

# North Yorkshire County Council

## Executive

25 May 2021

### Transforming Cities Fund Programme Proposals

#### Report of the Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services

#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval to undertake preliminary and detailed design of the recommended highways options for the Transforming Cities Fund programme following Public Consultation.

#### **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 £1.28bn (capital funding) was made available to city regions to bid for schemes to be delivered by 31 March 2023 through the Department for Transport's Transforming Cities Fund (TCF). The County Council was part of a Leeds City Region bid which was successful in securing £317m of funding.
- 2.2 The aim of TCF is to 'drive up productivity through improved connections between urban centres and suburbs' with a focus on investment 'in infrastructure to improve public and sustainable transport connectivity'.
- 2.3 As part of the successful Leeds City Region bid, North Yorkshire County Council is leading on delivery of a £31m programme with our partners at Skipton and Selby District Councils and Harrogate Borough Council, under a funding agreement with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA).

#### **3.0 Progress**

- 3.1 The projects are progressing through the West Yorkshire Combined Authority's assurance process, which requires the submission of an Outline Business Case in order to release funding for the preliminary and detailed design phase of the schemes.
- 3.2 A public consultation was undertaken on the proposals included within the Outline Business Case development for each project in order to inform the design development through preliminary and detailed design. The proposals are currently at a feasibility stage. Further consultation will be undertaken following more detailed design work.
- 3.3 A Final Business case will be presented prior to implementation and a further decision from the Executive will be sought to agree any recommended implementation of the final designs later in 2021.

#### **4.0 Public Consultation**

- 4.1 Public consultation on the schemes was undertaken between the 24 February and the 24 March 2021. The consultation exercise was run online using the WYCA Yourvoice Portal.

4.2 A number of open public online events were run using Microsoft Teams Broadcast in support of the consultation and good levels of engagement were seen. The following table summarises engagement for each scheme:

	<b>Visits to Yourvoice site</b>	<b>Visitors viewing detailed material</b>	<b>Surveys Completed</b>
Harrogate	5217	3247	1101
Skipton	912	566	193
Selby	1831	1099	234

4.3 The proposals which were consulted on are attached at Appendix A. For the Harrogate scheme variant options of some elements were presented and based on the feedback received, recommendations for the Highway elements have been formed.

4.4 A summary of overall responses to all scheme elements is attached at Appendix B.

## **5.0 Harrogate**

5.1 The following represent the key elements of the Harrogate scheme:

- Reallocation of road space on Station Parade – 1 lane and 2 Lane options & northern end made one way southbound
- Improvements to eastern section of James Street
- Public realm transformation of Station Square
- Improved public realm to the north of Victoria Multi-storey Car Park (One Arch)
- Provision of cycle lanes on East Parade

5.2 The consultation responses indicated generally good levels of support for the proposals with over half of respondents feeling positive or very positive about proposals for north Station Parade, One Arch, Station Square and East Parade.

5.3 Variant options were presented for the following highway elements, with respondents asked to indicate which variant they preferred:

- Station Parade 1 Lane or 2 Lane Options (Both Options include making northern Station Parade One Way southbound)
- James Street (eastern end) Full Pedestrianisation, Partial Pedestrianisation or retention of vehicle access at all times

5.4 For Station Parade 49% of respondents favoured the 1 Lane option, 27% the 2 Lane option and 24% neither. Analysis of comments provided shows that those preferring neither option typically did not want to see any changes on Station Parade.

5.5 On the basis of detailed comments received, the key concerns about the proposals and options for Station Parade were based around the potential impacts of increased congestion and the impact on businesses of reduced parking. Representations were received from a number of stakeholder groups, those primarily interested in sustainability and cycling generally preferred the 1 Lane Option, whilst a number of local business organisations preferred the 2 Lane option.

5.6 Traffic modelling has been undertaken to help understand the possible outcomes. A worst case scenario was developed by inflating traffic levels to 2023 (from a 2018 baseline) using regional levels of growth (In the period 2013 – 2018 Harrogate showed flat growth) and looking at the busiest time of day which is the afternoon peak (4.45pm – 5.45pm). It is considered that this approach represents a robust assessment of traffic levels.

5.7 The results indicated that under all of the options the highway network is expected to continue to operate effectively.

