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**Meeting of Executive Members for City Strategy  
and Advisory Panel**

**20 October 2008**

Report of the Director of City Strategy

**James Street Link Road Phase 2  
Stage 1 – Traffic Forecast Refresh**

**Summary**

1. This report presents the output of traffic modelling recently undertaken, to refresh the modelling previously undertaken as part of the Foss Basin Transport Implications report completed in 2003 (2003 Study), in order to confirm the need for James Street Link Road Phase 2 (Phase 2) and determine the optimum time for the construction of the short remaining eastern section for its completion.
2. This report also presents several recommendations for progressing the design and construction of the short remaining southern section of Phase 2 (P2S), in order to secure best value for the council.

**Background**

3. The 'Foss Basin' area of York located to the north-east of the city centre, has undergone significant development in recent years, including: the construction of a new supermarket (Morrisons) and DIY superstore (Homebase), both of which are off Foss Islands Road; the council's new Eco-Depot, off James Street and the Persimmon's homes residential development off Heworth Green, which is nearing completion.
4. In recognition of the anticipated traffic impacts in the Foss Basin and the wider area encompassing Heworth Green, Melrosegate and Lawrence Street / Hull Road, generated by these developments, (see Annex A) Jacobs Consultancy was commissioned to undertake the 'Foss Basin Transport Implications' study. The study sought to investigate the implications of development proposals within the Foss Basin area of York, by modelling a series of development scenarios and network configurations to forecast future traffic flows and test highway improvement proposals. The study report was received in August 2003. It stated that the modelling indicated that James Street Link Road, linking Lawrence Street to Heworth Green could play a significant role in alleviating congestion on the Inner Ring Road, adding that constructing both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the link would yield the maximum benefit, as Phase 1 alone had only limited impact.

5. Following receipt of this report, construction of Phase 1 of the link road, which incorporates dedicated cycle-lanes, cycleways and footways, commenced in 2005/06 as part of the Local Transport Plan 2001-2006 (LTP1) Capital Programme. Its construction continued into 2006/07, coinciding with the first year of the Local Transport Plan 2006-2011 (LTP2). It opened on the 27th of November 2006, connecting Layerthorpe with Lawrence Street, with the aim of relieving congestion on Foss Islands Road.
6. Phase 2 of the James Street Link Road connects Layerthorpe to Heworth Green. The majority of this link (the northern section – P2N) is effectively provided by the access road currently being constructed by Persimmon Homes to its ‘The Forum’ residential development off Heworth Green, which is nearing completion. The remaining 90m (approximately) southern section of the Link Road (P2S), which will run from the southern end of P2N through to a new traffic signal controlled junction with Layerthorpe, passes through land which is currently owned by a private developer and has Outline Planning Permission for residential development, subject to the signing of an Agreement (construction of this section of the link is one of the conditions attached to the permission). As yet this agreement has not been signed, and it is not clear at the present time if and when a decision to grant permission (and hence the period within which the development will need to be realised) will be made. Negotiations are ongoing between the developer and Officers to ascertain if, when and how the site is intended to be developed.
7. In order for the council to be in a more informed position for making its decision regarding the revocation of Outline Planning Permission and the condition requiring the construction of Phase 2, Halcrow was appointed, in July 2008, to perform further modelling to refresh the modelling undertaken for the Foss Basin Transport Implications study. The purpose of this refresh was to:
  - Affirm the need for James Street Link Road Phase 2 to realise the full benefits of Phase 1 (already open);
  - Determine the optimum time period for the construction of P2S, expressed as the three following bands, to provide the best financial return for the council:
    - Up to 2011 (i.e. within the period of LTP2)
    - Between 2011 and 2021 (i.e. medium-to-long-term)
    - Post 2021 (i.e. long term, towards the end of the Local Development Framework period)
8. The modelling refresh forms the first stage of a 4-stage study, design and construction programme for the link road as summarised below:
  - **Stage 1:** - A refresh of the modelled network and resultant traffic forecasts previously undertaken;
  - **Stage 2:** - An initial feasibility study to investigate the extent of contamination on, or in the vicinity of, the proposed link and present design options;

- **Stage 3:** - Detailed design of the section of link road and its junction with Layerthorpe, and
- **Stage 4:** - construction

### **The traffic modelling refresh and its findings (Study Stage 1, Part 1)**

9. The 2003 Study concluded that constructing James Street Link Road Phase 1 would relieve some congestion in the peak hours, but maximum relief would be achieved by building Phase 2 as well. On Saturdays Phase 1 with Phase 2 alleviates Melrosegate and Layerthorpe. The first element of the refresh was to review the development assumptions and modelling methodology of the 2003 Study, and perform further modelling if this was found to be out of date.
10. The refresh used the latest version of the Council's SATURN model (2004), which, when projecting forward to 2011, 2021 and beyond 2021, incorporated higher levels of development demand than the 2003 modelling as new development opportunities have come forward in York since the 2003 study was undertaken.

