

Report of the Assistant Director Transport, Highways and Environment

**York Outer Ring Road Improvements – Proposed A1237 Monks
Cross Junction Upgrade – Report on Public Engagement**

Summary

1. This report is about the design and public engagement of the proposed upgrade of the A1237 / Monks Cross Link junction (the “Monks Cross junction”). The report is seeking the Executive Member for Transport and Planning’s approval to proceed with the detailed design and construction stages of the scheme.
2. Preliminary design and public engagement processes have recently been completed and it is now time to conclude the detailed design and move to the construction stage. This report sets out what has been achieved over the last few months and asks approval to progress to the delivery stage.

Recommendations

3. The Executive Member is asked to:
 - 1) Confirm that the results of the public engagement process have been considered and incorporated in the design where possible.

Reason: To enable the detailed final design of the Monks Cross junction upgrades to proceed and be completed.

- 2) Note the general arrangement design for the junction upgrade and give approval for preparations and implementation of construction (See Annex 1).

Reason: To enable arrangements to be made to commence construction of the Monks Cross junction upgrade.

- 3) Note the ongoing acquisition of land and negotiation of terms and conditions by the Assistant Director Transport Highways & Environment.

Reason: To enable the acquisition of land in a timely manner in order to adhere to the York Outer Ring Road (YORR) programme.

- 4) Endorse the appointment of the City of York Council's Delivery Team for the civil engineering and associated works to undertake the Monks Cross junction upgrade.

Reason: To enable a timely appointment of a contractor which eliminates the need to go through lengthy and costly tendering processes.

Background

4. In July 2017 City of York Council Executive approved a report setting out the proposed approach and management of the YORR Improvement Project. Specifically, the report gave delegation of operational and detailed decision making for the design and delivery of the scheme to the Executive Member for Transport and Planning. Progress has been made over recent months on the scheme with work commencing on Phase 1 at the A1237/Wetherby Road junction. Design and development work has also been in progress on the Phase 2 A1237/Monks Cross Link junction and it is now time to move to the next stage on this junction. The decisions to be made by the Executive Member which are relevant at this stage are:
 - a. Accept that a satisfactory public engagement process has been held and note the results.
 - b. Accept the final layout of the Monks Cross junction upgrade and note that the results of the public engagement process have been considered and incorporated in the design where possible.
 - c. Note the continuing phasing of the programme.
 - d. Endorse the appointment of the City of York Council's Delivery Team to undertake the works at Monks Cross junction.

5. Running in parallel to the endorsement by City of York Council Executive, the scheme is being funded through the West Yorkshire Plus Transport Fund. The fund is administered by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) and is governed through a programme management process, see Annex 4. A Final Business Case for the overall improvement programme was submitted in late 2017. This was accepted by WYCA with a condition that each individual phase must be submitted separately to secure funding for the delivery stage. The estimated cost of the proposed upgrade at Monks Cross at that time was £3.3m.
6. The project team are currently making preparations to submit a Final Business Case + to WYCA in September 2018 in order to secure the estimated £3.3m funding for upgrading the Monks Cross junction.

Consultation

7. A public engagement process has been held which commenced on the 4th May and which ran to the 1st June 2018.
8. On the 3rd May 2018 letters informing of the public engagement were sent to:
 - Julian Sturdy MP and Rachael Maskell MP
 - Councillors Ayre, Boyce, Cullwick, Cuthbertson, D'Agorne, Dew, Doughty, Douglas, Gillies, Lisle, Looker, Orrell and Runciman.
 - The Parish Councils of Earswick, Heworth without, Huntingdon with New Earswick and Strensall with Towthorpe.
9. The following public engagement events were undertaken:
 - An unmanned display was set up within the reception area of West Offices from the 4th May for the duration of the consultation period.
 - 2 public engagement events were held at the Monks Cross Management Suite on the 8th and 22nd May 2018 from 13:00 to 18:00 hours with officers from CYC and our design consultants, Pell Frischmann in attendance. A total of 50 people attended these events.
 - A designated e-mail address (yorr@york.gov.uk) was assigned to receive comments from the public. 14 comments were received.

