
**Decision Session
- Executive Member for City Strategy**

7th December 2010

Report of the Director of City Strategy

Crichton Avenue Cycle Scheme - Completion

Summary

1. This report summarises the completion of the Crichton Avenue cycle improvement scheme, and responds to concerns raised by some local residents that the shared use areas across the railway bridge should be delineated.

Recommendations

2. That the Executive Member for City Strategy is recommended to:
 - i. Note the contents of the report and road safety audit comments.
 - ii. Note that this trial is a new, unproven approach that should be considered experimental until the trial is concluded.
 - iii. Instruct officers to action and monitor the trial for a 6 month period.
3. Reason: To complete the Crichton Avenue Cycle Scheme by informally delineating, as a trial, the use of space for walking and cycling over the railway bridge and respond to concerns raised by residents and the Ward Councillor for Clifton through their petition.

Background

Policy and strategic context

4. In July 2008, York was successful in its bid to become a 'Cycling Demonstration Town' resulting in it receiving Cycling City status and £3.68M of extra funding; which was match funded to more than £8M for the three year duration of the project.
5. As part of Cycling City York and City of York Council's Capital programme, an Orbital Cycle Route (OCR) concept was developed following the public's desire for a cycle route located between the inner and outer ring roads and away from busy radial roads.
6. Some sections of the OCR have been in place for some time but one missing section at the time of the award was Crichton Avenue, which was

subsequently completed in early 2010. The remainder of the OCR is programmed for completion by April 2011.

The Existing Scheme

7. This existing scheme has allowed the following facilities to be provided: -
 - Road widening to facilitate 1.5m wide on-road cycle lanes in both directions of travel (west of Burton Stone Lane),
 - Off-road shared use facilities (east of Burton Stone Lane) to allow cycles to cross the bridge deck and avoid being squeezed by traffic on the narrow road across the railway bridge,
 - Peripheral cycle lanes on Kingsway North roundabout,
 - An improved pedestrian puffin crossing and a new Toucan (pedestrian and cycle) crossing,
 - Joint working with Neighbourhood Services delivering resurfacing works on the carriageway to minimise disruption to residents,
 - Renewed Street lighting and new driveway accesses.

Proposed Trial

Background

8. Following a request by the Executive Member for City Strategy for the bridge section to have delineation markings (hoof prints) back in the early summer on the basis that the current arrangement encourages cyclists to weave around pedestrians (creating a hazard).
9. Since this request, discussions have been in place between officers from the Transport Planning Unit and the Department for Transport (DfT) to establish if, and how shared use paths in York should be segregated; especially following the successful trial of similar 'hoof print' markings on a shorter length of path at Monk Bridge.
10. In October these discussions were concluded in a response from the DfT who replied positively to the idea of a trial as to the agreed plan (see Annex A) if desired locally. It is worth noting however some of their comments in this report, which include:

“At locations such as bus stops, the presence of segregation can cause difficulties and I can see why you are seeking to simplify the transition to localised unsegregated operation through the use of an informal segregating feature. I have discussed your proposal with our signs team. They do not consider the 100 square dots to be sufficiently close in appearance to a prescribed road marking to make formal approval necessary so you are free to continue with this trial as you wish.”

“The DfT are currently engaged in a project to write a new Local Transport Note on Shared Use. The DfT found that: “segregation

by white line is ineffective in encouraging compliance of segregation between pedestrians and cycle users, and non-compliance can lead to increased potential for conflict amongst all users. The tendency for segregation to increase conflict is contrary to what some might expect. It was also found that cycle speeds are higher on segregated routes. I therefore consider the idea of segregating previously unsegregated routes to be a potentially retrograde step.”

11. At around the same time as the DfT response, a petition was raised to the Executive Member for City Strategy by the Clifton Ward Councillor (Cllr Helen Douglas). The petition recorded the desire of local residents to segregate the shared use paths in Crichton Avenue, particularly over the railway bridge. Unfortunately, the conventional marking of a solid white line is for use where the path width is greater than the width available on the railway bridge. The current scheme therefore uses shared use paths to provide a facility compliant with current guidance and flexible enough to accommodate varying volumes of pedestrians and cycle users during the day.

Moving Forward

12. The DfT support for a trial of a new line type provides an opportunity to address the wishes of the petitioners, while also potentially improving and developing the local cycle infrastructure guidance for the city of York.
13. The proposals (Annex A) are going through a road safety audit at the time of writing this report, with a view to full comments being available before this Executive Decision meeting. Initial comments are already available from the audit team who express some preliminary concerns which are:
 - The marking is not a prescribed sign and therefore cycle users and pedestrians are likely to be unclear as to its significance. This will be a particular problem for pedestrians, as the scheme does not appear to indicate where pedestrians should walk.
 - As it is not a prescribed sign it is possible that, should there be a collision between a cyclist and a pedestrian resulting in an injury then the city council could be liable for damages for using a non prescribed sign.
 - Blind pedestrians will not be able to detect the central delineation strip and are therefore likely to walk along the edge of the footway adjacent to the kerb. As this is the area indicated for cycle users it can be reasonably assumed that they will consider it to be a cycle path and will not expect pedestrians to be on it, bringing them into potential conflict.
14. A verbal update on the final road safety audit comments will be made at the meeting. However to address the road safety concerns that have been raised the proposals will be taken forward as a trial keeping with comments from DfT, so that we will better be able to see what the conflicts are and focus on cycle users to take care, slow down and place them in a specific area to avoid conflicts. The markings are advisory, cycle logos will be placed on the cycle section and an education campaign will be

undertaken on the use of shared areas. The proposed trial may be undertaken at the discretion of the Executive Member but as outlined above, he should be aware of the background to the development of the current scheme and safety audit comments regarding the proposed trial before making a decision.

