

**Decision Session –  
Executive Member for Transport**

**20 October 2020**

**Hopgrove Lane South - Proposed Left Turn Lane**

**Summary**

1. This report prepared, in accordance with the decision by the Executive Member in 2018, in response to a petition presents the findings of preliminary investigations into the feasibility, likely cost, and impact of providing a left filter traffic lane on Hopgrove Lane South at its junction with Malton Road.

**Recommendations**

2. The Executive Member is asked to:

Note the findings of the preliminary feasibility investigations and instruct Officers not to progress the proposal any further.

Reason:

The feasibility study responds to a petition received in 2018 requesting the provision of an extra traffic lane on Hopgrove Lane South aimed at reducing the delay currently experienced by drivers turning onto Malton Road. The officer recommendation is based on the assessment that, on balance, the time-savings for drivers would not outweigh the road safety concerns or justify the cost. There is also a risk that the proposal could attract more through traffic to Hopgrove Lane South, and have negative impacts on nearby villages.

**Background**

3. In February 2018 it was reported to a former Executive Member that a petition containing 172 signatures had been received calling on the

council to provide a left filter lane at the Hopgrove Lane South/Malton Road junction. The Executive Member was presented with two options. One was to take no further action, but this was not recommended or approved because it was thought there might be potential to implement a cost effective scheme. Therefore option two was approved, which was to carry out feasibility work to assess the likely cost, practicality, and potential impact of such a scheme. As part of the approval it was agreed that the findings of the feasibility investigation should be brought back to a subsequent meeting to decide if a scheme should be included in a future capital programme.

## **Feasibility Assessment**

4. As part of the feasibility study the following key pieces of work have been undertaken:-
- developing an outline design
  - a detailed traffic survey ( to help assess the existing situation, and potential impact of introducing a left turn lane)
  - a utility search (to assess the extent and likely cost of protecting or diverting underground services affected by the scheme)
  - checking previous accident records and undertaking a Road Safety Audit of the proposed scheme (to assess the road safety implications of the proposal)
  - producing a cost estimate for delivering the project, and an assessment of its worth in transport terms (to enable scheme “value for money” to be assessed, and to guide future budget allocation needs)
  - initial consultation with local Ward Councillors ( to gauge support and identify concerns)

The main findings are summarised and discussed below:-

### *Outline Design*

5. The outline design developed for the feasibility study is shown on the plan in **Annex A**. This provides a second exit lane about 35m long, which is enough for about six cars to occupy. The design keeps the scheme within the public highway (this avoids the need to acquire adjacent land), and maintains a footway on the south side of the road. The centre-line road marking on Hopgrove Lane South has been kept in its existing position so that space for vehicles turning from Malton Road is not reduced.

### *Traffic Surveys*

6. Traffic surveys were carried out over a two-day period covering a Friday and Saturday (7am to 7pm each day). Full turning counts were carried out for all arms of the junction, and queue lengths/delays were measured on Hopgrove Lane South. The key findings are presented below, along with discussion about their relevance to the proposal. A more detailed summary of the survey results is provided in **Annex B**.
7. The traffic survey results confirm that Hopgrove Lane South carries a significant level of traffic in both directions (around 40% of that on Malton Road), and that a high percentage of traffic heading towards Malton Road turns right at the junction (about 45%). The busiest periods occurred in the late afternoon on Friday, and around late morning /early afternoon on Saturday.
8. Drivers making this right turn often have to wait a significant time to find a safe gap to exit on to Malton Road (up to 21 seconds after reaching the give-way line) and queues in excess of 12 vehicles regularly build up on Hopgrove Lane South at busy periods.
9. These figures indicate that introducing a second exit lane would be of benefit by enabling left turners to avoid being stuck behind right turners. Based on the split between left and right turners, and the available space to build a second lane, it is estimated that at peak queuing times a left turner could avoid waiting for around six drivers in front of them to turn right. It is estimated this could reduce save them between 1 and 2 minutes delay.
10. Right turners would also benefit from twin exit lanes by not having to wait for left turners in front of them. The benefit would not be as great as for the left turners, but it would still be significant.

### *Utility Search*

11. Although there does appear to be available space in the public highway to widen to road to provide a separate left turn lane, there are known to be many underground services located in area. Enquires have been made with the various utility companies to check what is there, and give advice about what work is likely to be required to protect or divert their equipment if the scheme was to be constructed.

12. The feedback indicates that underground infrastructure linked to electricity and communication services would be affected and require protection or diversion. The initial estimated cost of the necessary work is around £62K.