- A Facebook post was made. 76 comments were received with 27 “likes” and 15 “shares”.
 - Twitter feeds were posted every day during the public engagement except the 8th, 15th, 16th, 22nd, 25th, 26th and 27th May. 10 comments were received.
 - A press release was published on the 4th May as shown in Annex 5.
10. A public engagement package, including a questionnaire, was delivered to a small number of individual residential properties within the study area on the 4th May 2018.
 11. A public engagement package was also delivered on the 4th May to businesses in the area (these are listed in the Pell Frischman report in Annex 8).
 12. A copy of the information provided in these packages comprised the following:
 - A leaflet containing information of the proposals and a map of the study area (Annex 3).
 - A questionnaire and freepost reply envelope.(Annex 3)
 13. This information was also available for members of the public to pick up at the unmanned display in West Offices mentioned in point 9 above.
 14. All the public engagement information, along with a copy of the questionnaire was available online at www.york.gov.uk.yorr .

Responses

15. 105 responses were received, comprising of 5 questionnaires, 14 e-mails, 76 Facebook posts and 10 Twitter comments.
16. No direct responses were received from the MPs, Councillors or from local businesses.
17. 76 respondents replied through Facebook with 27 likes and 15 shares. However, 34 of these comments were socially unconstructive comments so the total of respondents reduces to 33. A further 3 respondents offered only unconstructive criticism but can be taken as objections to the proposals Each response was given a unique reference number to allow specific replies to be recovered at

a later date if necessary. All personal details have been removed for this report in accordance with the new General Data Protection Regulations.

18. 50 people attended the Monks Cross Management Suite events.

Summary of comments

19 A summary of all the comments, questions and officer comments associated with points 15 to 18 above are detailed in Pell Frischmann's Report on Public Engagement, attached as Appendix 8.

20 96 comments were received from 82 respondents.

21 Unsurprisingly all but 5 of the respondents (94%) were in favour of carrying out improvements to Monks Cross roundabout. Whilst 94% of the respondents were in favour of some form of improvements to Monks Cross roundabout, only 68% expressed a preference for the specific proposal set out in the public engagement whose design mirrors the improvements of the previously upgraded A19 and A59 roundabouts.

22 A number of respondents did comment that other roundabouts should be done in preference and it would be more beneficial to give the other roundabouts priority. 8 comments were received for priority to be given for Haxby, 6 comments for Strensall and 4 for Wigginton.

23 Valid comments were received enforcing the ideal that pedestrians and cyclists are at the top of CYC road hierarchy so greater consideration should be given to pedestrians and cyclists in the proposed improvements. 5 comments were received regarding the provision of cycle lanes and 3 comments regarding pedestrian safety.

24 Other concerns aired included driver habits, road markings, slip roads, road noise, environmental concerns and a suggestion for an Outer Ring Road bus route.

Conclusion

- 25 In conclusion, most respondents are generally in favour of the proposals at Monks Cross. A lot of the concerns they raise are either outside the scope of the scheme or relate to greater traffic congestion at the Haxby, Strensall and Wigginton roundabouts. There is a possibility that should traffic flows be improved at Monks Cross, then congestion at the smaller roundabouts at the Haxby, Strensall and Wigginton junctions may increase. This issue is not considered to be a major concern but will be considered when programming the phasing of the remaining roundabouts.
- 26 The dualling of the A1237 YORR is the most popular alternative to roundabout improvements. This is in line with the CYC long term aspiration to dual with grade separated junctions but funding issues rule out this option at present.
- 27 The greatest concern of respondents is the issue of merging lanes. Longer merge lanes would generally be welcomed to allow a greater throughput of vehicles, but drivers appear to be unsure on how to use them properly. There are misconceptions with drivers in both lanes about who has the right of way. A recent application to the Secretary of State for Transport, asking for approval to allow some bespoke signing at Wetherby Road roundabout has been refused. It will be difficult to specifically educate users of the A1237 YORR through the traditional channels so this matter will continue to be a problem. Merging lanes will disappear if and when dualling of the A1237 takes place.
- 28 Also of concern is the lack of cycle facilities both crossing the A1237 YORR to allow access into York and on a circular route around the bypass. Several measures have been incorporated in the roundabout improvements, but to do anything more would be beyond the scope of the current project.
- 29 There has been criticism of the A59 roundabout design, but in the main, this is in relation to the merging lanes arrangement mentioned earlier.

City of York Council Officer Recommendations following the public engagement process.

- 30 It is recommended that the Monks Cross roundabout improvement proceeds as currently designed as this is the general consensus of this round of public engagement.
- 31 The phasing of the remaining roundabouts should consider the valid comments made about the three smaller roundabouts on the ring road. However in the short term, construction of Monks Cross is more easily achievable and co-ordinates well with the completion of the Community Stadium.
- 32 As highlighted by the public engagement there are misconceptions with drivers in both lanes about who has the right of way on merge lanes and it is therefore recommended that the CYC website and any future public engagement material includes guidance on how to use merge lanes.
- 33 It is recommended that cycle and pedestrian facilities, which were highlighted of high importance in the public engagement, are promoted wherever possible in this and future roundabout improvement schemes.

