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

30 October 2006

Report of the Director of City Strategy

### **A19 / WHELDRAKE LANE ( CROCKEY HILL ) – JUNCTION IMPROVEMENT SCHEME**

#### **Summary**

- 1 This report summarises the feedback received on proposals to install traffic signals at the Wheldrake Lane junction with the A19 at Crockey Hill, in conjunction with the introduction of a 40mph speed limit along the A19 on both approaches to the junction.
- 2 A decision is required to progress implementation of an amended scheme layout, including some additional pedestrian and cycling facilities.

#### **Background**

- 3 In February 2006 the Executive Member for Planning and Transport and Advisory Panel (EMAP) considered a report that provided an update on the development and implementation of safety improvements at the A19/Wheldrake Lane junction. A combined traffic signal and speed management scheme was approved as the preferred solution, subject to consultation and the availability of the necessary funding.
- 4 The speed management elements of the scheme, comprising a 40mph speed limit with street lighting and high visibility signing/road markings, had already been agreed in principle following local consultation and advertisement of the necessary Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) in 2005. These measures, which are shown in **Annex A**, are already planned to be implemented before Christmas.
- 5 The signalised junction layout approved in principle by EMAP in February is shown in **Annex B**. The key design issue flagged up in the EMAP report involved the need to widen the existing A19 carriageway to accommodate a separate lane for traffic turning right into Wheldrake Lane. Members were very keen to avoid the loss of mature trees on the inside of the bend, so the preferred scheme involved a substantial amount of widening on the outside of the bend. The main issue on this side was the presence of several underground pipes and cables, which would be very expensive to move or protect. This made the estimated cost of the scheme very high at over £500,000. However, Members considered that the scheme offered significant

benefits and should be put forward as a proposal for inclusion in the 2006/07 Transport Capital Programme.

- 6 In April 2006 the EMAP agreed the Transport Capital Programme for 2006/07. This included a sum of £550,000 to cover the cost of signalling the Crockey Hill junction, plus a sum of £60,000 to fund the associated speed management scheme.
- 7 Following this decision, detailed design work on the junction layout was progressed further. Through this process ways of reducing the amount of road widening, and hence cost of moving underground services, were explored. This identified that significant savings might be achieved if the left slip lanes into and out of Wheldrake Lane were omitted. An alternative design was developed and tested using a computer model. The results showed that the layout changes would only cause a small loss in overall efficiency, which the junction could accommodate without the risk of causing excessive queuing or delays. The potential cost saving of this design change was estimated at around £200,000. The revised layout is shown in **Annex C**. Given the much-improved value for money this alternative layout offered, it was adopted as the preferred layout to put forward for public consultation.

## **Consultation**

- 8 A leaflet describing the proposed scheme (*see example at Annex D*) was circulated to 45 properties around Crockey Hill during August (*see distribution plan at Annex E*), inviting views and comments within a three week period, which ended on 15 September. Copies were also supplied to the local Parish Councils and Ward Councillors. The same information was made available on the City of York Council web-site.

In addition, the emergency services, travel related organisations, and other interested parties were sent copies of the information leaflet and asked for their views or any concerns (*see copy of covering letter at Annex F*).

## **Responses from local residents and businesses**

- 9 11 residents support the traffic signal proposals, mostly because they hope this 'very dangerous' junction will become much safer, with some expressing the view that these improvements are long overdue. One Wheldrake resident currently feels it necessary to travel via Grimston Bar and the A64 to reach Acomb or Tadcaster, extra distance they can hardly afford, to avoid using the Crockey Hill junction at peak times.

Some residents also raised related issues or suggested additional improvements, as summarised below :-

- One resident, who would prefer to leave their car at home and travel by bus, has asked us to consider providing a footway linking Howden Lane to the bus stops on the south side of the junction. This would avoid them having to walk in the grass verge or along the busy A19, either of which they feel is not very safe.

*Officer's response*

*This would be a useful addition to the scheme, to help local residents access the bus stop, and it should be relatively inexpensive to build. Therefore it is recommended that this suggestion be added to the proposals.*

- One resident, who uses the junction both as a cyclist and motorist, has asked if a shared footway/cycle path can be created south from the Crockey Hill junction to the junction with Howden Lane, whilst noting there is already a footway for part of the way. This would open up a network of relatively quiet and safe routes for cyclists, particularly families with children, with minimal investment.

