
**Decision Session - Cabinet Member for
Transport, Planning and Sustainability**

17 October 2013

Report of the Director of City and Environmental Services

**BETTER BUS AREA FUND –
YORK CENTRAL BUS INTERCHANGE (ROUGIER STREET)**

Summary

1. This report sets out proposals to improve the 10 bus stops at Rougier Street and Station Road with the objective of creating a more formal, integrated “Central Interchange” for bus services in York. The intention is both to improve the facilities for bus passengers, but also take the opportunity to make more general changes in Rougier Street which will improve the attractiveness of the area more generally.

Background

2. Improving York’s local bus services is identified as one of 6 key actions in the Council Plan in support of Get York Moving. Funding has been provided via the Better Bus Area Fund (BBAF) to assist City of York Council (CYC) in delivering the corporate priorities and outcomes set in the Council Plan, Local Plan and Economic Strategy. A part of the BBAF Programme identifies five locations in central York which will fulfil the role of “Bus Interchanges” due to their high density of bus services, and the ability to interchange between them, at these locations. Rougier Street and Station Road form one of these interchanges, the largest one, with the other interchanges being located at the Rail Station, Piccadilly, Stonebow and Exhibition Square. The interchange cluster of stops comprises in practice:
 - Six stops on Rougier Street itself; and
 - Two stops on Station Road, adjacent to the Cedar Court Hotel.
3. These stops, between them, are served by a very high proportion of the city’s bus services, including three park and ride routes, four of the city’s

10 minute frequency bus services, and inter-urban services to Leeds, Hull and destinations on the East Coast. They are also located close to the Rail Station interchange and Station Avenue, allowing bus passengers to interchange onto Rawcliffe Bar park and ride services, Stephenson's services to destinations north of York and First's service 5 which connects Acomb and Strensall via the city centre.

4. As such, the cluster of bus stops around Rougier Street are currently the nearest thing York has to a "bus station", which is to say that, in the absence of a single, off-street, centralised bus interchange, the Rougier Street stop cluster act as a location where bus services are concentrated and it is relatively easy to interchange from one service to another. The cluster is also used for driver changeovers and short term layover by bus operators. It is understood that the number of bus service arrivals and departures per day at Rougier Street is of a similar order of magnitude as at many city centre bus stations in large cities – for example, Sheffield Bus Interchange.
5. Accordingly, the BBAF programme includes a budget, funds being provided by the Department for Transport, of £500,000 to upgrade the Central Interchange. The objectives of the upgrade are to:
 - "Improve the amenity of the Central Interchange for passengers;
 - Improve the operating environment of the Central Interchange bus stops for bus operators; and
 - Redevelop the current cluster of stops to be more architecturally coherent and feel like a single location for interchange rather than a cluster of bus stops."¹
6. The objective for this paper is to set out the work which has taken place to date and ask the Member to support the proposals or suggest an alternative course of action. If the Member supports the proposed course of action then City of York Council will begin the process of procuring the proposed shelter through a tender process. Works should complete in March 2014.

Proposals

7. Proposals have been developed to achieve the objectives of the project,

¹ From the design brief for York Central Interchange.

and taking into account a survey of bus movements on Rougier Street. Whilst considering options, discussions were held with officers and key stakeholders such as bus operators, York Civic Trust and Skelwith, the property developers for Roman House.

8. A planning application has been submitted for the proposed works on the “red shelter” and letters have been sent to adjacent properties and businesses seeking their views on the proposal.

9. The proposed alterations consist of:

To improve the attractiveness of York Central Interchange and Rougier Street more generally:

- replacement of the existing red shelter, which is tatty and life – expired, with a new structure, designed to be architecturally coherent with the Foster shelters used elsewhere in the cluster;
- movement of the Foster shelters on the Northern House side of Rougier Street so that they are more effectively bunched together, facing the new structure which will replace the red shelter attached to Roman House;
- Resurfacing of footways to improve the appearance of the area;
- Use of lighting and public art to make the facilities generally more attractive, and a better place to spend time waiting for a bus

To improve safety/ reduce perceived danger at York Central Interchange:

- Resurfacing of bus lay-bys to combat degradation of surfaces and unevenness caused by several years of bus movement;
- Installation of CCTV units within the shelters to improve passenger safety;

To improve the customer experience at York Central Interchange:

- Improvements to the real time information system across the Central Interchange;
- Improvements to signage, information and mapping for bus passengers.

The annexes illustrate the proposed scheme.

Consultation

10. Consultation has taken place with key stakeholders such as York Civic Trust, bus operators and Skelwith group. Local businesses and properties have been consulted through the planning application.
11. Responses during the consultation have focussed on the poor state of repair of the existing facilities and peoples' desire that they be replaced. No specific queries or objections have been raised relating to the proposed design of the replacement shelter.
12. **Options**
The Cabinet Member is being asked to consider the following options:

- Option 1 – approve the scheme as shown in **Annex A**.
- Option 2 – suggest an alternative arrangement.
- Option 3 - do nothing

Council Plan

13. The potential benefits for the priorities in the Council Plan are:
 - Get York Moving – improvements to the bus stops will further encourage use of bus services and improve passenger waiting environments, particularly for passengers wishing to interchange between services.
 - Protecting the environment – the improvements will improve the environment on Rougier Street, which is currently poor. In particular they will improve the environment within the enclosed “red” shelter attached to Roman House which is currently very poor.

Implications

14. This report has the following implications:

Financial

15. Provisional cost estimates suggest that the proposed works can be delivered within the allocated budget of £500,000, all of which is provided by the Department for Transport element of the BBAF. The cost will be reviewed when a firm estimate has been received for the replacement shelter. Other costs (for example, for real time information equipment

and new “Foster” shelters) are known quantities.

16. **Human Resources** - none

Equalities

17. The Centre for Accessible Environments (CAE) have undertaken an Access and Mobility Audit, based around key issues of coach travel, streets and spaces, street furniture and clutter, heritage and other cultural attractions, blue badge parking and shopmobility. The audit has highlighted a number of key challenges around improving the public realm environment for disabled pedestrians and wheelchair users.

18. The works at Rougier Street will improve footways in the area, reducing risks of trips and falls. They will also improve the levels of lighting in the area, which will improve visibility of hazards and improve perceived safety levels in the area.

Legal

19. The proposed works would fall within the Local Highway Authority’s Permitted Development Rights outlined in Part 13(b) to Schedule 2 of the 1995 Town and Country Planning General (Permitted Development) Order. A grant of planning permission is not required for the works on the Rougier Street shelter, however, planning permission is required for the changes to location of advertising shelters on Rougier Street and a planning application was submitted on 30th August 2013.

Crime and Disorder.

20. There are no implications on crime and disorder.

Information Technology.

21. There are some information technology implications of expanding the real time system and providing in-shelter CCTV coverage. These are not significant.

Land.

22. All land lies within the adopted highway. The land is owned by the Council on the Roman House side of the road.

Risk Management.

23. No significant risks associated with the recommendations in this report have been identified.

Recommendations.

24. That the Cabinet Member gives approval for:
- the implementation of the proposed bus stop improvements as shown in **Annex A**.

Contact Details

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Specialist Implications Officer(s)

There are no specialist implications.

Wards Affected: Guildhall (site of scheme)

All

For further information please contact the author of the report.

Annexes:

Annex A Proposed scheme.