Design of Monks Cross roundabout

- 34 The detailed design for the junction has been completed following technical review and public engagement processes. Any issues raised have been considered and incorporated in the design (Annex 1) where possible as follows:
 - a. proposed provision of a shared pedestrian/cycle route around the roundabout to enable users to cross at surface level and also to feed into to future development and improvement schemes. The Pedestrian/cycle route included the provision of additional and larger traffic islands for pedestrian safety.
 - b. Micro simulation modelling has demonstrated that two short left hand slip lanes are not required. (northbound left A1237 into Monks Cross Link & northbound left North Lane into A1237).

- c. The general alignment has shifted slightly north to avoid the large diameter water main running orbitally around the YORR at this point.
 - d. The enforced realignment to the north and increased width due to pedestrian facilities has led to a larger roundabout inscribed circle.
- 35 The objective of the design is to increase the capacity of the junction to reduce delay at the projected traffic flow levels and more closely match the capacity of the section of carriageway between the roundabouts. In addition the objective is to improve the facilities for pedestrians and cyclists where it is warranted by the demand.
- 36 The proposed design for the Monks Cross roundabout upgrade is based upon previous improvements to junctions at the A19 and A59 roundabouts i.e. A1237 approaches widened to 3 lanes, A1237 exits widened to 2 lanes, minor arm approaches widened to suit traffic flows, provision of walking and cycling improvements. The upgrades will also be constructed to allow for dualling of the carriageways in years to come.
- 37 The upgraded roundabout is projected to deliver reduced journey times and lower the level of queuing in the area. The overall saving in journey times in the opening year (2019) between Wetherby Road and Monks Cross is in excess of 20% and in excess of 10% in the design year (2036). Note that these projections are based on the whole route being improved.

Traffic Modelling

- 38 The proposed junction upgrade is modelled and designed in accordance with current Department for Transport standards. Detailed analysis of this modelling is documented in the Final Business Case approved by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) in February 2018. This modelling considers the growth of traffic and ability of the junction to work until 2036. This is a standard approach.

Current Activity

- 39 A Final Business Case Submission was submitted to WYCA in November 2017. This was approved with an estimated scheme cost of £3.3m for the Monks Cross roundabout upgrade. These

costs are currently being reviewed and if within 10% of the approved figure will be accepted by WYCA.

- 40 In accordance with the published City of York Council Procurement Rules, a direct award of the works package (i.e. civil engineering work) is proposed to be made to the City of York Council Delivery Team. The following extract from the Procurement Rules applies in this case:

“10.4.1 In relation to all procurements with a value in excess of £100,000 Officers should, in conjunction with Commercial Procurement, consider whether there is an appropriate Internal Service Provider, existing Contract or Framework Agreement or Dynamic Purchasing System which can be used.”

- 41 The main considerations for this award are that savings in time and expenditure can be demonstrated over traditional tendering. Also the work package is well within the technical capability of the Delivery Team. Preparations are in progress for the Delivery Team to commence work in January 2019. This provides an added advantage in that this team can move sequentially from Wetherby Road onto Phase 2 Monks Cross without having to mobilise a separate contractor and involve a number of time consuming interfaces and start up processes.
- 42 Negotiation for land acquisition is currently in progress across the whole of the YORR improvement scheme. At the Monks Cross junction, the landowners have been approached to discuss the transfer of land and negotiations are at an early stage. Land transfer costs will remain confidential until the completion of the whole scheme as negotiations elsewhere are still in progress.
- 43 The details have yet to be finalised but it is anticipated that the works will be substantially complete by June 2019 in order to co-ordinate with the opening of the Community Stadium. An indicative programme for the whole of the YORR Improvement project is included as Annex 7.
- 44 During this period, although localised disruption during construction is inevitable, the project team will seek to minimise it as far as possible by careful programming of the works.
- 45 Also, the project team will aim to keep noise, vibration and disruption to nearby properties to a minimum. The need for any road closures will be kept to a minimum and will only be required for

short periods of time for specific activities such as when tie-ing in the new surfacing with the existing road. Access for emergency services will be maintained at all times.

- 46 A communications plan for the YORR programme has been prepared and through the measures outlined in this document road users and residents around the Monks Cross roundabout will be kept informed about the progress of the work. This will include signing on the junction approaches and updates relating to site activities. This will take place before work commences and during the construction when regular updates will be given. Information will also be available through the City Council's website.

