Wetherby Road / Railway Road Junction Improvement Scheme

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Following the informal consultation held between 14 September and 4 October, the Council received a number of comments, questions and suggestions regarding the proposed scheme. Many respondents raised similar themes, while others asked specific questions about the project. We also received a number of positive comments from residents who welcomed the proposed improvements and were pleased to see the scheme being progressed.

To help provide further clarity ahead of the formal consultation process, we have compiled this Frequently Asked Questions document. The questions below reflect the most common themes raised during the informal consultation and have been paraphrased where appropriate for brevity and clarity.

Where respondents raised individual or scheme-specific queries, officers have responded directly or will do so within the Council's target timescales. The purpose of this document is to provide additional information to residents and stakeholders so that any further comments can be made with the benefit of this additional context.

The scheme sounds very expensive/doesn't represent good value for money.

The £350,000 figure referenced during consultation represents the maximum project budget rather than the anticipated final construction cost. This is made up of grant funding (£180,000) from Active Travel England, with the remainder being match funded from the Councils traffic signals budget. The final outturn cost is expected to be lower once procurement is complete.

Providing formal pedestrian crossings at this junction has been a longstanding aspiration. The Council has received requests for improvements from residents, ward councillors and through the local MP's office over a number of years, but sufficient funding has not previously been available.

The funding has been awarded specifically for improvements at this location and has been subject to an external assurance process. In addition to new pedestrian crossing facilities, the project will replace ageing traffic signal equipment with modern technology.

The Council therefore considers that the accessibility, safety and asset renewal benefits justify the investment.

Could the money be reallocated to another scheme? Why has this been prioritised over (various possible improvements) where I think there is a more pressing problem?

No. The funding was awarded specifically for improvements at the Wetherby Road/Railway Road junction and cannot be redirected to unrelated projects.

The scheme was identified through the Council's project prioritisation and shortlisting process, which assesses a range of factors including accessibility, connectivity, safety and existing infrastructure. Following assessment of a number of potential schemes, this location was selected as a priority and subsequently secured external funding.

Whilst residents may consider other locations to be of higher priority, the funding is tied to the delivery of this specific scheme. If it did not proceed, the funding would not automatically become available for alternative highway improvements and could instead be lost.

Could the money be spent on maintenance/fixing potholes/resurfacing instead?

No. The funding has been awarded specifically for active travel and accessibility improvements and cannot be transferred to maintenance activities such as pothole repairs or resurfacing.

Highway maintenance is funded through separate capital and revenue budgets. Across North Yorkshire, tens of millions of pounds are invested annually in both preventative and reactive highway maintenance. The total capital spend in the 25/26 financial year was around £62m and revenue spending £33.7m

Delivering improvement projects through external funding does not reduce the Council's investment in maintaining the highway network.

Will adding the signalised crossings increase congestion on Wetherby Road?

Improving junction capacity is not the objective of the scheme. However, the existing traffic signal equipment has reached the end of its operational life and requires replacement. Upgrading the signals is necessary to enable the introduction of the proposed pedestrian crossing facilities and therefore forms an integral part of the scheme. As a result, the signal renewal works represent a significant proportion of the overall project cost.

Traffic impacts have been carefully considered throughout the design process. Traffic surveys were undertaken and a range of options assessed using traffic modelling. The

proposed layout was identified as the option that best balances improvements in pedestrian accessibility and safety with the need to maintain efficient traffic flow.

The modelling indicates that the junction will continue to operate satisfactorily following implementation. While some approaches may experience modest increases in delays or queue lengths during peak periods, these are expected to be limited and are offset by improvements on other approaches.

The existing signals will be replaced with modern technology, including adaptive signal control systems that can respond to changing traffic conditions and help minimise delays.

Overall, any increase in congestion is expected to be minor and is considered proportionate to the substantial accessibility and safety benefits that the scheme will deliver.

Will the changes negatively impact air quality?

No significant air quality impacts are anticipated.

Traffic modelling indicates that the junction will continue to operate satisfactorily, with only minor changes in delays and queue lengths expected on some approaches and improvements on others.