*Officer's response*

*This would also be a useful enhancement to the scheme, to provide an off road cycle route linking Wheldrake Lane with Howden Lane, and it should be relatively inexpensive to construct. Therefore it is recommended that this suggestion be added to the proposals.*

- Grove Lane residents, on the Deighton side of the junction, have asked if 'keep clear' or yellow hatch markings can be provided (as proposed for The Forge on the north side of the junction), so that their access will not be hampered by York bound traffic queuing at the traffic signals.

*Officer's response*

*This request is considered reasonable, and the relevant road markings can be included at the detailed design stage.*

- One resident notes that the road is to be resurfaced, and requests that a finish which reduces noise should be applied.

*Officer's response*

*The carriageway is to be resurfaced using stone mastic asphalt (SMA), which does produce less road noise than other materials, such as hot rolled asphalt.*

- One resident feels that the introduction of a speed limit, and the installation of street lighting should mean that it would be feasible to provide bus stops within the verges for the benefit of residents and businesses on the north side of the junction.

*Officer's response*

*There are no plans to provide bus stops on the north side of the junction. These would be outside the scope of the current scheme, therefore, the level of demand would need to be established by the appropriate team, prior to putting forward any further proposals in the future.*

- One resident has suggested a footpath from The Forge to the northern extent of the 40mph limit, to open up access by foot or cycle from Crockey Hill to Fulford, along the public footpath passing Tilmire farm, without using the A19.

*Officer's response*

*Providing an additional footway and cycle path north of Crockey Hill would be very expensive, and could not be considered as a minor addition to the current scheme. It will therefore be put forward as an idea for further investigation as part of the development of future cycle and pedestrian programmes.*

2 residents did not support the installation of traffic signals at the Wheldrake Lane junction. The main concerns raised are listed below :-

- There will be a problem exiting Wheldrake Lane if traffic queues which some times occur from the Fulford interchange, past the Crockey Hill junction, back towards Deighton are not detected.

*Officer's response*

*Although the introduction of traffic signals will interrupt traffic flows along the A19, the traffic signal phasing will be optimised to maximise capacity at the junction, and keep delays to a minimum.*

- The proposed traffic signals will cause extra congestion on the A19. This could result in additional traffic 'taking a short cut' through outlying villages, such as Naburn,

*Officer's response*

*It is not anticipated that the proposals will create congestion which could cause an increase in vehicles diverting along alternative routes to avoid Crockey Hill.*

- Main road vehicles stopping and moving off at the traffic signals will create extra pollution.

*Officer's response*

*There is already a lot of slowing down, idling, and accelerating at the junction, but signals will increase this on the main road. This will lead to some increase in vehicle emissions, but this is not likely to significantly degrade air quality, due to the open characteristics of the area.*

## **Responses from organisations**

- 10 **Deighton and Crockey Hill Parish Council** have confirmed in writing that they support the proposals.
- 11 **Fulford Parish Council** discussed the current proposals at their meeting on 4 September, and have since written to confirm that they are happy to support the scheme.
- 12 The **Wheldrake Ward Councillor** is pleased that the proposals are progressing, and hopes that the scheme will be approved for implementation. Councillor Vassie also wishes to point out that around 260 people, mostly

living in Wheldrake, signed a petition supporting signalisation of the junction, prior to the earlier EMAP meeting in February.

- 13 **North Yorkshire Police** support the proposals in principle, but have requested more detail about the 'gateway' features, traffic signs, road markings etc. For example, they consider that it is not going to be obvious to road users why they are being subject to a reduced speed limit at this location, therefore, signing at the entry into the 40mph speed limit should be sufficient to get motorists down to the required speed. In addition, the location would be difficult to police, therefore, the proposed speed control measures will need to be robust in order to achieve the desired result.
- 14 **First York** fully support the scheme, particularly in view of the bus priority measures which would be introduced to assist services that use the junction.
- 15 **York Cycle Campaign** welcome the introduction of traffic signals at what they regard as a 'difficult' junction. However, they would like to see the proposed traffic island and link paths on the Deighton side of the junction upgraded to allow cyclists to cross the A19 between Wheldrake Lane and Howden Lane. They feel this would improve access to the York Selby Sustrans cycle path, which is a safer more pleasant route into York for those not in a hurry.

*Officer's response*

*This would be a useful enhancement to the scheme, to provide an off road cycle route linking Wheldrake Lane with Howden Lane, and it should be relatively inexpensive to construct. Therefore it is recommended that this suggestion is added to the scheme.*

- 16 Although the **Cyclists' Touring Club** welcome the proposed speed limit on the A19, they are not convinced that traffic signals are necessary at Wheldrake Lane, and feel the proposed changes to the road layout incorporate potential hazards for cyclists. They are also concerned that this and other current schemes overlook, or even ignore, the Council's much-vaunted 'hierarchy of users', so that cyclists and pedestrian needs are very much subservient to those of the commuter by car.

