

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	Cabinet	
MEETING DATE:	10th April, 2013	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 2439
TITLE:	Bus Priority Measures in Dorchester street, Manvers Street and Pierrepont Street	
WARD:	Abbey, Widcombe, Bathwick	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: Appendix A: Option A Appendix B: Option B Appendix C: Option C Appendix D: Alternative Route Appendix E: Consultation Scheme Appendix F: Consultation Responses Summary Appendix G: Recommended Scheme		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 Congestion in Manvers Street and Dorchester Street creates pollution and delays for buses in the vicinity of the bus station at peak times and the aspiration for the Public Realm and Movement Strategy is to create a more pedestrian and cycle friendly environment in Dorchester Street, Manvers Street and Pierrepont St by removing private and commercial motor vehicles from Dorchester St.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet agrees that:

- i) An Experimental Traffic Regulation Order be implemented under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 for a maximum period of 18 months to evaluate the impact of prohibiting the driving of vehicles except buses and taxis in an eastbound direction on Dorchester Street between 10am and 4pm and allowing right turn only out of Manvers St car park. (Appendix G)
- ii) The eastbound carriageway of Dorchester Street be designated as a bus lane for the purposes of civil enforcement using CCTV cameras under the Transport Act 2000.

- iii) The Divisional Director for Environmental Services be delegated authority to make changes to the Experimental Order in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport and also delegated authority to use the Council's bus lane enforcement powers.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The estimated cost of the scheme is £20k funded by a S106 contribution from the Southgate development and revenue from CCTV bus lane enforcement, which would be used to offset any losses from the scheme, for example reduced revenue from Manvers St car park due to reduced access from Dorchester Street or removing the scheme if the experiment proved not to be successful.
- 3.2 The Medium Term Service and Resource Plans for 2013/2014 to 2015/2016 make no provision for the reduced parking income arising as a result of such a scheme. There is potential mitigation of some of the reduced income from bus lane camera enforcement revenue. The budgetary implications of this scheme will need to be closely monitored and reflected in the Council's financial plan going forward.
- 3.3 The proposed eastbound only scheme is consistent with the signing for the High Street bus gate which has recently been reviewed by the Traffic Penalty Tribunal and found to be acceptable with minor modifications.
- 3.4 The cost of removing the experimental scheme, if unsuccessful, is estimated to be £5k and will be met from existing service budgets.

4 CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

- *Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live*

Reducing traffic in Dorchester St., Manvers St and Pierrepont St will improve the flow of traffic and air quality and reduce congestion on these streets. The scheme is consistent with the vision and objectives of the public realm and movement strategy for Bath.

5 THE REPORT

- 5.1 Reducing traffic in busy city centre streets is an important transport objective of the Council to improve the city centre environment for pedestrians, cyclists and buses and encourage sustainable transport modes.
- 5.2 Previous traffic management measures introduced in Bath have created 'traffic cells' in the city centre which effectively prevent motorised traffic moving across and between cells, but still allow essential access to properties and businesses within each cell. This policy has been very effective in reducing through traffic in the city and promoting walking, cycling and public transport.
- 5.3 During the planning stages of the Southgate Development the need to provide priority access for buses along Dorchester St and Manvers St was considered desirable but not found to be essential following the introduction of the High Street bus gate restrictions which has successfully reduced through traffic in the area.