The scheme will also make walking safer and more attractive for local journeys, supporting wider objectives to encourage sustainable travel choices and reduce reliance on private vehicle trips over time.

I don’t find it difficult to cross the road in this location, it's congested which makes it easy to cross. Why are signalised crossings needed?

While some people may find it easy to cross the junction when traffic is moving slowly or queuing, this is not the experience of all users. The current layout relies largely on pedestrians finding suitable gaps in traffic or on drivers giving way.

The proposed crossings will provide a consistent, safe and accessible means of crossing for all users, particularly older people, disabled people, people with visual or mobility impairments, and parents with pushchairs.

Despite being one of the largest signalised junctions in the county, there are currently no formal pedestrian crossing facilities. The scheme seeks to address this long-standing gap in provision.

Will/should local businesses contribute towards the cost of these works?

No. There is no legal requirement for existing businesses or landowners to contribute towards highway improvement schemes of this nature.

Developer contributions are normally only sought where a new development is expected to generate additional traffic or create a need for highway improvements. These contributions are typically secured through the planning process using Section 106 or Section 278 agreements.

As this scheme is not being delivered to support a new development, such contributions are not applicable.

How long will the works take and what will be the impact on traffic whilst construction is ongoing?

Construction is currently anticipated to take approximately seven weeks, although the final programme will be confirmed once a contractor has been appointed.

Some disruption will be unavoidable given the location of the works. However, the contractor will be required to carefully phase the works and maintain traffic movements through the junction wherever possible.

Temporary traffic management measures, including lane restrictions and temporary signals, are likely to be required at certain stages. Further details will be provided in advance of works commencing.

The scheme ignores the needs of cyclists. Can cycle crossings or upgrades be added?

The current scheme is focused on improving pedestrian safety and accessibility and is being delivered through funding awarded specifically for that purpose. As a result, dedicated cycling infrastructure is outside the scope of the project.

Opportunities to incorporate cycling improvements were considered during scheme development. However, meaningful cycling facilities would require more extensive changes, including highway widening and the use of land beyond the existing highway boundary. In particular, the land immediately adjacent to the highway is Stray Land, and any widening would require the acquisition of that land together with the provision of suitable replacement land in accordance with the requirements of the Stray Act. This is a complex and lengthy process that could not be accommodated within the available budget, programme or funding deadlines.

To help future-proof the junction, the proposed crossings have been designed to toucan crossing widths, reducing the risk of abortive work should future cycling improvements be delivered. In the meantime, cyclists can use the upgraded pedestrian crossings, although they would be required to dismount.

The Council has also commissioned a feasibility study to investigate potential cycling improvements at the junction. Any future cycling scheme would be developed, funded and consulted upon separately.

I don't support cycle lanes in this location.

We recognise that views on cycling infrastructure can vary.

The current pedestrian improvement scheme does not include dedicated cycle facilities, as these cannot be delivered within the available budget, timescales or land constraints. However, North Yorkshire Council is separately exploring options to improve cycling provision at this junction as part of a wider ambition to create a coherent and well-connected cycling network across the area.

This work is at an early stage and no preferred option has yet been identified. Any future proposals will be subject to public consultation, providing residents, businesses and road users with the opportunity to comment before decisions are made.

Any future cycling improvements would be a separate project and would be dependent on securing external funding.

Can a slip road to the tip be added as part of these works?

No. The purpose of this scheme is to improve pedestrian safety and accessibility at the Wetherby Road/Railway Road junction, and the funding has been awarded specifically for those improvements.

A new slip road to the Household Waste Recycling Centre would be a separate highway project with different objectives, design requirements and funding considerations. It has not formed part of the scheme development or funding approval process.

In addition, widening the highway to accommodate a slip road would require the acquisition of Stray Land and the provision of suitable replacement land in accordance with the Stray Act. This is a complex process which would introduce significant programme and delivery risks.

While a slip road cannot be delivered as part of the current scheme, opportunities can be considered through future studies examining wider improvements to the area.

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