#### *Road Safety Assessment*

13. The formal accident records compiled by the Police show 4 incidents at the junction over the last 5 years. All of these resulted in “slight” injuries. This accident rate is below the trigger point for a local safety scheme investigation to be initiated.
14. A stage one (feasibility) road safety audit has been carried out on the outline design. This has highlighted a number of concerns, most of which could be addressed in the detailed design of the scheme. However, the most significant concern is that left-turners in a second exit lane will have difficulty seeing oncoming traffic because of right-turners. This would increase the probability of a collision with approaching traffic on Malton Road, especially with cyclists riding past the junction. It would be difficult to address this fully in the scheme design without major remodelling of the junction geometry.
15. There is also known to be an existing problem of drivers approaching the junction from the A1237 with their left-turn indicator flashing, although they are not intending to turn into Hopgrove Lane South. This can lead to drivers to pull out of Hopgrove Lane South on the assumption that the approaching vehicle is about to turn left. This problem has been a factor in at least two of the recent accidents at the junction. The proposed scheme would do nothing to change the risks linked to this problem.

#### *Costs/Value*

16. The total cost of the project, including service protection works, professional fees, and a contingency allowance, is estimated at £120K. This funding would need to be allocated from a future transport capital programme, and the scheme would need to be assessed as a priority when assessed against other spending options under consideration at that time.
17. The scheme would undoubtedly produce significant time-savings for users of Hopgrove Lane South at certain times of the day (it is estimated

that left turning traffic could save between 1 and 2 minutes delay at peak times).

18. The scheme would primarily benefit car occupants, such as commuters and shoppers. It is therefore considered be of low priority when set against the Council's "Hierarchy of Transport Users", and it also has little value in terms of contributing to any of the council's Transport Policy aims, which are:-
- To enable everyone to undertake their activities in the most sustainable way and to have a transport system that:
  - Has people walking, cycling and using public transport more;
  - Makes York easier to get around with reliable and sustainable links within its own area, to adjacent areas and cities and the rest of the UK;
  - Enables people to travel in safety, comfort and security, whatever form of transport they use;
  - Provides equal access to opportunities for employment, education, training, good health and leisure for all, and
  - Addresses the transport-related climate change and local air quality issues in York.

#### *Ward Councillor Consultation*

19. In preparing this feasibility report it was thought helpful to be aware of the views of Ward Members representing the surrounding areas. Additional comments received from residents in support of the provision of a left turn lane since the petition was originally submitted have been considered by Officers. The junction is located within Huntington and New Earswick Ward, but is very close to three other ward areas as shown on the plan in **Annex C**. Hence all the ward councillors representing these areas were consulted to get their initial views on the proposal.
20. Responses were received from the following Cllrs, and their key points/comments are summarised below :-

Cllr Ayre – supports the proposal.

Cllr Runciman - supports the proposal

Cllr Orrell – Supports the proposal, and comments that this junction saw an increase in traffic when Vangarde opened and could well have a further increase when the Stadium complex opens. Also, improving the

traffic flow at this junction would be positive in terms of climate change and the impact of air pollution on local residents.

Cllr Warters - Whilst the scheme would get traffic moving better at this location, consideration needs to be given to the consequences of making this route more attractive to motorists on the A166. This could see traffic increases through Holtby, Murton, and Stockton on the Forest.

Cllr Fisher - supports the proposal, and comments that most drivers on the A166 already uses the road through Holtby as a cut through to get to Monks Cross and the north east area of York. They accept the delay at Hopgrove Lane South because it is still quicker than going via the A64 at most times. Hence the scheme proposed will not add much, if any, additional traffic through Holtby since everyone already travels that way anyway. The residents of Holtby and Murton will also gain as they can get to the Monks Cross area more quickly.

Cllr Doughty - Supports the proposal, although appreciates the concern highlighted by Cllr Warters

21. Overall, this feedback has shown strong support for the proposal from the local Ward Councillors. The main reasons are reducing the amount of queuing traffic on Hopgrove Lane South, and the delay for motorists using this route to access Malton Road.
22. A concern put forward by Cllr Warters is the possible increase in traffic elsewhere if Hopgrove Lane South became more attractive to use. However, a counter argument was put forward by Cllr Fisher that drivers are already choosing to use Hopgrove Lane South over possible alternatives despite the current delays, and improving this would not lead to any significant transfer from elsewhere.
23. Both of the views put forward by the Cllrs Warters and Fisher are considered reasonable. However it is considered likely that there is a degree of suppressed demand caused by the delays at the existing junction which could be released if the delays were removed leading to additional traffic in nearby villages. It is difficult to predict what the actual outcome would be. Ideally, the effects of providing the extra exit lane would be tested via a trial, but unfortunately this could not be done without physically widening the road. In such a situation computer traffic modelling is considered the best way of getting further information to guide the decision.

24. To assess the wider effects on the road network of the proposed junction alteration would require strategic rather than local modelling to be carried out. This is more time consuming and costly to undertake as it would require an update to the Council's citywide transport model.

