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**Decision Session - Executive Member for City Strategy**

7<sup>th</sup> July 2009

Report of the Director of City Strategy

**BECKFIELD LANE – EXTENSION OF CYCLE ROUTE**

**Summary**

1. Following the recent introduction of off-road cycle facilities on the east side of Beckfield Lane between Boroughbridge Road and Ostman Road, this report looks at options for extending these facilities. A scheme proposal is developed which seeks to maximise the potential for promoting safe and sustainable travel to nearby schools, shops, and other local facilities whilst aiming to minimise likely construction difficulties and costs.

**Recommendations**

2. That the Executive Member notes the content of the report and considers the options available for taking the scheme forward.

Reason: To allow the scheme to progress in comparison with other cycle schemes around the city.

**Background**

3. At the EMAP meeting on 8 September 2008, approval was given to implement a package of highway improvements aimed at providing safe and sustainable links to the new Manor School development on Millfield Lane. This included widening the existing footway along Beckfield Lane on the east side from Boroughbridge Road to Newlands Drive, to provide an off-road segregated cycle track.
4. At this meeting approval in principle was given to the long-term aspiration of introducing off-road cycle tracks along either side of Beckfield Lane over its full length. However, it was recognised that this would be very expensive, and would probably need to be tackled in discrete phases. Based on value for money in terms of potential usage and benefit gained, it was proposed that the first priority should be to provide an off-road link on the east side of Beckfield Lane from Boroughbridge Road to either Almsford Road or Ostman Road. This would achieve an important link to the residential streets in the Danebury Drive area, which includes existing signed cycle routes giving access to York Road and beyond via traffic calmed streets.

5. The scheme that was subsequently approved at the EMAP meeting on 8 December 2008 is shown in **Annex A**. The scheme also included the provision of a zebra crossing between Grayshon Drive and Almsford Road primarily to assist pupils and parents from the northern end of Beckfield Lane walking to Carr Infant and Junior schools, but also for use by cyclists, after dismounting, for accessing the off-road cycle path. These measures have now been implemented.
6. At the EMAP meeting on 8 December 2008 Officers were also asked to develop proposals for extending cycle facilities further along Beckfield Lane. The outcome of this work is discussed below.

### **Extending Facilities on Beckfield Lane**

7. The recently introduced cycle facilities on Beckfield Lane between Boroughbridge Road and Ostman Road consist of a segregated shared use facility along the east side of the street. The existing footway has been widened to 3.8m with 1.8m allocated to the footway and 2.0m allocated to the cycle track. Cyclists are positioned on the carriageway side of the footway. Short sections of the cycle facilities around bus stops and pedestrian crossing points are unsegregated as pedestrians are expected to cross the full width of the footway / cycle track. Across side road junctions, the crossing point is set back from the junction to allow one car to wait at the give way line without blocking the crossing point. It is therefore logical to base any proposed extension of the cycle facility on Beckfield Lane to the same basic layout and dimensions.
8. Initial consideration was given to continuing the segregated footway / cycle track down the east footway to Wetherby Road but the feasibility study revealed major environmental and construction difficulties on the final section of footway between Runswick Avenue and Wetherby Road. These are:
  - a line of four mature trees adjacent to the footway edge which would have to be removed to allow widening
  - a severe slope on the verge which would be expensive to rectify.

Less significant problems with the east footway have also been identified. These are:

- the section near the alleyway to Jute Avenue is likely to have drainage problems similar to those on the northern section of Beckfield Lane
  - the need to cross the side road of Beckfield Place which provides access to around 55 properties but has very poor visibility when compared to other side roads on the route.
9. Fortunately, the verge width, gradient, side road and tree positions on the west footway over this length do look favourable for constructing an off-road cycle path. Photos comparing the two footways are shown in **Annex B**. It is therefore proposed that the majority of the southern cycle facilities should be constructed on the west footway as shown in **Annex C**.

