
Economic & City Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee

26th January 2010

Interim Report of the Water End Task Group

Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to present Members of the Committee with information received to date regarding the review into traffic issues at the junction of the A19 and Water Lane at Clifton Green along with associated traffic issues in Westminster Road and The Avenue.

Background

2. At a meeting of the Economic & City Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 12th August 2009 Members were asked to consider a CCfA¹ submitted by Councillors Scott, King and Douglas in relation to traffic issues at the junction of Water Lane and Clifton Green, Westminster Road, The Avenue and Clifton Green.
3. In coming to a decision to review this topic, the Economic & City Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee recognised certain key objectives and the following remit was agreed:

Aim

To determine the best solution for the problems local residents are experiencing and to look at what lessons can be learnt in order to inform the implementation of similar schemes within the city.

Key Objectives

- i. To establish whether local concerns still exist in the light of the Executive Member's decision²
- ii. To explore whether further improvements can be made to address the current traffic issues

¹ Councillor Call for Action

² It was agreed at a full meeting of the Committee that key objective (i) be put on hold until after the Executive Member for City Strategy had received his next report on 5th January 2010. The Task Group would concentrate on objectives ii, iii, & iv of this remit. Members of the Task Group would prefer comments on this report and these would be circulated to the entire Committee prior to being presented to the Executive Member.

- iii. From experience to date, identify those measures or actions that can be taken to assist in the smooth implementation of similar schemes in the city.
- iv. To understand the context of the Land Compensation Act 1973 in relation to this CCfA

Consultation

- 4. To date, consultation has mainly taken place with relevant technical officers within the Council. There are plans to hold a public event in the future.

Information Received

- 5. At an informal meeting of the Task Group on Tuesday 15th December 2009 the following information/reports were received, discussed and/or referred to:
 - Report to the meeting of the Executive Members for City Strategy & Advisory Panel regarding 'Proposed 2008/09 City Strategy Capital Programme' and dated 17th March 2008
This report sets out the details of the proposed City Strategy Capital Programme for 2008/09 and includes details regarding the Water End/Clifton Green cycle routes
 - Report to the meeting of the Executive Members for City Strategy & Advisory Panel regarding 'York Cycling City' and dated 8th September 2008
This report advised Members of progress in developing the York Cycling City project since the announcement of the successful bid in June 2008
 - Report to the meeting of the Executive Members for City Strategy & Advisory Panel regarding 'Water End - Proposed Improvements for Cyclists' and dated 20th October 2008
This report advised Members about the results of consultation on proposals to introduce cycle facilities on Water End from the Clifton Green traffic signals to the junction with Salisbury Road.
 - Plan of Orbital Cycle Route
 - E-mail from Transport Planner (Strategy) dated 14 December 2009
 - Water End Traffic Flow Changes - 6th May 2008 to 5th November 2009 – Annex A to this report
 - Clifton Bridge & Water End Cycle Works costings – discussion document - Annex B to this report

Key Objectives i, ii & iii

- 6. At a meeting of the Economic & City Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 8th December 2009 Members agreed a scope and timetable for

undertaking this review. For ease of reference this report is split into the themes identified within the agreed scope. There were also a series of e-mail correspondence covering questions that couldn't be answered at the meeting. These discussions took place after the Task Group had met and have been incorporated into the relevant sections below.

Discussions on previous reports in this area, in particular the report to the Executive Member for City Strategy on 20th October 2008 (Water End – proposed improvements for cyclists)

7. The report dated 20th October 2008 presented Members of the Task Group with information regarding the results of consultation on proposals to introduce cycle facilities on Water End from the Clifton Green traffic signals to the junction with Salisbury Road. Over a period of time ideas regarding improvements for cyclists in this area had gained momentum and the report of 20th October 2008 highlighted all that had been done to that date.
8. Discussions around the report highlighted the following:
 - There were still 3 more sections needed to complete the 'orbital route'

Discussions on available technical reports/modelling data [including looking at 'before' & 'after' traffic survey data and any forecasts made to substantiate the case for the improved junction proposals]