#### **2011**

11. For 2011, the modelling showed that 'without Phase 2' the five following junctions would approach or exceed their theoretical operating capacity:
  - The Lord Mayor's Walk/ Monk Gate junction on the Inner Ring Road (IRR);
  - The Layerthorpe/ Foss Island Road junction on the IRR;
  - The Mill Lane/ Heworth Green junction on Heworth Green;
  - The Layerthorpe/ Proposed James St Link Road junction, and
  - The Mill Lane/ Hawthorne Grove junction on Layerthorpe.
12. For the 'With Phase 2' in 2011 scenario, the IRR junctions improve slightly, but a more significant reduction of flow on the IRR between Layerthorpe and Monkgate is forecast. All the other junctions operate in a stable manner within their capacity.

#### **2021**

13. For 2021, the modelling showed that 'without Phase 2' in addition to the five following junctions listed in paragraph 14, the Lord Mayor's Walk/ Monkgate junction on the IRR would approach or exceed theoretical operating capacity.
14. If Phase 2 was implemented by 2021, the Layerthorpe/ Foss Island Road junction and the Layerthorpe/ Proposed James St Link Road junction on the IRR would operate in a stable manner within capacity. The remaining junctions would, generally, experience some relief, particularly Mill Lane/Hawthorne Grove which would otherwise be operating above its theoretical capacity.

## **Influences on the timescale for constructing the short remaining southern section of Phase2 (Study Stage 1, Part 2)**

15. The developer of the site is required, under an Agreement associated with the Planning Permission granted for its development, to construct the final section of Phase 2 (P2S) which is due to run through the site. However, the developer has not yet signed this Agreement and pursuant to this, consultation with the site developer's agent (see Annex B), carried out as part of the traffic modelling refresh revealed that the developer's intentions for the site are uncertain at the present time. Furthermore, if the Agreement is not signed, the Council may seek to revoke the Planning Permission granted, thereby negating any developer contribution to the construction of P2S.
16. If the council decides to revoke the Planning Permission in view of the Agreement not being signed by the Developer, the option to fund directly the construction of the link road itself might be pursued, if it can be shown to be sufficiently beneficial.
17. The modelling refresh forecast that constructing Phase 2 would provide saturation relief to some junctions and reduce traffic flows on some links. The financial benefit arising from this congestion relief on the network has been calculated at £620,000.00 at the end of its first year of operation. The estimated cost for constructing P2S, based on Halcrow's experience of construction projects for similar roads on similarly contaminated sites is £290,000.00 (excluding land purchase/compensation costs, Part 1 compensation claims and service diversions). This gives a benefit of £2.14 for every £1.00 spent.

## **Conclusions**

18. Completion of Phase 2 would reduce total travel time and distance on York's road network, and increase average journey speeds. The magnitude of these network effects are forecast to be similar in 2011 and 2021. Furthermore Phase 2 would incorporate new facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, and reduce journey length and time for these users. Foss Bank, to the west of Phase 2, is not an attractive route for cyclists, so Phase 2 would enhance journey ambience for these users. Phase 2 would also encourage improvements in bus services by providing a through route, facilitating greater flexibility in the routes provided and improved penetration of services into areas of new development.
19. The apparent high benefit : cost ratio arising from network delay savings versus construction costs of P2S would indicate that the earliest possible completion of Phase 2 would provide the optimum financial benefit to the Council. This, however, assumes a construction cost estimate based on a consultant's experience of constructing similar highways over contaminated sites and the actual extent of contamination/remedial measures may result in a higher cost than the estimate.

20. The following options are, available to the council:

- Option 1 - Pursue the developer's signing of the Agreement requiring him to construct the remaining southern section of Phase 2 (P2S). Under this option, the Council is expected to make a contribution from the Local Transport Plan allocation for enhancing the minor access road, that would have otherwise been constructed, to the desired standard for the link road.

If the developer decides not to proceed with the development (and the Council revokes the Planning Permission) then proceed with Option 2.

- Option 2 - When the outcome of negotiations with the developer is known a further report on the financial implications is submitted to EMAP for a decision to progress the commissioning of the remaining stages of the design programme so that P2S can be considered for inclusion in the 2009/10 capital programme.