10. As a consequence of switching cycling facilities onto the opposite side of Beckfield Lane, a crossing point for cyclists would be required. Consultation on previous schemes has highlighted the need for improved pedestrian crossing facilities near the shops south of Ostman Road and therefore, a toucan crossing in this area would serve both purposes. A pedestrian crossing survey has been undertaken in the vicinity of the proposed toucan crossing and has shown 588 crossing movements on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2009 in the 12 hour period from 7am to 7pm. It should be noted that a small tree would have to be removed in order to install a toucan crossing at this location. A similar tree would be planted elsewhere to mitigate its loss.
11. Based on the number of nearby properties, a segregated footway / cycle track on the west side of Beckfield Lane would also link into a potentially larger catchment area than on the east side. This also includes anyone cycling from the village of Knapton and beyond where there is a link over the outer ring road.
12. A complete route on Beckfield Lane would benefit other cyclists in the wider area including a significant number of Manor School pupils and a few York High School pupils. In addition, there is currently a very low percentage of Carr Infant and Junior School pupils who cycle to school, but the Schools have expressed a desire through their school travel plan to increase numbers therefore any improvements to cycle facilities in the area, particularly those aimed at more vulnerable cyclists, would be beneficial. There are also a number of cyclists who would use the proposed facilities for shorter local journeys. Potential destinations on the southern half of Beckfield Lane include a small supermarket, other local shops, takeaways and the household waste and recycling centre. The majority of these would be directly accessible from the proposed off-road cycle facility.
13. A traffic survey was undertaken in the vicinity of the Coop supermarket on the same day as the pedestrian crossing survey (Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2009 from 7am to 7pm) and counted 7747 motor vehicles on Beckfield Lane. The same survey also recorded cycling activity with 292 cycles on carriageway and 171 cycles on the existing footpath.
14. There have been five accidents on the southern half of Beckfield Lane in the last three years, only one involved a cyclist. This involved a car colliding with a cyclist travelling in the same direction whilst overtaking a parked car. Although this is not considered to indicate a significant road safety problem, if an off-road facility had been available the accident may not have occurred.
15. An initial estimate of £285,000 has been calculated for the entire scheme.

## **Consultation**

16. Officers consulted with Ward Councillors Horton and Simpson-Laing, plus Councillors D'Agorne, Gillies and Potter on the draft proposals. Their responses are summarised below.

### **Ward Member Views**

17. Cllr David Horton questions the justification of the scheme and considers that it is unlikely to represent value for money. He also points out that the side roads to the west of Beckfield Lane have a high proportion of elderly residents and consequently very few potential cyclists.
18. Cllr Tracey Simpson-Laing shares Cllr David Horton's concerns and comments that Beckfield Lane is a quiet road and the only traffic problem is speeding at night. She is also concerned that if cyclists are required to swap sides of the road part way along the route, many will simply continue along the same side using the footway.

### **Other Member Views**

19. Cllr Ian Gillies agrees with the Ward Councillors that the scheme would not be justified or offer value for money.
20. Cllr Ruth Potter states 'Following discussion with the relevant Ward members there appears to be some concern that this proposal is unnecessary and could be wasting money. I would like to see further consultation with local residents to ascertain the need for this extension prior to any scheme being taken forward'.
21. Cllr D'Agorne had not submitted any comments at the time of writing. His comments will be reported at the meeting.

### **Options on the Way Forward**

22. Officers consider that the Executive Member has three options to consider:

Option One – authorise continued design and public consultation on the proposal shown in **Annex C**;

Option Two – make any changes to the proposal that the Executive Member considers necessary before progressing to design and consultation;

Option Three – defer further work on this scheme at this time, but keep the scheme in reserve for consideration at a later date for potential inclusion in future transport capital programmes.

### **Analysis of Options**

23. Cycle facilities linking the new Manor School site to Beckfield Lane as far south as Ostman Road have recently been constructed. The proposals discussed in this report will complement those already in existence and provide another phase which will fulfil the aim of having cycle facilities over the full length of Beckfield Lane. These cycle facilities will serve destinations including local shops and other businesses, and provide benefits for cyclists travelling beyond the area, particularly to local schools. In addition, pedestrians will benefit from another controlled crossing facility in an area with high demand.

24. The Beckfield Lane scheme has the potential to contribute to the city's cycle route network and improve safe routes to schools. In a recent survey near the Coop, just south of Ostman Road, 292 cycles were recorded on the carriageway and 171 cycles on the footway in a 12 hour period (7am to 7pm). Compared to other routes on the 2008/09 and 2009/10 Capital Programme this is considered to be a medium level of cycling (for comparison, 12 hour cycle flows on Water End are around 800, and on Crichton Avenue around 680, which are considered to represent high levels of activity). The survey recorded significant levels of cycling activity sustained throughout the day suggesting that at this point on Beckfield Lane there are many cycling journeys other than to and from school. In contrast, surveys at the northern end of Beckfield Lane recorded 155 cyclists (92 on the carriageway and 63 on the footway) with most movements being at school arrival and leaving times.
25. Issues that will need to be explored further as part of the detailed design include how best to connect the route with the roundabout at the Wetherby Road junction, and how to minimise potential conflicts at side road junctions. The areas around two existing bus stops and the proposed toucan crossing will also need careful consideration, with good signing and lining to ensure the route can be easily understood by both cyclists and pedestrians. Extensive consultation with interested parties, including local residents and businesses would also be carried out.

