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## **Economic & City Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

17<sup>th</sup> May 2010

### **Water End Councillor Call for Action – Draft Final Report**

#### **Background**

1. At a meeting of the Economic & City Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2009 Members were asked to consider a Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) submitted by Councillors Scott, King & Douglas in relation to traffic issues at the junction of Water End and Clifton Green, Westminster Road, The Avenue and Clifton Green.

#### **Background Information on CCfA Process**

2. Ward Councillors play a central role in the life of a local authority, as a conduit for discussion between the Council and its residents and as a champion for local concerns. To strengthen Councillors' ability to carry out the second role the Government has enacted in the Local Government and Public Health Act 2007, provisions for a 'Councillor Call for Action (CCfA)'. This provides Councillors with the opportunity to ask for discussions at Scrutiny Committees on issues where local problems have arisen and where other methods of resolution have been exhausted.
3. CCfA is a tool that can be used by Councillors to tackle problems on a neighbourhood or ward specific basis that it has not been possible to resolve through the normal channels. CCfA is a means of last resort when all other avenues have been exhausted and the Council has been unable to resolve the issue.

#### **Background Information on Steps Taken to Resolve the Traffic Issues at the Junction of Water End**

4. The topic registration form, attached at Annex A to this report, states that the following took place to try and resolve the traffic issues in the Water End area of the City:
  - Ward Committee meeting 21<sup>st</sup> April 2009 – City of York Council Officers attended this meeting and noted residents concerns.
  - Special Ward Committee meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2009 – results of recent traffic surveys were reported to this meeting. However, whilst these figures were considered to be flawed, they indicated an increase of traffic along Westminster Road and The Avenue of over 50%.

5. A further informal Ward Committee meeting was held on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2009, which involved holding a mobile surgery at three locations in the ward; one of which was Clifton Green. Among the issues raised by residents were the ongoing traffic problems on Water End and Clifton Green. Residents pointed out that the increased traffic on Westminster Road and The Avenue was a safety issue, and suggested that it be addressed by road closure or preventing motorists from turning right/left in to the area. Residents also suggested that there be greater cooperation between various council departments, e.g. between Transport Planning and the Cycling City project.
6. In addition to the above, two separate petitions had been submitted to the Council by residents from the Westminster Road, The Avenue and Greycliffe Drive areas. The first of these, received on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2009, contained 95 signatures from 62 properties mainly from Westminster Road and called for the Council to instigate the closure of Westminster Road. The second petition received on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2009 came from residents of The Avenue; it contained 20 signatures covering 12 properties and also requested the closure of Westminster Road. There are approximately 158 properties along the three roads in this area. Both of these petitions were submitted to Full Council on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2009. A report regarding these petitions was subsequently presented to the Executive Member for City Strategy at a Decision Session in September 2009.
7. Having taken all the above information into consideration the Economic & City Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee agreed to progress this Councillor Call for Action to review and in doing so recognised certain key objectives and the following remit was agreed:

### **Aim**

8. 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 decision
  - ii. To explore whether further improvements can be made to address the current traffic issues
  - 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.
9. A scoping report was presented to the Economic & City Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2009, which further expanded the information to be received under the key objectives of the remit. It was also agreed that the work would be undertaken by a small Task Group

comprised of several Members of the Committee namely Councillors D'Agorne, Holvey, Hudson and Pierce.

### **Consultation**

10. Consultation took place with the relevant technical officers within the Council. A public event was also held to hear residents' view. In addition to this residents have spoken under the Council's Public Participation Scheme at various public meetings where this issue has been discussed.
11. A list of all documentation received as part of the review is attached at Annex B to this report.

### **Information Gathered**

12. During the course of this review, at informal sessions, a public event and formal meetings Members gathered the following evidence in relation to this CCfA:

#### **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**

13. 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 End area of the City.
14. 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 presented to the Executive Member for City Strategy for consideration.
15. 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.
16. 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.
17. 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:

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

- 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)
  - 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
18. 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 chicanes as a method of controlling traffic speed and volumes be evaluated and reported back
19. 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”
20. 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.