### **Corporate Priorities**

21. Completion of Phase 2 would appear to contribute to the following Corporate Priorities:

- Reduce the environmental impact of council activities and encourage, empower and promote others to do the same. *There is considerable scope for reducing vehicle congestion delay on the overall network and thereby reducing the associated adverse affects, such as air pollution.*
- Increase the use of public and other environmentally friendly modes of transport. *There is considerable scope for encouraging a more walking, cycling and use of buses at Phase 2 will include new cycle routes (forming a strategic link in the city's cycle network) and provide the opportunity for new bus routes to be introduced.*
- Improve the economic prosperity of the people of York with a focus on minimising income differentials. *The construction of Phase 2 will contribute to the opportunities for regenerating the Foss Islands area of the city..*
- Improve the health and lifestyles of the people who live in York, in particular among groups whose levels of health are the poorest. *There is considerable scope for encouraging a more walking, cycling and use of buses at Phase 2 will include new cycle routes and provide the opportunity for new bus routes to be introduced.*

22. Local Transport Plan 2006-2011 (LTP2): The scheme would contribute to several of the aims of the recently submitted LTP2, namely:

- To tackle congestion
- To improve economic performance in a sustainable manner;
- To reduce the levels of actual and perceived safety problems;

- To enhance opportunities for all community members, including disadvantaged groups, to play an active part in society;
- To improve the health of those who live or work in, or visit, York, and
- To reduce the impact of traffic and travel on the environment, including air quality, noise and the use of non-renewable resources.

## Implications

23. This report has the following implications:

- **Financial** - There are no financial implications for the council at this stage. Once the outcome of ongoing negotiations with the developer of the site through which the last section Phase 2 is due to run are known and the feasibility study described in paragraph 26 has reported the financial implications will be more certain.
- **Human Resources (HR)** – There are no HR implications for the council.
- **Equalities** - The potential improvements to the service on the York-Harrogate-Leeds line would enable people to reach job opportunities within York and the wider Leeds City Region that would have otherwise been unreachable due to lack of available and affordable transport.
- **Legal** – *Comments awaited on implications for securing the developer's signature on the Section 106 Agreement or land purchase / revocation of Planning Permission, if the developer decides not to develop the site.*
- **Crime and Disorder** – There are no legal implications at present.
- **Information Technology (IT)** – there are no IT implications at present.
- **Property** – The land purchase and revocation of Planning Permission may have significant financial and legal implications. Once the outcome of ongoing negotiations with the developer of the site, through which the last section Phase 2 is due to run, are known these implications will be more certain.
- **Sustainability** – The facilities within this scheme to encourage greater use of more sustainable forms of travel are welcomed. More detailed environmental impact analyses will need to be undertaken as part of the detailed design.
- **Other** – No comments.

## Risk Management

24. In compliance with the Council's Risk Management Strategy the main risk that has been identified in this report could lead to the inability to meet the council's objectives (Strategic).

25. Measured in terms of impact and likelihood, the risk score for the recommendation is less than 16 and thus 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.

## Recommendations

26. That the Advisory Panel advise the Executive Members to:
- i. Note this report (including, Annexes)
  - ii. Await the outcome of negotiations with the developer and when they are known, a further report on the financial and legal implications is submitted to a future EMAP for a decision to be considered on:
    - Pursuing the developer's signing of the Agreement requiring him to construct the remaining southern section of Phase 2 (P2S)
    - Authorising the commissioning of the remaining stages of the design programme to enable P2S to be considered for inclusion in the 2009/10 capital programme.

Reason: The modelling undertaken for the short remaining southern section of James Street Link Road shows that it would enhance the performance of Phase 1 and relieve congestion on several roads in the Foss Basin area of the city now and in the future. The initial financial assessment showed that this should be constructed as soon as possible to generate the most benefit. The Council also needs to be clear of the position and that of the developer regarding the development of the site off Layerthorpe through which the Link Road is to run, in order for it to reach a decision as to whether the developer or the council should fund the construction of the final section of the link road and when it should be constructed.

### Contact Details

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Report Approved

Date 03/10/08

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**Wards Affected:**

All

Heworth

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

## **Background Papers**

'Foss Basin Transport Implications, Final Report, 2003 *Jacobs*

'James Street Link Road Phase 2 Stage 1 Report - Traffic Forecast Refresh, September 2008' - *Halcrow Group Limited*

## **Annexes**

Annex A - Location Plan

Annex B – Details of consultation with the site developer's agent