## **Corporate Priorities**

Completion of a cycle route would contribute to the following corporate priorities:

26. Sustainable City – Providing an off-road facility for cyclists would help encourage cycling particularly for journeys to Manor School, but also for other residents who may otherwise travel by car.
27. Safer City – The carriageway of Beckfield Lane is quite narrow and cyclists may get squeezed by impatient car drivers, but an off-road route would prevent this from happening. In addition, a controlled crossing facility would provide a safer place for pedestrians and cyclists to cross the road.
28. Healthy City – Increased cycling as a result of any scheme will help improve the health and lifestyle of people. Extra crossing facilities may also promote increased walking particularly among more vulnerable pedestrians.
29. Local Transport Plan 2006-11 – A scheme would contribute towards objectives including improving accessibility by providing links to local schools and businesses, safer roads by giving cyclists an off-road option and pedestrians and cyclists a safer crossing point, and to a lesser extent tackling congestion by providing a more attractive choice to cycle for road users who feel vulnerable on-road.

## **Implications**

30. This report has the following implications:

### **Financial**

31. The feasibility study has been funded from the 2009/10 City Strategy Capital Programme which includes £20,000 for cycle scheme development. A separate allocation of £285k would be needed to deliver the scheme if it was decided to implement in 2009/10. The 2009/10 programme is over-committed so progress on other schemes (e.g. Blossom Street, Fishergate Gyratory, Wigginton Road) may need to be slowed and delivery slipped into 2010/11. Details of any adjustments would be presented to the Executive Member in the Monitor 1 report in September.

### **Human Resources**

32. None.

### **Equalities**

33. The proposed measures will benefit vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists. In particular improved crossing facilities will benefit the young and the elderly as well as the mobility and visually impaired.

### **Legal**

34. City of York Council, as highway authority for the area, has powers under the following Acts and associated Regulations to implement improvements to the highway and any associated measures:

- The Highways Act 1980
- The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984
- The Road Traffic Act 1988

### **Crime and Disorder**

35. None.

### **Information Technology**

36. None.

### **Land & Property**

37. All the proposed works would be within the adopted highway.

## Risk Management

38. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy, the main risks linked to this report are discussed below:-

### Strategic

39. None.

### Physical

40. None at this stage.

### Financial

41. The report contains initial estimates, as always upon more detailed investigation there is a potential risk that scheme costs may increase.

### Organisation/Reputation

42. There is a risk of criticism from the public if a complete route on Beckfield Lane is not pursued as discussed at the EMAP meetings of 8 September and 8 December 2008. Likewise, there is a risk of criticism from consultees who are against the proposal.
43. Measured in terms of impact and likelihood, the risk score for all these risks has been assessed at less than 16 (see table below). This means that at this point the risks need only to be monitored as they do not provide a real threat to the achievement of the objectives of this report.

Risk Category	Impact	Likelihood	Score
Financial	Medium	Possible	14
Organisation/Reputation	Medium	Possible	14

## Contact Details

### Author:

Louise Robinson  
Engineer  
Transport and Safety  
Engineering Consultancy  
Tel: (01904) 553463

### Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Damon Copperthwaite  
Assistant Director  
(City Development & Transport)

Report Approved



Date 17<sup>th</sup> June 2009

### Specialist Implications Officer(s)

There are no specialist implications.

Wards Affected: Acomb

All

For further information please contact the author of the report.

## **Background Papers:**

“Beckfield Lane – Pedestrian / Cyclist Improvements” - report to the meeting of the Executive Members for City Strategy and Advisory Panel held on 8 December 2008.

## **Annexes**

Annex A Beckfield Lane – Boroughbridge Road to Ostman Road – recently constructed pedestrian/cycle facilities, approved at EMAP 8 September and 8 December 2008.

Annex B Photos showing the east and west footway of Beckfield Lane.

Annex C Beckfield Lane – Ostman Road to Wetherby Road – extension of pedestrian/cycle facilities and existing on-road signed routes in the area.