21. At the Executive (Calling in) meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2009 the Executive agreed to accept the recommendations of SMC.
22. 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.
23. 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<sup>2</sup> of the Water End Cycle Scheme. 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.
24. 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.”
25. On consideration of the call in Scrutiny Management Committee upheld the decision of the Executive Member for City Strategy.

### **Public Event**

26. As part of key objective (i) of the remit the Task Group held a public event on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2010 to listen to the views of members of the public, to hear their concerns and to try and establish whether local concern still existed. The following paragraphs are a summary of the views received at that event and are sub-divided into road user categories.

### **Cycling**

27. A member of the Cyclists Touring Club (CTC) expressed the view that the work that had been carried out at the Water End junction had been beneficial to

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<sup>2</sup> The Task Group understood that there would be an evaluation of the scheme after the changes to the junction had been in place for one year

cyclists, especially as many people in the city commuted to work by bicycle. He stated that a recent survey had highlighted that 57% of cars in the peak period were undertaking short journeys and there was a need to encourage a move to alternative modes of transport for these.

28. The Water End scheme was not a 'stand alone' scheme and was just one part of an orbital cycle route that was being built around the city.
29. Traffic counters will be in place to monitor and prove change of usage.
30. A local resident expressed the view that there were very few cyclists using the new cycle lanes. They did not believe that cyclists should have any more leeway than other road users. A short car journey via the new junction could now take up to 20 minutes.
31. During a 20 minute journey from Leeman Road to Clifton Green one resident said they saw only 1 cyclist. They questioned why priority was given to cyclists when so few were using the facilities.

### **Pedestrians**

32. 'Rat running' was not good for pedestrians, especially those with pushchairs and/or small children. One resident with small children had had a 'near miss' at The Avenue.
33. It was quite difficult to cross the road at The Avenue at peak times. Even if vehicles were not going at more than 20 miles per hour it was still awkward for the elderly and those with pushchairs and small children.
34. A Representative from the Cyclists Touring Club North Yorkshire said that there was a pedestrian footway on the south side of Clifton Bridge, however many pedestrians did not cross to use this.
35. A Westminster Road resident said that having safe walking routes was fundamental. National Guidance suggests that we need them, especially for children and young people to play in the street. Westminster Road and The Avenue were less attractive for pedestrians since the changes to the junction. There were 486 vehicle movements on Saturday 6th February 2010 between 2pm & 3pm.
36. One resident asked whether Council policy was to prioritise in the following order; pedestrians followed by cyclists followed by vehicular traffic.<sup>3</sup>

### **Motorists**

37. There has been a significant increase in traffic over recent years and the City of York Council's traffic engineers have not taken the impact of this into consideration when implementing/designing new schemes.
38. There is no consistency in City of York Council policy

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<sup>3</sup> The answer to this question is addressed at another point in this report

39. Residents in the area have had to bear the brunt of the introduction of this scheme.
40. A resident, who was both a cyclist and a motorist, was in favour of the cycling provision at Water End and felt the changes to the junction had made the area safer for cyclists. As a motorist he expected to be delayed and felt that motorists were part of the problem.
41. The Police do not have the resources to monitor traffic flow, junctions or 'rat running'.

### **Local Residents' Views**

42. Changes to major junctions must be well planned through traffic modelling that takes into consideration the impact changes may have on suburban roads. This was not taken into consideration when the modelling for the junction changes at Clifton Green was undertaken.
43. There was a 97% increase in through traffic volume in Westminster Road and The Avenue.
44. 93% of residents in Westminster Road and The Avenue petitioned for point closure such was the negative impact of increased traffic on their community.
45. Many letters have been sent to the Chief Executive and to the Executive Member for City Strategy.
46. The increase in through traffic is not in dispute but the solution is. The proposed 20mph speed limit is a token gesture and will not address the problems being experienced.
47. Generally local residents welcomed the fact that the scheme would be evaluated a year after installation (March/April 2010). They did, however, believe that any evaluation should include the impact the changes to the junction had had on Westminster Road and The Avenue.
48. 50% of the increased traffic flow is not at peak times, so there is no let up in traffic even at weekends. There is an overall increase in traffic on Westminster Road as a result of the changes made to the junction.
49. A resident living on the corner of Westminster Road and The Avenue said that a 20mph limit was counter-productive as it highlights that it is a main road that people may consider using. They did not feel enough was being done on the phasing of traffic lights. The only solution was to close the road, which the majority of residents were in favour of. They could not understand why the Council were too afraid to do this.
50. A Resident living at the junction of Westminster Road and The Avenue said that due to increased traffic travelling in both directions there had been many near misses.

