
**Decision Session – Executive Member for
Transport and Planning**

17 May 2018

Report of Corporate Director of Economy and Place

North York Bus Improvement Scheme

Summary

1. This Decision Session paper sets out a scheme to improve the reliability of bus services on Wigginton and Haxby Roads and requests permission from the Executive Member to go out to consultation on the scheme with local residents, businesses and other effected stakeholders.

Recommendations

2. That the Executive Member gives permission for the further development of the scheme set out in this paper – specifically that the scheme now goes forward to public consultation and engineering development with a final decision to be taken on whether to proceed with the scheme after the Summer.

Reason: This will allow the scheme to be delivered in early 2019.

Background

3. The Haxby Road and Wigginton Road corridors are critical to bus services in York, but suffer from congestion. There is ongoing development on both corridors (for example, increasing demand from traffic to and from York District Hospital, and the future demand from the Nestle South development), and traffic modelling work undertaken to support York's Local Plan shows substantial increases in delay in the area, particularly on Wigginton Road as a result of generalised traffic growth in York.
4. Accordingly, City of York Council has been taking forward a phased improvement programme for the Haxby Road and Wigginton Road corridor. The first stage of this programme has been the improvements made to the Clarence Street/ Lord Mayor's Walk

junction in Summer 2017. The scheme discussed in this paper allows an extension of this approach to cover the area between the northern end of Clarence Street and Crichton Avenue/ Wigginton Road junction.

5. The Haxby Road and Wigginton Road corridors are complex in traffic terms. There are multiple junctions, particularly on Wigginton Road, and these junctions have interactions with one-another, and other traffic features such as bus stops. Cumulatively they impose a lot of “side-friction” on traffic as it travels along the corridor, slowing it down. As such, conventional modelling techniques which look at the capacity of individual junctions offer only a partial analysis of conditions on the corridor. Consequently, the work presented here has been informed by a VISSIM micro-simulation model which can look at the cumulative effect of a number of interventions on the corridor being taken forward together. It should also be noted that, as this work is part of an ongoing programme to improve reliability on this corridor, development of the VISSIM model will allow CYC to evaluate further interventions on the corridor as development sites come forward and/ or traffic volumes increase in the area. More information about the model, and the tests conducted using it, can be found in Annex A of this paper. It should be borne in mind that the tests presented in Annex A are not exhaustive.
6. Observation, analysis of bus journey time data and modelling all indicate that, since the improvements made at the Clarence Street/ Lord Mayor’s Walk junction, the worst source of unreliability for buses on the corridor is found on the stretch of Wigginton Road between the Crichton Avenue bridge and the Wigginton Road/ Haxby Road/ Clarence Street junction. The delays are particularly severe at Hospital shift start and end times. At these times it usually takes around 8 minutes (and sometimes much longer) for buses to cover the 1.5 km between Crichton Avenue and the Bootham/ Gillygate junction – an average speed of 7mph.
7. Slow and unreliable journey times inconvenience all road users, frustrate policies to encourage bus use to the Hospital and worsen local air quality. Because the bus services on Wigginton Road and Haxby Road travel to other districts in York, improvements here can beneficially effect services across the York area. Also, more reliable journey times on the approaches to York city centre reduces the need for buses to wait time in the city centre because operators don’t need to leave extra time in schedules to accommodate unreliability.

8. York's Better Bus Area programme includes an allocation of funds to enact measures which improve the reliability of bus services in the city and because some of the worst delays in York are found on Wigginton Road a funding allocation was made from the Better Bus Area to develop a scheme to reduce delays in this area.
9. Work on this phase of the Wigginton Road/ Haxby Road scheme to date has consisted of:
 - The micro-simulation modelling exercise to assess the effectiveness of various interventions
 - Outline engineering design and feasibility assessment of potential interventions
 - Discussion with York's bus operators about their assessment of delays in the area and potential solutions
 - An internal consultation to assess whether there are, within City of York Council, any fundamental technical objections to pursuing the scheme.
10. The modelling work showed that it is possible to improve journey times for buses on Wigginton Road through three interventions:
 - Remodelling the Wigginton Road/ Haxby Road/ Clarence Street junction (as shown in figure 1) to prioritise Wigginton Road traffic (saving of up to 20 seconds);
 - Replacing the existing mini-roundabout at the junction between Fountayne Street, Wigginton Road and the Hospital's northern access road with a conventional give way junction (figure 2) (saving of up to 10 seconds); and
 - Working with the bus operators to reduce the amount of time buses wait at the Fountayne Street pair of stops – by making changes to their fares structures and timing points so that vehicles no longer have to wait time at these stops (saving of up to 10 seconds).
11. However, cumulatively, by reducing "friction" along the corridor the three interventions enacted together are estimated to be able to reduce average journey times for buses by up to 90 seconds southbound on Wigginton Road in peak traffic, and 30 seconds northbound. Southbound journey times on Haxby Road would increase slightly – by around 10 seconds, because of the additional priority given to Wigginton Road traffic. Although the measures are being taken forward to benefit bus services, the benefits will be felt by all road users on Wigginton Road. It is estimated, from the modelling work undertaken, that the benefits just for buses and their passengers will be around 3 times the cost of the measures. Bus operators are supportive of the project.

