

# Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	Cabinet	
MEETING DATE:	11 January 2012	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 2344
TITLE:	Radstock Town Centre Highway Infrastructure Improvements	
WARD:	Radstock	
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>		
<b>List of attachments to this report:</b>		
Appendix A Radstock Regeneration and Highway Improvement Scheme		
Appendix B Draft Traffic Regulation Orders (B1, B2, B3, B4)		
Appendix C Summary of comments received		
Appendix D Objections to Advertised Traffic Regulation Orders		

## 1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 To consider the modifications required to the advertised Traffic Regulation Orders required for the proposed Radstock Regeneration and Highway Improvement Scheme in conjunction with the Norton Radstock Regeneration Project to be implemented, and either agree, modify or remove some of the proposed elements following further public consultation on the revised proposal.

## 2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet agrees that:

- 2.1 The Radstock Regeneration and Highway Scheme be implemented as illustrated in Appendix A
- 2.2 The proposed BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL (FROME ROAD, RADSTOCK) (BUS LANE) ORDER 201\* is abandoned (Appendix B1)
- 2.3 The BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL (VARIOUS ROADS, RADSTOCK) (ONE WAY TRAFFIC) (PROHIBITION OF RIGHT HAND TURN) ORDER 201- is made as modified so that Frome Road is removed from Schedule 1 and Church Street is removed from Schedule 2. (Appendix B2)
- 2.4 The BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 ALTERATION TO PEDESTRIAN CROSSING – WELLS ROAD (A367) is implemented (Appendix B3)

2.5 The BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL (VARIOUS ROADS, RADSTOCK) (AUTHORISED PARKING PLACES) ORDER 201- is made as advertised. (Appendix B4)

### **3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 Funding for the Highway works have been secured through a £800k grant from the Homes & Communities Agency. With the benefit of this grant, if Cabinet agree this report, the work is programmed to commence in Spring 2012.
- 3.2 The proposed modifications to the TRO's and further improvements will significantly reduce the cost of the original scheme by retaining the existing double mini-roundabouts and thereby avoiding the cost of providing a new mini-roundabout.
- 3.3 The budget available for scheme is £1.2m including the HCA grant. The scheme is currently estimated within budget, with a contingency of £79k. Additional expenditure above this contingency sum will need to be met from the Local Transport Plan Capital Programme Block.
- 3.4 Additional maintenance costs arising from the construction of the proposed link road and two additional zebra crossings will be provided for in the Medium Term Financial Plan. The additional annual electrical costs for the two zebra crossings and link road street lighting is approximately £960/per annum.

### **4 CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

- *Building communities where people feel safe and secure*
- *Sustainable growth*
- *Improving the availability of Affordable Housing*
- *Improving transport and the public realm*

### **5 THE REPORT**

5.1 The statutory consultation process for all the various elements of the regeneration works was carried out in June and July 2011. Following objections received during the statutory consultation period and representations made at the Cabinet meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2011, the Council decided to defer a decision pending further work to consider whether modifications could be made to the scheme to overcome specific concerns.

#### **The modified scheme**

- 5.2 As a result of extensive traffic modelling work a modified scheme was advertised in the Journal on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2011, inviting residents and businesses to provide feedback via a questionnaire.
- 5.3 Some 5,000 leaflets explaining the modifications with the questionnaire were delivered to local businesses and homes in the Radstock and Westfield wards.
- 5.4 In addition an exhibition attended by 103 people was held in the Radstock Methodist Church Hall on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> December 2011.

5.5 A total of 300 completed questionnaires were returned, representing a response rate of 6.0%

5.6 A summary of the responses to the proposed modifications is shown in Table A below:

TABLE A

	Yes	No	No Opinion
Do you support the retention of the double mini-roundabout at the Frome Road/A367 junction?	50%	40%	4%
Do you support the removal of the proposed bus gate at the Frome Road/A367 junction and the retention of two-way flow on Frome Road	76%	12%	6%
Do you support the replacement of the proposed signalised junction at the link with The Street with a new mini-roundabout?	58%	26%	7%
Do you support the removal of the proposed ban on right turns out of Church Street	61%	25%	7%

5.7 The feedback to the proposed modifications is positive with a majority of respondents in favour of each of the measures proposed. A summary of other comments received is shown in Appendix C.