51. As cars frequently had to queue for 20 minutes at a time to pass through the junction there were concerns about the air quality in this area. Residents asked if there were air quality statistics available for before and after the changes to the junction.<sup>4</sup>
52. Residents asked if there were statistics showing the amount of cyclists that used the junction both before and after the changes were made.<sup>5</sup>
53. If you introduce a point closure then the traffic on the main highway would increase and people would have to queue for much longer. People will always drive, so we shouldn't be making changes to the highways just to accommodate a few cyclists.
54. Clifton planning panel should have been involved/consulted on the junction changes.
55. Motorists prefer to cut through Westminster Lane to go north onto the A19 rather than wait in a queue of traffic.
56. The pattern of traffic using Westminster Road is now established; adjusting the traffic lights will now no longer address the issue.
57. Many residents feel that closing the road would be the lesser of two evils.
58. Chicanes would cause further pollution.

### **Other views**

59. There has been a large increase in traffic around the end of the day, in part due to St Peter's School. However, this view was counteracted by a resident who expressed the view that it was the through traffic that was the problem rather than the school traffic. He believed that the school was also in favour of a point closure.
60. Whilst cycling is important, the infrastructure needs to accommodate all modes of transport including cars.

### **Written Representations**

61. In addition to the views expressed above several written representations were received from members of the public who were unable to attend the meeting. Some of these views have already been detailed in the paragraphs above and the list below sets out points not previously made:
  - Introduce a 20mph speed limit on Clifton Green on the stretch from the junction with Clifton to Water End
  - Position a belisha beacon at the crossing to the bus stop by The Old Grey Mare
  - Install a solar-powered 20mph sign to alert motorists to their speed
  - Tighten the chicane on Clifton Green to further reduce speed

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<sup>4</sup> This question is addressed at another point in this report

<sup>5</sup> This question is addressed at another point in this report



- Despite the vast sums of money spent improving cycling facilities on Water End many some people still seem to prefer to cycle on the pavement.
  - Westminster Road is being used as a rat run
  - Cars are speeding and even overtaking in the residential streets in the area
  - Dangerous driving in the Westminster Road area
  - A house wall in The Avenue was destroyed by a Council vehicle trying to avoid oncoming cars
  - Traffic chaos at peak times
  - Difficult to cross Westminster Road at peak time due to the increase in traffic
  - Why is an evaluation needed? It is quite obvious that the remodelling at Water End is a complete failure
  - A 20mph speed limit would have little or no effect
  - Environmental issues due to constant traffic jams caused by the removal of the filter lane
  - The size of vehicles now using the once quiet residential streets
  - Feel that the Council deceived us in their previous questionnaire. The Council didn't ask if we wanted to close the road, which I'm sure we would nearly all have agreed to, they (City of York Council) knew that there would be disagreement in where to close it so gave us lots of choices so no one would agree
  - Risk of damage to parked cars
62. In addition to the above a report was received from the Informal Traffic Group for Westminster Road and The Avenue, which had been annexed to the report presented to the Task Group on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2010. The views expressed in this document generally reflected the same public concerns that have been expressed elsewhere within this report.

### **Task Group's Comments**

63. The Task Group acknowledged the views that had been expressed at the public event and within the written representations and appreciated that these had generally been consistent throughout the course of the review.<sup>6</sup> The Task Group made the following comments in relation to the views expressed:
- The junction at Water End and Clifton Green lies within a Conservation Area. There were cobbles on one side of Water End and Clifton Green itself on the other. This made it difficult to widen the road; it also made it difficult to provide a safe pedestrian crossing at this point
  - Point closure could set a precedent and the wider implications, for the rest of the City, of having a point closure at Westminster Road needed to be explored
  - The possibility of a temporary closure of Westminster Road to assess the impact on the main highway and traffic trends
  - The possibility of using a rising bollard at any point closure
64. The Task Group thought that, perhaps, there were lessons to be learned in relation to including secondary channels within modelling schemes, thus

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<sup>6</sup> Views expressed at the public event were the views of those that had attended the event or provided a written representation. These were the personal opinions of attendees at the event and of other respondents to this CCfA

allowing peripheral roads (such as Westminster Road in this instance) to be taken into consideration prior to a scheme being implemented. Any impact that a new scheme may have on peripheral roads may then be gauged prior to works being undertaken.

