www.york.gov.uk/LocalTransportPlan)), which include promoting sustainable travel choices and reducing traffic in residential areas.
6. The Council is currently preparing a new Local Transport Strategy (available here: [www.york.gov.uk/LocalTransportStrategy](http://www.york.gov.uk/LocalTransportStrategy)). Detailed policies forming the basis of the policy consultation for the Local Transport Strategy were approved by the Executive member for the Economy and Transport in November 2023. These include similar principles, aiming to provide safe streets for walking and cycling, and encouraging people to use sustainable modes of transport where possible.

## Financial Strategy Implications

7. There are no financial strategy implications identified as the recommended option is to retain the existing Low Traffic Neighbourhood scheme without any changes.

## Recommendation and Reasons

8. The Executive Member is recommended to:
  - a) Acknowledge the concerns raised by the Petition and consider the aims of the Petition in the context of York's emerging Local Transport Plan and wider Council objectives.
  - b) Decline the request to reopen the roads which were closed to through travel by motorised traffic as part of the Low Traffic Neighbourhood scheme, which became permanent in 2022.

*Reasons: The scheme was subject to a full consultation process and the decision to make the closure permanent was taken by the Council's Executive, having considered the objections and consultation feedback received. Any changes to the highway network would need to be assessed across the Local Authority area and through the principles and policies of the emerging Local Transport Plan.*

## Background

9. An e-petition entitled “Reopen The Groves Roads” was presented to the Council in April 2024.
10. 19 people signed the e-petition which proved the following justification for the request: *“I and many have experienced the frustration and inconvenience caused by the closure of roads in The Groves and others. Cycling is wonderful and public transport has its place, but when road conditions are poor & bus fares rise and frequency lessens, cars become the only viable option for residents”*.
11. The low traffic neighbourhood scheme implemented in The Groves was developed over several years, with the Council working closely with residents through The Groves Regeneration Project, looking at ways to make the area a better place to live.
12. Through this work, local people said that they wanted better air quality, less and slower traffic and the chance to build on the existing sense of community for the area.
13. Streets which are less congested and less car-dominated can lead to improved road safety, better air quality, more walking and cycling and improved health and wellbeing. Reduced traffic and congestion on the streets may also lead to more social interaction, more community activities and less isolation, as people feel safer and more confident being out and about in the area.
14. When the scheme was developed and implemented, these aims were aligned with the objectives of the Council’s Local Transport Plan 2011 to 2031 (available here: [www.york.gov.uk/LocalTransportPlan](http://www.york.gov.uk/LocalTransportPlan)), which include promoting sustainable travel choices and reducing traffic in residential areas.
15. The Council is currently preparing a new Local Transport Strategy (available here: [www.york.gov.uk/LocalTransportStrategy](http://www.york.gov.uk/LocalTransportStrategy)). Detailed policies forming the basis of the policy consultation for the Local Transport Strategy were approved by the Executive member for the Economy and Transport in November 2023. These include similar principles, aiming to provide safe streets for walking and cycling and encouraging people to use sustainable modes of transport where possible.

16. The implementation of the low traffic neighbourhood scheme in The Groves in September 2020 followed significant engagement and public consultation. The scheme was initially implemented as a trial for 18 months, under an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO), so that further consultation, monitoring and evaluation could take place during the trial phase. This led to the scheme being adjusted in November 2020. This is described here: [www.york.gov.uk/TheGroves](http://www.york.gov.uk/TheGroves)
17. The Council also commissioned independent monitoring and evaluation work to assess the impacts of the trial. The findings were considered by the Council's Executive when the decision was made to make the scheme permanent in January 2022. This decision and all the associated reports are available here (see Item 82): <https://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=733&MIId=12799&Ver=4>
18. The decision to retain the road closures permanently was made on the basis that the scheme:
  - a) Supports the provision of quality alternative sustainable modes of transport in order to encourage behavioural change and maximise the use of walking, cycling and public transport and continue improving road safety;
  - b) Minimises the emission of harmful pollutants and traffic danger within the Groves;
  - c) Enhances public streets and spaces to improve the quality of life;
  - d) Minimises the impact of motorised traffic in The Groves and encourages economic, social and cultural activity.

## **Consultation Analysis**

19. No additional consultation has been undertaken to prepare this report.
20. Significant consultation was undertaken before and during the ETRO and before the closures were made permanent. This information is available online on the Council's "The Groves low traffic neighbourhood" page: [www.york.gov.uk/TheGroves](http://www.york.gov.uk/TheGroves)

## Options Analysis and Evidential Basis

21. Options available include:
- a) Option 1 – recommended option - Acknowledge the concerns raised by the Petition and consider the aims of the Petition in the context of York’s emerging Local Transport Plan and wider Council objectives. Decline the request to reopen the roads which were closed to through travel by motorised traffic as part of the Low Traffic Neighbourhood scheme, which became permanent in January 2022;
  - b) Option 2 – Accept the request to reopen the roads which were closed to through travel by motorised traffic as part of the Low Traffic Neighbourhood scheme;
  - c) Option 3 – Ask officers to review the Low Traffic Neighbourhood scheme and develop a different scheme.
22. Options 2 and 3 are not the recommended options as the decision to make the ETRO permanent acknowledged that the scheme supports the provision of quality alternative sustainable modes of transport in order to encourage behavioural change and maximise the use of walking, cycling and public transport and continue improving road safety, minimises the emission of harmful pollutants and traffic danger within The Groves, enhances public streets and spaces to improve the quality of life, minimises the impact of motorised traffic in The Groves and encourages economic, social and cultural activity, in line with the Council’s principles and policies of the emerging Local Transport Plan.

## Organisational Impact and Implications

23. The following implications have been identified:
- **Financial**, no financial implications identified as the recommended option is for the current scheme to remain in place.
  - **Human Resources (HR)**, no implications identified.
  - **Legal**, no implications identified.
  - **Procurement**, no implications identified.
  - **Health and Wellbeing**, no implications identified.

- **Environment and Climate action**, no implications identified. The current scheme is in line with the Council's principles and policies of the emerging Local Transport Plan which aim to promote the use of sustainable modes of transport and provide safe streets for active modes of travel.
- **Affordability**, no implications identified.
- **Equalities and Human Rights**, no implications identified as the recommended option is to retain the existing scheme. The implications of the scheme on equalities and human rights were considered when the Council's Executive decided to make the ETRO permanent. The Equality Impact Assessment supporting that decision is available here (see Annex G):  
<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=61090#mgDocuments>
- **Data Protection and Privacy**, no implications identified.
- **Communications**, no implications identified.
- **Economy**, no implications identified.

## Risks and Mitigations

24. No risks identified as the recommended option is for the current scheme to remain in place.

## Wards Impacted

25. Guildhall and Heworth.

## Contact details

For further information please contact the authors of this Decision Report.

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<b>Report approved:</b>	Yes

<b>Date:</b>	09/07/2024
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### **Background papers**

No background papers.

### **Annexes**

- Annex A – Petition (names have been redacted)