For example, they would like to see a separate cycle lane alongside the A19 southbound, between Wheldrake Lane and the Howden Lane junction, together with a physical centre island opposite the junction with Howden Lane. This would allow cyclists to cross the A19 in two stages without using any of the A19 carriageway, and create a useful link towards or from the NCN Route 65 Trans Pennine Trail.

*Officer's response*

*Providing a new southbound off-road cycle path, together with an island opposite the Howden Lane junction, would be very expensive, and could not be considered a minor addition to the scheme. However, as recommended above, it should be feasible to upgrade the existing footway and proposed pedestrian refuge on the south side of the junction to provide a useful cycle link between Wheldrake Lane and Howden Lane.*

- 17 **Confederation of Passenger Transport UK** support the introduction of traffic signals, together with the associated improvements at the junction.

## Options

- 18 In deciding the best way forward, there appear to be two basic options for Members to consider:
- 18 a) To approve the introduction of traffic signals, as shown in **Annex C**, at the Crockey Hill junction.
- 18 b) To approve amended proposals for the introduction of traffic signals at Crockey Hill, to include additional pedestrian and cycling facilities in response to consultation feedback, as shown in **Annex G**, plus any changes agreed by Members.

## Analysis

- 19 **Option a)** : The traffic signal proposals shown in **Annex C** will provide easier and safer access at a junction which currently presents particular difficulties and is potentially dangerous for right turners. By avoiding diversion of most of the underground services in the area, significant construction cost savings can be achieved which means that the scheme represents better value for money. Capacity calculations show that the proposed junction layout would comfortably cope with current traffic levels, although it could be close to capacity in about 15 years, based upon predicted rates of traffic growth. Consultation has shown that the scheme is well supported, with very few significant issues raised or adverse comments received. However, a number of minor amendments and additional features have been requested. Most of these appear practical and affordable and, therefore, not including these in the current scheme could generate some negative reaction. Hence proceeding with the scheme with no amendments is not being recommended.

**Option b)** : Most comments and concerns raised through the consultation process have focussed on minor amendments to overcome local concerns, or the possible provision of additional cycle and pedestrian facilities in the area. Although none of these are considered essential to the viability of the proposed traffic signals scheme, some would certainly enhance the scheme and are therefore considered to merit further investigation with a view to including them in the scheme where feasible. Only the specific requests to add a separate cycle lane alongside the A19 southbound up to Howden Lane junction, together with a physical centre island opposite the junction, plus a shared pedestrian and cycle path extending north of Wheldrake Lane, would involve a substantial increase in the scheme cost. These particular improvements would be better considered as a future scheme in their own right. Implementing the proposed scheme with the suggested minor amendments and additions, as shown in **Annex G**, is likely to increase the level of improvement and benefit, and should be even more popular with local residents.

Based upon the above analysis, **option b)** is recommended as the way forward.

If approved, it is anticipated that the traffic signal proposals, including the additional pedestrian and cycle facilities, could be implemented early in 2007.

During the construction period, road works carried out on the A19 would be restricted to 'off-peak' times, between 9.30am and 4pm. To further minimise disruption to through traffic during the construction and installation phases of the main scheme, some work on site would be arranged in the evenings and at weekends, so long as local residents were not unduly disturbed or inconvenienced.

## **Corporate Priorities**

- 20 The proposals support the Council's corporate priority for improving quality and sustainability, by improving safety in travelling and getting around, plus potentially increasing the use of public transport. One of the main reasons for providing the scheme is to make egress from Wheldrake Lane easier. This will be of particular benefit to the local residents and businesses.
- 21 The scheme also contributes towards achieving the aims and objectives of the Road Safety Strategy and Bus Strategy within the Council's Second Local Transport Plan (LTP2). Specifically in terms of safety, the signalisation of the junction should reduce the current accidents problem at the junction, associated with vehicles turning right from the A19, or turning out of Wheldrake Lane. The risk of high-speed collisions should also be significantly reduced by the introduction of the speed management measures which are already approved and due for implementation this financial year.

## **Implications**

- 22 The appropriate implications of the proposals are considered below :-

- **Financial**

When the 2006/07 Planning and Transport Capital Programme was approved at the Executive on 18 April 2006, it included an allocation of £550,000, under the 'Accessibility and Village Traffic Schemes' budget, for the proposed traffic signals at Crockey Hill.

