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

**1 December 2009**

Report of the Director of City Strategy

**Dunnington : A166 Church Balk junction improvements**

**Summary**

- 1 This report advises the Executive Member of proposals to introduce traffic islands and changes to road markings on the A166 at the Church Balk junction in Dunnington. The scheme is intended to make the junction safer and easier for turning traffic.

**Recommendation**

- 2 That the Executive Member approve for implementation the scheme shown in **Annex A** with the following amendments :-
  - traffic islands removed
  - red surfacing added inside hatched road markings.

**Reason :** To address road safety concerns and deter overtaking manoeuvres on the A166 at the Church Balk junction in Dunnington. The amendments respond to consultation feedback on the original proposals.

**Background**

- 3 The 2009/10 Transport Capital Programme includes funding to carry out a 'village accessibility review' (VAR) in response to representation by members of the public and Members, concerning road safety and access issues at several locations linked to villages around the City.
- 4 Officers carried out investigations and feasibility studies at eight key junctions identified in the review, in order to establish a list of improvement schemes prioritised for delivery.
- 5 A report discussing the findings of the review was presented to the Executive Member at the Decision Session in July, highlighting the main issues, and recommending potential mitigation measures which could be taken forward for implementation.
- 6 That report included an evaluation of the Church Balk junction with the A166 in Dunnington. Church Balk is the northern access into Dunnington, and although

there are typically fewer turning manoeuvres at this junction than either the York Road or Common Road junctions on the A1079, they are nonetheless significant. There have been six injury accidents here since 2006, including one fatality, mainly involving inappropriate overtaking manoeuvres on the A166. In addition, there are several accesses to properties off the A166 adjacent to the junction.

- 7 To address these issues officers have developed outline proposals to introduce traffic islands and changes to road markings on the A166 at the Church Balk junction in Dunnington. This was one of three VAR schemes prioritised for implementation during 2009/10, subject to more detailed design work and consultation. The outcome of this further work is presented in the following paragraphs.

### **Scheme design for consultation**

- 8 An outline design was developed for consultation, which is explained and illustrated in the information leaflet shown at **Annex A**.
- 9 The main elements of the A166 Church Balk outline scheme at Dunnington are listed below :-
  - A 'double white line' road marking scheme to deter overtaking on the A166 in the vicinity of the Church Balk junction
  - Traffic islands to physically deter overtaking, and reinforce the white line marking proposals

### **Consultation**

- 10 The information leaflet was delivered to eight properties in the vicinity of the proposed scheme. It was also sent to relevant Councillors, the local Parish Councils, the emergency services, plus other external organisations and groups, offering them the opportunity to comment or express their views on the proposals

### **Ward Member views**

- 11 **Councillor Brooks** had asked last year if something could be done at this junction, and is therefore pleased to see the proposals outlined in the information leaflet.

### **Other Member views**

- 12 **Councillor D'Agorne** has asked whether there will be adequate road width for a vehicle to overtake a bicycle without crossing the proposed double white lines.

### **Officer response**

*The existing traffic lane markings adjacent to the proposed island locations on the A166 Stamford Bridge Road are only approximately 3m wide. On a 60mph road, cycle design guidance recommends a minimum 4.5m lane width past*

*traffic islands. Following a detailed site survey it has been established that this recommended width couldn't be achieved for the proposed islands on the A166 without road widening. This would be very expensive and not affordable within the current budget allocation.*

*In addition, the A166 is a designated abnormal load route for high and wide loads. Therefore, consideration would need to be given to installing 'bolt down' traffic islands with demountable features, or provide sloping kerbs so that abnormal loads could drive up and over the islands.*

13 **Councillor Gilles** has stated that he endorses Councillor Brook's comments

14 **Councillor Potter** is happy to support the proposals

### **Parish Council views**

15 **Dunnington Parish Council** welcome the proposals as possibly the only thing that can be done to reduce collisions, particularly those caused by impatient drivers overtaking on the hatched areas

16 **Holtby Parish Council** view the proposals as very acceptable. Their only comment was to query whether the sight lines from Church Balk towards Stamford Bridge would be adequate once an island is in place.

### **Officer response**

*The installation of traffic islands as proposed within the existing hatch markings on the A166 at the Church Balk junction should not adversely affect intervisibility at the junction.*

*The Church Balk junction with the A166 is already quite wide and enables wide or long vehicles to make either entry or exit turns fairly easily. However, the proposed traffic island to the east of the junction would need to be carefully positioned so that it does not restrict turning vehicles, or hinder access to The Yews which has a vehicle access opposite the junction.*

### **Resident comments**

17 An occupier of commercial premises which have a vehicular access adjacent to the right turn lane off the A166 is concerned that the introduction of continuous white line 'no overtaking' road markings, in place of the existing broken white lines, would restrict access to and disrupt operation of their business.