Council Plan

- 47 The YORR Improvement proposals are embedded in the Council's Plan 2015-19. The implementation of this programme of highway improvements will be an integral part of the key priorities to "provide a prosperous city for all"; to ensure it delivers the services people want and work in partnership with local communities. Improvements to transport infrastructure are key drivers for improved productivity, this in turn leads to economic growth and the increase in wealth.
- 48 Residents will be consulted about the junction upgrades to ensure that consideration of the potential impact of decisions in relation to health, communities and equalities has been made.
- 49 Improved journey times will support the following aims from the Plan:
- A city where:
- Local businesses can thrive.
 - Residents have the opportunity to get good quality and well paid jobs.
 - Efficient and affordable transport links enable residents and businesses to access key services and opportunities.
 - Environmental Sustainability underpins everything we do.

Implications

Financial Implications

50 The estimated cost for the Monks Cross roundabout upgrade scheme is currently £3.3m. This price includes works, land, fees, project management and utility diversions. Release of funds from the WY+TF will be processed through satisfying the Project Assurance process and approval at meetings of WYCA. The project team are currently finalising costs with the internal delivery team to include in the Final Business Case with Costs. This will be considered in late autumn 2018 by WYCA. A funding agreement between WYCA and CYC will be drawn up for this purpose.

Human Resources (HR) Implications

51 There are no known human resource implications.

One Planet Council / Equalities

52 The One Planet Council Better Decision Making Tool has identified the following areas which can be explored further during the design and development of the whole YORR improvement programme:

- Greater consideration of renewable materials during construction.
- Consideration about the reduction of crime where subways are proposed.
- Enhanced Landscaping.
- Use of Public Art to provide attractive spaces for residents.

Legal

53 Land is required for the Monks Cross roundabout upgrade. The Council is actively pursuing the purchase of land for the scheme by private agreement. Legal Services will provide resources to process the conveyancing and land transfer agreements.

54 Currently there are no plans to acquire land through Compulsory Purchase Order unless as a matter of last resort. However the

Council have engaged the services of a law firm to prepare the documentation for Compulsory Purchase in order that it is prepared to make an order if necessary. Support from Legal Services will be required to manage the process.

Crime and Disorder

55 There are no known crime and disorder implications

Information Technology (IT)

56 IT opportunities are currently being considered as follows:

- Implementation of the Smart Travel Evolution Programme (STEP)

Property

57 Property Services are involved in this project acting as land managers for the City Council. New pieces of land will be acquired for the junction upgrades, the title of which will belong to the City Council. Property Services will also advise and assist the Project Team in supervising the work of the Land Valuers and Legal Firm.

Other

58 There are no other known implications.

Risk Management

59 In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy the main risks that have been identified in this report are those which could lead to financial loss, damage to the Council's image and reputation and failure to meet stakeholders' expectations. Measured in terms of impact and likelihood, the land acquisition risk has been assessed at 20. This is classed as Major/Probable and is the most significant live issue on the project. Other risks have been assessed at 14 or below. At this point the risks will be monitored and managed. A risk allowance has been estimated and is included within the current cost plan for the project. The top two risks currently affecting this project are:

- a. Risks associated with land acquisition. As described above, there is a high risk that some landowners will be unwilling to

sell land to the City of York Council by private agreement, or in a timely manner. This presents a programme risk potentially prolonging the time to complete the project. In order to mitigate this risk, preparation of a CPO in parallel to land negotiation is proposed as described in paragraph 42 above. A mitigation plan is being developed to enable the delivery of the scheme without taking the land in the early stages of construction.

- b. Risks associated with utility diversions being more complex than anticipated. These could lead to programme delays and have a cost implication. In the case of Monks Cross junction, early meetings with utility companies are planned to mitigate these risks.

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For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Paper to Executive 13th July 2017 – [Proposed York Outer Ring Road Improvements – Approach to Delivery](#)

Annexes

Annex 1 – Proposed General Arrangement for Monks Cross Junction
Annex 2 – Layout presented for public consultation
Annex 3 - Sample consultation package
Annex 4 – WYCA Project Assurance Process.
Annex 5 – Press Release for public engagement process
Annex 6 – Frequently Asked Questions
Annex 7 – Indicative YORR Improvement Programme
Annex 8 - Pell Frischman report

List of Abbreviations Used in this Report

CPO – Compulsory Purchase Order
WYCA – West Yorkshire Combined Authority
YORR – York Outer Ring Road
MP – Member of Parliament
CYC – City of York Council
STEP – Smart Travel Evolution Programme