

Bath & North East Somerset Council

DECISION MAKER:	Cllr Roger Symonds, Cabinet Member for Transport		
DECISION DATE:	On or after 11th April 2012	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:	
		E	2272
TITLE:	High St, Bath – Public Realm & Highway Improvement Scheme		
WARD:	Abbey		
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM			
List of attachments to this report: Appendix A – Original Traffic Regulation Order Plans Appendix B – Terrace Walk & Orange Grove, Road Space Re-arrangement Plan Appendix C – Schedule of Objections and Officer Comments Appendix D – Typical High St CCTV Footage, Observation Comments Matrix Appendix E – Equalities Impact Assessment			

THE ISSUE

In June 2011, a number of Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's) were proposed and consulted upon in connection with the proposed Public Realm and highway improvement layout for High St, Orange Grove and North Parade, Bath. Alongside the advertised TRO's, a lengthy consultation and design process has been undertaken to determine a suitable layout to resolve the current coach and taxi conflict within Orange Grove, by re-providing coach parking into Terrace Walk.

The Cabinet Member for Transport is asked to consider whether the TRO's proposed should be agreed, as well as agree the suitability of a layout for Terrace Walk recommended by the Highway Authority, to be carried forward as a test implementation through the use of experimental traffic regulation orders.

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet member is asked to agree that:-

1. Consider the objections and comments received by the Council to the TROs that have been advertised and consulted upon;
2. Agree, in relation to those TRO's that –

High Street

- (1) Order Ref PEV7292C – (High St, Bath) (Prohibition of Waiting) Order 201- is implemented (see Appendix A – dwg no. TR5500/TRO/101 Rev C);
- (2) Order Ref PEV7292E – (High St, Bath) (Prohibition of Waiting & Loading/ Unloading) (Disabled Badge Holders Parking Places) Order 201- is implemented (see Appendix A – dwg no. TR5500/TRO/101 Rev C);
- (3) Order Ref PEV7292G – (High St, Bath) (Loading Bay) Order 201- is implemented (see Appendix A – dwg no. TR5500/TRO/101 Rev C);
- (4) Order Ref PEV7480 – Alteration of Pedestrian Crossings – High St to Orange Grove is implemented (see Appendix A – dwg no. TR5500/TRO/101 Rev C).

Orange Grove

- (1) Order Ref PEV7292A – (Central Area, Bath) (Prohibition & Restriction of Waiting & Loading) (Designated Parking Places) (Variation) Order 201- should be removed and no longer be considered for revocation;
- (2) Order Ref PEV7292F – (Orange Grove, Bath) (Coach Bay) Order 201- is implemented (see Appendix A – dwg no. TR5500/TRO/101 Rev C);
- (3) Taxi rank in Orange Grove is extended. This requires processing by the Environmental Monitoring & Licensing Team (INFORMATION ONLY).

North Parade

- (1) Order Ref PEV7292B – (North Parade, Bath) (Prohibition of Waiting) Order 201- is implemented (see Appendix A – dwg no. TR5500/TRO/101 Rev C);
- (2) Order Ref PEV7292D – (North Parade, Bath) (Coach Bay) Order 201- is implemented (see Appendix A – dwg no. TR5500/TRO/101 Rev C).

3. Agree in relation to the following that -

Grand Parade

- (1) The existing loading bay on Grand Parade is varied, such that loading is restricted to only 30 minutes, no return within 1 hour, (Central Area, Bath) Prohibition & Restriction of Waiting & Loading) (Designated Parking Places) Order 2008.

Terrace Walk & Orange Grove

- (1) The proposed road space re-arrangement plan for Orange Grove and Terrace Walk, as set out in Appendix B (dwg. No. TR5500/550/01) and that the relevant traffic regulations orders are advertised through an experimental order. This includes the following:-
 - a) re-location of the city sightseeing bus stops in front of the Abbey Hotel;
 - b) provision of specific loading bays in Terrace Walk;
 - c) limited loading restriction to the western side of Terrace Walk;
 - d) coach parking in Terrace Walk;
 - e) 2 No disabled bays and 1 No loading bay in the currently proposed coach bay on the north side of Orange Grove;
 - f) Revocation of the existing coach bay on the southern side of Orange Grove.
4. That the Divisional Director, Environmental Services be granted delegated authority to take all necessary action to implement the above proposals.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

High St/ Orange Grove & North Parade

Implementation of the Traffic Regulation Orders will require the installation of appropriate statutory signage and lining, the cost of which will be met as part of the overall budget for the scheme, which is approved in the Council's Capital Programme for 2011/12.

