

Annex A - Overview of the Lendal Bridge Trial

1. The trial forms part of the wider transformation of the economic, cultural and recreational offer in the city centre. It will take the city forward in the same way as the vision to create the city centre footstreets and move traffic away from the Minster over 20 years ago. Concern at that time was overtaken by opportunity and vision, and the success of those bold decisions is now being shared throughout the country.
2. Significant transport changes are taking place across the City including expansion of park and ride, the upgrading of bus interchanges in the city centre, the rolling out of 20mph limits in residential areas and the development of smart ticketing, including the All-York ticket. Many other measures funded through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) and Better Bus Area Fund (BBAF) are aimed at increasing walking, cycling and the use of public transport and are influencing how we think about travel. These changes are fundamentally changing the way we make our travel choices and addressing the situation that as an historic city we do not have the physical space to fit more cars on the highway.
3. The Reinvigorate York programme, BBAF and the Local Transport Plan are spearheading major public realm improvements in the city centre, which includes: the redesign of the station frontage interchange; enhancements to the walking route from the station past the council offices to the Minster; theatre royal interchange Duncombe Place/Blake Street and Exhibition Square/St Leonard's Place/Bootham Bar improvement projects.
4. Removal of through traffic from the 'heart of the city' with managed access provided for essential traffic on 'priority routes' (in particular Lendal Bridge) offers a key transformational opportunity to maximise access for pedestrians, cyclists and buses. Significantly reducing motorised traffic offers the scope to improve air quality in some key central locations, improve bus reliability and enhance the attractiveness of the city centre. As the city grows the public transport system will become more vital for residents and visitors to in and around the city. More predictable journey times and less traffic in the city centre will improve the reliability and efficiency of bus services.

5. More specifically the reduction of vehicular traffic along the route from Queen Street, past the station, the city walls, Lendal Bridge to York Minster Library Square, St. Leonard's Place, Exhibition Square, Bootham Bar and beyond, improves the place and setting of this world class historic environment, stimulating trade, creating jobs and growing the economy. Reallocating released road space facilitates the realisation of series of public realm improvements along this route, and is an important step towards achieving the 'Reinvigorate York' transformation.
6. It is significant that on Lendal Bridge cars account for only 25% of person movements but comprise 80% of the vehicles, a disproportionate impact on the location and environs. 17% of person movements are by bus, 12% by cyclists and 41% are pedestrians.

The Economic Case for Investing in the City Centre

7. The quality of the city centre and its public spaces is absolutely critical to the continued economic prosperity of York, and particularly the city's ambition to become a top 5 UK city and top 10 mid sized European city¹. The city centre, as the 'face' of York, whilst still popular with many visitors and residents, is looking tired in places and will struggle in future years to compete with competitor cities across the UK and abroad.
8. Investment to uplift the city centre is important to encourage a greater proportion of the city's residents, as well as visitors, to spend time in the city. Experience in York (with the original footstreets implementation) and other cities who have taken bold decisions to invest in public streets and spaces, like Sheffield, Manchester and Bradford, have reported real uplifts in footfall, spend and business interest – as well as reaping the human benefits of a looked after and pedestrian-friendly place.
9. Local businesses have identified accessibility and movement in and around the city as being essential to improve. Key stakeholder groups such as Visit York, English Heritage, York Civic Trust and the Future York Group have all identified the need to improve streets and spaces across the city centre to provide a high quality public realm that is spectacular by day and night. Making the city

¹ York Economic Strategy 2011-15

more business-friendly will increase demand and build private sector confidence.

10. The York Visitor Survey 2011-12 found that the overwhelmingly top activity of our 7 million visitors each year is to “stroll around and enjoy the ambience of York”, together with “eating and drinking out”. Less than 2 million of the 7 million visitors actually go into the major attractions. This illustrates the vital importance of the quality of public spaces in attracting entrepreneurs, investors, students and people looking for jobs.
11. Resident surveys over a number of years have already shown support for measures to reduce traffic in the city centre. Recent surveys as part of the City Centre Area Action Plan (2008) consultation demonstrated specific support for restrictions on through traffic over Lendal Bridge.
12. More specifically the reduction of vehicular traffic along the route from Queen Street, past the station, the city walls, Lendal Bridge to York Minster Library Square, Bootham Bar and beyond, would vastly improve the place and setting of this world class historic environment.