### **Officers' Comments**

65. In response to some of the comments made at the public event officers said that through traffic using Westminster Road and The Avenue was not a new situation. However, they had not been able to predict the actual increase in traffic and the impact this might have had. The removal of the road humps to allow the works to be undertaken at St. Peter's School had not helped the situation as this had made it easier to use Westminster Road and The Avenue as a 'rat-run'.

### **Questions Arising from the Public Event**

66. A number of questions were raised at the public event and officers were asked to respond to these at a meeting of the Task Group on 23rd March 2010. Whilst these questions and their responses do not fully sit under key objective (i) of this remit they are included below for continuity.

#### Question

67. Are there air quality statistics for Clifton Green, Westminster Road and The Avenue before and after the changes?

#### Answer

68. The Task Group were informed that data was not specifically available for these roads, however data was available for a number of locations surrounding them and this is set out in Figures 1 & 2 of Annex C to this report.
69. Members were informed that diffusion tubes did not distinguish between traffic pollution, industrial pollution or background pollution but they could provide an indication of traffic emissions where they were co-located with traffic counters. Whilst traffic counters are located on Clifton Bridge and Shipton Road they are not co -located with diffusion tubes.
70. Further data was provided to indicate that there was a similar upward trend in air quality in other areas of the city and this is presented in Figures 3, 4, 5 and 6 of Annex C
71. On consideration of the information provided in relation to this question, the Task Group highlighted the following issues:
- After discussion with officers there appeared to be a general increase in Air Quality (AQ) levels across the city not just in the area around Water End
  - It was noted from officers' comments that 'Real Time Monitoring' was more accurate than diffusion tube monitoring

### Question

72. What is the methodology of the evaluation, how has it/will it be used?

### Answer

73. The Task Group were informed that the Clifton Green cycle scheme was part of the wider orbital route. The orbital route had been identified as part of the strategic cycle network in an effort to join the east/west routes either side of the river. The Clifton Bridge scheme was identified as an obvious gap in the cycle network and was included in the list of capital schemes to be progressed to address the issues raised by a previous Scrutiny Committee considering cycling several years ago. A significant amount of consultation had been carried out as part of that process and cyclists had advised that it was a location that needed addressing.<sup>7</sup>
74. The methodology to assess the success or otherwise of the scheme is a comparison of before and after data from key locations along the route:
- Clifton Bridge cycle counts
  - Clifton Bridge vehicle counts
  - Cycle City project monitoring (area wide cycle usage)
  - Turning counts at Salisbury Road and Clifton Green
  - A check of the modelling outputs and predictions against the actual flows and delay times (from the traffic master data set)
75. On consideration of the information provided in relation to this question, the Task Group highlighted the following issues:
- Traffic queues are difficult to model; whilst queues are longer delays can actually be shorter

### Question

76. Is Council policy still to prioritise pedestrians over cyclists over motorists?

### Answer

77. The Council has a Road User Hierarchy (RUH) that places pedestrians at the top followed by people with mobility problems and then cyclists. Car borne commuters are at the bottom of the hierarchy. It does not mean that pedestrians have absolute priority; it means that their needs should be considered before other modes in making any improvements or alterations to the highway.
78. Council Officers did, however, say that it might be how well we do this as a Council, that is the issue.
79. On consideration of the information provided in relation to this question, the Task Group highlighted the following issues:

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<sup>7</sup> This issue is further discussed under key objective (ii) of this report

- As previously mentioned, there were constraints on the junction design due to it being in a Conservation Area and this is why there hasn't been provision for pedestrians to cross Water End near Clifton Green.

Question

80. What cycle data is available to show the use of the route before and after the alterations?

Answer

81. Peak time cycle flow data for Clifton Bridge, for before and after the scheme, was implemented is set out in the table below.

