

SCRUTINY BOARD (INFRASTRUCTURE, INVESTMENT & INCLUSIVE GROWTH)

WEDNESDAY, 3RD JANUARY, 2024

PRESENT: Councillor J Garvani in the Chair

Councillors N Buckley, O Edwards, E Flint,
B Flynn, M Foster, S Hamilton,
J Heselwood, S Lay, M Shahzad,
E Thomson and I Wilson

64 Election of Chair

Due to the absence of Councillor A Marshall-Katung, a nomination was sought for a Chair for the meeting. A nomination had been made on behalf of Councillor J Garvani.

RESOLVED – That Councillor J Garvani be elected as Chair for the meeting.

65 APPEALS AGAINST REFUSAL OF INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS

There were no appeals.

66 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There was no exempt information.

67 Late Items

There were no late items.

68 Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations.

69 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors A Hussain, A Marshall-Katung, N Sharpe and M Millar.

Councillors E Flint, J Heselwood, E Thomson and O Edwards were in attendance as substitutes.

Apologies from Councillor H Hayden (Executive Member) and Gary Bartlett (Chief Officer, Transportation and Highways) were noted.

70 Call in Briefing paper

Minutes approved at the meeting
held on 28 February 2024

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report advising the Scrutiny Board on the procedural aspects of Calling In the decision.

Members were advised that the Call In is specific to the key decision in question, and issues outside of the decision, including other related decisions, were not to be considered as part of the Board's decision regarding the outcome of the Call In.

Members were also advised that the options available to the Scrutiny Board in respect of this particular called in decision were as follows:

Option 1- Release the decision for implementation

Having reviewed this decision, the Scrutiny Board may decide to release it for implementation. If the Scrutiny Board chooses this option, the decision will be immediately released for implementation and the decision may not be called in again.

Option 2 - Recommend that the decision be reconsidered

The Scrutiny Board may decide to recommend to the decision maker that the decision be reconsidered. If the Scrutiny Board chooses this option a report will be submitted to the decision maker.

In the case of this officer decision, the report of the Scrutiny Board will be prepared within three working days of the Scrutiny Board meeting and submitted to the relevant Director.

In reconsidering the decision and associated Scrutiny Board report, the Director may vary the decision or confirm the original decision. In either case, this will form the basis of the final decision and will not be subject to any further Call In.

Failure to agree one of the above options

If the Scrutiny Board, for any reason, does not agree one of the above courses of action at this meeting, then Option 1 will be adopted by default, i.e. the decision will be released for implementation with no further recourse to Call In.

RESOLVED – That the report outlining the Call In procedures be noted.

71 Lawnswood Roundabout Improvement Scheme - Approval to Proceed with Further Development and Delivery.

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report that presented background papers to a key decision made by the Director of City Development, which had been Called-In in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

The decision had been called in for review by Councillors Andrew Carter, Barry Anderson, Caroline Anderson, Billy Flynn, Neil Buckley, Lyn Buckley and Amanda Carter.

The Scrutiny Board considered the following written information:

- Copy of the completed Call In request form.
- Copy of the Delegated Decision Notice of the Director of City Development - 'Lawnswood Roundabout Improvement Scheme – approval to proceed with further development' – dated 1st December 2023
- Copy of the report of Transport Strategy to the Chief Officer (Highways & Transportation) - 'Lawnswood Roundabout Improvement Scheme – approval to proceed with further development' dated 1st November 2023 associated with the key decision.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Andrew Carter – Lead signatory to the call-in
- Councillor James Lewis – Leader of the Council
- Councillor Peter Carlill – Lead Member for Active Travel and Deputy Chair of WYCA Transport Committee
- Martin Farrington – Director of City Development
- Kate Morris – Head of Transport Planning
- Morgan Tatchell-Evans – Project Manager
- Mark Philpott – Transport Planning Manager
- Nikki Deol – Section Head, Property & Development

Councillor Carter addressed the Board as lead signatory to the call-in. He set out his reasons for requesting a call in, citing value for money, proportionality and the nature of the consultation process.

Concerns highlighted by Cllr Carter included:

- The funding for this would deprive other areas of potential funding.
- The accident record at other junctions exceeded this one.
- The proposals would lead to more congestion, and consequentially 'rat running' and a reduction in air quality for those living near the roundabout.
- Latest modelling shows that there would be an increase in journey times, the impact of which would be disproportionate given the associated environmental impacts.
- The benefit to costs ratio shows the proposal as poor value for money.
- The embedded carbon in construction of the scheme would outweigh any carbon savings associated with the scheme.
- Consultation – there were 607 responses and just over half were in favour. 35% were unhappy and made negative comments. Given the

number of vehicle movements on the roundabout the response rate appeared low. There was no information with regards to the postcodes of the respondents.

- Road safety – KSI figures have been falling since 2013 and there has not been any pedestrian injuries at the junction in recent years. Targeting improvements in other locations could deliver more benefits for road safety than this scheme.

Councillor Lewis addressed the Board, highlighting the following:

- The project is funded by the Government via West Yorkshire Combined Authority. Funding the scheme would not therefore be detrimental to Council spending on any other services.
- The costs involved are comparable with other schemes being delivered across the city.
- The main benefits of this scheme relate to road safety. In line with the Council's commitment to Vision Zero, where sites have been identified as having a record of collisions and injuries work has been programmed or has already been carried out.
- Lawnswood roundabout is currently unsignalised and at the junction of two busy main roads. There is a high school between two arms of the roundabout. This scheme would introduce signalised pedestrian crossings, reducing the potential for vehicle collisions and providing safe places for pedestrians and cyclists to cross the road.
- Local residents are supportive of the proposals to improve safety at the roundabout.
- The scheme would bring safety benefits for pedestrians including children who attended local schools.

