

Meanwood District Centre

Date: 29th March 2023

Report of: James Chadwick - Traffic Engineering

Report to: Chief Officer (Highways and Transportation)

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief Summary

This report seeks the approval of the Chief Officer (Highways and Transportation) to introduce a signalisation and general improvement scheme at Meanwood District Centre. This approval will also seek to fulfil an outstanding planning condition to provide signal control at the junction of Meanwood Rd/ Stonegate Rd/ Monk Bridge Rd and Green Road associated with the Waitrose development.

The scheme will formalise vehicle and pedestrian movement via signal control and make the area more aesthetically pleasing by creating a less car dominated street scene environment. This will be achieved by improving the provision for pedestrians through the introduction of wider pavements and the installation of new formal crossing links. This will result in a higher quality of environment for visitors with a view to supporting local businesses through uplift in customers. The signal control will also address a long-standing injury collision record at the junctions and aid buses move through the junction more freely.

The scheme cost is £740,000 and the design is supported and approved by the Moortown members and the Executive Member for Infrastructure and Climate.

Recommendations

The Chief Officer (Highways and Transportation) is requested to:

- a) Note the content of this report.
- b) Approve the detailed design and implementation of a package of highway works for the Meanwood District Centre, as shown on drawing 2434-LCC-00-XX-DR-TM-01_01c (Appendix A).
- c) Note and approve the total cost of £740,000 comprising of £506,000 Works costs, £105,000 UTMC, £126,000 Staff fees and £3,000 legal fees, and give authority to incur the expenditure, which is to be funded from the S106 contributions, CRSTS funding and Leeds City Councils, Town and Local Centres Programme.
- d) Instruct the City Solicitor to advertise a Traffic Regulation Order to introduce waiting restrictions, a movement order to implement prohibited vehicle movement turns and a speed

limit order to introduce a 20-mph speed limit as shown on the attached drawing no. 2434-LCC-00-XX-DR-TM-TRO_01 (Appendix B) & SLO_01 (Appendix C)

- e) If no valid objections are received, to instruct the City Solicitor to subsequently make, seal and implement the Traffic Regulation Order, Movement Order and Speed Limit Order as advertised.

What is this report about?

1. A planning condition for the construction of the Waitrose development on Green Road required the signalisation of the Green Rd/ Stonegate Rd/ Meanwood Rd junction to address concerns relating to increase capacity and existing recorded injury collisions. The options presented to the council on behalf of Waitrose for this junction were not able to be supported at that time, as the traffic modelling showed that the options presented created significant queues lengths and congestion in the area.
2. To enable the Waitrose development to progress, it was agreed that the funding originally allocated by Waitrose to signalise the above junction would be transferred to Leeds City Council to enable them to continue further option appraisals and delivery of a scheme. A signal control design was developed which fulfilled the planning conditions requirements, did not create excessive queues, and met the wider ambitions of the Meanwood Valley Partnerships for the district centre. Due to funding shortfalls, the scheme has not been able to progress at that time until additional funding contributions were found.
3. In 2015 the Meanwood Valley Partnership (MVP) presented a deputation to Leeds City Council seeking a commitment to continue to develop improvement options appropriate to a vibrant healthy developing suburb for the Meanwood centre. The Partnership also agreed that the junctions of Green Road, Stonegate Road and Monk Bridge Road were problematic to resolve and argued that this was made more difficulties due to the district centre falling within two electoral wards. They argued that further piecemeal unsympathetic remedies in this area was inappropriate.
4. The MVP deputation also argued that they lacked a coherent voice due to the Meanwood district centre straddling two ward boundaries with political and administrative burdens arising. The MVP asked the council to find ways to put communities before bureaucracy, focusing on citizens needs and aspirations not purely ease of council administration.
5. The council therefore continued to develop and model various design concepts and layouts for the district centre (12 in total) and found that only one met the objectives, without creating significant congestion in the area.
6. Following the launch of the councils' Town and Local Centres Programme, both the Weetwood and Moortown ward councillors committed their £150,000 allocation towards the Meanwood district centre project so that it was able to be progressed through to delivery on site.
7. Leeds City Council have also contributed £200,000 from the CRSTS funding allocation to address ongoing and historical road safety issues, to assist bus movement and punctuality and to support betterment for both pedestrians and cyclists at this busy junction.
8. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the detailed design and implementation of the package of works to introduce signalised junction control at Stainbeck Lane/ Stonegate Rd, Green Rd/ Stonegate Rd and Monk Bridge Rd and Meanwood Rd junctions. This scheme

