

Ward Member Comments

- Cllr Douglas prefers **Option 2**, because it affords lane protection for cyclists and is also a similar format to that which is used in several other places in the city. This in turn means that regular road users will know how to negotiate the junction.
- Cllr Scott – no comment.
- Cllr King – no comment.

Other Member Comments

- Cllr Hyman would like to see the existing layout retained for safety reasons, as highlighted by the Emergency Services responses, and the Road Safety Audit process.
- Cllr D'Agorne would also like to see no changes to the existing layout. He also comments that in taking the question of safety in highway design very seriously it makes no sense to deliberately exclude the safer status quo as an option, unsupported by any empirical evidence that this should be excluded as an option. Cllr D'Agorne is also concerned about removing a facility provided as part of the Cycle City funding.
- Cllr Taylor thinks that the existing layout is now quite reasonable and is safer for cyclists, neither option improves upon this, and changing things would be a waste of public money.

Comments from Organisations

- **Cyclists' Touring Club (CTC) – Richard Twigg:** “Firstly it is important to point out that the CTC, who have over 600 members in the York area, are extremely keen to continue supporting York City Council's objective of being ‘one of the country's premier cycling cities’ and appreciate the work that has gone into the development of the proposals to date. However we feel that the options you have put before us regarding Water End junction run the risk of:
 - (a) knowingly jeopardising the safety of cyclists and pedestrians;

(b) providing options which do not solve the extant problems in this area nor provide long term improvements for all; and

(c) wasting a significant slice of the £3.68m Cycling City budget by ripping out the improvements paid for out of that budget.

Therefore **we cannot support either option** because they will:

1. Be extremely dangerous for cyclists exiting the cycle lane onto the road directly at a point where left-turning traffic will cut across them;
2. Bring vehicles in close proximity to pedestrians;
3. Allow large vehicles to block "sub-standard" lanes negating any benefits;
4. Not address the issue of motorists using Westminster Rd. as a rat-run (closing Westminster Rd. in the future will only exacerbate things); and
5. Not significantly reduce the waiting times for traffic at Water End.

We also feel that the case for the "do-nothing" option is a very strong one for reasons of safety risk, reputational risk and conflict with local policy objectives. Cyclists are a very vulnerable group of road-users and if the proposed changes are made to this junction it will increase the likelihood of a serious road accident and so it will deter them from using this route which means they will return to their cars. There are a number of families and children who regularly need to negotiate this junction to access Homestead Park, the River Ouse, the Sustrans route, local schools and sports clubs etc... Therefore it seems that the Councillors need to take another look at the safety issues associated with these options as previously highlighted to them.

The proposals appear to conflict with the City of York Council's objectives regarding sustainability, health and safety. As an

environmental and sustainability consultant on major transport projects for 20 years I am fully qualified to comment on this.

Lastly, we are concerned that the City of York's reputation may be put at risk on this matter by promoting a more dangerous transport solution and by the apparent wasteful use of taxpayers money (it has been argued that a sum of money commensurate with that spent on the Water End scheme from the Cycling City budget should now be spent elsewhere on cycling improvements in York by way of completing the City's commitments under it's Cycling City status).”

- **York Cycle Campaign – Adrian Setter:** “Further to my personal response below, this matter was discussed at the monthly meeting of York Cycle Campaign on 10th January. The meeting resolved to reject both of the options offered, wishing instead for the junction to be left unchanged. In addition to the points made below, I have been asked to point out that this junction is part of the "Orbital Cycle Route", one of the principal visible legacies of the Cycling City York programme and that, since it is typically the most intimidating section of a route that determines a cyclist's decision on whether to use it or not, the changes proposed would seriously erode that legacy.

Neither of the proposed options is acceptable, and that the layout of the junction should remain unchanged. My reasons are, briefly:

- I understand that Council officers have assessed both options as being more hazardous than the existing layout. It is unacceptable for the Council to spend money knowingly to make a junction more dangerous. I can hold this position as a matter of principle, without even considering what the position of the Council and Councillors would be regarding civil and/or criminal liability should a cyclist subsequently be killed or injured.
- The junction was congested long before the removal of the left-hand filter lane, and reinstating it will not fix the congestion problem. If there is any small increase in capacity at the

junction, the release of suppressed demand will very soon restore the current levels of congestion.