5.8 The least popular measure with 50% in favour and 40% against was the retention of double mini-roundabout. Many of those against retaining the double mini-roundabouts commented that they were more in favour of a larger single roundabout. The estimated cost of constructing a single roundabout is £1.4m, excluding land acquisition costs, exceeding the £1.2m budget and traffic signals would not provide sufficient capacity because of the high number of stages required to avoid conflicting movements.

5.9 Furthermore the traffic modelling work indicates that the scheme will improve the flow of traffic through the double mini-roundabout and avoids the disruption that would be created during the construction of larger single roundabout. However the Council will review the operation and signing of the double mini-roundabout following completion of the scheme to consider what further improvements can be made.

5.10 Additional comments were made during the consultation on many of those aspects of the original proposals which remained substantially unchanged:

- The impact of the link road on traffic through The Street, two way traffic on The Street and reversing the flow of traffic on Fortescue Road on businesses, the post office depot and location of bus stops.
- the impact of parking restrictions on trade, including disabled access
- HGV movements
- the removal of the Jubilee oak tree

5.11 The proposed link road together with two-way traffic on The Street remains necessary to provide additional highway capacity to support the regeneration proposals and reduce traffic congestion in the area. In consequence the bus stops in The Street will need to be relocated nearby on the proposed link road. The

distance between the bus stops and Radco supermarket will be about 200m, well within walking distance for most people.

5.12 Two-way traffic on The Street also necessitates that the flow of traffic in Fortescue Road be reversed to overcome severely restricted visibility to the right of the junction. However, reversing the flow has the advantage of reducing through traffic on Fortescue Road and creating a more pedestrian friendly environment. Discussions have taken place with the manager of the Royal Mail depot who has confirmed that the future of the depot is not threatened by the proposed reversal of traffic flow.

5.13 These and other comments were also raised by objectors to the draft Traffic Regulation Orders scheme which need to be formally considered by cabinet before making a decision.

### **Objections to draft Traffic Regulation Orders**

5.14 The 35 objections were received to the advertised Traffic Regulation Orders (Appendix D) are summarised as follows:

i). Proposal will kill off local trade.

- People will no longer want to pop in to buy items on impulse,
- The number of parking spaces has been greatly reduced,
- There is not enough crossing points on the design to make it safe,
- Deliveries to local shops will be affected by the increased traffic.

A. The overall effect of the proposals is to reduce the number of parking spaces by about 16 or 4% of the total parking stock, including Radco and Waterloo Road car parks. Whilst no modifications to the advertised parking order are proposed at this stage, work will continue with the Radstock Traders Association and Radstock Town Council to review parking provision with the aim of increasing the supply of short stay parking in the town and improving access to disabled parking pays. This may include, for example, measures to allow shoppers to park for free for a limited period whilst discouraging all day commuter parking by commuters. The Radstock Traders Association has also suggested a number of options to increase parking provision and signage to car parks which will form part of these discussions.

Access to local shops and deliveries will be retained and local trading will not be affected. Journey times under the modified scheme will generally be reduced at peak times improving accessibility to the town for visitors, including bus users. Additional pedestrian crossing facilities proposed will further improve access and safety for pedestrians. During construction an additional car parking 14 spaces will be provided at the Radstock Working Men's Club and Institute.

ii) Proposal will add to congestion in the town centre.

A. Extensive traffic modelling indicates that the modified scheme will significantly reduce congestion in and around the town centre by removing the proposed one way bus lane in Frome Road and maintaining two way traffic flow.

iii). The proposed 360° turning manoeuvres will be dangerous to other road users and pedestrians.

A. The need to undertake U turns from Church Street has been removed as a result of the proposed modifications to the Traffic Regulation Order and the Road Safety Audit undertaken has not raised concerns with these the U turns from Fortescue Road.

iv) It will produce greater air pollution in an already polluted town centre.

A. A significant change in air quality is not expected. The proposed modifications will improve the flow of traffic thereby reducing pollution caused by queuing traffic.

v) The proposal will mean the loss of the Jubilee oak tree, a significant local monument.

A. Thorough consideration has been given to how the oak tree could be retained as part of the scheme and subsequent work on the modified proposals scheme. Unfortunately, this is not possible because a roundabout at this location is required which is essential to the scheme. However, a replacement tree/s in an appropriate location selected in consultation with the local community will be provided. Arboricultural advice indicates that relocation of the tree is not a viable option.

vi). Increased vibrations from extra vehicles could damage the historic buildings and cellars in the area.

