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Report of the Director of City and Environmental Services

**BETTER BUS AREA FUND –  
YORK CENTRAL BUS INTERCHANGE (ROUGIER STREET)**

**Summary**

1. This report updates the Director with the position in relation to the proposed “City Centre Bus Interchange” in particular the proposed new shelter attached to Roman House, which is intended to replace the existing shelter, which is around 25 years old and is now life expired.

**Recommendation and reason**

2. The Director is recommended to note the contents of this report and agree to delay construction of the shelter attached to Roman House to the 2015/16 financial year, when there will be greater clarity about the development of Roman House. This minimises the Council’s exposure to charges to store the new shelter before it can be attached to Roman House, or the risk that the shelter could be damaged by building works if it is attached to Roman House before the redevelopment of the building takes place.

**Background**

3. Improving York’s local bus services is identified as one of 6 key actions in the Council Plan in support of Get York Moving. Funding has been provided via the Better Bus Area Fund (BBAF) to assist City of York Council (CYC) in delivering the corporate priorities and outcomes set in the Council Plan, Local Plan and Economic Strategy. A part of the BBAF Programme identifies five locations in central York which will fulfil the role of “Bus Interchanges” due to their high density of bus services, and the ability to interchange between them, at these locations. Rougier Street/ Station Road and Micklegate form one of these interchanges, the largest one, with the other interchanges being located at the Rail Station, Piccadilly, Stonebow and Exhibition Square. The “Central Interchange”

cluster of stops comprises:

- Six stops on Rougier Street itself;
- Two stops on Station Road, adjacent to the Cedar Court Hotel, and
- Two stops at the foot of Micklegate.

The Better Bus Area programme of 2012 contained an allocation of £500,000 for improving the Central Interchange.

4. Since the BBAF award, many of the works required to deliver the Central Interchange (for example, the new shelters on Station Road, repainted shelters on Micklegate and reconfiguring the shelters opposite Roman House) have taken place. However, the outstanding Central Interchange project is to replace the shelter attached to Roman House. These works, which are the largest single item of expenditure in the project, have been delayed as Roman House has changed hands twice, initially (in early 2013) as part of a proposed redevelopment of the office building into flats, then, in November 2014, as part of a redevelopment of the building into hotel premises. CYC has applied for, and been granted, planning permission for the new shelter, but there have been long periods of “limbo” for the project whilst the Council has waited for developers to formulate their own plans for the building. The current position is that the new owners of the building have been working with their architects to develop a scheme for the building. However, work is at an early stage and the hotel group who have acquired the building are not yet in a position to share their plans or timescales for the redevelopment. As such, the building is again in a state of limbo.
5. Going forwards, this state of affairs gives CYC three options in developing the new shelter:
  - Option 1: CYC could press ahead with procuring and constructing the shelter, accepting that there may be a period when the shelter is in store awaiting fitment to the building when its refurbishment is completed – or that the shelter could be fixed but may be damaged by the building works linked with the redevelopment of Roman House (although this would be at any contractor’s risk)
  - Option 2: CYC could delay construction of the shelter until such time as Roman House is redeveloped – looking to procure the shelter to be fitted once Roman House has been redeveloped
  - Option 3: Abandoning the project and either returning the unspent funding to the Department for Transport, or using it to improve bus stops and shelters elsewhere in York.

6. This report recommends option 2 as it looks to replace the shelter ultimately, but does not expose CYC to the high costs of storing the new shelter or the risk that the new shelter would be damaged by building work on Roman House. Option 3 is considered impractical because of (a) the risk of reputational damage to CYC should the funds be returned to DfT (b) the need to replace the existing shelter on Roman House, whatever is decided in this paper and (c) the absence of another bus-stop related programme in York capable of accommodating the funds which would be released by abandoning this project.

## **Consultation**

7. Consultation took place to inform a Decision Session paper in October 2013 which set out how the Central Interchange would be configured. No further consultation has taken place.
8. Responses during the earlier consultation focussed on the poor state of repair of the existing facilities and peoples' desire that they be replaced. No specific queries or objections were raised relating to the proposed design of the replacement shelter.

## **Council Plan**

9. The potential benefits for the priorities in the Council Plan are:
  - Get York Moving – improvements to the bus stops will further encourage use of bus services and improve passenger waiting environments, particularly for passengers wishing to interchange between services.
  - Protecting the environment – the improvements will improve the environment on Rougier Street, which is currently poor. In particular they will improve the environment within the enclosed “red” shelter attached to Roman House which is currently very poor.

## **Implications**

10. This report has the following implications:
11. **Financial:** Provisional cost estimates suggest that the proposed works can be delivered within the allocated budget.
12. **Human Resources:** None.

13. **Equalities:** The Centre for Accessible Environments (CAE) have undertaken an Access and Mobility Audit, based around key issues of coach travel, streets and spaces, street furniture and clutter, heritage and other cultural attractions, blue badge parking and shopmobility. The audit has highlighted a number of key challenges around improving the public realm environment for disabled pedestrians and wheelchair users.
14. The works at Rougier Street will improve footways in the area, reducing risks of trips and falls. They will also improve the levels of lighting in the area, which will improve visibility of hazards and improve perceived safety levels in the area.
15. **Legal:** The proposed works would fall within the Local Highway Authority's Permitted Development Rights outlined in Part 13(b) to Schedule 2 of the 1995 Town and Country Planning General (Permitted Development) Order. A grant of planning permission is not required for the works on the Rougier Street shelter, however, planning permission is required for the changes to location of advertising shelters on Rougier Street and a planning application was approved in October 2013.
16. **Crime and Disorder:** There are no implications on crime and disorder.
17. **Information Technology:** There are some information technology implications of expanding the real time system and providing in-shelter CCTV coverage. These are not significant.
18. **Land:** All land lies within the adopted highway. The land is owned by the Council.
19. **Risk Management:** No significant risks associated with the recommendations in this report have been identified.

## Contact Details

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**Specialist Implications Officer(s)**

There are no specialist implications.

**Wards Affected:** Guildhall (site of scheme)

**Annexes:** (none)