- Whilst many people, mostly people passing through the area, rather than residents, have complained about congestion, it is clear to any observer of local politics that the reason for the proposed changes is pressure from residents of Westminster Road and The Avenue on their ward Councillors, not to do with the congestion directly, but to do with traffic diverting along those streets to avoid it. Changing the junction will not solve that problem, because it will not stop traffic backing up as far as, and beyond, Westminster Road. The only fix for the issue of through traffic on those roads, if one is really needed, would be direct measures to stop traffic using that route.”
- **North Yorkshire Police – Steve Burrell**, Traffic Management Liaison Officer: “I have studied both options and offer the following observations on behalf of the North Yorkshire Police:-
 - Both these options have previously been safety audited. I agree with the audits findings and reiterate the concerns identified.
 - The new proposals are less safe than the current and existing layout.
 - The options pro's and con's list most of the main safety issues and concerns, which cannot be ignored or disregarded.
 - I understand that the present layout has increased the number of cycle journeys made in the area. The new proposals appear to fly in the face of general CYC policy with regards to modal shift, as the potential for conflict will be identified by cyclists and is likely to reduce the attractiveness of this route and the gains in cycling will be lost.
 - My understanding is that the proposed changes are politically led with regards to a perceived increase in congestion by motorists. Changing the layout to one of those proposed will be a backwards step as the dispersed traffic and modal shift achieved, will be reversed and the traffic flow and queues will return to its previous levels.

Therefore, based on the above road safety issues, the North Yorkshire Police cannot support the proposals.”

- **Fire & Rescue Service:** “This junction does present the Fire and Rescue Service with difficulties when responding to incidents on blue lights, particularly during peak periods when traffic is queuing in both directions. For fire appliances to be able to progress, vehicles are required to move out of our way and at times this is extremely difficult and could potentially place cyclists at risk. Having looked at and considered the two options from an emergency response perspective;

(Option 1) would return the junction to its original state leaving us with little room to manoeuvre when it becomes necessary to overtake two lines of queuing traffic on approaching the lights at red with stationary oncoming vehicles. This often makes it necessary for us to wait for the lights to change in order to proceed.

(Option 2) would allow traffic in the outside lane to move into the cycle lane if necessary allowing us a little more room to manoeuvre, however it still wouldn't be wide enough with oncoming traffic present and would present an added risk to any cyclists who might be occupying the central cycle lane.

Compared to Option 1 and 2 the existing layout provides other road users with the greatest amount of room to be able to move safely out of our way and on that basis alone we would prefer that the existing layout is maintained.

Further to this, a 'green wave' system for Acomb fire station would prevent the majority of problems we have at this junction and reduce our waiting time at the lights during periods of heavy traffic. The green wave system would enable us to press a button at Acomb station which would set the lights at Clifton on green and eliminate any traffic congestion at that junction when emergency vehicles reach that point. I am led to believe that this matter was discussed several years ago but unfortunately never implemented.”

- **Ambulance Service** – The ambulance service have responded by reiterating their previous comments, as follows: With regard to the possible changes to the Water End/Clifton Green junction we would not be in support of the proposals. In support of this stance please take the following aspects into account:
 - Currently we have issues with the ability of an ambulance to make progress along Water End during heavy traffic volume periods as there is limited capacity for vehicles to move. This is compounded by the vision of the junction when travelling towards Clifton Green as the ambulance staff have to commit to travelling in the opposing lane in heavy traffic; oncoming traffic does not have the vision until it is committed to the same lane. The introduction of the secondary traffic lane would potentially reduce the capacity further, especially as this is below recommended width.
 - There is potential for an increase in road traffic collisions and therefore casualty incidents due to vehicles having to cross the cycle lane to join the left turn lane.
 - The narrow lanes potentially increase the risk to cyclists that are now dedicated to having to travel between two lanes of moving vehicles.
 - Cyclists' intention to turn right from Water End has the potential of a collision with a vehicle heading straight on, which further raises the risk of casualty incidents.
 - Removal of the splitter island commits pedestrians to a complete crossing of the junction head with no dedicated footway adjacent to the Green.
 - The reduction of both the cycle lane and the left turn lane below recommended width causes some concern, as this brings the cyclist and motorist closer together.
 - This is a bus route and presumably there will be no change to bus services locally. The potential for vehicles to encroach on the opposing lane, due to the restrictive lane width, is greater and potentially lends itself to creating an obstruction to emergency vehicles.
- **Rawcliffe Parish Council** – At the time of writing the report, the parish council have not responded.