will provide footway widening, an uphill cycle lane, formal crossing points at key pedestrian desire lines and waiting restrictions as detailed in this report and shown on drawing No's 2434-LCC-00-XX-DR-TM-01_01c, 2434-LCC-00-XX-DR-TM-TRO_01 and 2434-LCC-00-XX-DR-TM-SLO_01.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 9 The Town and Local Centres programme funding contribution has enabled a long-standing planning commitment to be designed and delivered which will result in the implementation of a district centre signalisation/ improvement scheme in Meanwood. The scheme will make the area feel less car dominated and aim to provide a safer and more pedestrian/ cycle friendly district centre. The council's Inclusive Growth Strategy recognises the importance of such district centres as economic, social and service hubs and the need to continue to deliver improvements that promote enterprise and connect people to jobs and opportunities within them. Targeting improvements to local district centres assist in delivering the Best Council Plan ambition of promoting sustainable and inclusive economic growth.
- 10 The proposals will also help reduce existing injury road collisions through the control of traffic and pedestrians in this area. The introduction of signal control will also help improve bus service punctuality and a reduction in the speed limit to 20mph will also improve road safety and make the area a more pleasant environment.

What impact will this proposal have?

- 11 The scheme is anticipated to have the following benefits:
 - a) Widening of the footpaths will improve pedestrian movement around the Meanwood District Centre by increasing the available space for those with mobility issues and allow opportunities for outdoor seating for the bars and restaurants.
 - b) Often when traffic is waiting to turn onto Monk Bridge Road this can cause queues to form and prevents traffic from exiting Green Road. The new signal control layout will make this movement easier and create a free-flowing system.
 - c) The north-east (uphill) cycle lane will provide an opportunity for cyclists to navigate this busy junction safely via segregated provision. This will remove conflict with vehicles and will make it safer for cyclists.
 - d) The signalised junctions will incorporate pedestrian crossings on existing pedestrian desire lines, which will aid pedestrian movements across various arms of the junction where there are currently no facilities. The conclusion of these works will result in formal pedestrians' crossings linking all the Meanwood district shopping areas.
 - e) Formalise parking around the junctions of the Meanwood District Centre and from obstructive areas on Bentley Lane to aid traffic flow through this area. To improve road safety and efficient operation of the junction. Loading is proposed, where it can safely be accommodated.
 - f) Address long standing injury collision record.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards Affected: Weetwood and Moortown

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

- 12 Ward Members from both electoral wards have been consulted and kept up to date throughout the design process and consultation periods.
- 13 In June 2021, a meeting was held at the request of the Meanwood Valley Partnership (MVP) seeking clarification as to the final design and position of the scheme. This was attended by key representatives, including elected councillors. The many design options were shared, and detailed explanations provided why some options did not work in this location. Officers were able to demonstrate that only one design worked, which addressed the MVP concerns and their ambitions for the centre which were: -
1. Cluttered public realm, needs improving.
 2. Poorly maintained area, neglected.
 3. Lack of clear centre
 4. Car dominated
 5. Hostile to pedestrians and cyclists
- 14 This design, however, did require the banning of three vehicle movements so that the junction was able to work within its current capacity and didn't create extensive queues on all approach routes throughout the day. A vote was held to progress this design (including the inclusion of the banned turn movements) to delivery and the support was received to deliver the scheme in its designed format.
- 15 Ward Members requested an all-day drop-in session to be held, together with an online consultation opportunity. This was undertaken in February 2022.
- 16 Over 600 people attended the drop-in session and along with the online consultations and letter drops approximately 440 responses were received, made up of 100+ emails, 74 written notes and 270 online comments.
- 17 There was large support for improving the area with over 100 individual positive / supportive comments received to the scheme, particularly noting:
- The junction is long overdue for improvements.
 - The improvements in the number of crossings will make it easier to navigate the junction as a pedestrian, especially as they are to be signalised.
 - The improvements will make the roads safer.
 - The alterations will prevent traffic from stacking up within the junction which often happens due to traffic waiting to turn into Monk Bridge Road.
 - The increased focus on cycling and walking is a positive.