15. If used, a trial is recommended to last for a period of 6 months with ongoing monitoring. The results and decision will go to and rest with the Director of City Strategy.
16. The York Cycle Design Standards, paragraph 4.3, will be reviewed and amended accordingly in the light of the trial findings.

Consultation

17. The completed Crichton Avenue scheme was developed in consultation with the relevant ward Councillors, the Cycle Champion, local residents/businesses, the emergency services, and other interested parties such as road user groups and utility companies.
18. The unique nature of any proposed trial markings makes assessing them in consultation prior to installation difficult and perhaps a matter of personal opinion. Therefore, a trial approach is reasonable and supported by the DfT, the Executive Member for City Strategy and Director of City Strategy. The trial does not materially alter the arrangement or usage of the existing Crichton Avenue scheme, and therefore consultation nearing the end of the trial would be more useful in soliciting informed views and decisions.

Conclusions

19. The current scheme has been delivered on time and to budget with much improved facilities for pedestrians, cycle users and motorists. Whilst data is still coming in, initial before and after counts show there has been an increase in cycling.
20. Monitoring of cycle use on Crichton Avenue shows that there has been a 15% increase in cycle numbers post scheme in 2010 compared to the pre-scheme level in 2009. This is an increase of over 60 cycle users a day using the route. Whilst it is possible that some of these cycle users have switched from other routes, the availability of reasonable alternative routes over the railway line is limited to the pedestrian footbridge at Bridge Lane behind the Hospital and Bootham. It would seem likely that a proportion of these 60 cycle users are genuinely 'new'. What cannot be ascertained is whether they are new as a result of this specific scheme or as a result of other Cycling City initiatives. In all probability it is a combination. A 15% increase is in line with targets for Cycling City and as observed elsewhere in the City. It seems reasonable to expect that the numbers will continue to increase as more people take up cycling as a means of transport.

Corporate Strategy

21. The completion of this scheme and the improvements it delivers, particularly pedestrians and cycle users, contributes to the delivery of the Corporate Strategy, including through the following themes:

- Sustainable City

The Council is committed to improve the quality of the local environment and the condition of York's streets and public spaces.

The Council is committed to transform York into a 'Cycle City' by investing our successful £3.7 million bid in cycling infrastructure, increasing cycling opportunities and improving cycle availability to all;

- Safer City

Providing needed cycle facilities where there were none before and removing pinch-points along Crichton Avenue bridge section significantly reducing cyclist and motorist conflicts;

- Healthy City

Investing in cycling infrastructure and improved pedestrian routes will encourage more people to choose these options and improve general health and wellbeing;

22. Local Transport Plan 2006-2011 (LTP2): The scheme contributes to several of the aims of LTP2, namely:

- To reduce the levels of actual and perceived safety problems;
- To enhance opportunities for all community members, including disadvantaged groups, to play an active part in society. To improve the health of those who live or work in, or visit, York, and
- To reduce the impact of traffic and travel on the environment, including air quality, noise and the use of non-renewable resources.

Implications

23. The trial markings on Crichton Avenue cycle scheme have the following implications:

- **Financial** –the demarcation trial is within the budget for this scheme.
- **Human Resources (HR)** – There are no HR implications for the council.
- **Equalities** – An Equalities Impact Assessment has been agreed for the Cycling City Initiative, which discusses the use of shared pedestrian and cyclist areas, and concludes that these should only be used as a last resort or where there are special considerations, such as a high volume of children using the route. This reluctance to use shared use paths where there is sufficient width for delineated paths recognises that delineated paths are better for blind and partially sighted people, who can orientate themselves via the white delineator markings and the tactile paving of a delineated path.
- With regard to the proposed line type, blind and partially sighted people will experience the path as though it were a shared use path.

- The trialling of the demarcation of the shared use section is perceived by the petitioners to create a safer area for pedestrians and cycle users to share.
- **Legal** – The proposed line type is sufficiently different from existing line types that the DfT do not believe it to constitute a conflict of interests. The creation of new cycle paths, even those next to a road within a highway can be accomplished by the council acting as Highway Authority, provide it pays due regard to its own established reporting and consultation procedures such as this decision session report and a fair evaluation of the trial results.
- **Crime and Disorder** – There are no crime and disorder implications.
- **Information Technology (IT)** – There are no IT implications.
- **Property** – There are no property implications.
- **Sustainability** – There are no sustainability implications.
- **Other** – As a ‘Cycling City’, York needs to be seen actively improving provision for cycle users.

Risk Management

24. The trial markings have the following implication:

Risk Category	Impact	Likelihood	Score
Organisation/Reputation	Medium (3)	Possible (3)	3x3=9

25. In compliance with the Council’s risk management strategy, the main risk that has been identified in this report is the potential damage to the Council’s image and reputation. If the proposed trial is controversial there is a risk it could impact negatively on the perception of the Crichton Avenue scheme. At this point, the risk only needs to be monitored, as there do not appear to be any clear threats to the achievement of the objectives of this report.

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Report Approved

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Specialist Implications Officer(s)

There are no specialist officer implications.

Wards Affected: Clifton

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annex A - Plan of the Crichton Avenue bridge section illustrating the demarcation trial.