

Decision Session - Executive Member for City Strategy  
Tuesday, 11th May, 2010

**Agenda Item 6 – Blossom Street Multi Modal Scheme:  
Officers' Response to Further Comments Received**

Comment	Officers' response
<b>North Yorkshire Police</b>	
<p>1. Consideration should be given to the issues raised in the Stage 1 Road Safety Audit.</p>	<p>Following receipt of the Stage 1 RSA, a meeting was held with one of the authors of the audit and Officers from Transport Planning, Engineering Consultancy (Transport &amp; Safety), Network Management, and the Assistant Director (City Development &amp; Transport).</p> <p>The meeting was held to discuss the outcome of the audit, the safety concerns and to decide on any necessary amendments to the Preferred Option. Subsequently, each of the issues raised from the RSA was considered and addressed. Some recommendations were incorporated into the scheme. Others were rejected, with the reasoning explained below.</p>
<p>2. All proposals put forward result in significant safety issues that are not present with the current road layout. They will also result in an increase in the perception of danger to all road users.</p>	<p>There are inevitably some safety issues associated with designing this scheme - much is being proposed for a small area of road-space and at a junction that is already at capacity, so very little flexibility exists.</p> <p>There is already a high accident rate On Blossom Street, so improving safety is key, but with a compromise for maintaining the efficient operation of the road network in the area – and the layout in the proposed scheme reflects this.</p> <p>It is the view of Officers that the scheme perhaps does make users more cautious (due to the removal of the islands and the proximity of the traffic flows etc), but this is not a negative effect and is the type of proposal that the DfT favours for such space with a mix of users. Officers' are of the view that the scheme makes the best use of available space and is an improvements on current layout to all users. The benefits of this scheme far outweigh the minimal risk to safety.</p> <p>As discussed in Paragraphs 60-69 of the report, the new route to the station (via Lowther Terrace), in addition to the alternative parallel route to the east of Blossom Street (using Scarcroft Hill), will provide a safer and more attractive route to using Blossom Street for those with limited confidence on a bicycle.</p>
<p>3. The current three (narrow) lane inbound layout causes a number of problems and consideration should be made to reducing to two lanes.</p>	<p>Was considered but rejected. Paragraph 70 of the report.</p> <p>Micro-simulation modelling indicates a significant loss of capacity with reducing the number of lanes here, also causing displacement of traffic onto alternative routes.</p> <p>Public opinion (resulting from the citywide consultation) is also not favourable at all.</p>

<p>4. Nothing done to aid left turning larger vehicles from Blossom Street into Queen Street.</p>	<p>These are aided by the left lane being displaced 1 metre further away from the footway due to the cycle feeder lane; the Blossom Street stop-line being set further back; and the islands on Queen Street being removed. Analysis shows that an FTR can make the manoeuvre solely from the left lane, no longer requiring to straddle two lanes.</p>
<p>5. Difficulty for cyclists inbound to get into straight ahead &amp; right turn ASL from the proposed advanced cycle feeder lane. Consider another cycle lane on the nearside of the straight ahead lane.</p>	<p>Insufficient highway width to accommodate a secondary feeder lane and maintain adequate highway capacity. As it is only feasible to accommodate one cycle feeder lane on the Blossom Street city bound approach arm, it is preferable to accommodate cyclists in the nearside. This is based on the observed turning manoeuvres at the junction and the public consultation which showed certain cycle users (and potential cyclists) would not feel comfortable using a central feeder lane. Cyclists wishing to travel straight ahead or right will benefit from an increase in lane width on the approach arm leading to the stop-line.</p> <p>As discussed in 4. above, left turning vehicles also benefit from the current proposed position of the cycle feeder lane.</p> <p>To help cyclists get into the correct position, Officers now propose that where the two inbound traffic lanes flare to three, within the cycle feeder lane we provide arrows indicating that to continue within the feeder lane is for left-turners only.</p>
<p>6. The cycle lane should be a minimum of 1.5 metres in width to provide better separation between cyclists and other vehicles.</p>	<p>These are not 'cycle lanes' in the normal sense (for vehicles to pass cyclists leaving sufficient width, when travelling at 30mph). They are 'feeder lanes' into ASLs, their purpose to get cyclists down the inside of stationary vehicles and bypass the queuing traffic to reach the front of the queue. These arrangements have been adopted by CYC, within the Cycling Infrastructure Design Standards approved in 2009.</p> <p>To accommodate wider cycle lanes would require the removal of a traffic lane. As previously stated, this is not a workable transport solution in network capacity terms.</p>
<p>7. Long crossing distance for pedestrians at the new crossing between the Bar Convent and the Windmill PH. Consider retaining a refuge and stagger the crossing.</p>	<p>Discussed in Paragraph 74-76. Staggering the crossing and retaining the three lanes means that the refuge would have to be sub-standard in size and width, with a high likelihood of being struck, plus narrowing traffic lanes to sub-standard.</p> <p>Not providing a crossing in this location is not an option as pedestrian safety is one of the key aspects of this scheme.</p> <p>Therefore accepting a longer single-stage crossing is acceptable to Officers, with mitigating measures included to improve safety (e.g. on-crossing detection will be 'doubled up').</p>
<p>8. The pedestrian crossing near to the cinema has a refuge but is straight across with no stagger. Pedestrians who cross late in the cycle could find themselves stranded on the island.</p>	<p>The island will have push buttons in accordance with PUFFIN crossing guidelines, however, it is envisaged that pedestrians will cross the carriageway in one movement. When commissioning the signals, the engineer will allow sufficient clearance time for pedestrians to negotiate the full length of the crossing should they cross late in the cycle.</p>