Clifton Bridge												
Eastbound												
AM peak				PM peak				12 hour				
	All traffic	Cars	Pedal Cycles	Pedestrians	All traffic	Cars	Pedal Cycles	Pedestrians	All traffic	Cars	Pedal Cycles	Pedestrians
Sep-08	791	627	85	N/A	702	605	23	N/A	6477	5241	388	N/A
Sep-09	816	558	126	46	661	548	39	33	7286	5688	521	326
Nov-09	688	582	114	N/A	666	566	49	N/A	7373	5888	491	N/A
Westbound												
AM peak				PM peak				12 hour				
	All traffic	Cars	Pedal Cycles	Pedestrians	All traffic	Cars	Pedal Cycles	Pedestrians	All traffic	Cars	Pedal Cycles	Pedestrians
Sep-08	753	616	38	N/A	1260	1054	92	N/A	8660	7075	406	N/A
Sep-09	843	611	57	34	1110	850	98	44	9102	6942	495	313
Nov-09	852	699	50	N/A	1135	900	118	N/A	9224	7435	537	N/A

82. On consideration of the information provided in relation to this question the Task Group highlighted the following issues:

- There had been a significant increase in all westbound traffic

Other

83. In addition to the public views expressed at the event held on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2010 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 in the paragraphs below:

**Residents' Views expressed under the Council's Public Participation Scheme**

84. On 12th 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 9th July 2009.

85. 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.
86. 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 than those that had previously existed.
87. At a meeting of the Task Group on 15th 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.
88. 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.
89. On 5th 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 nearby 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.
90. 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.
91. At a meeting of Economic & City Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 26th 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.

92. 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.
93. At a meeting of the Water End CCfA Task Group held on 23<sup>rd</sup> March Members heard from two local residents. The first stated that it had been almost a year since the scheme had been implemented and it was now well documented that it was having a negative impact on local residents. The second resident reiterated a point previously made, namely that there had been a 97% increase in traffic and Westminster Road was now being used as a relief road.
94. The Water End Task Group met again on 14<sup>th</sup> April when they heard from two local residents who reiterated points that had previously been made. The Task Group were also addressed by a representative of the Cyclists Touring Club who believed that the full value of the scheme would not be realised until the orbital cycle route had been completed. He hoped that any future evaluation of the scheme would indicate that there had been an increase in cyclists using this route.

### **Key Objective (ii)**

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

### **Site Visit**

95. On 18th 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 time observing traffic at the junction of Water End and Westminster Road.
96. 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 a pecked line, from which traffic was not excluded, marked the cycle lane.

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

97. 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)**

98. 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.
99. 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]**

100. Officers confirmed that the works in this area 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.
101. Discussions ensued around the above subheading and are detailed 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**

102. 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.'

103. 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.

104. The following further clarifying 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.'

105. 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

106. Officers also 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

107. The Task Group queried whether there were alternative, viable cycle routes and were informed that as part of the public consultation on the Water End proposals in September 2008, a resident of Westminster Road had suggested using a nearby pathway alongside the John Berrill Almshouse as an alternative route for cyclists. A response was sent to the resident stating that for several reasons the path was not suitable. The main reasons being as follows:

- The middle part of this existing pedestrian footpath is too narrow for pedestrians and cycles to share. It could not be widened without land purchase on one side or the other

- The actual benefit cyclists appears to be minimal, given that the proposed scheme safely guides cyclists to Clifton Green signals, and that after making the left turn, there is just a relatively short section of the A19 leading to the Rawcliffe Lane signals.
- A relatively narrow route that mixes pedestrians and cyclists (which is also overgrown and not particularly well lit) is not likely to be considered an attractive route to the vast majority of cyclists and is therefore not likely to be well used. This tends to be confirmed by the fact that it is not well used at the moment by cyclists.

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

108. Members received information on the cost of the programme of works at the Water End/Clifton Green junction. A briefing note was circulated 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**

109. 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.
110. 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.

