

## **Appendix B – Concerns raised by the residents’ group re the proposals for Lawnswood Roundabout.**

### **G Sugden 21/8/2019**

A little over a year ago WSP put forward a scheme to replace Lawnswood Roundabout with an acre of tarmac and a six-lane highway involving 12 sets of traffic lights and, in the process, remove many mature trees, grass verges and flower beds. The destruction of this well-known(loved) green gateway into the city from the North would be nothing short of catastrophic.

We wish to raise our concerns over the viability of the scheme, its impact on the environment, the pupils at Lawnswood School and residents.

### **Flaws with the proposal**

- Creation of right turn lanes into Lawnswood School and Weetwood hotel cutting across 2 lanes of fast flowing traffic.
- The increased risk of accidents caused by accelerating vehicles through green/amber lights.
- Lack of time for right turning cyclists to cross the large central area before oncoming traffic on green.
- The proposals will increase the volume of traffic having to use the surrounding side streets to navigate their journeys towards various parts of the City. This will cause disruption, noise and air pollution to more residential areas.
- Creation of joint cycle and footpaths will result in increased dangers for pedestrians.
- Grass verges are being removed from in-front of a considerable number of residential properties to make way for a combined pedestrian and cycle lane. Currently the width of the verges provides a place for the residents to stop and view the traffic situation in relative safety before joining the Ring Road. With the proposed changes this visibility is removed and the danger to pedestrians and cyclists is significantly increased.
- The use of taxis and access to these for residents with mobility needs is significantly affected, increasing risk to life and endangering pedestrians and cyclists.
- The proposed cost of £10 million does not represent good value for money as much cheaper alternatives are possible.

### **Lack of data**

- On numerous occasions we have requested the consultants to provide data and evidence from simulation models to support the benefit from such major changes to the area. We feel let down that the requested information has not been forthcoming. Our view is that either this information is not available, and the impact of the changes have not been adequately modelled, or that the information is not conclusive to support such a significant scheme.
- For example, seeking to find out:
  - whether WSP have modelled a simple signalisation of the existing roundabout.
  - whether WSP have modelled signalisation of a slightly smaller roundabout with unsignalised left turn slip roads but with a pedestrian crossing across the ring road (Horsforth side).
  - how the predicted delays with these designs compare with those under their current proposal and with the current layout.
  - -whether the modelling of their proposal allows for the fact that the signal timings will have to allow for right turning cyclists ( there is no way to force cyclists to use the toucan crossings and allowing for cyclists turning right will reduce the efficiency of their design quite significantly).

## **Bus times**

- The proposal claimed that significant improvements to bus times would occur given its implementation. Data uploaded from thousands of bus journeys proved that their claims were mathematically impossible to achieve.
- WSP claimed that the major benefit from the proposed change is that the bus journeys through Lawnswood roundabout towards Leeds will be improved by the use of priority traffic lights. However, this benefit is flawed since the build-up of traffic currently is due to the flow of traffic narrowing from two lanes into a single lane from the roundabout heading into West Park junction.
- All bus users on the A660 are aware that the hold up to traffic on the route is not the roundabout but in getting through Headingley Centre (Arndale Centre). Yearlong data shows that bus speeds are three times faster across the roundabout than through Headingley

## **Increased air pollution**

- At present the traffic flows freely at the roundabout for over 20 hours per day on weekdays but the installation of 12 sets of traffic lights will always result in stationary traffic with the inevitable increase in pollution. It is now well documented that stationary traffic produces significantly more pollutants than moving traffic.
- Increased pollution is a major concern to the staff, governors and pupils at Lawnswood School which is situated next to the roundabout. Currently the air pollution in the area is low. On a scale of 1 to 6, with 1 being Good and 6 being Heavily Polluted, Lawnswood Roundabout features at 2 and Lawnswood School at 1 (Source: MappAir100 by EarthSense). There is no evidence that the health of these pupils has been taken into consideration.
- The initial plans indicated that up to 49 trees were in danger of being removed near the roundabout and within the school grounds. These lost trees will of course cease to absorb pollutants and traffic noise.

## **Alternative proposal**

The health and safety issues for both cyclists and pedestrians can be addressed in a far more sympathetic manner to the environment and at a far lower cost. We believe that this can be achieved by adding

- Toucan crossings to the other three arms of the roundabout similar to the one south of the roundabout which is used by the pupils at Lawnswood School
- MOVA lights with Toucan crossings. Intelligent lights to be used at peak times.
- Box junctions - vehicles will keep junctions clear to allow traffic to flow.

## **Our proposal would;**

- Eliminate the need for the right turnings at Lawnswood school and Weetwood Hall.
- Save the roundabout, trees and green spaces.
- Be less polluting
- Cost significantly less

## **Moving forward;**

We understand that Councillor Mulherin has rejected the original proposal and asked for it to be redrawn with an emphasis on safety for pedestrians and cyclists which we support. We would however like the council to be far more open in its planning and in particular;

1. Involve local residents in the early planning stages
2. Release the data and simulation models showing the benefit of the proposed scheme and the value for money from its expenditure.
3. Retain the beauty of the area by saving Lawnswood roundabout.