

## **Information Received to Date**

### **Key Objective (i)**

**To establish whether local concerns still exist in the light of the Executive Member's Decision<sup>1</sup>**

### **Executive Member for City Strategy Decision Making Meetings**

1. At a meeting of full Council on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2009 residents of the area presented two petitions regarding traffic issues in the Water Lane area of the City.
2. A report was subsequently prepared in response to these petitions and presented to the Executive Member for City Strategy on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2009 for decision. The report detailed the results of initial survey information and options in response to the two petitions received regarding the change in traffic conditions due to works carried out on Water End earlier in 2009. The Task Group prepared comments on this report, which were also presented to the Executive Member for City Strategy for consideration.
3. As part of their commentary the Task Group recognised the difficulties being faced by the residents of the area. They acknowledged that the introduction of the Water End Cycle Scheme, the burst water main and the removal of the speed cushions along Westminster Road had had a significant impact on traffic issues in the area. They did however, acknowledge, that this series of events was an abnormal combination and would not usually have happened.
4. The Task Group also acknowledged that no speeding problems had been reported and once the speed cushions along Westminster Road had been reinstated then the speeds would fit with the criteria for a 20mph zone.
5. They then made the following comments on the options set out in the report to the Executive Member for City Strategy dated 1<sup>st</sup> September 2009:
  - There was already some through traffic in the area prior to the changes being made
  - It would be hard to judge whether this would change when the speed cushions in Westminster Road were reinstated
  - The Task Group supported that a survey be started by the end of September 2009 to allow for the return to school and the report be completed by October 2009 (on the understanding that the speed cushions would be replaced by the end of August 2009)

---

<sup>1</sup> This refers to reports that went to the Executive Member for City Strategy on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2009 & 5<sup>th</sup> January 2010

- They supported the introduction of a 20mph speed limit and a review of the St Peter's School Travel Plan
  - The Task Group did not believe that the introduction of an access only order or banned turning manoeuvres would be an effective deterrent. Both of these options would be difficult to enforce and could be more disadvantageous to local residents than to occasional users of the route
  - The introduction of a one-way route could be disadvantageous to residents, particularly in terms of speed
  - The Task Group accepted that point closure was a possible solution but it would need very careful exploration due to the knock on effect it may have on other streets in the area, access for emergency services and increase in pressure on other highways
  - The Task Group suggested that the installation of chicanes be explored
6. On consideration of the report and its associated annexes the Executive Member for City Strategy agreed that:
- Further surveys should be undertaken once the road humps on Westminster Road had been replaced and the outcome of these surveys should be reported to a future decision session.
  - To progress the introduction of a 20mph speed limit and undertake a review of St Peter's School Travel Plan.
  - Point closure along The Avenue or Westminster Road be given further consideration as part of reporting of the above 2 points.
  - That the option of introducing build outs or chicane as a method of controlling traffic speed and volumes be evaluated and reported back
7. The three Clifton Ward Councillors subsequently called this decision in for the following reasons:
- ‘That the Executive Member misdirected himself in:
- Failing to follow the representations of local Councillors
  - Failing to follow the representations of the residents of Westminster Road
  - Failure to opt for a point closure
8. The decision of the Executive Member for City Strategy was then referred to the Scrutiny Management Committee (SMC) for consideration at a meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2009. SMC referred the matter back to the Executive (Calling in) for reconsideration with a recommendation that further consultation be carried out with residents with the aim of reporting the results to the Executive Member for City Strategy on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2009, or at the same time as the results of the further surveys.

9. At the Executive (Calling in) meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2009 the Executive agreed to accept the recommendations of SMC.
10. A further report was presented to the Executive Member for City Strategy at a decision session on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2010 which detailed the key results of vehicle surveys and a questionnaire carried out in relation to the through traffic in the Westminster Road area following the introduction of the Water End Cycle Scheme.
11. On consideration of this report the Executive Member for City Strategy agreed to implement a 20mph zone for the area. He noted the outcome of the traffic surveys and decided to take no further action in terms of a point closure. However he did agree that the results of the survey be considered as part of any future evaluation of the Water End Cycle Scheme.
12. He also requested that the Police monitor the junctions in this area with a view to addressing any examples they may find of inappropriate driver behaviour.
13. The decision of the Executive Member was subsequently called in by Councillors Scott, Douglas and King for the following reasons:

“That the Executive Member misdirected himself by: -

  - Failing to listen to the representations of residents;
  - Failing to listen to the representations of Ward Councillors;
  - Failing to recognise and correct the deficiencies in the consultation process;
  - Failing to act so as to alleviate the increased traffic volumes and flow on Westminster Road and The Avenue;
  - Failing to comply with the council's own highway design guide; and
  - Failing to honour his commitment on the issue given at an EMAP meeting in 2009.”
14. On consideration of the call in Scrutiny Management Committee upheld the decision of the Executive Member for City Strategy.