Terrace Walk & Orange Grove

As part of the future experimental order proposals to re-arrange road space in Terrace Walk and Orange Grove, the tour buses will be relocated in front of the Abbey hotel between 9.30am and 8pm, but allowing unrestricted parking outside of these hours. As coach parking and loading provision has been added into the Terrace Walk layout, all resident and pay & display spaces cannot be accommodated elsewhere, within the Terrace Walk area. It is therefore proposed to take out pay & display in York St and replace it with residents' parking, to accommodate the loss of resident parking in Terrace Walk.

The cabinet report of 9th November 2011 has already identified a £1.5k/ annum budget pressure that should be considered as a result of option 1. However the proposals for Terrace Walk will add a further £8.5k/ annum, to give a total budget pressure of £10k/ annum that should to be considered. Perhaps part of this revenue will be partially mitigated because there is the likelihood that at least some of the vehicles will move to alternative pay & display bays in the locale.

A further budget pressure of £25,000/ annum should be realised, as a result of the recommendation and requirement for a dedicated parking enforcement officer to enforce the loading/ waiting restrictions proposed along the western side of Terrace Walk.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Improving transport and the public realm - The new permanent Traffic Regulation Orders for High St will ensure that the spaces defined for the various functions of the street will give clear direction to users and allow parking enforcement officers to manage the spaces appropriately. This will protect the public realm, improve operation of the street and minimise impact upon the public transport and the highway network in the area.

The experimental order proposed for Terrace Walk and York St will provide a chance to test and monitor the layout, over a 6 month period. At the end of this period, the Cabinet Member will be asked to decide whether to retain the layout or consider an alternative proposal.

THE REPORT

Proposals for the High St in Bath and changes to Terrace Walk in Bath are part of the Public Realm and Movement Programme for Bath City Centre, following the formal adoption of the Public Realm and Movement Strategy in March 2010. The High St Scheme aims to make significant improvements to the public realm primarily in the interest of pedestrians, by providing greater pedestrian footway areas and improved Puffin crossings. It also:-

1. provides loading bays and disabled bays to improve functionality and make the spaces clearer to understand in terms of their intended use;
2. restricts waiting and loading to allow clearer passage for vehicles moving through the street;
3. provides specific spaces for coach and public transport usage.

The TRO's are used to bring legal affect to those spaces described above to allow the Council to provided appropriate control.

Traffic Regulation Orders were advertised on street, through local media, on the B&NES website and at an exhibition in the Guildhall and ran between the 19th May 2011 and the 9th June 2011. Following requests from consultees, this period was extended to the 24th June 2011, which allowed sufficient time for key stakeholders to provide all comments and objections to the proposals.

The majority of responses received were objections to the proposed order for removal of coach parking on the southern side of Orange Grove (Order Ref - PEV7292A), lengthening of the existing taxi rank and subsequent suggestion of re-provision of coach parking in Terrace Walk.

Consultees felt that the proposed TRO's would mean:-

- a loss of business to traders in Orange Grove;
- coaches parked in front of Terrace Walk businesses would block their frontages and cause potential loss of business.

The retention of coach parking within the vicinity of High St and Orange Grove is seen as a key part of the tourist economy of Bath.

Other comments included:-

- Removal of coaches from Orange Grove to reduce congestion in High St;
- Taxi ranks provided in Terrace Walk to reduce congestion in High St;
- Increased congestion and pollution in High St, as a result of a reduction in length of bus lane;

- Anti-social behaviour during night-time economy, whilst waiting for taxis around Orange Grove and Terrace Walk;
- Bendy bus and shelter locations, would interrupt views of the Abbey;
- Guildhall Market – traders loading/ unloading receiving tickets;
- Greater level of parking enforcement;
- More toilet facilities.

