
**Decision Session – Executive Member for
Transport and Planning**

10 September 2015

Report of the Acting Director of City and Environmental Services

**Proposed Enhancements to the University Road Pedestrian
Crossing and Cycle Route Scheme**

Summary

1. This report presents information to show how the scheme is currently operating, and outlines a number of proposed enhancements.

Recommendations

2. The Executive Member is requested to approve the following additions to the scheme:
 - Two extra pairs of speed cushions with central islands, as shown in **Annex B**, to make the 20mph Zone more effective.
 - A new crossing refuge located at the speed table near the bus stops, as shown in **Annex C**, to increase pedestrian safety in the busiest crossing location.
3. In addition, the Executive Member is asked to note that officers are currently working with the University to encourage greater use of the new cycle path. This involves installing various additional direction signs, plus extra signs and markings at all the entry points to make the status of the path more obvious, and publicising the facility to students.
4. The Executive Member is also requested to confirm acceptance of the University's view that the provision of an additional set of steps to the footbridge on the Market Square side of University Road is unnecessary, and to note the University's financial contributions to the scheme.

Reasons:

5. Council Officers and the University consider that the additional measures will improve the safety of all road users, in particular university students crossing University Road, and encourage greater use of the new cycle route.

Council officers and the University consider that the provision of additional steps to the Library footbridge is not necessary.

The University have offered to contribute extra funding to improve the scheme.

Background

6. The scheme shown in **Annex A** was implemented during the autumn of 2014, in close collaboration with the University. The key elements of the scheme included improvements to the bus stops, creating a 20mph Zone with speed cushions and speed table crossing points, and building a shared use pedestrian/cycle route along University Road. This has been co-ordinated with work by the University to encourage greater use of the existing footbridge and to deter unnecessary crossing of University Road at ground level – the University provided a new set of steps to give more direct access to the footbridge from the busy Market Square area, and new steps off Morrell Way leading to the Library.
7. When this scheme was approved, it was considered that another set of steps to the footbridge, close to the southern bus stop, could be useful to encourage people heading for the library to use to footbridge rather than crossing the road. The Cabinet Member therefore requested that the University provide this as a second stage to the project.

Monitoring and Proposals

8. Shortly after the scheme became operational in accordance with council procedures an independent Road Safety Audit was carried out, and a number of improvements were implemented soon afterwards. However, there were still some unresolved issues and the University still had a number of concerns about the operation of the scheme. To investigate these further and help develop possible solutions, a comprehensive set of surveys was commissioned covering traffic speeds, pedestrian movement, and cycle flows. The results have been discussed with the University and a proposed

plan of action agreed. The key findings and proposals are presented below:

9. Traffic Speeds – surveys show that average speeds within the 20 Zone are about 22mph and about 27mph outside.

Proposals - Officers and the University are in agreement that traffic speeds need to be reduced further in the 20mph Zone, both to make the 20mph Zone more self-enforcing and to further improve safety. It is considered that the best way of achieving this would be the introduction of an additional two pairs of cushions, with central islands. These were in the original scheme design put out for public consultation (see the plan in **Annex B**), but were omitted within the original decision on the basis that speed could be reduced sufficiently with fewer measures, and that additional features could be installed at a later date if necessary.

10. Pedestrian movements – the surveys confirm that, since removing the steps on the embankment and providing new steps to the footbridge, far fewer people are crossing at road level. Almost all residual crossing at ground level is now directly linked to use of the bus stops.

Most road level crossing movements now take place between the bus stops, either on or close to the speed table crossing point. People tend to cross behind a waiting bus and then stand in the middle of the road for a gap in the traffic on the other side. If the bus on their side then pulls away they are left in a very vulnerable position in the middle of the road without protection.

The surveys also suggest that people on the south side of the University road already use the footbridge to get to the library. The vast majority of people getting off a bus at the southern stop were observed heading south across the car park, which gives easy access to the footbridge ramp for anyone wanting to get to the library. This route to the library is about 50m shorter than the alternative of crossing University Road and then going up Morrell Way, where there are also 41 steps to climb.

Proposals - Officers and the University propose to make it easier and safer to cross the road near the bus stops by creating a central crossing refuge centred on the new speed table. This would remove the opportunity for drivers to overtake waiting buses, but it is considered that pedestrian safety should be the priority and any

delay to motorists would be minimal. The plan in **Annex C** shows how a refuge could be created at the speed table.

It is proposed that the refuge island should be provided on a trial basis as a bolt down arrangement and be reviewed following the end of the academic year in June 2016.

Officers and the University also consider that providing another set of steps to access the footbridge near the bus stop on the south side of University Road would have no significant advantage for pedestrians, or add to road safety. It would only reduce the length of the existing route by about 25m, and this would involve going up about 15 steps. Importantly it would not reduce the current number road crossing movements on University Road, and therefore there is no proposal to progress this further.

11. Cycle movements - the surveys show that most cyclists are staying on the road rather than using the new path, and use of the path is particularly low in a westerly direction.