## **Key Objective (ii)**

**To explore whether further improvements can be made to address the current traffic issues**

### **Site Visit**

1. On 18<sup>th</sup> November 2009 at 5.30pm the Water End Task Group observed the traffic flow at the junction of Water End, Clifton and Bootham. They also spent some time observing traffic at the junction of Water End and Westminster Road.
2. The Assistant Director (City Development & Transport) gave a guided tour and explanation of the improvement works. He explained that whilst queues back along the bridge were longer the actual delay was shorter because of the recently changed traffic light sequencing. Considerable traffic flow data had been obtained (including CCTV) which demonstrated the greater efficiency of the new junction arrangements and increased bicycle flows. He explained that vehicular traffic had not been excluded from the space occupied by the previous left turn into Shipton Road as the cycle lane was marked by a pecked line from which traffic was not excluded.

### **Information received at a meeting on 15th December 2009**

3. At a meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2009 the Task Group considered the following information:

### **Report to the Executive Member for City Strategy & Advisory Panel on 20th October 2008 (Water End – proposed improvements for cyclists)**

4. 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.
5. Discussions around this report highlighted the following:
  - There were still 3 more sections needed to complete the 'orbital route'

### **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]**

6. Officers confirmed that the works in this area commenced on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2009 and were substantially completed by 31<sup>st</sup> 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.

7. 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.

**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**

8. 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.'

9. 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.
10. 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
11. 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.
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. In addition to this a Councillor Scott and a resident of Westminster Road suggested using a nearby pathway alongside the John Berrill Almhouse as an alternative route for cyclists and wondered whether this had been considered to be a viable cycle route. Details of the Officer response can be found at annexes B1 and B2 of this report.

**Breakdown of the cost of the works at Water End/Clifton Green to date**

15. Members received information on the cost of the programme of works at the Water End/Clifton Green junction. A discussion document was circulated (Annex B3 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).

### **Viability & the cost of restoring the road to its original layout**

16. 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.
17. 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.

**Key Objective (iv)**

**To understand the context of the Land Compensation Act 1973 in relation to this CCfA**

1. At their meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2010 Members received information on the Land Compensation Act 1973. The briefing note explaining this is attached at Annex B4 to this report.
2. A Council Legal Officer was in attendance at the meeting and confirmed that public works and increases in traffic flows on side roads would not give rise to a claim for compensation. He also confirmed that he was unaware of any successful claims that had been agreed by the authority.

## **Residents' Views**

1. Members of the public have spoken at various public meetings since the works have taken place at Water End and a summary of their views is set out below:
2. On 12<sup>th</sup> August 2009, when the feasibility study was considered, a resident, who was a member of an informal traffic group, was concerned about the disruptive influence that traffic had been causing on Westminster Road. He suggested that the disruption had been caused by two situations. Firstly, the new cycle facilities at Water End and its effect on traffic management. Secondly the removal of speed cushion humps from Westminster Road due to construction work at St Peter's School. He added that residents had been upset by the dust, noise and vibration of additional traffic that had been using the roads in question and that they had signed a petition for closed bollards to be constructed on Westminster Road to solve the traffic problems. This petition was presented at the Full Council meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2009.
3. On 1st September 2009 representations were made to the Executive Member for City Strategy at his decision session. A resident spoke in support of a point closure on Westminster Road, as they did not feel that speed cushions or road signage would have any affect on through traffic in the area.
4. Another resident referred to the increased volume and speed of through traffic on every day of the week. He pointed out that residents felt that point closure was the only lasting method of resolving the traffic problems being experienced. He stated that the recently replaced road humps were less robust then those that had previously existed.
5. At a meeting of the Task Group on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2010 a resident of Westminster Road 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.
6. The same resident 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.

## Annex B

7. On 5<sup>th</sup> January 2010 representations were made to the Executive Member for City Strategy at his decision session. A local resident spoke in support of point closure of Westminster Road and referred to the detrimental impact of through traffic on the residential road since the nearly cycle scheme had been implemented. He confirmed that these issues had been raised with local Councillors, the Ward Committee and Officers. He stated that the increase in traffic was affecting residents' well being and quality of life as the road was being used as a 'rat run' and that the only effective solution would be point closure.
8. A further representation was received from a resident of Westminster Road who confirmed that he had spoken to the Task Group and that residents were looking for a lasting solution to the traffic problems in the area. He stated that residents had seen a 97% increase in through traffic since the changes at Water End which had resulted in deterioration in their environment.
9. At a meeting of Economic & City Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2010 a local resident explained that she was increasingly finding it difficult to manoeuvre out of her driveway owing to the increase in the volume of traffic. She also raised concerns on the grounds of safety, particularly in relation to the left turn into the Avenue. She requested the closure of Westminster Road.
10. Another resident spoke at this meeting on behalf of himself and his neighbours. He was a long term resident of the area and a frequent pedestrian in the vicinity of Water End. He referred to the increase in the volume of traffic, which made the area unsafe for local children. He confirmed that traffic had increased since the changes to the Water End junction. He felt that the only solution was to block the road to prevent through traffic and suggested that the area should be made more attractive for pedestrians.