

Report of the Director of City & Environmental Services

## **An Update Report on the Lendal Bridge Trial**

### **Summary**

1. This report provides Members of the Economic & City Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an overview and update in relation to the Lendal Bridge traffic trial being undertaken between 27<sup>th</sup> August 2013 and 26<sup>th</sup> February 2014.

### **Background**

2. Approval to proceed with a six month trial was agreed at Cabinet on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2013. The main objectives of the trial are to: reduce congestion in the city centre and on the route between the Station and Bootham in particular, and to create a bus corridor that provides improvements in bus reliability and journey times, thus encouraging greater use of public transport. Longer term the objective is to support the economy by creating a more attractive environment for pedestrians and cyclists and increase footfall in the city centre.
3. The trial commenced on 27<sup>th</sup> August 2013 and the restriction operates between 10:30 and 5:00pm seven days a week. Buses, taxis, cyclists, pedestrians and emergency vehicles are permitted to cross the bridge during this period as well as a number of other vehicles specifically exempted within the Traffic Order.
4. Advance warning and information was provided in the form of Press (York Press and Yorkshire Post) and radio adverts, business information sessions, three city centre consultation events, creation of new pages on the Council website, information released to accommodation providers through Visit York and a citywide leaflet drop to all residents.

The restriction is enforced by Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras situated at the Rougier St/Lendal Bridge junction. There are a number of regulatory signs in place immediately adjacent to the restriction that make the trial enforceable.

5. A grace period on the enforcement was agreed until 4th September 2013.
6. A monitoring regime has been set up and a number of datasets are published on the council website each month and can be found at [www.york.gov.uk/citycentreimprovements](http://www.york.gov.uk/citycentreimprovements) . The review of the data is being conducted by the Institute of Transport Studies (ITS) at Leeds University. A three month interim report is due to be considered at the end of January 2014. An online and paper feedback form (in all libraries and West Offices) is available for residents and visitors to provide feedback. A separate online form has been set up for businesses.

## **Progress to date**

### **Data**

7. Initial assessment of the data demonstrates that overall the traffic network has responded well to the restriction. There have been significant reductions in traffic volumes and improvements to traffic flow in a number of key areas of the highway network. In particular Bootham, Gillygate, Clarence Street, Lord Mayors Walk, St Leonard's Place, Museum Street, Lendal Arch and the Station frontage have seen improvements. This has decongested these areas improving this important bus, taxi, pedestrian and cycling city centre corridor.
8. Elsewhere in the city the radials and the outer ring road have remained fundamentally unaffected by the restriction in that flows (and levels of delay) remaining similar to pre-trial (evidenced by traffic counts and P&R travel times). There have however been comments made about significant additional traffic occurring at specific locations. These have been investigated; some occurrences have been as a result of specific instances e.g. localised flooding on Bishopthorpe Road, others reporting increases in traffic have not been confirmed by the data e.g. Burdyke Road and Leeman Road.

Monitoring continues to pay close attention to the network as a whole and specific reports of congestion and delay.

9. The inner ring road between Fishergate, Walmgate Bar and Layerthorpe Bridge has, as was predicted, seen increases in traffic volumes and consequential increases in the level of congestion. Spot surveys show that this is adding an extra five or ten minutes to travel times in this area of the city. These spot surveys were undertaken in the morning only and will need to be supported by the Trafficmaster data due to be received in late January which will provide a clearer indication of journey times across the city.
10. Water End has also seen an increase in traffic volume, again as predicted by the traffic model. Increases in travel time for motorists using this route have been increased in particular during the late afternoon (school run) by several minutes but at other times of day Water End and Clifton Green appear to be coping reasonably well with the additional traffic.
11. The base line data provided at the start of the trial has been updated to reflect the recent figures for traffic volumes and flows on the bridges and selected main routes and Park&Ride journey times. Monthly updates are available on the website at [www.york.gov.uk/citycentreimprovements](http://www.york.gov.uk/citycentreimprovements). The first three months updates are included as appendix A.
12. The traffic count data collected so far shows that the flows during the restricted period are broadly the same as flows in September 2012 and October and give no indication that people are avoiding coming to York. Park and Ride patronage for Sept and Oct 2013 are both up on the same period last year. Both these indicators suggest that people are not avoiding York and that York remains very much open for business.
13. The Park & Ride data shows journey time savings are possible for buses (although the savings are not necessarily currently being realised as time saved on sections of the route is lost having to wait at other locations to maintain headway). As a proxy for traffic the data provides a good indication that generally the network is responding well to the restriction.