9. Officers confirmed that the works commenced on 19th January 2009 and were substantially completed by 31st March 2009, and completely finished towards the end of April 2009. The cyclist traffic signal opposite the junction with Salisbury Road was reinstated in June 2009. Discussions ensued around the above subheading and the details of these are set out below:
 - The junction at Water End/Clifton Green had been modelled both with and without a filter lane
 - Modelled using the SATURN (Simulation and Assignment of Traffic to Urban Road Networks) transport model, which shows how the traffic would load onto the network. This predicted the diversion of some traffic onto the outer and inner ring roads.
 - Modelling did not indicate that any displacement would be to Westminster Road and/or The Avenue. Modelling was undertaken on a much larger scale and smaller roads such as these would not be part of the model.
 - Queues and delays under differing circumstances were compared to show how traffic might impact on Water End
 - When the filter lane was in place between 5 and 7 vehicles could stand before the traffic had to go to single file
 - The traffic lights are biased towards traffic along the 'Park & Ride' route although changes were made in April 2009 and more traffic light 'green time' was given to traffic turning out of Water End (the time mainly came off the 'green time' at Water Lane to try and reduce the queues at Water End)
 - Currently analysing 'post scheme traffic data' (including pedestrian and cyclist usage) & indications are that less traffic is using Water End. There

is an Automatic Traffic Counter (ATC) in the area but the results from this are inconclusive.

- There are natural variations in the traffic – route choices and the times people choose to travel vary daily
- Knock on effects from traffic displacement
- Need to wait before see trends developing
- Queue lengths were difficult to measure - a 'before & after' queue length survey had not been undertaken
- Queue lengths could be longer but delays shorter due to the green light phasing
- New traffic counter can count on and off carriage cycle usage
- The use of a pecked line to mark the edge of the cycle lane rather than a solid lane (a pecked line allows motorists to cross it)
- The original ATC was damaged during the works to the carriageway (the ATC on the North East Loop stopped recording from 10th March 2009 until 25th August 2009) A new ATC was installed on 27th August 2009, this also counts cycle movements

Discussions on York's cycling infrastructure, in particular the Orbital Cycle Route, the rationale of the scheme & how the works in the Water Lane area fit with this

10. Members of the Task Group considered an e-mail from an officer in Transport Planning (Strategy), the content of which is set out below:

'York had been striving to build a cohesive cycle route network for several decades and adopted a proposed network of routes following the publication of its first Cycling Strategy in the late 1980's. Following a Local Government reorganisation in 1996 the proposed network was expanded to cover the new areas, which had passed to York from surrounding authorities. This adopted network tended to focus on the city centre and many of the proposed routes radiated outwards from it. Consultation exercises undertaken as part of a previous scrutinisation of cycling and from a city-wide questionnaire have both tended to indicate that many cyclists and non-cyclists see the main radial routes as a barrier to cycling in the city and also highlight the inner and outer ring roads as dangerous.

As part of the preparatory work for the Cycle Town Bid an orbital route was proposed which would run between the inner and outer ring roads and would cater for trips around the city centre whilst avoiding the radial routes except where the route crossed them. This proposed route would be suitable for all types of cyclist and utilised existing infrastructure wherever possible. The main aim of the route was to link (either directly or indirectly) as many cycle trip generators and attractors as possible. Examples of these attractors and generators include large employment sites (Nestle, York Hospital, Clifton Moor, Foss Islands Retail Park, University of York, Hospital Fields Road and the former Terry's site.) The route also links to several schools, leisure facilities, both universities and recreation areas.

Wherever possible the route uses off-road paths but where this isn't possible it uses quiet or traffic-calmed streets. Improved crossing facilities will be provided

where the route crosses the main radial routes into the city centre. The vast majority of residents won't use the whole route but will find it a useful means to reach many of their destinations by hopping onto and then off the route as it suits them.

One of the key links in the orbital route was the section constructed along Water End between the Salisbury Road and Clifton Green junctions. This particular link had the potential to provide a visible link for cyclists between the large residential areas on the west side of York with the large employment sites over the other side of the River Ouse and would give users an alternative to the less attractive route around the outer ring road.

The Crichton Avenue section of the orbital route is currently under construction and feasibility work is also currently underway on the other three missing sections between Clifton Green and Crichton Avenue, James Street/Hallfield Road and Walmgate Stray and finally Hob Moor to Water End/Boroughbridge Road. The intention is to finish the feasibility work on these links by the end of the 2009/10 financial year with a review to them being built during the 2010/11 financial year.'

11. Members discussed the following in relation to the Orbital Cycle Route:

- Whether the Orbital Cycle Route was too far out and whether it should be nearer the centre of town
- Whether the Orbital Cycle Route deflected people too far from their destination and was therefore an indirect route which took too long to traverse
- The fact that the current Orbital Cycle Route identified some of the quieter routes but there was a huge array of cycle networks & links within this circle
- The difficulties in crossing the river/lack of river crossings
- Safety issues on some of the off road cycleways
- The need to facilitate across town cycle movement
- The network was designed to be 'hop on and hop off'
- The fact that the Orbital is part of the Cycle City Strategy and is funded through this
- What the penalties are if City of York Council fails to achieve an orbital route:
 - There would be a penalty if the Local Authority didn't deliver what they had agreed as part of the Cycling City bid. This could mean withdrawal of funding.

