
Meeting of Executive Members for City Strategy and Advisory Panel

29th October 2007

Report of the Director of City Strategy

MILLFIELD LANE / LOW POPPLETON LANE TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER OBJECTIONS

Summary

1. This report brings to the attention of the Advisory Panel the receipt of objections to a proposed change to the existing road closure at the above junction and seeks Members approval to overturn the objections and implement the Traffic Regulation Order in due course.

Background

2. The planning approval for the new Manor School site off Millfield Lane was granted earlier this year by the Planning Committee. It included a condition for the *“provision of a lowering bollard (or other means) and any associated works to facilitate public transport and emergency vehicle access only access between Millfield Lane and Low Poppleton Lane”* prior to occupation of the school. The reason given for this was *“in the interests of the safe and free passage of highway users and in the interests of providing sustainable transport option to the school site in accordance with policy T7c of the Development Control Local Plan”*. This policy requires development sites of this scale and nature to be served by a regular bus service within 400m offering a daytime frequency of 20 minutes. An alternative option of retaining the bus service on the A59 was considered. Whilst the site abuts the A59 Boroughbridge Road this was not considered an acceptable option due to both highway safety (including proximity to A59 / A1237 roundabout) and remoteness (over 800m) from the new school buildings / entrances.
3. It should be noted that as part of the development of the prestigious new Manor School other works would be taken forward to improve the highway network for the wider driving, cycling and walking population. Whilst the details of these works are not available at present they include proposals for:
 - Improved cycle / pedestrian facilities from Beckfield Lane along Millfield Lane to the new school.
 - A junction improvement at the Boroughbridge Road / Beckfield Lane junction, including pedestrian facilities.
 - A school safety zone on Millfield Lane at the school entrance.
 - New bus stop facilities at the school.
4. The developer has requested that the Traffic Regulation order be progressed to give him the required surety that the condition could be met before he committed to development works. Funding for the new school is time constrained and so the condition has to be resolved now so that construction

can be started very shortly otherwise construction of the new school may not be able to proceed.

5. The proposal only allows the local bus service, school buses and emergency services access through the closure was approved for advertising at an Officer in Consultation meeting on the 15th August this year. Taxis, private hire vehicles and all other vehicles would not be permitted to travel through the closure point. The bus service that currently operates is a 20 minute service; hence there would be 6 vehicles per hour using the route. By diverting the bus service off the A59 the existing delays to the service due to congestion will be reduced. In addition, the revised bus route, which the bus company is keen to implement, will be better able to serve the Poppleton Park residential estate and York Business Park. It is also worth noting that there is a possibility that the bus company may increase the frequency of the bus service to every 15 minutes, in which case the number of buses per hour would rise to 8 in total. The plan in Annex A shows the area in question.
6. The closure point is proposed to remain at the present closure position. Only a low number of vehicles will be allowed through the closure position (currently 6 buses per hour, 3 in each direction) so a priority working system from one direction or the other can be used.
7. The bulk of the properties affected by the removal of the bus route will remain within a 5 to 10 minute walk of either the revised bus route and/or the hourly Ripon to York bus service that uses the A59.

Consultation

8. In line with legal requirements, the Traffic Regulation Order proposals have been advertised in the local press giving a three week period for representations to be made (the closing date was 17th November 2007). In addition, it is City Council policy to put notices up on street and deliver details to the properties adjacent to the proposals, in this case those properties in Millfield Lane and Low Poppleton Lane. A copy of the proposals was also sent out to Ward Councillors and to Nether and Upper Poppleton Parish Councils for their information and consideration.
9. Seven written representations were made against the proposals and they are reproduced in Annex B along with officer's comments. The main issues raised and officers comments are:

- Concerns regarding safety of the proposals.

A detailed design has not been carried out for how the control point would operate. The low number and speed of vehicles combined with the characteristics of the site do not suggest that safety will be compromised. In addition, schemes of this nature all have to go through a safety audit process during the design and implementation to ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to ensure the safe operation.

- Cost of the proposals.

The developer would fund the proposals.

- Loss of public transport facilities for some residents.

The revised 20 minute bus service route would miss out the section of Boroughbridge Road from Beckfield Lane to Poppleton and Station Road

Poppleton. An hourly bus service from York to Ripon along the A59 would remain, but there would not be a service along Station Road, Poppleton.

- Low Poppleton Lane is not a suitable road for the proposal.

Millfield Lane and Low Poppleton Lane are both public highways that are able to accommodate the low number of additional vehicles (6 per hour) that would be able to use the route.

- There would not be a decrease in vehicles using the road.

Parents dropping children off on the Poppleton side of the existing closure point will be removed entirely leading to far fewer drivers making a 3 point turn at the closure position. In addition, drivers visiting the school during the day will also no longer use Low Poppleton Lane.

10. No formal comments have been received from either Parish Council.

Options and Analysis

11. The options available are set out below:

- A. Uphold the objections and refer back to the Planning Committee.

This is not the recommended action as the Planning Committee's decision is in line with Council policy on public transport that has been applied to other developments and delays providing the surety to the developer that the approved development can be occupied on completion. In addition, other developers could also reasonably expect to have their developments treated in a similar manner, which would then bring the agreed Council policy into disrepute.

- B. Advertise a revised set of restrictions that either relaxes the control to allow additional vehicles through the control point, such as taxis and Private Hire vehicles. or further restricts the class of vehicle permitted through the closure point.

This is not the recommended action as the only practical way of meeting the planning approval condition is to allow just buses through the existing closure point.

- C. Implement the restrictions as advertised.

This is the recommended action for the reasons outlined above.

Corporate Priorities

12. Considering this matter is part of our focus on the needs of customers and residents in designing and providing services.

Implications

13. There are no Financial, Human Resource, Equality, Legal, Crime and Disorder, IT, Property or other implications associated with the recommendations in this report.

Risk Management

14. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy there are no risks associated with the recommendations in this report.

Recommendations

15. That the Advisory Panel advise the Executive Member to implement the proposals as advertised and inform the objectors of this decision.

Reasons:

Local Plan Policy (T7c) adopted by the City of York Council requires development sites of this scale and nature be served by a regular bus service within 400m offering a daytime frequency of 20 minutes. In this case the number of additional vehicles per hour would rise by just 6 unless the bus company increase their service to every 15 minutes in which case the number of additional vehicles per hour will be 8.

The use of a controlled access point that allows only buses through is the only practical way of achieving this outcome without opening up the route to all classes of vehicle.

Contact Details

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Report Approved

Date 17/10/07

Wards Affected: Acomb and Rural West York

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None.

Annexes:

Annex A – Plan of the proposed restrictions.

Annex B – Copies of the objections to the proposals.