If further modelling were to be undertaken, it would be sensible to test other possible modifications to the junction to assess what the local and wider effects are likely to be. For example, one alternative could be to prohibit the right-turn out of Hopgrove Lane South. This would reduce the delays for those exiting onto Malton Road, but not by as much as a dedicated left-turn lane. The former right-turners would also experience increased journey distance and delays, and changes to the wider traffic patterns could cause other problems elsewhere. Accessibility for residents in the area to the local road network would be restricted at all times by the change in response to an intermittent issue. Enforcement of the banned turn could also be an issue, meaning there would probably be a need to introduce expensive physical measures or CCTV camera monitoring to deter right-turns still being made. Such a change may also introduce additional road safety concerns which would need to be considered. It is not considered viable to put in place an experimental change without physical measures as abuse of the restriction is considered to be likely.

## **Options**

25. The Executive Member is asked to consider the findings of the feasibility study as set out in this report, and then decide on one of the following options:
- i) Approve the proposal for detailed design and implementation (and allocation of the necessary budget in the 21/22 Capital Programme)
  - ii) Request a further report back after strategic traffic modelling is carried out (to help inform a final decision on the scheme being progressed and included in a future Capital Programme). As part of this modelling work other ways of modifying the operation of the junction would also be explored, such as prohibiting certain movements.
  - iii) Abandon the proposal now, and inform petitioners of the reasons (limited benefits, road safety concerns, costs etc.)

## **Analysis**

26. The proposal to widen Hopgrove Lane South to provide a second exit lane onto Malton Road is attractive in terms of queuing and delay reduction for motorists, but also carries risks for adding to traffic problems elsewhere. The scheme would have a negative impact on road safety at the junction. It is also an expensive proposal, which would contribute little in terms of meeting transport policy objectives or current Council Plan priorities (see paragraph 28).
27. In view of the above analysis officers could not recommend Option i), to implement the scheme without any further assessment. Option ii), to delay a decision until traffic modelling is carried out to help answer the question of possible impacts elsewhere, does offer a possible way forward. However, it is already known that the left-turn lane proposal has road safety concerns and would be expensive. Any alternative junction modifications would have similar issues. Therefore Option iii), not taking the proposal any further, is recommended by officers.

## **Council Plan**

28. The Key Priorities set out in the Council's Plan 2019-23 are as follows:
  - Well-paid jobs and an inclusive economy
  - A greener and cleaner city
  - Getting around sustainably
  - Good health and wellbeing
  - Safe communities and culture for all
  - Creating homes and world-class infrastructure
  - A better start for children and young people
  - An open and effective council
29. The introduction of the second exit lane on Hopgrove Lane South would not make a significant contribution to any of these priorities. The most relevant is "getting around sustainably". The proposal would not encourage any transfer away from car use, but might result in a very small improvement to local air quality by reducing the amount of traffic queuing on Hopgrove Lane South. However, if it attracted more traffic to the road, this benefit could be negated.



## Implications

30.

- **Financial** - The initial feasibility study has cost around £8K. This was largely funded from the Transport Capital Programme for 19/20, and the balance is being funded from a £10K allocation in the 20/21 Programme. The possible additional modelling work to assess wider impact of a scheme and develop a more detailed design is estimated at £8K. This could also be met from the 20/21 Capital Programme allocation. The funding for implementing the scheme, estimated in the region of £120K, would need to be considered for inclusion in a future Capital Programme
- **Human Resources (HR)** - There are no HR implications.
- **One Planet Council / Equalities** - There are no equalities implications.
- **Legal** - There are no legal implications.
- **Crime and Disorder** - There are no crime and disorder implications,
- **Information Technology (IT)** - There are no IT implications.
- **Property** - There are no property implications.

## Risk Management

31. **Physical** - there is always a potential for new safety issues to arise whenever an existing traffic arrangement is altered, and potential for traffic diversions. Mitigation would be via traffic modelling, and further stages of road safety audit during the design.
32. **Organisation/Reputation** - there is a risk of criticism from the public in implementing a scheme to which some people may have objections, but equally there could also be criticism from potential supporters of the scheme if it is not implemented. Good quality consultation should ensure that well informed decisions are made about the scheme and reduce the risk of public criticism.

33.

<b>Risk Category</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Score</b>
Physical	Medium	Unlikely	6
Organisation/Reputation	Medium	Unlikely	6

Measured in terms of impact and likelihood, the risk scores have all been assessed at lower than 16. This means that at this point, the risks need only to be monitored, as they do not provide a threat to the achievement of the objectives of this report.

### **Contact Details**

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**Report**  **Date** 7 October 2020  
**Approved**

**Wards Affected:**

**Huntington and New Earswick  
Heworth Without  
Strensall  
Osbalwick and Derwent**

**For further information please contact the author of the report.**

**Background Papers:**

*Hopgrove Lane South Petition* - report to Executive Member for Transport and Planning Decision Session meeting on 15/2/2018.

**Annexes:**

**Annex A** - Outline Design Plan

**Annex B** - Survey Results

**Annex C** - Ward Boundaries