

Report of the Interim Director of City and Environmental Services

**PROPOSED UNIVERSITY ROAD PEDESTRIAN CROSSING
IMPROVEMENTS AND CYCLE ROUTE**

Summary

1. This report discusses the outcome of detailed design work and public consultation on proposals to improve facilities for pedestrians crossing University Road by the implementation of a number of safety measures, including a 20mph zone with speed cushions and speed table crossing points. The scheme will also consist of an off road shared cycle/pedestrian route alongside University Road between the Siwards Way and Innovation Way roundabouts.

Recommendation

2. The Cabinet Member is requested to approve the revised scheme shown in **Annex B** for implementation, including the making of a Traffic Regulation Order covering the 20mph Zone. This approval would be subject to the University of York giving a firm commitment to install an additional set of steps on the Market Square side of University Road as a second phase of works to be undertaken in 2015.

Reason:

Officers consider that the scheme will improve the safety of pedestrians, in particular university students crossing University Road. The revised proposals in **Annex B** include some key changes in response to consultation and detailed design. These include a reduction in the number of speed cushions, and the provision of additional steps to the Library footbridge (to be delivered by the University as a second phase) to offer a more desirable access to the bridge from the bus stops.

Background

3. On 13 March 2014, a report was taken to the Cabinet Member Decision Session. The report sought approval to consult on a preferred option layout, and to advertise a 20mph Speed Limit Order for the proposed 20mph Zone. The outline scheme shown in **Annex A** was approved in principle, and Officers were required to develop the proposals further through detailed design work and public consultation, with a view to implementing a scheme in August/September 2014. The outcome of this work is presented below.

Proposals (pre-consultation).

4. The original proposals (as shown in **Annex A**) were to create crossing improvements and a bus stop relocation on University Road in the vicinity of Market Square, and would incorporate a 20mph Zone with speed cushions and speed table crossing points. This work would be co-ordinated with work to be carried out by the University of York to provide alternative and additional pedestrian facilities to access Morrell Library. Also, a shared use pedestrian/cycle route was proposed along University Road.

Consultation.

5. The proposals shown in **Annex A** formed the basis of an extensive consultation exercise involving relevant Councillors, Heslington Parish Council, University of York/Students Union, local residents via the Parish Council, emergency services, and other interested parties such as road user groups. The consultation literature was also published on the City of York Council website and a press release was issued. The traffic order for the proposed speed limit was also advertised concurrent to the consultation.

In total the consultation process generated 54 responses. The feedback received, and officer responses to issues raised, are summarised in **Annex C**.

6. Safety Audit Results

The proposals shown in **Annex A** were subject to a Stage 2 Safety Audit process. The main concerns are summarised below:-

- Removing the grass verge to provide a shared use cycle/footway increases the desirability of crossing the road at anywhere along

its length. This could increase conflict points along the route, between pedestrians and drivers on the carriageway and pedestrians and cyclists on the new shared use path;

Officer response: The design of crossing points shall be reviewed to minimise the numbers of pedestrians crossing the carriageway along the length of University Road. Crossing of University Road is to be encouraged at desired locations (i.e. the speed tables).

- The existing splitter islands narrow the running lanes and act as a form of traffic calming, but they form pinch points along the route that compromise cycle safety;

Officer response: Splitter islands are to be provided at the proposed cushion locations and will continue to deter overtaking at the critical locations. However, following consultation responses, the number of speed cushions and traffic island combinations is to be reduced (see Annex B) to increase the spacing between the features to an acceptable distance. This will be monitored and, if necessary, introduction of the original number of cushions and islands (as per Annex A) may need to be considered.

- The bus stop close to Morrell Way includes a widened footway/cycleway to allow users to divert around the back of the shelter. The taper for the widened footway is quite severe and may lead to cyclists rejoining the carriageway at the speed table so they do not have to slow significantly to negotiate the shelter and any waiting users;

Officer response: The taper length at the widened footway shall be increased to allow cyclists to pass more easily and safely.

- The altered island at the junction of Innovation Way is not wide enough for a cyclist to comfortably wait on alongside pedestrians. A substandard island could lead to users crossing in the shadow of the island or cyclists bumping up full height kerbs to get a safer crossing position;

Officer response: The design of the island needs to be finalised and due consideration will be taken to ensure that a suitable facility is provided.

Revised Proposals

7. The proposals in **Annex A** were subject to a stage 2 safety audit and consultation. These have led to a number of minor amendments being proposed to address specific concerns, with the resulting proposed scheme being shown in **Annex B**.

The key differences between the outline proposal (**Annex A**) and the revised scheme (**Annex B**) are described below:

(a) The removal of two sets of speed cushions and adjacent traffic islands within the proposed 20mph speed limit zone on University Road.

The removal of the two sets of speed cushions is considered not to be detrimental to the effectiveness of the traffic calming. For those cyclists remaining on carriageway instead of using the off-road facilities, the removal of the cushions will also will reduce the likelihood of causing cyclists to feel squeezed (between cushion and kerb) at these potential pinch point locations. The spacing of the resultant speed cushions is also within permissible design recommendations and is deemed to be a more acceptable spacing to address concerns which have been raised.