14. Specific service routes have also been provisionally analysed (routes 1 and 6, chosen as high frequency routes using the bridge) this shows that some significant journey time savings are possible (timetable alterations required to realise benefits).
15. The general network seems to be reacting well to the restriction, although it continues to be monitored closely by operators in the council's Traffic Control Centre. Signal timings have been adjusted city wide to optimise the timings to help the flow of traffic and in response to any incidents on the network.
16. The results from the traffic flow data and journey time data are positive at this stage. Just over halfway through the trial significant improvements in some areas have been identified and there are no signs of gridlock. Importantly the bus services that do not use the bridge are not being affected by the re-routing traffic. It remains important to remember that traffic flows are going to be higher now than at the start of the trial as a result of schools returning, Christmas build up etc.
17. Detailed analysis of traffic data and individual bus routes is being undertaken as part of the three month review report currently being developed.

### **Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs)**

18. The number of PCNs being issued has remained at a relatively constant level, rather than reduce and plateau as predicted. This is in the main due to the number of visitors to the city. Residents appear to be aware of the trial and the split between YO postcodes and others is approximately 80/20. Monthly data is published on the website at the address in paragraph 6 and 11 and the first three months data is provided in Appendix B.
19. Out of the total number of PCNs issued some will be successful at appeal which can take up to three weeks, so the actual numbers of viable PCNs will be lower than shown in the appendix.

### **Signing and information**

20. Signing is comprehensive and legally compliant in line with the Department of Transport regulations.

The regulatory signs that make enforcement possible are immediately adjacent to the restriction. Additional advanced directional signs have been installed along Bootham, St Leonard's Place, Museum St and Station Avenue. Yellow AA information signs advising that Lendal Bridge is restricted have been in place since the beginning of the trial and cover the main radial routes into the city out to the Outer Ring Road. These signs are to advise drivers that there are some changes in the city and they need to be alert.

21. To further assist visiting drivers, Visit York sent out information to all their members to help them advise their customers of the restrictions over Lendal Bridge. There is some evidence to suggest that some accommodation providers are not always advising their customers ahead of their visit and further discussions have recently taken place with Visit York. In addition the Council has also provided appropriate wording/directional information to accommodation providers via the Hotel Association. The council has also launched a new online journey planner (available at [www.itravelyork.info](http://www.itravelyork.info)) that will present tailored transport options for journeys in and around York.
22. The SATNAV companies have advised us that their mapping is not currently able to incorporate the restrictions because it is not a permanent scheme. Google Maps which is used as the base for many smart-phones (iPhone/Android), along with tablet based SATNAV apps/route finders has fully taken on board the Lendal Bridge restriction. The journey planning site [www.transportdirect.info](http://www.transportdirect.info) has also fully taken on board the restriction. TomTom has added it to their 'live map' information and the Council is still in discussion with them and NavTeq (providers to Garmin) about updating their maps.
23. Although the inability of the SatNav companies to take on board the restriction has been disappointing SatNavs are only advisory, and the statutory road signs are what motorists should legally be paying attention to when driving.

### **Alterations to the trial**

24. The number of PCNs being issued remains a concern, especially as it appears to be drivers who are unfamiliar with the city.

The Cabinet Member for Transport requested that the signing was reviewed and improved and a number of steps have been taken/are planned to try and raise awareness of the restriction and its location.

25. Firstly the regulatory signs on the bridge have been increased in size and placed on yellow backing board to make them more obvious and visible. The detail of the signs remains unaltered.
26. Secondly some yellow AA directional lane signs have been placed on the bridge approach from the station to alert drivers that the bus lane and left turn over the bridge is for buses and taxis only.
27. Thirdly, a variable messaging sign has been placed at the junction of Station Rise/Station Avenue advising:  
Lendal Bridge, ← closed, 10:30am – 5pm
28. Fourthly, following feedback larger advanced directional signs along the routes leading to Lendal Bridge to be installed in January to make them more visible and clearly identify the location of Lendal Bridge and the route for all traffic; recognising the comments that have been received so far and the environment in which they are located. The sign that is currently located at the Bootham/Gillygate junction facing traffic approaching from Gillygate will be relocated onto Gillygate but requires a cantilever arm to be fabricated due to the lack of space available.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

29. Whilst CYC are downloading and collating the data in relation to the trial and have provided the monthly updates on the council website, the evaluation of the trial data is being undertaken by ITS. An interim three month report is currently being prepared and a full trial report will be prepared for early April. The full trial report will be considered by Cabinet and a decision on whether to continue the trial, remove it or confirm the Traffic Order will be made.

### **Consultation**

30. Not applicable as this item is for information only

### **Options**

31. Not applicable as this item is for information only

### **Council Priorities**

32. These transport initiatives accord with the Council's priorities relating in particular to Get York Moving, Building Strong Communities and Create Jobs & grow the economy.

### **Implications**

33. There are no financial, human resources, crime and disorder, information technology, property or other implications directly associated with this information only report.

### **Risk management**

34. Not applicable as this is an item for information only.

### **Recommendations**

35. That the Committee note the present position in relation to the progress of the trial.

Reason: In order to keep them updated on the progress of the trial.

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Report  **Date** 08.01.14  
Approved

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

**Wards affected – ALL**

### **Annexes**

**Annex A – Month One Data Release**

**Annex B – How are the Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued**

**Annex C - Abbreviations**