12. The following further information was received from officers via e-mail after the meeting:

'As part of York's Cycling City bid, the creation of an "orbital" cycle route was proposed to provide better links to many destinations including schools, leisure facilities, employment sites, shops and healthcare sites. The aim is to connect as many of these as possible to the main residential areas using a combination of off-road paths, signed routes via quiet less-trafficked streets and some on-road cycle lanes where other alternatives aren't possible. The route will also

provide improved crossing facilities across many of the main radial routes into the city, which it crosses.'

Some sections of the route have been in place for a long time already, such as the University to Hob Moor route which crosses the Millennium Bridge to the south of the city centre, and the Foss Islands Path between Nestle and James Street to the north of the city centre. More recent additions are the improved facilities along Water End and the facilities currently under construction along Crichton Avenue. A further three sections are proposed for possible construction in 2010/11, which will substantially complete the Orbital Route. These are:

- Clifton Green to Crichton Avenue
- Water End to Hob Moor
- James Street to Heslington Road

The next step is to take a report to the City Strategy Decision Session on 5th of February, to seek in principle support, with a view to funding being allocated in the 2010/11 Capital Programme. If this is successful, public consultation on more detailed proposals would take place in the spring of 2010.'

13. Members of the Committee have been provided with maps indicating the current orbital cycle route status and the proposals for the routes from Clifton Green to Crichton Avenue, Water End to Hob Moor and James Street to Heslington Road
14. On discussion of these e-mails the Task Group raised the following further points:
 - The Sustrans route from the Hospital to James Street is unsuitable for 24 hour use because, despite the street lighting, it is largely in a cutting or 'not over-looked' and does not provide a route, which most cyclists regard as safe.
 - Whether it would be possible to use linear programming to devise an optimal route
 - Ways of enhancing all routes that may be attractive to cyclists
 - When this scheme was originally discussed it was asked why there couldn't be a contra flow cycle lane along the one way road beside the Green. Various reasons were given as to why cyclists had to be routed via the junction rather than provide for this route, which cyclists wishing to go via Bootham might see as logically most convenient.
 - The orbital route is policy and monies have already been invested in it and we need to build on the strategy we already have
15. Officers provided the following additional comments:
 - The route has already been decided and there has been significant amounts of money spent on this
 - Looking at a new route now would be very costly
 - In trying to cater for most needs especially the target audience of this programme (lapsed cycle users) off road is more preferable

Discussions on the breakdown of the cost of the works at Water End/Clifton Green to date

16. Members were also interested to receive information on the cost of the programme of works at the Water End/Clifton Green junction. A discussion document was circulated (Annex B to this report refers) comparing the original funding allocation and the forecast out-turn costs. Discussions regarding these figures ensued and the following points were made:
 - The final cost of the scheme was £540k but the original budget had been £300k; this was because it was decided to upgrade the traffic lights at the same time
 - Originally there was going to be a cycle lane on both sides of Water End but these proposals were revised
 - £85k was saved on works to the bridge which was subsequently made available for cycling facilities
 - Opportunities to manage and deliver all within that years budget (the upgrade to the traffic lights was not originally forecast for the same financial year)
 - What schemes were pushed back to allow this to happen (the Task Group were referred to the Capital Monitoring Reports for the 2008/09 financial year)

Discussion on the viability & the cost of restoring the road to its original layout

17. The cost of restoring the road to its original layout would be in the region of £6000 (rough estimate). This would allow some of the filter lane to be put back. Full restoration of the original layout on the approach to this junction may well be in the region of £30k.
18. Officers would not recommend restoring the road to its original layout, as there could be repercussions from Cycling England who may reconsider their funding arrangements. Also this was the area where the water main was fractured and there would be reluctance to work above this area again.

Other Information Gathered

19. The Task Group also heard from a resident of Westminster Road who said that the scheme had led to an increase in through traffic on Westminster Road and The Avenue. He felt that the modelling used for the scheme was at fault, as it did not look at the effect the scheme would have on the nearby residential areas. He said that more traffic was coming down Westminster Road and The Avenue and traffic was increased by 97%. He thought that the solution to the problem was to install bollards (exact location to be determined), which would create a point closure and effectively stop the through traffic.
20. He did not feel that the cycle route was used as much as it should be and mentioned a nearby pathway that could be used by cyclists if the overgrowth were cleared from the area. When asked whether the reinstatement of the road

humps had lessened the traffic he responded it was not speed that was an issue but the quantity of traffic using the residential roads.