<b>Cycling City York Major Infrastructure Group</b>	
<p>9. Disappointing that the preferred scheme appears to confirm that car drivers are still top priority, despite the Hierarchy of Users - where pedestrians and cyclists etc should be considered first. The scheme does not make a serious step towards promoting modal shift for a low-carbon transport arrangement.</p>	<p>Significant improvements have been made for pedestrians within the Preferred Option. Significant improvements (on the current layout) have also been made for cyclists. However, this can not (and should not) be done at the complete expense of the efficient operation of the road network, especially at such an important junction, as has been demonstrated in the micro-simulation modelling. There is an element of benefit and compromise for all users in this proposed scheme.</p> <p>With frequent buses using this street from the proposed relocated and enlarged Askham Bar and new Poppleton P&amp;R sites, we should not make any alterations which could potentially cause increased bus journey times than at present - which would potentially discourage people from using the service as an alternative to their own private vehicles.</p> <p>Although of course the Hierarchy needs consideration, so also does the Traffic Management Act 2004, which gives the council a duty to “effectively manage the highway network in order to avoid, reduce or minimise congestion or disruption on the highway network for all road users”.</p>
<p>10. The decision (to keep 5 traffic lanes) should not be based solely on the result of a public consultation. Drivers will always vote in their own interests.</p>	<p>Although public opinion was considered, the main decision to retain 5 traffic lanes in the Preferred Option was due to the results of the micro-simulation modelling which showed that any reduction in lanes significantly increased queue lengths elsewhere in the network (due to the key position of this particular junction) and which also caused vehicles to re-route through South Bank.</p> <p>The layout of the Preferred Option does not prejudice any further alteration in the future (i.e. removal of a traffic lane / wider cycle lanes) if further developments occur which restrain private car-use in the future. This could easily be achieved with the ‘blank canvass’ that Blossom Street presents with the proposed removal of the refuge islands.</p>
<p>11. Wholly inadequate improvements for cycle-users considering that this is a Cycling City scheme.</p>	<p>This scheme is a <u>multi-modal</u> safety improvement scheme for all users and is not solely for cyclists. Only a fraction of the cost of implementing this scheme would be potentially coming from the Cycling City grant, with the majority from the Local Transport Plan.</p>
<p>12. Fails to address the intimidating environment faced by outbound cyclists on Blossom Street. A central outbound cycle lane would be preferable.</p>	<p>With the new cycle pre-signal from Queen Street, cyclists should be clear of the Queen Street junction and in the correct lane positioning by the time the rest of the traffic follows.</p> <p>The decision not to put the outbound cycle feeder lane between the two traffic lanes was made after considering the many comments received from the public consultation where the public said that they would feel intimidated cycling between two lanes of traffic.</p> <p>A central cycle feeder lane is achievable (from South Parade to Holgate Road). However, cycle flows in this area during AM and PM peaks indicate nearly double the amount of cyclists travelling straight ahead at this junction than those turning right. Space is only available for one cycle feeder lane here, for straight ahead movements or right-turns. Officers have considered this and believe that for consistency (i.e. similar layout to other approaches in this area – Queen Street outbound for example), for safety, and to avoid confusion for cyclists and motorists, a nearside cycle feeder lane would still be preferable to one positioned between the two traffic lanes. This would also benefit a greater number of cyclists.</p>