### **Officer response**

*The relevant Regulations which govern the placing and enforcement of continuous white line road markings permits vehicles to cross the line in order to enter any private access or other side road adjoining the main road.*

*This matter is also dealt with in the Highway Code under Rule 129, which further refers to the associated Law within Section 36 of the Road Traffic Act*

*It would be a concern that retaining a section of broken white lines, or*

*introducing a gap, into the proposed continuous white line could lead to drivers attempting to overtake. Therefore, since it is legal to cross such a continuous white line to gain access, officers do not consider it is appropriate to provide a gap or a broken white line instead of continuous white line opposite a vehicle access such as those on the A166*

### **External organisation comments**

- 18 The **Police** support the proposals, provided that the scheme complies with the provisions of the relevant legislation and the double white lines are therefore enforceable from the police perspective.

Officer comment

*The Police would be invited to check the final scheme layout to ensure that the proposed changes to road markings meet the relevant regulations and are therefore enforceable.*

- 19 The **Cycling Touring Club** and **York Cycle Campaign** have both expressed concerns that the proposed traffic islands may create pinch points, unless either adequate road width is provided to allow cyclists to be overtaken by a motor vehicle, or the traffic lane is so narrow that drivers would not be tempted to overtake.

Officer response

*Cycle design guidance allows the use of narrow traffic lanes in slow speed environments, where motorists would be expected to slow down and follow a cyclist past a traffic island. However, on a derestricted 60mph road it is not a safe option to physically narrow the lane width to deter drivers of motorised vehicles from overtaking cyclists at pinch points.*

*Please refer also to the officer response above to a similar point raised by Councillor D'Agorne in paragraph 12*

### **Road safety audit**

- 20 A road safety audit Risk Assessment has not raised any fundamental concerns but notes that the introduction of traffic islands on a derestricted (i.e. 60mph) road would introduce a new potential hazard. There is a risk of the islands being run into by a vehicle, or cyclists being squeezed by passing motor vehicles. It was therefore recommended that a Stage 1 (feasibility) audit was not required. However, a Stage 2 (detailed design) and a Stage 3 (scheme completion) road safety audit would be carried out, and any issues arising taken into account in the development of the proposals.

### **Revised scheme proposals following consultation**

- 21 The consultation process has raised some specific concerns regarding the road width which would be available adjacent to the proposed traffic islands, therefore, in response revised scheme proposals have been considered.

- 22 This particular issue could be addressed by either omitting the proposed traffic islands from the scheme, or locally widening the carriageway in order to provide sufficient lane width to enable motorised vehicles to overtake cyclists at the traffic island locations.
- 23 The additional costs involved in widening the road would be very high and exceed the available allocation in the transport capital programme.
- 24 Omitting traffic islands from the scheme is considered acceptable, given that the main deterrent to overtaking would be the proposed double white line road markings. Traffic islands were intended to act as an additional physical deterrent, but benefit needs to be balanced against potential disbenefits.
- 25 Without introducing physical traffic islands it is felt that the proposed changes to the road markings should be enhanced by the addition of red surfacing within the hatched areas, to add emphasis on the approaches to the right turn facility at the junction.

### **Further consultation on revised proposals**

- 26 Information about the revised scheme proposals was forwarded to relevant Councillors and the local Parish Councils, offering them a further opportunity to comment. Their responses are summarised below :-

#### **Ward Member views**

- 27 **Councillor Brooks** had not responded at the time this report was prepared.

#### **Other Member views**

- 28 **Councillor D'Agorne** welcomes the response to the inherent risks for cyclists.

He has asked whether a narrower island with bollards and lighting might be feasible within the current hatch markings. If not, he endorses the approach now proposed but feels that, in view of the accident record, consideration should be given to lowering the speed limit in conjunction with changing the character of the junction approaches.

#### **Officer comment**

*On a 60mph road the islands would need to be a minimum of 1.8m wide, to accommodate 900mm diameter 'Keep Left' signs with 450mm clearance on each side. The recommended 4.5m lane width to accommodate cyclists and motor vehicles past both sides of the islands should also ideally have 300m clearance between the lane markings and adjacent edge kerbs. This arrangement would therefore require an overall carriageway width of 12m. Given that the existing carriageway is only approximately 9.6m wide at the proposed island location, some road widening would be essential for even minimum width islands to be accommodated.*

*A reduced speed limit on the A166 is unlikely to be effective, or supported by the police, without the introduction of additional physical measures, such as*

*islands or street lighting, to change the characteristics of the road. Slower traffic speeds on the A166 could make it easier to turn into or out of Church Balk, but the main aim of the current improvement scheme is to deter overtaking, which has been the main cause of injury accidents at this junction. Providing physical measures would be expensive, therefore, the effectiveness of the white lining scheme would need to be reviewed before considering justification for the introduction of additional mitigation measures.*

29 **Councillor Gilles** is happy to support the views of the local councillor.

30 **Councillor Potter** has said that the revised option is acceptable.