A full officer response to the above comments and objections and others has been provided in Appendix C, which includes a number of comments of support for the High St proposals.

During the course of the TRO consultation, meetings were arranged with representatives from the Bath Taxi Association, as well as traders and residents from Orange Grove, Terrace Walk and High St. This gave us a greater understanding of the concerns and objections raised during the initial stages of the consultation and a chance to consider all issues.

In October 2011, alternative layout options were generated for Orange Grove and Terrace Walk, which were included as part of a Cabinet report generated by the Council's Public Realm Team. The Cabinet decided that option 1, coaches in Terrace Walk with a reversed traffic flow, should be considered for implementation as an experimental TRO.

Following further consultation with traders in Terrace Walk, the Cabinet Member requested that a slightly amended layout be considered, which retained the existing direction of flow in order to primarily prevent coach parking directly outside businesses on the western side of Terrace Walk. A layout has been generated and agreed (see Appendix B).

Consultees also made specific comment relating to the proposed design of High St. Their particular concern relates to the reduction in the length of bus lane, as a result of the increased paved crossing area, which they see as a catalyst to creating further congestion and pollution. Officers have monitored traffic patterns, using CCTV footage taken from the north end of the High St on the following occasions:-

- 6th-10th June 2011 between 10am and 6pm;
- 15th-16th & 19th-20th June 2011 between 8am and 10am;
- 29th August - 8th September 2011 between 8am and 6pm;
- 8th-15th September 2011 between 8am and 6pm;
- 16th-19th September 2011 between 8am and 6pm;
- 8th-13th October 2011 between 8am and 6pm.

From observation (see Appendix D for typical observational comments), the footage showed that for the majority of the day (up to 5.45pm), traffic flow was light, consisting mainly of coaches, buses and taxis. This allows pedestrians to move freely through and across the street and only the occasional requirement to use the signal controlled crossing facility between the Guildhall and the Corridor. It was noted that traffic only

queued back from the lights through the signalised crossing on the odd occasion, although this was mainly as a result of pedestrians calling the crossing.

After 6.00pm, where the busgate restrictions are lifted, traffic patterns changed, with greater private car and general vehicular activity, leading to increased traffic queuing back through the pedestrian crossing. However it was noted that this cleared quickly as a result of available green time provided within the staging of the busgate signals.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The report author and Cabinet Member have fully reviewed the risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

The risk assessment for this project has indicated that there is a significant risk that if traffic regulation orders were not implemented, the inappropriate vehicle has the potential for significant and operational damage to the area.

EQUALITIES

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out for this scheme, see Appendix E.

RATIONALE

The proposed Traffic Regulation Orders for the original consultations, together with the recommended layout proposed for implementation through an experimental TRO, will ensure that the spaces defined for the various functions of High St, Orange Grove, North Parade and Terrace Walk provide clear direction to users and allow parking enforcement officers to manage the spaces appropriately. This will protect the public realm, improve operation in those streets and minimise impact upon the public transport and the highway network in the area.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

A number of options have been considered for management of coaches and taxis in Orange and Terrace Walk, as outlined within the Cabinet report decided upon in November 2011.

CONSULTATION

Ward Councillor; Cabinet members; Parish Council; Overview & Scrutiny Panel; Staff; Other B&NES Services; Service Users; Local Residents; Community Interest Groups; Stakeholders/Partners; Other Public Sector Bodies; Section 151 Finance Officer; Chief Executive; Monitoring Officer.

Traffic Regulation Orders were advertised on street, through local media, on the B&NES website and an exhibition in the Guildhall and ran between the 19th May 2011 and the 9th June 2011, although as a result of the level of objection, this period was extended to the 24th June 2011. Consultation has also been on-going between June

2011 and March 2012, which has allowed sufficient time for key stakeholders to provide all comments and objections to the proposals.

ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

11.1 *Customer Focus; Sustainability; Human Resources; Property; Corporate Health & Safety.*

ADVICE SOUGHT

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.

Contact person	Simon Thomas, Tel. No. 01225 395160
Background papers	Cabinet Report (9 th November 2011) – Public Realm and Highway Improvement Scheme, High St: Options for Orange Grove and Terrace Walk
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