12. Improving conditions for pedestrians and cyclists has been a critical consideration in the design process for the interventions proposed here. The conceptual designs made in the project so far have sought to enlarge the pedestrian islands at the Clarence St/ Haxby Road/ Wigginton Road junction and reduce conflicts at the Fountayne Street/ Wigginton Road junction by replacing the existing mini-roundabout with a conventional priority junction, which will reduce conflicts experienced by cyclists heading straight along Wigginton Road – the majority of cyclists on the corridor. Attention will also be given to the movement between Wigginton Road and Clarence Street/ Lowther Street, where there currently exist conflicts between cyclists travelling from Wigginton Road to Clarence Street and other traffic travelling from Wigginton Road to Lowther Street. The designs produced to date have not been subject to a road safety audit – as this is something which will take place in the next stage of the project – and will focus in greater depth on resolving conflicts between vehicle traffic, cyclists and pedestrians.
13. A separate modelling exercise considered the potential impacts of changes to traffic arrangements on Fountayne Street and Vyner Street – specifically whether there could be a benefit of reopening these streets to general traffic. It was concluded that, whilst this intervention would reduce traffic volumes and delays experienced on Wigginton Road and at the Wigginton Road/ Haxby Road/ Clarence Street junction, it was not acceptable to progress it because of the negative impact on the amenity of Fountayne Street and Vyner Street which would see substantial increases in traffic volumes, queuing traffic and noise and emissions from traffic in areas which currently see very low traffic volumes. It would also be contrary to City of York Council's adopted mode hierarchy which places the needs of pedestrians and cyclists above those of drivers.
14. Work is also ongoing with York District Hospital to reduce the impact of Hospital traffic in the area by improving the NHS Trust's travel plan capability. Within the next year City of York Council officers will also be assessing options for improving traffic flow in the Crichton Avenue bridge area, although interventions here could be very expensive if they require significant infrastructure work on the bridge and its approaches – and it may not be possible to achieve a significant improvement which is affordable.

Figure 1: Wigginton Road/ Haxby Road/ Clarence Street junction conceptual design (superimposed on existing junction)