<p>13. The positioning of the inbound cycle (feeder) lane encourages cyclists to take up a dangerous position.</p>	<p>See 5. above.</p>
<p>14. 1.0 metre cycle (feeder) lanes are sub-standard and a token gesture to cyclists. These should be 1.5 metres as a minimum.</p>	<p>See 6. above.</p>
<p>15. Space for widened cycle lanes should be taken from the traffic lanes or from the footways / cobbled areas.</p>	<p>Proposed traffic lane widths throughout the scheme area are already narrow, especially for a main arterial route and gateway into the city, used by large vehicles and many buses. Any further reduction in these widths may compromise safety.</p> <p>There are large numbers of pedestrians who use the footways and also there are significant costs associated with moving kerbs and drainage etc. Therefore Officers worked within the 'footprint' of the current carriageway dimensions.</p> <p>Conservation groups and local residents have strongly objected to any proposal to widen the carriageway at the expense of the cobbled areas. Furthermore on investigation, there are a large number of utilities positioned beneath the cobbles which would potentially need expensive diversionary work if we included this suggestion.</p>
<p>16. Positive reaction to the 'head start' signal for cyclists emerging from Queen Street.</p>	<p>-</p>
<p>17. Support the extension of the feeder lane by-passing The Mount bus-gate, which is often blocked by buses.</p>	<p>-</p>
<p>18. A Keep Clear under Micklegate Bar will not be obeyed. Traffic signals north of the Bar would be the best solution (similar arrangement to Monk Bar).</p>	<p>As set out in the report under paragraph 80, a Keep Clear at this location is not appropriate.</p> <p>The situation at Micklegate Bar is not the same as at Monk Bar (where the configuration of the traffic through the arches is different). Also, with traffic emerging from Bar Lane/Toft Green onto Micklegate just a few metres north of the Bar, traffic signals here would be very problematic. Furthermore they would require 'scheduled monument consent' which is a lengthy process. However, if required, traffic signals could be retrofitted to this area at any time in the future if deemed an appropriate measure.</p>
<p>19. Any cycle lane should be bounded by kerbs on the traffic side, to prevent blocking by vehicles.</p>	<p>This would not be advisable as it would prevent cyclists from moving out of a cycle lane, across traffic lanes, to correctly position themselves at junctions.</p>
<p>20. The Lowther Terrace alternative route will only benefit a limited number of cyclists from Holgate Road, but is of no</p>	<p>With 87% of the public in favour of the Lowther Terrace/York Station route, it is obviously a popular proposal and will be well used.</p>

<p>use to cyclists travelling onto Micklegate and Nunnery Lane.</p>	<p>As set out in paragraphs 67 to 70 within the report, an alternative route already exists for those cyclists wishing to access Nunnery Lane and Ouse Bridge without needing to use Blossom Street. This route will be well signposted and promoted.</p>
<p>21. Why was the following reported within the report, when it has no foundation (as neither are a legal requirement)?  “11% of comments received were regarding cyclists not respecting the laws of the road, including not using cycle lanes and not wearing high visibility clothing.”</p>	<p>It is correct that there is no legal requirement for cyclists to use a cycle lane when one is provided, nor to wear mandatory high visibility clothing.</p> <p>However, this sentence (taken from paragraph 19 of the report) was merely reporting the outcome of the public consultation and the views expressed. It would not be appropriate for Officers to selectively omit comments which many local residents had expressed.</p>
<p>22. Cars parked on double yellow lines on narrow strip of cobbles outside KFC are a problem and usually stick out into road. Cobbled gutter in same area exacerbates the problem for cyclists.</p>	<p>It is acknowledged that this is an issue. As well as increased enforcement of the parking restrictions, other means of preventing illegal parking in this location is currently being considered. This includes the use of bollards or the planting of small street trees within the cobbles.</p>
<p><b>Cllr Merrett – Facility requested</b></p>	
<p>23. Cllr Merrett has highlighted that a secondary stop line and signals at the junction of Holgate Road and Lowther Terrace would assist cyclists going to / from the new station access, as well as preventing cyclists being blocked or becoming trapped against the kerb by larger vehicles at the narrow corner of Holgate Road. It would also assist in the air quality in this area.</p>	<p>Officers considered this proposal in detail and concluded that this is not a workable option. It would be incredibly challenging to get a Holgate Road pre-signal to work anything like sensibly, given the large travel time between the new stop line and the main stop line. Also, this feature has not been modelled and so it would be essential that some modelling was produced to show the effects (which Officers think would be significant).</p> <p>As the main green does not clear all approaching traffic, vehicles would still get stuck between the two stop-lines, unless the new signal 'gated' traffic quite severely, and queuing much further back up Holgate Road would be seen. Because of the additional delay which would be imposed on drivers, it is very likely that we would see more 'racing' through to the main green which would cause problems for cyclists.</p> <p>Network Management would be very concerned about this proposal and the affect it would have on traffic on Holgate Road. Their judgement is that it would cause additional delays, (also to the new A59 P+R service). They can not see how it could be implemented in a way that would achieve the goals Cllr Merrett desires and does not think it would particularly increase safety or air quality (it would just move the problem to a new location and increase it's severity).</p> <p>A yellow box junction at Lowther Terrace has been included within the Preferred Option instead.</p>