### **Further Information Requested**

111. Having taken all the information received to date into consideration the Task Group asked Officers to prepare a briefing note on what impact a point closure would have on the main highway. This is attached at Annex D to this report.
112. The Task Group discussed Annex D at their meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2010 and noted that the left hand lane turn outlined was shorter than it was prior to the scheme being implemented. The briefing note clearly indicated that a point

closure would create an increase in the amount of traffic using the main highway. Concerns were raised about how the re-introduction of a left hand turn would impact on cyclists and the rationale of creating an orbital cycle route.

113. If a left hand turn were to be reintroduced then, in order to maintain the status and quality of cycling provision the road would need to be widened. This may be difficult due to the constraints of the Village Green on one side of the highway and the cobbled area to the other.
114. The Task Group also received some updated information on cycle flows on Clifton Bridge and this is attached at Annex E to this report. Members were informed that there were certain difficulties in monitoring cycle usage and to gather the most accurate data monitoring needed to take place for about a year; thus allowing for seasonal fluctuations in usage to be recorded.

### **Key Objective (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**

115. At a meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2010 Members of the Task Group received information on the following:

### **The Consultation Processes used for Highway Schemes**

116. A briefing note was received detailing the consultation exercise undertaken for the Water End/Clifton Green Cycle Scheme and for comparison a similar summary for the A19 Fulford Multi-Modal Corridor Improvement Scheme. Copies of the consultation documentation were circulated at the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2010.
117. Discussion between the Task Group and officers drew out the following points:
  - The first consultation document in relation to the Fulford scheme went to approximately 4700 homes. There was a 13% response rate, which officers confirmed was good.
  - Enough views were received back on the Fulford scheme to see what the representative views were
  - Only a small portion of homes in Westminster Road received consultation documentation on the Water End scheme (approximately 25)
118. The Task Group asked why similar consultation, to that on the Fulford scheme, was not undertaken at Water End and if it had been would it have highlighted the potential impact on Westminster Road and The Avenue? Officers said that consultation must be pitched to each individual scheme. It was already known from previous consultation that this was area of the City needed improved provision for cyclists.

### **Trial Highway Schemes**

119. At the same meeting a briefing note on the possibility of trialling highway schemes, prior to full implementation, was considered by the Task Group. The briefing note stated that there were a number of factors that could make implementation of a scheme on a trial basis an impractical proposition.
120. On discussion of this document with officers the Task Group were advised that it was only practical to undertake trials on small, simplistic schemes.
121. Members of the Task Group felt that trialling was possible in certain circumstances and it was not difficult to re-sequence traffic lights or cordon off part or all of a carriageway with temporary bollards in order to create a temporary cycle lane. This would be a lot less expensive than installing a permanent change only to find it did not work.

### **Key Objective (iv)**

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

122. At a meeting on 26th January 2010 Members received information on the Land Compensation Act 1973. This contained a summary of the law for Members' information.
123. 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.

### **Analysis & Key Findings**

124. On considering all of the information received as part of this Councillor Call for Action the Task Group acknowledged that the set of circumstances leading to the problems being experienced were unique. It was clear that this was an exceptional set of circumstances and they felt that because they had, in part, been caused by the changes to the junction the Council had some responsibility to attempt to resolve them.
125. The Task Group drew the following conclusions based on the evidence they had received:
  - As a consequence of the Water End highway project, traffic levels in Westminster Road and The Avenue have increased substantially
  - These consequences were unforeseen during the testing of the future traffic flows using the macro traffic model which did not include Westminster Road, The Avenue or other side streets
  - The consequences were also unforeseen by the large number of agencies, Councillors and residents who were also consulted about the proposals

- The new junction arrangements were undertaken as part of a longstanding, well-considered cycling strategy and partially funded by a Government grant for Cycling City
  - The sought increased usage by cyclists has been achieved
  - The delays encountered by other traffic using the junction have not been greatly increased
  - However, the increase in cycle movements and absence of significant delays has been achieved by a driver instigated diversion of some traffic along Westminster Road and The Avenue
  - On its own, point closure of Westminster Road and/or The Avenue would lead to substantial congestion at Water End.
126. It was apparent that there was very limited space to widen the carriageway as the Village Green could not be impinged on and the cobbles on the other side were part of the Conservation Area. The Task Group were not prepared to support the loss of the cycle lane in order to reinstate the left hand turn. However, they realised that if there were to be a point closure on either Westminster Road or The Avenue then there would need to be a left hand filter lane to aid traffic flows on Water End.