- 5.8 The modelling estimates that the worst case impacts on traffic congestion at the 2023 opening date would be:
- Station Parade 1 Lane Option – Increase in average journey time across the town centre of 53 seconds per vehicle with James Street part pedestrianised or 1minute 14 seconds per vehicle with James Street fully pedestrianised at all times.
  - Station Parade 2 Lane Option – Increase in average journey time across the town centre of 27 seconds. It is anticipated this would increase if delivered in combination with either full or partial pedestrianisation of James Street but remain below the times expressed for the 1 Lane Options.
- 5.9 Under any option Station Parade remains open to traffic and all options create potential for vehicles to divert away as a result of improvements to pedestrian crossings, introduction of signals for bus exit from the station and reconfiguration of the junction with Station Bridge.
- 5.10 The traffic modelling for both options for Station Parade predicts that there will be in the region of 170 to 200 vehicles diverted from Station Parade and that this traffic would be spread across the wider network. The concerns expressed by key stakeholders about the potential for increased congestion are recognised and the modelling does show an increase in journey times although this is a very robust estimate that is considered to represent a worst case. The consultation responses do however, show a strong level of support for the 1 Lane option although it is apparent that a significant number of responses favoured the 2 Lane or neither option. There is however a substantial majority in favour of doing something on Station Parade to improve the environment for pedestrians and cyclist albeit either the 1 Lane or 2 Lane option with the greater number being in favour of the former.
- 5.11 As has already been mentioned the scheme has to go through a further decision making process and consultation exercise before a final decision is taken on the Final Business Case. On this basis it is recommended that further detailed design and consultation work is undertaken on the 1 Lane Option ahead of a decision on the Final Business Case later this year.
- 5.12 For James Street 45% of respondents favoured full pedestrianisation, 17% partial pedestrianisation, 32% favoured retention of vehicular access and 6% did not want to see any of the options introduced.
- 5.13 Key concerns expressed about pedestrianisation in the consultation were the risk of congestion and the potential impact on businesses, particularly through loss of parking. Representations were received from a number of stakeholder groups, those primarily interested in sustainability and cycling generally preferred the full pedestrianisation option, whilst a number of local business organisations preferred the retention of vehicular access.
- 5.14 The traffic modelling suggests that, when delivered in conjunction with either the 1 lane or 2 lane options for Station Parade, the highway network will continue to operate effectively with any of the James Street options.
- 5.15 Whilst partial or full pedestrianisation of James Street would require some reduction in parking spaces, at this feasibility stage it is estimated that this would be less than 5% (45 out of a total of 915) reduction in on street pay and display spaces in Harrogate town centre. Currently, at peak occupancy, it is estimated that there are around 13% (120 out of a total of 915) on-street spaces unused.
- 5.16 Further more detailed design will seek to minimise any impact on parking whilst delivering a high quality street environment, which has been demonstrated to be a key factor in driving increased footfall for businesses. There are also opportunities to look at improving town centre signage for off-street car parking, to raise awareness of the whole car parking offer to visitors and residents alike.

- 5.17 Whilst the consultation outcome shows majority support for the full pedestrianisation option, it should be noted that this option would require a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to be undertaken. The TRO process requires public consultation to be undertaken, with the potential for a local public inquiry should formal objections be received and not resolved.
- 5.18 In order to minimise the risk of abortive design at this stage, it is recommended that further design is based on full pedestrianisation of James Street but incorporates the ability to retain an unobstructed width such that traffic could be accommodated if necessary.
- 5.19 Further design evolution of all scheme elements will consider suggestions received as part of the consultation. For Harrogate a number of suggestions were made which will be taken forward including:
- Review and optimisation of traffic signal synchronisation within the town centre
  - Review of space provided for taxis and improved provision particularly for rear loading taxis
  - Cambridge Street – whilst not part of the scope of this project opportunities will be reviewed to undertake improvements to Cambridge Street
  - Loading for businesses – further design will ensure acceptable loading arrangements for businesses, we will work closely with businesses to understand their individual needs.
- 5.20 Harrogate Borough Council, as a partner in this project, are highly supportive of the recommended option of undertaking further design and public consultation on the 1 Lane Station Parade Option and Full Pedestrianisation of James Street.

## **6.0 Selby**

- 6.1 The following represent the key elements of the Selby scheme:
- Ousegate Active Travel Corridor – one way at the west end to allow creation of segregated bidirectional cycle lanes, improved footway widths and new public realm along with the closure of canal bridge
  - Bus Hub and Western Link – Improvement of the Bus terminal and linkages to wider town
  - Railway Station Gateway – Improvements to public realm around the railway station and linkages to the wider town
  - Creation of Eastern Station entrance
  - Olympia Park Link – Improved pedestrian and cycle link to Olympia Park development site
- 6.2 The consultation responses indicated good levels of support for all the scheme elements. All elements received 57% or greater positive or very positive responses, with the exception of closing Denison Road Bridge to vehicles (45.9% positive or very positive, 18.4% neutral).
- 6.3 The key themes of responses which were negative or very negative about the proposals were the risk of traffic congestion and associated air pollution. Traffic modelling has been undertaken which shows no anticipated negative impact on congestion and detailed air quality modelling will be undertaken as part of more detailed design to ensure there is no unacceptable impact. It is therefore recommended that all of the proposals impacting on the highway network are taken forward for preliminary and detailed design.
- 6.4 There were no variant options presented for the Selby proposals impacting the existing highway network. Choices were presented for the Park, Railway Station and Bawtry Road underpass and the way forward with these options will be reviewed with Selby District Council. It is recommended that the decision on how to proceed with design for these options

is delegated to the Corporate Director, BES working in conjunction with Selby District Council and Network Rail.