Martin Farrington addressed the Board. Issues highlighted included the following:

- The scheme is principally about improving safety. There have been 15 personal injury collisions since 1 January 2020, 5 of which were classified as serious. The site had a record of collisions/injuries, and a scheme is needed to prevent any further injuries.
- The costs could be lower if all works were carried out in normal working hours. However, this would have a larger impact on the highway and congestion.
- The embodied carbon in production of the scheme would outweigh the direct operational value - this is typical of this kind of scheme. This should, however, be considered in the broader context of modal shift which will see a decrease in carbon emissions due to an increase in electric vehicles. The impact of such a modal shift cannot be captured in the business case.
- Consultation – there had been three drop in events, press releases, letters to local businesses and residents, and use of social media. Key stakeholders including resident associations, schools and bus operators have been consulted.

In response to comments and questions from the Board, discussion included the following:

- The proposed costs are not out of the ordinary for a scheme of this kind.
- Concern regarding the potential for increased air population in an area that was close to schools and sports facilities.
- Concern that there are other areas of the city that have had schemes cancelled due to inadequate funds.
- Concern regarding the cost of the scheme outweighing the benefits and the cost benefit ratio being considered poor value for money when modelling the scheme using the Department for Transport's framework.
- Further to concerns regarding air quality it was reported that due to the transition from use of fossil fuels there will not be a reduction of air quality over the lifetime of the scheme. Any detrimental impacts on air quality would not breach legal limits. There is not expected to be a detrimental impact with increased noise.
- It is not uncommon for road safety schemes to be classed as poor value for money within Department for Transport models. The modelling for the proposals is based on a worst-case scenario with regards to impact on traffic and air quality. The benefits are underestimated, and specific road safety benefits are not reflected in the outcomes. Such modelling can therefore only be one part of the assessment.
- The proposals would meet objectives for improving road safety and safety for pedestrians and cyclists.
- The scheme would have significant benefits for local residents and meet other city ambitions including enabling more active travel.
- The junction is currently very difficult for pedestrians to cross.
- There is potentially an under reporting of incidents at the roundabout as incidents which do not involve injuries may not be recorded.
- The scheme would deliver a modern design with facility for pedestrians, cyclists and buses.
- There are constraints on the design due to the size of the site.
- Further to resident feedback on an earlier design, this scheme limits the need to remove a number of trees.
- Existing arrangements are dangerous for pedestrians and for people wanting to cross the roundabout to access bus services.
- Concern that the consultation process was not sufficient in terms of the number of people who used the roundabout.
- The assessment could not include incidents where injuries had not been reported. These incidents still have financial and wellbeing implications.
- Local residents have frequently raised concerns about the roundabouts with Ward Members.
- Consideration was given to alternative arrangements which could enable safe crossing points for pedestrians at a lower cost. However, officers highlighted the importance of introducing a scheme that also

reduces vehicle collisions – signalisation has been identified as the most effective way to achieve this.

- Bus journeys have been falling since 2009 and are not expected to return to pre-pandemic levels. Introducing signalisation could enable improved reliability for buses as an additional benefit.
- The Council produced the business case, which was subsequently approved by WYCA.
- Concern that KSI figures have remained static in spite of spending on similar projects.
- Where engineering interventions have been implemented at specific locations of concern there had been a track record of improved safety. Signalisation removes the need for human judgement at a busy junction and can therefore reduce the risk of collisions.
- The proposed costs have taken account of inflation.
- Concern regarding the economic impact of delays preventing people from getting to work on time.
- Signalisation and new pedestrian crossings would result in traffic delays for drivers. The majority of delays would be under 30 seconds, which had been deemed acceptable in light of the improved safety benefits for all users of the roundabout. Any new traffic projects would be designed to a similar standard.
- Proportionality in relation to the cost benefits in for active travel and accident impacts.
- Pre- and post-scheme monitoring from other similar schemes has shown a 50% increase in active travel.
- Concern that other objectives including those relating to climate change would not be met.

Councillor Lewis was invited to make any closing remarks. He concluded that it was clear that the junction required safety improvements and the costs involved are in line with other similar projects. The proposals respond to residents' desire to see improvements at this roundabout. The proposals would provide safer places to cross the road and provide signalised crossing for pedestrians, including pupils at the adjacent school, and cyclists. The Board was asked to release the decision for implementation.

Councillor Carter was invited to summarise. He expressed concern that the questions and discussion had not sufficiently scrutinised the decision making process. He reiterated that the call-in was not questioning the safety improvements the project would provide. There were still many objectors who do not feel they have been listened to and there are still concerns that WYCA did not class the scheme as delivering good value for money.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report, along with comments from Members, be noted.

72 **Outcome of the Call In**

The Scrutiny Board considered whether or not to release the decision for implementation. A vote was subsequently held and the Scrutiny Board agreed (by majority decision) that the decision be released.

RESOLVED – That the decision be released for implementation.

73 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday 10 January 2024 at 10.30 a.m. Pre-meeting for all Board Members at 10.15 a.m.