21. Annexes C & D detail a response to the suggestion of using a nearby pathway alongside the John Berrill Almhouse as an alternative route for cyclists and why this is not considered to be a viable cycle route.
22. Members of the Task Group also prepared comments on a report presented to the Executive Member for City Strategy on 5th January 2010. This report was entitled 'Westminster Road Area Consultation & Survey Results'. The comments were also circulated to the Economic & City Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee. A copy of the comments is attached at Annex E to this report.
23. At the meeting on 5th January, the Executive Member for City Strategy made the following decision:

'That the Executive Member for City Strategy agrees:

- i) To implement a 20mph zone for the area.
- ii) To note the outcome of the traffic surveys and questionnaire and take no further action at this time on introducing a point closure.
- iii) That the results of the survey be also considered as part of any future evaluation of the Water End cycle scheme.
- iv) That the Police be requested to monitor the junctions in this area with a view to addressing any examples they may find of inappropriate driver behaviour.

REASON:

As the lower speeds due to the traffic calming justify the introduction of a lower speed limit.

As the options of closing the area to through traffic does not have support from a significant proportion of the local community that would be affected by a closure.

As the options of investigating the use of chicanes and road narrowings are not well supported by local residents.

24. This decision has been called in and will be considered by the Scrutiny Management Committee (Calling In) at a meeting on Monday 25th January 2010.

Key Objective iv

25. Key objective iv of this review asks Members to understand the context of the Land Compensation Act 1973 in relation to the original Councillor Call for Action (CCfA). A briefing note has been prepared by legal services and is attached at Annex F to this report. A legal officer will be in attendance at this

meeting to present the paper and to answer any questions Members may have.

Next steps

26. As per the scoping report dated 8th December 2010 the next step is for a public event to be organised (date and venue to be confirmed). This event will give local residents, cyclists and road users the chance to give their views on the evidence received to date. These will then be collated and considered by the Task Group at a further meeting

Options

27. This is an update report and therefore there are no options for Members to consider.

Analysis

28. Members of the Task Group will be undertaking a full analysis of the information received to date at a later stage in the review. A final report will also be produced, complete with any recommendations the Task Group may wish to make.
29. In the meantime, Members of the full Committee may wish to comment on the information received to date.

Corporate Strategy 2009/2012

30. Although this topic does not directly fall in line with any of the themes in the Corporate Strategy 2009/2012, the Economic & City Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee still has an obligation to address the issues raised within the formally registered CCfA.

Implications

31. **Financial** – There is a small amount of funding available within the scrutiny budget to carry out reviews. There are no other financial implications associated with the recommendations in this report however; implications may arise as the review progresses.
32. **Human Resources** – There are no known Human Resources implications associated with the recommendations in this report.
33. **Legal** – There are no known legal implications associated with the recommendations within this report however the remit for this review requests that information be provided on the Land Compensation Act 1973. It may be that that legal implications arise as the review progresses.
34. There are no known equalities, property, crime & disorder or other implications associated with the recommendations in this report however; implications may arise as the review progresses.

Risk Management

35. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy there are no risks associated with the recommendations in this report however; risks may become apparent as the review progresses.

Recommendations

36. Members of the Committee are asked to:
- (i) Receive and comment on the briefing note on the Land Compensation Act 1973
 - (ii) Comment on the information set out in this report and confirm the next steps set out in paragraph 26 of this report.

Reason: In order to progress this review

Contact Details

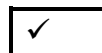
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Interim Report
Approved



Date 14.01.2010

Specialist Implications Officer(s) None

Wards Affected: Clifton Ward

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

- Report to the meeting of the Executive Members for City Strategy & Advisory Panel regarding 'Proposed 2008/09 City Strategy Capital Programme' and dated 17th March 2008
- Report to the meeting of the Executive Members for City Strategy & Advisory Panel regarding 'York Cycling City' and dated 8th September 2008
- Report to the meeting of the Executive Members for City Strategy & Advisory Panel regarding 'Water End - Proposed Improvements for Cyclists' and dated 20th October 2008

Annexes

- Annex A** Water End Traffic Flow Changes - 6th May 2008 to 5th November 2009
Annex B Clifton Bridge & Water End Cycle Works costings – discussion document
Annex C Evaluation of Path Conversion

- Annex D** John Berrill Almhouse Footpath (map)
Annex E Comments of the Task Group on the report presented to the Executive Member on 5th January 2010
Annex F Land Compensation Act Briefing Note

Task Group

Councillor Pierce
Councillor Scott
Councillor D'Agorne
Councillor Hudson