A. Road construction details will be employed in accordance with current design guidance. There is no evidence that vibrations from vehicles cause structural damage to buildings. A 7.5 tonne weight restriction is also proposed as part of further improvements (see 5.11 below) to reduce the environmental impact of the scheme on historic building and cellars.

vii) No provisions have been made to include the expected increase in cyclists using the NCN 24 cycle route through the area.

A. Completion of the development will include a more direct access to NCN 24 through the development access roads. Crossing points and an area wide 20mph speed limit is also proposed to further improve safety to cyclists (see 5.15 below)

viii). No-one can explain how the proposals will be of benefit to the residents and businesses.

A. Residents will benefit from the expected economic improvements associated with the regeneration proposals. Access to the shops will be maintained at all times. There will be clear signage to ensure that people are aware that it is business as usual. The proposed highway improvements will also reduce rat running by improving the flow of traffic on the major routes.

ix). The proposals are in breach of the Local Plan.

A. The scheme has planning consent. As part of the planning process, consideration would have been given to the Local Plan.

As part of the responses to the advertised Traffic Regulation Orders, a petition was received opposing the diversion of the Frome Road through the middle of Radstock, and another one in support of the removal of the two mini-roundabouts to replace them with one big one. They also showed support for an idea to move the electricity sub-

station, which has been suggested by Radstock Action Group as needed in order to install a single larger roundabout.

A.The suggested layout would be too expensive to implement, costing in excess of £1.4m excluding land acquisition costs.

**Proposed further improvements**

5.15 In addition to the proposed modifications to the Traffic Regulation Orders, feedback was invited on further improvements to the scheme as follows;

- Additional zebra crossings
- Area wide 20mph speed limit
- 7.5 tonne weight restriction on the link road
- Speed table on Frome Road

5.16 The responses are summarised in Table B below:

TABLE B

	Yes	No	No Opinion
Do you support the introduction of a 20mph Speed Limit across the central network?	69%	22%	3%
Do you support the introduction of a 7.5t weight restriction on the new road link?	68%	22%	4%
Do you support the introduction of new pedestrian crossings on the Street and Frome Road	74%	15%	4%

5.17 Overall the responses to the further improvements were positive and it is proposed to advertise these proposals for statutory consultation.

5.18 During the consultation a petition signed by 304 petitioners was received from St Nicholas C of E School headed as follows:

*Whilst there is a review of speed limits in Radstock we wish to petition Bath and North East Somerset Council to reduce the speed limit to 20 miles per hour on Kilmersdon Road in front of St Nicholas C of E Primary. We would also like to request that the road crossings are clearly specified at the junction of The Street, Fortescue Road and Church Road.*

5.19 Introducing a 20mph speed limit on Kilmersdon Road lies outside the scope of this particular scheme, but the council has a £500k project to implement 20mph speed limits in the district over the next 3 years, particularly outside schools and St Nicholas School will be included in this project.

5.20 As part of the further improvements to the scheme, Zebra crossings are proposed across the link road and The Street, which will improve crossing facilities in the area of Church Road.

**6 RISK MANAGEMENT**

6.1 The report author and Lead Cabinet member have fully reviewed the risk assessment (WIP) related to the issue and recommendations, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

## 7 EQUALITIES

7.1 A proportionate equalities impact assessment has been carried out and there are no implications for the groups with protected characteristics.

## 8 RATIONALE

8.1 The proposed Radstock Regeneration and Highway Improvement Scheme is needed to support the regeneration of the town by providing additional highway capacity to support housing and economic growth.

## 9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 A number of alternative options were evaluated as part of extensive traffic modelling work the result of which concluded that the modified proposal achieved the greatest benefit. The additional cost of replacing the proposed mini-roundabout with a single large conventional roundabout is estimated to cost of £1.4m and is not affordable from the available budget.

## 10 CONSULTATION

10.1 *Ward Councillor; Cabinet members; Town Council; Service Users; Local Residents; Community Interest Groups; Stakeholders/Partners; Section 151 Finance Officer; Chief Executive; Monitoring Officer*

10.2 Consultation on the original scheme was carried out as part of the planning process (application 06/02880/EOUT) and via e-mail and public notices for the TRO advertisement Process.

10.3 The consultation on the proposed modifications to the TRO's and further improvements is described in Section 5 above.

## 11 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

11.1 *Social Inclusion; Customer Focus; Sustainability; Other Legal Considerations*

## 12 ADVICE SOUGHT

12.1 The Council's Monitoring Officer (Divisional Director – Legal and Democratic Services) and Section 151 Officer (Divisional Director - Finance) have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

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