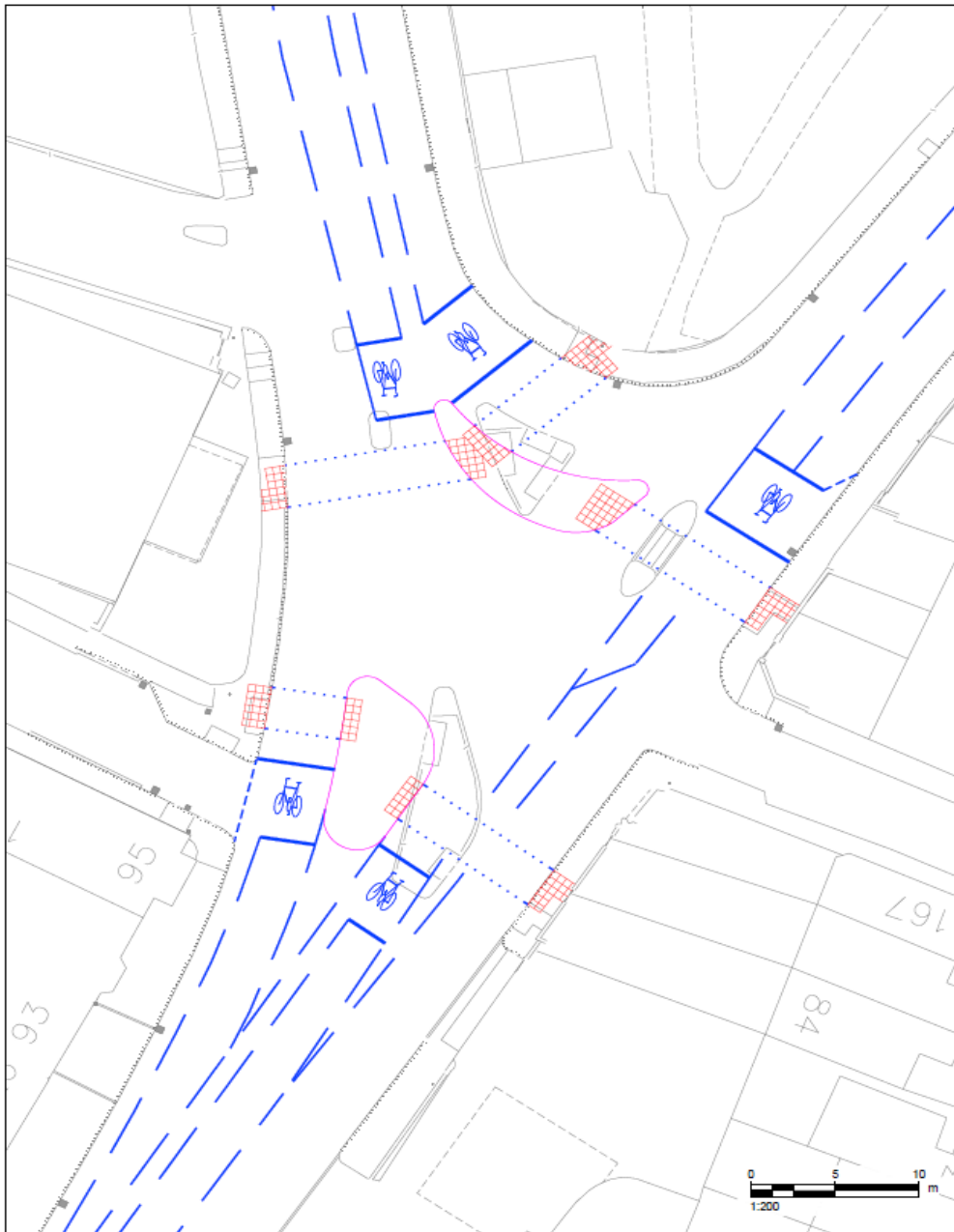


Figure 2: Wigginton Rd/ Fountayne St junction conceptual design



15. Initial engineering feasibility studies have shown that the proposed interventions in this phase of the scheme are broadly feasible and deliverable within a budget of £150,000 to £200,000.
16. The scheme has been shared with bus operators, who are supportive of the measures, and has been consulted on with key officers within City of York Council, who have not raised any fundamental objection to the scheme, although the exercise has

highlighted the need for detailed design to best meet the requirements of cyclists and pedestrians on the corridor.

17. If the Executive Member approves putting the scheme out to public consultation, then an indicative timescale for delivering the scheme would be:
 - Public consultation: June 2018
 - Consideration of responses and engineering implications: July/ August 2018
 - Road Safety Audit: August 2018
 - Final Decision to proceed: September 2018
 - Scheme enacted: Early 2019 (dependent on roadspace availability/ labour availability around other works in the city).

Corporate Strategy

18. Considering this matter does not impact on the corporate strategy.

Implications

19. The following are the only identified implications.
 - **Financial** – A budget of £250,000 has been identified for delivering this project, funded by York’s Better Bus Area. Approximately £50,000 has been spent on scheme development so far, and it is anticipated that the scheme will cost around a further £200,000 to deliver. If this decision session grants permission to further develop the scheme, then a detailed cost estimate for the scheme will be prepared. It should be noted that the expenditure on scheme development also supports the development of further interventions on the corridor as detailed in paragraph 6 above.
 - **Human Resources (HR)** - There are no HR implications
 - **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 as all works are taking place within public highway boundaries.

Risk Management

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

Contact

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**Report
Approved**



Date 30.04.18

Wards affected:

Clifton, Guildhall, Haxby & Wigginton, Heworth,
Huntington & New Earswick

Annex:

Annex A – Clarence Street Bus Priority