- 18 The main objections to the scheme were as follows:
- Concerns of rat running through the various nearby roads.
 - Concerns about the banned turns.
 - The impact on local buses.
 - The impact on business frontages / deliveries.
- 19 Further meetings were held with the Ward Members in September 2022 where the results of the consultations were discussed, along with the officers' responses to the most common elements. Ward Members were asked for their support to deliver the scheme as designed. The Moortown councillors offered their support for the scheme, but the Weetwood councillors still had concerns relating to displaced traffic within their ward and were not able to give their support.
- 20 An on-site meeting was held with two of the Weetwood members in October 2022 to further discuss their concerns. The result of this meeting was the inclusion of the 20mph speed limit through the junction and along a section of Monk Bridge Road. This speed limit change can only be controlled through the inclusion of the signalised junction which will be able to control driver speeds through this district centre junction.
- 21 Weetwood Ward Members formally objected to the proposals in December 2022 due to the concerns relating to potential displaced traffic because of the proposed banned movements.
- 22 A further commitment was provided, that Leeds would undertake extensive pre works survey of the peripheral road network and we will undertake post scheme surveys to see if any displaced traffic has been concentrated onto one of two routes. This approach would also enable a review to see if the traffic had dispersed more evenly across the area. Given the various permutation drivers could make to avoid the proposed banned turns, it is not possible at this stage to presume where traffic will move to and what, if any concerns this may raise.
- 23 The Meanwood Valley Partnership were consulted on the scheme at various public meetings and supported the scheme progressing.
- 24 Emergency Services were consulted via email dated 31 August 2021 and no objections were received to the proposals. The police were contacted in October 2022 to discuss the potential for introducing a 20mph scheme to the junction. It was accepted that this could be introduced if the signalised junction works were done as they will aid with compliance of the lower speed limit.
- 25 West Yorkshire Combined Authority were consulted via email dated 31 August 2021 and initially raised concerns with buses not being able to turn right out of Green Road and having to divert to Bentley Lane. A site meeting was held on 1 October 2021 between Leeds City Council, WYCA and First operatives. The initial issues were overcome by the request to introduce some waiting restrictions on Bentley Lane to provide passing spaces. This was accepted and has been included into the scheme.
- 26 The Executive Member for Infrastructure and Climate taking all the above in mind and the previous deputation from the MVP committed to support the scheme, so that the formal consultation via the Traffic Regulation Order process can proceed and to ensure funding is committed to this scheme.
- 27 Road Safety Audit: A Stage 1 Safety Audit was undertaken on 5 November 2020 and a Stage 2 audit was undertaken in December 2021. All the items raised have had a response from the design engineer to explain the reasons for the decision or to agree alterations.

What are the resource implications?

- 28 The estimated total cost to implement this scheme is £740,000 comprising £506,000 Works costs, £105,000 UTMC, £126,000 Staff fees and £3,000 legal fees, and give authority to incur the expenditure, which is to be funded from the S106 contributions, CRSTS funding and Leeds City Councils, Town, and Local Centres Programme.

What are the legal implications?

- 29 As the scheme covers multiple wards and is over £500,000 it is eligible for Call In and is a Key Decision.
- 30 The overall scheme implementation is subject to resolving any objections which may be received from the advertisement of the TRO.
- 31 All work will lie within the framework of highway legislation and national and local standards for design where applicable. All other relevant legislation will also be taken into consideration, including duties under the Equalities Act.
- 32 The TROs will be introduced using the powers contained within the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, the Highways Act 1980 and the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976. Further, the procedural steps undertaken will fully comply with the requirements of the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 33 Due to the time constraints on the funding from the Local Centres Programme, there is a risk that this money will not be available in the next financial year if it is not assigned to this scheme.

Does this proposal support the council's 3 Key Pillars?

Inclusive Growth Health and Wellbeing Climate Emergency

- 34 The scheme has envisaged benefits of promoting modal shift, supporting active travel and facilitating a reduction in dependence on private motor vehicles.
- 35 The proposal directly promotes health and wellbeing and the Council's climate emergency commitment for zero carbon by 2030, by encouraging residents to walk within the area, by providing a less car dominated environment, wider pavements and the introduction of formal crossing points. This design supports wider pavements supports and enables the ambitions of the Meanwood Valley Partnership to progress through the introduction of trees/ planters and greenery in the future.
- 36 The installation of the pedestrian crossings will increase accessibility on a key walking route around the junction and to local shops. It will also offer an enhanced link to community facilities and wider key public transport routes and corridors.

Options, timescales and measuring success

a) What other options were considered?

Over 12 other design options were proposed, which would maintain all the existing turning movements, however, they were not taken forward because the traffic impact modelling

showed an excessive adverse effect on traffic on the approach routes, with excessive congestion and queues forming.

b) How will success be measured?

An improvement of conditions for pedestrians within the junction and for cyclists travelling through and a reduction in the recorded injury collision.

c) What is the timetable for implementation?

The schemes implementation is anticipated to start within the 2023/24 financial year and complete on site within the 2023/24 financial year.

Appendices

- Appendix A: General Arrangement Drawing
- Appendix B: TRO Drawing
- Appendix C: SLO Drawing
- Appendix D: EDCI
- Appendix E: General concerns and responses.

Background papers

37 None