(b) The introduction of road markings across the carriageway entrance at the Siwards Way, Morrell Way and Innovation Way junctions.

Officers have considered that the off-road shared use path would be required to be highlighted where it crosses the junctions of Siwards Way and Morrell Way. Whilst the most appropriate method is still to be considered, this could be achieved by the introduction of 'elephant's footprints' markings on the road surface which would raise awareness to motorists that cyclists could be crossing the junction at these locations.

(c) Additional steps on the southern side of University Road (Market Square).

Concerns have been raised about the positioning of the proposed steps on the Market Square side of University Road leading to the footbridge access. It is recognised that students would be more likely to use the new footsteps from the city-bound bus stop if the

steps were located along the desire route and positioned on the road-side of the access ramp.

The University has agreed to provide steps at this location, as a second phase activity to be constructed in the 2015 Easter holidays. Annex B shows the proposed additional steps.

(d) Remove the existing traffic island on Siwards Way.

This island was to be retained and improved to include safer crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. Preliminary design has demonstrated that this is difficult to achieve, as there is insufficient space to accommodate an appropriately sized island without compromising vehicular access to Siwards Way. The island is therefore to be removed and suitable markings and signage provided to facilitate a safe crossing point.

The presence of statutory utility apparatus would further limit scope to alter the junction.

(e) Remove existing traffic islands on University Road outside of the proposed extents of the 20mph Speed Limit Zone.

There has been a late request from the University to remove the existing islands beyond the limit of the proposed traffic calming and 20mph zone. Officers have not been able to consider this proposal in detail but shall consider the proposals for inclusion in phase 2 of the project.

Options

8. The options for the Executive Member to consider are as follows:

Option 1 – Approve the scheme as shown in **Annex A**;

Option 2 – Approve the revised scheme as shown in **Annex B**, along with any additional amendments the Cabinet Member may request;

Option 3 – Reject the proposed scheme and retain the existing measures.

Analysis

9. Option 2 - the proposals shown in **Annex B** address the concerns identified during the design process, together with the issues raised

from feedback through the consultation and safety audit processes. The proposals are recommended for approval and subsequent implementation.

Option 1 would not adequately address the issues identified during design or through the consultation or safety audit processes.

Option 3 would not address the need to improve safety measures at the location or provide cycle facilities in this area. Cyclists and pedestrians will continue to be at risk.

Therefore, Option 2 is recommended for implementation.

Corporate Priorities

10. The scheme would contribute to the following Corporate Priorities:

- Making York a Sustainable City, by encouraging more cycling and walking which are environmentally friendly modes of transport;
- Making York a Healthy City by encouraging cycling and walking which are healthy activities;
- Helping to make the City of York Council an effective organisation by combining the implementation of a cycling infrastructure and safety scheme and working with the University as a partner.

Implications

Financial/Programme Implications

11. The likely cost for the Council to implement the proposals for the University Road shared use path is £250k, and the Library crossing/safety scheme element of works is £80k. The Transport Capital Programme for 2014/15 has a total £330 allocation of funds to implement the scheme.

The University is funding the implementation of the off-highway works (i.e. the removal of the existing library steps and installation of new steps, including additional measures to encourage use of the steps).

12. The aim is to complete the works prior to the commencement of the new academic year on 29th September 2014. The construction of

shared-use paths will require the relocation of approximately 22 street lighting columns and existing signage, which is to be done in advance of the main construction works.

13. Phase 2 of the works (to implement the outstanding activities and install the additional steps) is programmed for the Easter 2015 period.

Human Resources

14. There are no Human Resources implications.

Equalities

15. There are no Equalities implications.

Legal

16. The Traffic Regulation Order for the proposed 20mph Speed Limit Zone has been advertised.

Crime and Disorder

17. There are no Crime and Disorder implications.

Information Technology (IT)

18. There are no Information Technology implications.

Property

19. There are no Property implications.

Risk Management

Risk Category	Impact	Likelihood	Score
Organisation/Reputation	Medium (3)	Possible (3)	3x3=9

20. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy, the main risk that has been identified in this report is the potential damage to the Council's image and reputation if safety improvements for pedestrians/bus passengers and cyclists along University Road are not delivered.

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Specialist Implications Officer(s)

There are no specialist officer implications.

Wards Affected: Heslington

For further information please contact the author of the report.

Background Papers:

“University Road Pedestrian Crossing Improvement Scheme Proposals”: Cabinet Member Decision Session report, meeting on 13 March 2014.

Annexes:

Annex A: Plan showing original proposals sent out to consultation consisting of ‘University Road – Crossing Improvements/Cycle Route’ and ‘Cycle Route Refuges’.

Annex B: Plan showing revised proposals following public consultation consisting of ‘University Road – Crossing Improvements/Cycle Route’ and ‘Cycle Route Refuges’

Annex C: Document showing the results of the consultation process and the officer responses.