### **Parish Council views**

31 **Dunnington Parish Council** support the amended scheme as a valid attempt to improve road safety, if the expensive road widening associated with the provision of traffic islands cannot be justified.

32 **Holtby Parish Council** support the revised proposals.

### **Options for the way forward**

33 The options for the Executive Member to consider are :-

**Option 1** - authorise implementation of the original scheme shown at **Annex A**

**Option 2** - approve for implementation an amended scheme without traffic islands but with red surfacing added inside hatched road markings, plus any other changes to the proposals that the Executive Member considers necessary.

**Option 3** - abandon the scheme

### **Analysis of Options**

34 **Option 1** – addresses the road safety concerns about overtaking and access issues highlighted by the earlier review, but could potentially introduce new hazards, particularly for cyclists.

35 **Option 2** – should have similar benefits to Option 1, but also takes into account factors arising from the consultation and more detailed design.

36 **Option 3** – would not address the current issues, would not achieve Corporate Priorities related to scheme prioritisation, and could be viewed as failing to contribute to relevant aims within the Local Transport Plan.

37 Consultation has produced some positive support, together with useful feedback. Concerns relating to safety of cyclists and accommodating abnormal loads has led to revised scheme proposals being developed. Hence, **Option 2** is recommended as the preferred way forward.

## Corporate Priorities

- 38 Introducing the proposed measures would contribute to the following corporate objectives and priorities :-
- **Safer City** – Implementing the revised measures outlined under **Option 2** should reduce road accidents and casualties by making turning into and out of the Church Balk junction with the A166 safer.
- 39 The proposed scheme should also contribute to the aims of the Local Transport Plan 2006-2011 (LTP2), namely :-
- Reduce the levels of actual and perceived safety problems,

## Implications

- 40 This report has the following implications
- **Financial** - £22k is included in the 2009/10 Transport Capital Programme for implementation of a scheme at the A166 Church Balk junction. The current estimates for both the original scheme outline in **Annex A** and the amended proposals outlined in **Option 2** are within that allocation.
  - **Human Resources (HR)** – There are no HR implications for the Council
  - **Equalities** - Implementing the measures outlined in **Annex A** should enhance opportunities for community members, including disadvantaged groups, to play an active part in society.
  - **Legal** – City of York Council, as Highway Authority for the area, has powers under the following Acts and associated Regulations to implement improvements and any associated measures on the highway;
    - The Highways Act
    - The Road Traffic Regulations and General Directions
    - The Road Traffic Act
  - **Crime and Disorder** – There are no crime and disorder implications expected.
  - **Information Technology (IT)** - There are no IT implications anticipated.
  - **Land and Property** – The proposed works would be within the adopted highway.
  - **Other** – There are no other known implications at present

## Risk Management

- 41 In compliance with the Council's Risk Management Strategy, the main risks associated with this report are considered to be as follows :-

**Strategic** – If it is decided not to implement the proposals there is a risk that this could lead to an inability to meet the council's priorities, and some of the aims of the Local Transport Plan.

**Physical** – If it is decided to implement the original proposals (**Option 1**) the main physical risk to achieving implementation on time are thought to involve a need to locally widen the A166 carriageway and maintain adequate traffic lane width to allow vehicles to overtake cyclists when passing the proposed traffic islands.

If the revised proposals (**Option 2**) to introduce changes to road markings, but without the proposed traffic islands, are implemented, there is a risk that the absence of physical measures to deter overtaking may be less effective in addressing the main injury accident concerns.

**Financial** – This report relates to cost estimates based upon site surveys, investigations and preliminary design. There is a potential risk that the scheme costs may increase, the main financial uncertainties being related to **Option 1** involving any need to locally widen the A166 carriageway.

**Organisation / Reputation** – There is a risk of criticism if a scheme prioritised for implementation during the current fiscal year and publicised is not delivered.

Measured in terms of impact and likelihood, the risk score for each of the above risks has been assessed at less than 16, as indicated in the following table;

<b>Risk Category</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Score</b>
Strategic	Low	Possible	6
Physical	Medium	Possible	9
Financial	Medium	Possible	9
Organisation / Reputation	Medium	Possible	9

The above scores indicate that at this point the risks need only be monitored, as they do not provide a real threat to the achievement of the objectives of this report

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**Report Approved**  **Date** 13 November 2009

**Specialist Implications Officer(s)**

There are no specialist officer implications



**Wards Affected:**  
Derwent

All

**For further information please contact the author of the report.**

**Background Papers:**

*“ Village Accessibility Review “* – Report of the Director of City Strategy  
Decision Session : Executive Member for City Strategy - 7 July 2009

**Annexes:**

**Annex A -** Information leaflet (*intended for printing @ A3 then folded to A4 size*)  
explaining and illustrating the scope and extent of the proposed scheme

**A1 -** Information leaflet : Front page explanatory text

**A2 -** Information leaflet : Inside illustration

**A3 -** Information leaflet : Back page explanatory text