The Opportunities and Rationale for Improving Movement in the City Centre. Why Now?

13. The ability to deliver on a bridge reprioritisation proposal impacts directly on the scope of the Reinvigorate York projects at Exhibition Square/St Leonard’s Place / Bootham Bar and Duncombe Place/Blake Street and the benefits that can be accrued, including the opportunity to showcase the city during the Tour de France event in 2014. Significant investment in the area (over £14m) is taking place around the art gallery, theatre and St Leonard’s Place to create a cultural hub. The whole area therefore acts as a gateway to the city centre, the station and Minster and cultural quarter
14. Reprioritisation of traffic on the bridge is critical to enabling the full potential of this investment to be realised. It would create spaces not dominated by traffic, free up space currently used by traffic thus enabling it to be used as shared space or public realm and allows the spaces to be more coherently joined together. However these areas can be maximally enhanced only if the majority of traffic is removed.

15. Equally importantly there is a one off opportunity with a number of critical transport projects (which will offer mitigation and complement the trial) are being delivered over the next two years, which bring with them external funding of approximately 22 million pounds; namely the i-Travel York project encouraging mode shift, Better Bus Area Funding delivering bus improvements, Access York A59 / Outer Ring Road roundabout upgrade and Poppleton Road/Boroughbridge Road bus lane improvements and new Park & Ride sites, also being delivered through Access York.
16. Reprioritising traffic on Lendal bridge also presents opportunities to make significant improvement to public transport, creating a corridor that enables greater reliability and consistency. If the growth aspirations for the city are to be delivered then the public transport offer will need to be strengthened in order to provide for the additional demand for travel within a constrained highway network. The greatest benefit would accrue in the 7:00am to 7:00pm period.
17. It is accepted that the re-routing of traffic will potentially lead to some detrimental displacement effects, and worsening congestion on some routes dependant upon the travel choices people make as a result of the changes. This will be influenced by the mitigation works pursued in the form of business and personalised travel planning, re-routed bus services etc.
18. However, research into roadspace reallocation (Cairns et al 2002) looking at 70 schemes in 11 countries, suggested that predictions of traffic problems were often 'unnecessarily alarmist' and that subject to local conditions 'significant reductions in overall traffic can occur', on average across the schemes, 11%. It also makes the point that how the scheme is perceived and reported in the media is critical. If as a result of any trial or permanent arrangement a significant reduction in overall traffic was achieved, as maybe likely, this would also contribute significantly to air quality improvements and targets.
19. The recently successful £2.2M Better Bus Area (2012) fund bid included proposals for the investigation of bus priority corridors on Lendal (and Ouse) bridges. The proposal is to support the implementation of other major public realm initiatives as well as contribute to the economic aspirations of the city by enabling growth whilst accommodating existing traffic in an alternative way.

Trialing restrictions on Lendal Bridge

20. The overview for the proposal for the trial is set out here:

- To be delivered using experimental Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO). Under an experimental TRO the trial can run for up to 18 months before it must either be revoked or made permanent. The first six months of the trial constitutes the objection or representation period.
- To commence during the summer holiday period in August 2013
- Commencing with 10:30am – 5:00pm which will need to operate for at least 6 months.
- A two-way restriction to be enforced with ANPR cameras based at the Rougier Street end of the bridge
- The enforced restriction to be in place between Rougier St/Lendal Bridge traffic signals and Lendal/Museum St junction (see plan attached to the report)
- Access only provision to be made from the Bootham/Gillygate junction into St. Leonard's Place
- The right turn out of Lendal to be reinstated (this will mean that for the period of the trial there will be a smaller informal pedestrian crossing point at this location, however as part of any possible permanent arrangement there is potential to deliver a shared space solution to the junction such as altered paving or a raised table)
- The 'no right turn' into Explore to be recinded

21. An evaluation report will be brought back to Cabinet and the objections to the Order considered before any consideration could be given to making the trial permanent. The aspiration is for a restriction from 7:00am to 7:00pm and the trial provides a step towards understanding what, where and how the traffic redistributes on the network and what impact the restriction has on residents and businesses.

