

**Notes from TCW Traffic and Transport public forum 30/07/2009 – Ebor Suite,
York Racecourse**

Notes of the Meeting

Intro – PAC ran through the slide show

Q: Although lots of debate over the site relates to road traffic (i.e. car use), the area can be dangerous for cyclists. If a reduction in car use is targeted, other means of transport must be catered for; what provisions are being made on Bishopthorpe Road to provide extra protection for cyclists and pedestrians?

A: No additional cycle lanes for Bishopthorpe Road at present, but enhanced crossing points are being discussed with officers.

Q: What will be the frequency of the proposed shuttle bus?

A: Every 15 minutes between 7.30-9.30am, and again between 4.30-6.30pm.

Q: What measures will be taken to tackle opportunist parking around South Bank, if reduced car parking facilities at the site are proposed as a deterrent for car commuters?

A: There are no proposals to have yellow lines or a resident parking scheme as the general consensus appears to prefer not to have these. The need for parking facilities will be predicted, and appropriate parking will be provided on-site. Not all commuters will use cars – we have looked at the parking profile and have arrived at a balance of parking versus sustainability. A logical measured case is being developed for where car users will come from, using specially developed tools (i.e. MATT and SATURN).

Q: There are already problems on Church Lane and Eim Balk Lane?

A: Yes, we acknowledge there are existing problems.

Q: There are 273 homes on the site, and some of the new residents will work elsewhere. At present, the area suffers from the ‘chaos’ of the annual Race calendar. Should the current residents be worried about an increase in traffic?

A: We have used the baseline traffic level (that is, if the factory were re-opened today with its extant permission) as a comparison tool, not the current traffic levels, which are artificially low due to the closure of the site. Our mitigation proposals are designed to address the impact between baseline and proposed scenario's.

Q: At present, the traffic levels around Bishopthorpe Road do not appear to be ‘artificially low’, where has this information come from?

A: The current state of traffic arrangements in the area is precisely that – current, without the existing factory being utilised, therefore the traffic is substantially lower than if the factory were utilised. Our proposals extend to 2016, and beyond to 2021, and our mitigation proposals are designed to effectively tackle the future issues as they arrive.

Q: Where are these baseline figures coming from? To what can current residents compare this information?

A: If the factory was put into use today, residents could expect an influx of 471 PCUs in the AM to the site. Post development, there will be around 510 PCUs arriving on site in the morning, representing an increase of 8%. During the factory's operation, comparable periods of road use will be impossible to recall, as there are more car users generally in today's society, the factory had lots of HGV movements and labour was localized to a greater extent.

Q: These figures do not mean a lot... what about Heavy Goods Vehicles which will have to service the site?

A: A PCU is a Passenger Car Unit, and encompasses all road use corresponding to traffic impact, i.e a bicycle is 0.1 unit, a car is equal to 1 unit, while a HGV is equal to 2.5. Our calculations and models recognise the variety of use that the area will be subject to. The design of the site is such that substantial amounts of HGV's are not envisaged.

Q: Will the traffic increase be gradual, or will residents see a rapid increase in the amount of road use?

A: Our projections predict a gradual, staggered growth, over a period of between 3-7, perhaps 10 years. The phasing of the project will be a primary driver of this gradual change, but also external factors, such as the Credit Crunch, mean that projects must move slower at present.

Q: Four or Five junctions will exceed your criteria – is this when the site is fully developed? What traffic management measures are proposed?

A: Our figures assume the site fully developed. Our 2016 assessment shows no need for traffic lights at the Bishopthorpe Road/ Campleshon Road junction. Our assessment also shows more people from York will work on the site than was the case with the previous application.

Q: The 'experts' got it so wrong with alterations to the Northern ring road, how can residents be sure that this will not happen again?

A: A growth figure of 1.2% per annum is being applied to all areas and time periods in producing models for traffic mitigation procedures. The City of York Council's over-arching policy is to reduce traffic ingress to the city centre.

Q: Are there enough parking spaces on the site itself?

A: There are 1,520 spaces available on the site, spread over residential, commercial and mixed use areas. This represents a reduction of only 140 spaces from the maximum permissible number as set out by the City of York Council.

Q: Where are the five entrances to the site?

A: 1. Bishopthorpe Road (existing access); 2. Campleshon Road (existing access); 3. Racecourse Road (proposed); 4. Bishopthorpe Road (serving the care home only); 5. Bishopthorpe Road (existing entrance to car park)

Q: Is the project in isolation? Does it incorporate Racecourse events (aside from race days), and are there any conflicts of interest therein?

A: There is an obligation to look at these issues. Dialogue has been undertaken with the Racecourse, which has its own parking facilities. Cooperation between the two parties is extremely good. Other sites have also been considered in the calculations such as the York College development and the proposed P&R facility.