6.5 Further design evolution of all scheme elements will consider suggestions received as part of the consultation. For Selby a number of suggestions were made which will be taken forward including:

- Review of proposed path alignments through the park and design of an option which best respects the historic character of the park
- Review of railway station drop off space provision to ensure sufficient provision at both sides of the station

6.6 Selby District Council, as a partner in this scheme are supportive of the recommendation to progress into preliminary and detailed design.

## **7.0 Skipton**

7.1 The following represent the key elements of the Skipton scheme:

- Reconfiguration of the rail station car park to accommodate new cycle and pedestrian access, upgrade to landscaping
- Broughton Road Active Travel corridor – Reconfiguration of the carriageway to accommodate a bidirectional cycleway
- Railway station to bus station pedestrian improvements - Improvements to black walk, reconfiguration of the junction at Cavendish Street & One way on Carleton Street and canal bridge upgrade
- Railway station to College campus pedestrian improvements – upgrade to canal path and new footpath to Aireville Leisure Centre

7.2 The consultation responses indicated good levels of support for all the scheme elements. All elements received 54% or greater positive or very positive responses

7.3 The key themes of responses which were negative or very negative about the proposals were the configuration of cycle lanes on Broughton Road, impact of proposals on parking and bus services using Broughton Road and the railway station.

7.4 There were no variant options presented for the Skipton proposals impacting the existing highway network.

7.5 More detailed design work will review the cycle lane configuration on Broughton Road and any scheme impacts on parking and updated proposals will be presented at Final Business Case stage taking on board public feedback from further public consultation. Additionally suggestions were made for improved signage, particularly on Keighley Road which will be considered as part of the next design phase.

7.6 Craven District Council remains supportive of the Transforming Cities Fund proposals and continue to actively participate in the development of the scheme.

## **8.0 Next Steps**

8.1 The next stage of the projects is to commence preliminary and detailed design, which will see more detail developed for the feasibility proposals utilising consultation responses and feedback.

8.2 A full report summarising the consultation responses is being prepared by WYCA and it is anticipated this will be made available on the Yourvoice portal before the end of May.

- 8.3 Further public consultation will be undertaken during summer and autumn 2021 to inform proposals for implementation.
- 8.4 Following the development of detailed designs a final business case will be prepared, including the outcome of further consultation on the detailed design proposals and approval of the Executive sought for implementation of the finalised designs.

## **9.0 Equalities**

- 9.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment is attached as Appendix C.
- 9.2 The proposals are currently at an early stage and have completed a first round of feedback, the intent of the schemes is to improve accessibility to and within the town centres and the design philosophy moving forward will be to comply with current legislation, relevant standards and best practice and to seek to incorporate views received. The Action Plan developed will be maintained and evolve through the next design phase and subsequent stakeholder engagement and ensure that concerns can be addressed.

## **10.0 Finance**

- 10.1 This programme is funded from the Department for Transport's Transforming Cities Fund as part of the Leeds City Region bid. The Council is contributing £100k to each of the three schemes.
- 10.2 The successful funding bid allocated £7.8m for the Harrogate scheme, £5.8m for the Skipton scheme and £17.5m for the Selby scheme.
- 10.3 The funding requires that schemes are delivered by 31 March 2023, at Final Business Case stage proposals will be finalised and will ensure all elements can be delivered in line with funding requirements. Full details of the final funding requirements will be reported to Executive.

## **11.0 Legal**

- 11.1 Once final designs have been prepared some of the proposals will require Traffic Regulation Orders before they can be implemented. Where a TRO is required the legal process will need to be followed which includes consultation and consideration of objections in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedures) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

## **12.0 Climate Change**

- 12.1 It is anticipated that the proposals at Skipton and Selby will be the subject of planning consent and in the case of Selby, a full Environmental Impact Assessment.
- 12.2 A key aim of the schemes is to encourage travel using sustainable modes of transport with a resulting positive impact on climate change. Further design development will seek to identify opportunities to minimise carbon impacts of construction associated with the final recommended options for implementation and these will be presented in a climate change impact assessment as part of the decision to implement.

## **13.0 Recommendations**

13.1 It is recommended that the highway proposals for the Transforming Cities Fund projects in Harrogate, Skipton and Selby are taken forward for preliminary and detailed design and consultation subject to the following:

- (a) further design and consultation is undertaken on the Harrogate 1 Lane Station Parade option only;
- (b) further design and consultation is undertaken on James Street based on full pedestrianisation incorporating the ability to retain an unobstructed width such that traffic could be accommodated if necessary;
- (c) a Final Business Case will be presented prior to implementation and a further decision from the Executive will be sought to agree any recommended implementation of the final designs later in 2021;
- (d) decisions on how to progress with the variant options at Selby which do not directly affect the existing highway network are delegated to the Corporate Director, BES working with Selby District Council and Network Rail.

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Background Documents: None

Appendices:  
Appendix A – Proposal Document  
Appendix B – Summary of Overall Responses  
Appendix C – Equalities Impact Assessment