### **Corporate Strategy 2009/2012**

127. 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 had an obligation to address the issues raised within the formally registered CCfA. They have done this by forming a Task Group to investigate the issues. The Task Group directly reported to the Economic & City Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee with their findings.

### **Implications**

128. **Financial** – Funding will need to be found to update the SATURN modelling programme to incorporate side streets as suggested in recommendation (ii) of this report. The financial implications are, however, unknown at this time because it will be dependent on the number of side streets included in any updates to SATURN. Financial costs could include traffic counters, cameras and extra staffing costs in order to survey further streets. This could amount to a significant sum of money dependent on how many side streets were incorporated. Officers in the City Strategy Directorate are planning a refresh of the model for LTP3 and may increase the level of detail in the model in some areas - although expanding the area of coverage is probably more of a priority. Officers have also indicated that whilst it may not be practicable to include all road links in the transport model, for individual schemes a greater level of detail in the modelling is possible and in some circumstances desirable. Another financial implication is that the design cost of schemes may rise due to additional surveys and modelling time, this would need to be factored against the delivery of the individual schemes.

129. Additional costs could also be incurred (as yet unknown) if further alterations to the junction and/or Westminster Road and The Avenue are made. Any costs would have to be identified as part of the development of any new comprehensive proposals as suggested in recommendation (i) arising from this review.
130. **Human Resources** – Appropriate staffing resources will need to be made available to implement recommendation (i) of this review.
131. **Legal** – Under The Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 the Local Authority has a legal duty to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas. Any further alterations to the junction should mitigate the likelihood of causing damage to the conservation area and may need to be addressed under recommendation (i) arising from this review.
132. Clifton Green is a registered village green and is protected from development. The cobbles, as part of the highway, are not formally protected although the duty under the 1990 Planning Act to preserve and enhance the special character conservation areas does extend to highways schemes. The cobbles are considered to be part of the character of the conservation area along with trees, verges, boundary walls and urban form in general – all the elements that make for distinctive townscape interest in the area. Conservation Area Consent may be necessary for any further engineering works.
133. There are no known equalities, property, crime & disorder or other implications associated with the recommendations in this report.

### **Risk Management**

134. This Councillor Call for Action was raised by the Clifton Ward Councillors in response to significant dissatisfaction amongst local residents regarding the changes to the junction at Water End. Failure to respond to these concerns and the recommendations within this report could lead to the issues raised in this CCfA remaining unresolved.
135. However, there is also a risk that a solution may not be found that can adequately address recommendation (i). The Task Group has already established that there is no room for two traffic lanes and a cycle lane. They have also expressed the wish that the cycle lane remain. This, therefore, leaves limited possibilities to adapt the junction. Those possibilities that do remain may have a negative impact on the conservation area, which would need to be very carefully considered, and the appropriate officers in the Council would need to be consulted.
136. It could also lead to potential problems elsewhere in the city as the orbital cycle route is developed and other major junctions are changed to accommodate this.

### **Recommendations**

137. In light of the above report the Task Group have agreed the following recommendations:

- i. That Council Officers urgently develop new, comprehensive proposals for the Water End junctions to improve the current junction and reduce greatly traffic flows in Westminster Road/The Avenue
- ii. That the Council should, in future, use traffic models which incorporate side streets when assessing and designing junction improvements
- iii. That the present policy of reviewing new highway schemes only after a period of twelve months should be modified to enable a review after three months when unforeseen consequences have arisen and when Ward Members request.

Reason: To address the concerns raised in the Councillor Call for Action

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**Final Draft Report**   
**Approved**

**Date** 6<sup>th</sup> May 2010

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**Wards Affected:** Clifton

All

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

### Background Papers:

A list of the documentation received as part of this review is attached at Annex B to this report.

### Annexes

- Annex A** Topic Registration Form
- Annex B** List of Documentation Received as part of the Review
- Annex C** Air Quality Statistics
- Annex D** Effects of Point Closure on the Main Highway/Junction Analysis
- Annex E** Cycle Flows on Clifton Bridge