Proposals - To make the status of the path more obvious and encourage greater usage, Officers and the University have developed a package of additional direction signs, plus extra signs and markings at all the potential entry points. Arrangements are currently being made for these to be implemented, and detailed plans are listed as background papers to this report.

Consultation

12. **York University** supports the proposals and is keen to see them implemented as soon as possible. The University has offered to pay up to £20K for them to be installed.
13. **Councillors**

The views of the **Hull Road ward councillors** (Cllrs Levene, Barnes and Shepherd) were submitted in a joint response, and are set out below along with officer comments;

- *We are comfortable with the proposal to introduce a refuge island.*

Officer Comment – noted.

- *We are also comfortable with the proposal to introduce further signage and markings to encourage use of the cycle path.*

Officer Comment – noted

- *We are not satisfied as to the explanation for the University not proceeding with the installation of south-side steps from the road onto the footbridge as originally agreed. There is insufficient evidence to justify the argument that such steps would attract further road crossings from the north-side bus stop by those wishing to access the library, i.e. travelling in the exact opposite direction of their destination.*

Officer Comment – As explained in paragraph 10, the main reason for not installing an extra set of steps is that it would provide no significant advantage for pedestrians, nor add to road safety.

- *We are strongly of the view that as the organisation representing the vast majority of users in the area, the Students Union should be consulted on these proposals.*

Officer Comment – a wider consultation on these limited scheme additions was not considered necessary as they are aimed at addressing safety audit concerns, and are not significant changes from the original scheme consulted on.

Councillor D'Agorne, the **Green Party spokesman on transport**, has commented as follows:

- *supports the proposal to reduce speeds further, but need to consider the safety of cyclists, and suggests additional speed tables could be better than cushions.*

Officer Comment – cyclists have been considered in developing the scheme, the cushions and islands would be similar to those already in place, and because this is an important bus and emergency vehicle route the number of full width calming measures should be kept to a minimum.

- *supports the proposed central island near the bus stops, provided that the dwell time of buses is kept to a minimum.*

Officer Comment – the support is noted, and dwell times are generally short here because the bus operators employ a number of quick ticket payment methods.

- *is not surprised that the use of the off road cycle facility is low in a westerly direction, since this would involve a longer route and crossing the road again to continue towards Green Dykes Lane. Safety would be improved by an on-road westerly cycle lane at least as far as the roundabout.*

Officer Comment – there is insufficient width to install an on-road cycle lane, and it is hoped that the improved signing will attract more users to the safer off-road path.

Options

14. The options for the Executive Member to consider in relation to the proposed scheme additions are as follows:

Option 1 - Approve the scheme additions (extra speed cushions and central refuge) as shown in **Annexes B and C**;

Option 2 - Reject the proposed scheme amendments and retain the existing layout.

Analysis

15. Option 1 - the proposals shown in **Annexes B and C** seek to address key concerns highlighted by the safety audit, confirmed by the traffic surveys, and explored in discussion with the University.

Option 2 - would not address the existing problems with the scheme which have been highlighted in this report.

Option 1 is recommended for implementation.

Corporate Priorities

16. The scheme would contribute to the following Corporate Priorities:
 - Making York a Sustainable City, by encouraging more cycling and walking which are environmentally friendly modes of transport;

- Making York a healthier city by encouraging cycling and walking which are healthy activities;
- Helping to make the City of York Council an effective organisation by combining the implementation of a cycling infrastructure and safety scheme and working with the University as a partner.

Implications

Financial/Programme Implications

17. The likely cost for the Council to implement the proposals for University Road will be about £15K. The University have agreed to pay for this work, up to a maximum of £20K.
18. The aim is to complete the works as soon as possible and early into the new academic year which starts on 29th September 2015.

19. Human Resources

20. There are no Human Resources implications.

Equalities

21. There are no Equalities implications.

Legal

22. The 20mph Speed Limit Zone is currently not compliant with national guidance, which specifies that average speeds within the Zone should be 20mph or less. The proposed additional measures are expected to lower speeds to meet this requirement.

Crime and Disorder

23. There are no Crime and Disorder implications.

Information Technology (IT)

24. There are no Information Technology implications.

Property

25. There are no Property implications.

Risk Management

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

26. 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 effective safety improvements for pedestrians, bus passengers and cyclists along University Road are not delivered.

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Report
Approved



Date 27 August
2015

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

There are no specialist officer implications.

Wards Affected: Hull Road

All



For further information please contact the author of the report.

Background Papers:

"University Road Pedestrian Crossing Improvement Scheme Proposals": Cabinet Member Decision Session report, meeting on 13th March 2014.

"University Road Pedestrian Crossing Improvements and Cycle Route": Cabinet Member Decision Session report, meeting on 7th August 2014.

Drawings TP/12012061/A/100/001, 002, 003, and 004, all titled “University Road Combined Cycleway/Footway - Additional Required Works”, which detail the signing and lining improvements along the cycle route.

Annexes:

Annex A:

Plan showing the scheme now implemented.

Annex B:

Plan showing the original proposed scheme layout with two extra pairs of speed cushions/ central islands.

Annex C:

Plan showing the proposed central crossing refuge at the speed table near the bus stops.