Now that an amended layout has been designed which avoids most of the underground utility diversions which would be required by the earlier option, it is anticipated that the latest revised scheme will cost substantially less, at around £350,000. The lower cost will enable the implementation of other schemes already included within the 2006/07 programme rather than deferring them into future years. Details of the amended programme will be provided for approval in the 2006/07 Capital Programme 2<sup>nd</sup> monitoring report to the City Strategy EMAP on 11 December 2006.

- **Human Resources**

There would be some HR implications in terms of manpower and resources for future maintenance and to undertake monitoring of the effectiveness of the junction improvements. However, although these activities involve extra work, this should be readily accommodated within existing staffing levels.

- **Equalities**

There are no equality implications.

- **Legal**

The Council, as Highway Authority for the area, has powers under the Highways Act 1980, The Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984, and Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 1994 and 2002 to implement the proposals covered by this report.

- **Crime and Disorder**

There is potential for the traffic signal equipment and signs to be vandalised. However, these should be no more vulnerable than other similar highway infrastructure installed to a suitably robust standard.

- **Information Technology**

There are no IT implications.

- **Property**

There are no property implications.

- **Road Safety Audit**

An independent risk assessment of the scheme proposals has identified that the scheme does have a number of potential road safety issues which warrant closer examination to ensure that the safest possible solution would be implemented. Therefore, should the traffic signal proposals be progressed, a full Road Safety Audit is recommended, involving independent checks at key stages during the design process and when the scheme is built.

## **Risk Management**

23 In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy the risks arising from the recommendations are assessed below :-

- **Governance Risk**

There are no risks associated with the recommendations of this report.



- **Strategic Risk**

There are no risks associated with the recommendations of this report.

- **Legal and Regulatory Risk**

There are no risks associated with the recommendations of this report

- **Physical Risk**

There are concerns over the introduction of traffic signals on a high-speed road such as the A19. Fortunately, comprehensive speed management measures are already approved for this area, and are due to be implemented this financial year. These will significantly reduce the risk of a serious accident occurring, and a range of additional safety features will also be built into the signals design. However, it is anticipated that the overall accident record of the junction will not be improved, remaining at about two injury accidents per year

- **Financial Risk**

The recommended option provides better value for money than the original scheme with the main aims and objectives being achieved at a lower overall cost thus releasing funds for other schemes within the Capital Programme. There is a risk that costs may increase owing to unforeseen construction difficulties and additional elements required by the safety audit however the risk of substantial cost increases is considered to be remote.

- **Competitive Risk**

There are no risks associated with the recommendations of this report

- **People Risk**

There are no risks associated with the recommendations of this report

- **System and Technology Risk**

There are no risks associated with the recommendations of this report

- **External Risk**

There are no risks associated with the recommendations of this report

- **Organisation Risk**

There are no risks associated with the recommendations of this report

Risk Category	Impact	Likelihood	Score
Physical	Medium	Possible	9
Financial	Medium	Possible	9

Measured in terms of impact and likelihood, the risks scores have been assessed as 'medium', with a risk matrix score at less than 16. 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.

## Recommendations

- 24 The Advisory Panel advises the Executive Members for City Strategy that:

The proposed scheme to install traffic signals at Crockey Hill, with the addition of some extra pedestrian and cycle facilities, as shown in **Annex G**, should be approved for implementation during 2006/2007

**Reason:** To make turning into and out of Wheldrake Lane at the A19 junction easier and safer. In conjunction with the comprehensive speed management proposals already approved for Crockey Hill, and the additional pedestrian and cycle facilities, the overall traffic signal proposals will be of particular benefit to residents and businesses, both locally and in nearby villages such as Wheldrake.

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### **Background Papers:**

“A19/wheldrake Lane (Crockey Hill) – Junction improvement scheme”  
Report to Executive Member for Planning and Transport : 28 February 2006

“Speed Management – A19 Junction with Wheldrake Lane at Crockey Hill”  
Report to Planning and Transport (East Area) Sub-Committee : 13 October 2005

### **Annexes**

- Annex A** Speed management and street lighting proposals as approved in 2005
- Annex B** Signalised junction layout approved in principle by EMAP in February
- Annex C** Current revised layout including traffic signal proposals
- Annex D** Information Leaflet
- Annex E** Distribution Plan
- Annex F** Covering letter sent with Information leaflet to external organisations.
- Annex G** Amended layout including additional pedestrian and cycling facilities