22. A dedicated Project Manager is in place for the trial to ensure that the project runs efficiently and that full consultation and monitoring processes are in place.

23. The 'access only' arrangements on St. Leonard's Place will provide for access for businesses and residents and ensure they have 24 hour access to their premises. It will also enable legitimate access to the footstreets area.

24. The signing regime in relation to the enforced restriction and the wider signing around the city is still subject to final detailed design. The enforced restriction will follow as closely as possible the signing at Coppergate as it will not require any additional authorisation from the Department for Transport. It will also make the signing more consistent and understandable.
25. Any exemptions from the restriction are still subject to a final decision e.g. post office delivery vehicles but are being kept to a minimum and are 'except for operational requirements' as necessary.
26. Officers are in discussion with a company that uploads streetworks information to satellite navigation systems to understand whether it is possible to include the Lendal Bridge restriction.
27. A restriction on Lendal Bridge to through traffic could cause some problems on a number of bus services at specific locations. Mitigation measures are being considered as part of the trial and any permanent scheme (and are set out in more detail in Annex D of the 7th May Cabinet report). However, crucially, the proposal has the potential to generate substantial benefits to bus services. This is because such a closure will:
- Free buses from the congestion that they experience over the bridge itself
 - Reduce traffic flows on links near to the bridge, where buses also experience congestion currently
 - Reduce traffic flows and congestion on Ouse Bridge – bus services using either bridge benefits from the measure

Mitigation overview

28. The main points of the mitigations available are set out below. Further detail is included in Annex D of the Cabinet report.
29. The main focus is on providing a proactive traffic management service. Adjustment of the signal settings will be made to capitalise from the reductions on some routes and mitigate against impacts on others. Adjustment of the plans will enable more 'green time' to be given to some arms of the junction to reduce delay.

30. Additional network operator staff will be deployed to provide proactive management and control utilising equipment available e.g. CCTV. These staff will focus on monitoring the network and identifying problems which will enable any problems that develop to be dealt with immediately.
31. Through the BBAF provision is being made for bus wardens – who will monitor the situation on the ground and deal with issues directly with bus users and operators; and for a bus controller who will be based in the CCTV office. This person will monitor the CCTV specifically in relation to bus issues and seek to address them directly or avert potential issues before they escalate.
32. Through the LSTF a programme of personalised travel planning in the northern quadrant of the city is commencing in May 2013 and running for two years. Staff will be working with individuals to identify how, where and when they can change their travel behavior. Cycle facility improvements are being provided which will provide a more joined up network by infilling gaps and providing new routes e.g. Haxby to Clifton Moor and a park & pedal scheme at the P&R sites has just been launched through the business travel planning initiative.
33. Early discussions with bus operators have indicated general support and a willingness to work with the council to trial additional services, re-routing of services, fare promotions etc. Discussions with operators are on-going. The new Park & Ride at Poppleton on the A59 will provide additional public transport capacity in 2014.
34. The BBAF will also be delivering a number of other public transport improvements including: a bus priority lane on Clarence Street to improve bus reliability and reduce delay, improved ticketing arrangements with the introduction of a smart card, improved interchange areas, improved information and provision of real-time information and improvements to the existing city centre bus priority area on Coppergate.

Monitoring & Evaluation

35. Further detail is provided in the 7th May Cabinet report.

36. Additional traffic surveys have been undertaken to establish a baseline. Officers are working in partnership with the Institute of Transport Studies (ITS) at Leeds University to ensure critical and relevant data is collected, questionnaires are suitably designed and supporting contextual data is available.
37. The monitoring of the scheme will be undertaken by the Council but it is the intention that the evaluation will be undertaken independently by ITS.