Q: The Park and Ride service will obviously be a major provider of transport to the site, although the cost of the service may mean that drivers will simply park in South Bank, resulting in Resident Parking schemes being put into place. This extra cost for residents is not fair, especially with current bus services being so unreliable.

A: There is a balance to be struck between the fares charged and the attractiveness of a bus service. We do not propose to introduce resident parking schemes.

Q: Is the Park and Ride car park big enough to accommodate an increase in users?

A: A planning application is underway to nearly double the size of the site, to around 600+ spaces, from c. 350. This increase will allow workers to come to York and increase the output of the City itself.

Q: Will the proposed new service compete with, hence reduce the services of the current, 'unreliable' no. 11 bus route?

A: Timetabling will aim to avoid any conflict. The aim is for the new service to complement the 11 route by running at intervals in between the current service. If users miss the shuttle, they will catch the no. 11, thus use of that service will potentially be increased. Furthermore, the growth in commuters to the site should enhance the patronage of the 11 service overall, leading to increased reliability.

Q: What will drive P+R take-up?

A: The goal is to achieve a balance between parking restrictions and correct bus service pricing. If the cost of the bus is too high and parking allowance too low, commuters will simply find alternative parking arrangements elsewhere (i.e. among South Bank). If the bus cost is too low, it cannot feasibly operate.

Q: What enhancements have been drawn up for the existing Park and Ride service?

A: The enhancements put forward in a planning application have not been published yet, but will be available for public consultation on the City of York Council's website soon. The

Terry's Chocolate Works site has no involvement with the Park and Ride, however, our proposals for a shuttle bus are simply based on a pick up point at the P&R site.

Q: Cannot the site be designated a no-car zone, as part of York's 'Cycle City' initiative?

A: Unfortunately, with a few exceptions, the general population is one of car users. Creating a no-car zone on-site will simply create parking issues throughout the wider area as individuals use existing residential areas to park up.

Q: What are the benefits of the new masterplan proposals compared to the old, which was refused planning consent in August 2008?

A: 10 months of hard work has gone into producing a revised masterplan. We began again with a blank canvas, and have listened to the local community through forums and workshops. In terms of traffic proposals, we have a much clearer idea and set of data with which to work with on this occasion, and now have the ability to present a case to the City of York Council backed by strong evidence in our favour. The new Masterplan provides the following benefits; a substantial number of family homes, with gardens; a range of accommodation types to allow people to stay in the community as their needs change; good employment prospects for a wide range of skills, including part time work; community facilities such as the medical centre and the nursery; improvements to the local sports facilities and education through S106 contributions; re-energising the area and providing investment that should benefit the whole community.

Q: How big is the hotel?

A: Grade four star approx 150 beds; business hotel approx 145 beds.

Q: What about local small business? The traffic growth may mean it is harder to achieve sales etc. due to the inability for potential customers to stop and shop.

A: The reality is that the site represents a potential growth in the customer base of local businesses as new residents and commercial tenants take up space, and will no doubt be looking for products and services from the locality.

ISSUES

A pertinent issue that was brought up was the possibility of cross-ticketing on the proposed shuttle bus, and potential ticketing restrictions if passengers wish to travel on different services. This is an issue that will be investigated by Grantside Ltd., and one we are happy that has been brought to our attention.

Another positive suggestion was the potential for cycle hire, as seen in Bristol, and is an area Grantside Ltd. have supported in existing developments in Newcastle Upon Tyne. Councillor Gunnell made clear the need for a serious look at the cycling issue, and made the useful suggestion that a seasonal approach to the issue is in need – the growth in children cycling to and from school during term time must be appreciated, and form part of any cycle-centric ideas during the design process.

Two further issues were discussed in depth;

1. The issue of a slip-road from the A64.

Several residents commented on the possibility of a slip-road being built from the A64, having read comments in the local newspaper, the Evening Press.

Councillor John Galvin put forward that this issue did not come under the responsibilities of the developer, Grantside Ltd., but urged residents to contact the City of York Council over the potential of the slip road.

Councillor Merrett further mentioned the involvement of the Highways Agency in developments regarding the A64, and stated that far from being a positive addition, such a provision could have a negative impact on traffic in the area, as motorists see an opportunity to access the city centre from that direction via Bishopthorpe Road.

2. The issue of enrolment in local schools for the children of new residents.

This issue does not come under the scope of the developer; however, we would like to point out to residents that discussions are underway among the council to consider the admissions policies for local children to attend schools within their wards.

3. Issue of Public Consultation

Councillor Fraser commented on the improved level of information available to residents compared to the previous application and the steps the developer had taken to address the issues that had been raised, and that the events of the evening will inform the decision whether to grant planning consent for the revised masterplan.

He also pointed out that with regard to the baseline, people need to be clear that this is not the level of the previous Terry's operations which in latter years was unusually low. The mix of employment proposed will be different to what previously existed.