Traffic management options

- 5.4 Traffic management options are limited by the lack of a suitable alternative route at the eastern junction of Dorchester Street with Manvers Street for prohibited traffic reaching the end of Manvers Street to avoid any restriction introduced at this location. Consequently any restriction introduced at this at the eastern end of Dorchester Street would be unenforceable due to lack of available space for a vehicle to take evasive action. Advisory signs would however be used to discourage traffic entering Pierrepont Street and Manvers St, with traffic exiting Manvers St car park directed to turn right into Manvers St away from Dorchester St.
- 5.5 Exemptions for access to businesses and residents have been considered to address concerns raised, but exemptions of this nature are particularly difficult to enforce which would undermine public support for the scheme and have not been considered further for this reason.
- 5.6 Traffic modelling also indicates that the impact on the alternative route of a westbound restriction on Dorchester Street, particularly on Rossiter Rd and Widcombe Parade would be severe. For example average traffic speeds on the surrounding network, including the proposed Rossiter Road scheme, would reduce from 11mph to 6mph in the PM peak in 2015, with average bus speeds reducing from 8mph to 4mph.
- 5.7 In the eastbound direction however, there are three possible signing options for prohibiting through traffic in Dorchester St in the eastbound direction at the junction with St James' Parade.
- (A) Prohibition of driving motorised vehicles with exemptions for buses and taxis for all or certain parts of the day (Appendix A).
 - (B) 24hr Contra-flow bus lane with exemptions for taxis and cycles (Appendix B)
 - (C) 24hr 'No Entry' with exemptions for buses, taxis and cycles (Appendix C).
- 5.8 Option A prohibits the driving of motorised vehicles with exemptions for specific categories of traffic and access by time of day 10am – 6pm in this example. The signing and enforcement measures are consistent with existing bus gate signage in the High Street to avoid misunderstandings, which may otherwise weaken the council's position in defending appeals against penalty charge notices.
- 5.9 Option B designates the eastbound carriageway as contraflow bus lane with exemptions for taxis and cycles. The contraflow bus lane would operate 24hrs a day and requires a central solid white line running the length of Dorchester Street to define the bus lane.
- 5.10 Option C prohibits access in Dorchester St for all vehicles, except for buses, taxis and cyclists. Exemptions for cycles are not currently permitted and will need specific authorisation from the DfT, but 'No Entry' restrictions with exemptions for buses, taxis and cycles are currently being trialled elsewhere. The main advantage of using 'No Entry' signs with permitted exemptions is that they are generally well observed by drivers without the need for camera enforcement.

- 5.11 In all cases the alternative route for through traffic and local access to the station, High Street, Manvers Street and Terrace Walk area is via Churchill Bridge, Rossiter Road, Pulteney Road and North Parade (see Appendix D).
- 5.12 The layout of the junction of Dorchester St with St James Parade will need to be modified to provide two ahead lanes on St James Parade in a southerly direction to provide increased capacity and simplify the signal arrangement at the junction. The kerblines at the entry to Churchill Bridge would need to be modified to accommodate a two lane approach.

Traffic modelling assessment

- 5.13 The impact of a number of options for access restrictions within Dorchester Street in Bath have been assessed under a 2015 forecast scenario which assumes a limited amount of traffic growth and the implementation of the A36 Rossiter Road scheme.
- 5.14 The change in mean vehicle speeds on the surrounding network which are summarised in the table below:

	AM Peak Mean Speed 2015 (7am- 10am)		Inter Peak Mean Speed 2015 (10am-3pm)		PM Peak Mean Speed 2015 (3pm-7pm)	
	All vehs	Buses	All vehs	Buses	All vehs	Buses
Do Nothing	12	9	15	10	11	8
Dorchester St 24hr bus lane e/b only	10	6	13	8	9	6

- 5.15 The modelling assessment predicts a degree of network instability, and increased queuing and delays under all options during the morning peak period and, especially, during the evening peak period. These issues appear to arise from the significant displacement of traffic in the eastbound direction from Dorchester Street to the A36, which is already operating near or at capacity during the busy morning and evening peak hours.
- 5.16 During the inter-peak, the modelling predicts that the wider network is capable of accommodating the displaced traffic under all options without detriment to network operation. The main impacts in the Inter peak (11am-12 noon) are estimated to be as follows:

Road	Vehs/hr (11am -12 noon) 2015
Dorchester St (e/b)	-170
Pulteney Road (n/b)	+160

North Parade (w/b)	+130
Manvers Street (n/b)	-90
Manvers Street (s/b)	+60

Consultation

5.17 An informal consultation was carried out with local business and residents based on the scheme shown in Appendix E with 24hr restrictions on Dorchester Street, Manvers Street and Pierrepont Street.

5.18 The headline results are that 51 (36%) responses are in favour or broadly in favour of the proposed traffic restrictions, 88 (62%) responses are against and 3 (2%) responses have no opinion. The response rate to the consultation was 31%.

5.19 A number of comments were also made. The main issues raised against the scheme are:

- Congestion on alternative routes, particularly North Parade (32 responses)
- Reduced accessibility for residents living in the area, particularly at the Empire (31 responses)
- Reduced accessibility to, and impact on, businesses in the area (13 responses)
- Enforcement (9 responses)
- Longer journeys resulting in more pollution (6 responses).

Congestion on alternative routes

5.20 An eastbound only restriction on Dorchester St during the inter peak period slightly decreases vehicle speeds by 2mph (15%) on alternative routes during the inter-peak period. Congestion on North Parade e/b at its junction with Pulteney Road however is likely to reduce as a result of removing through traffic movements.

Accessibility

5.21 The residents of the Empire were particularly opposed to the scheme because it imposes further restrictions on access in both directions on Dorchester St. Similarly businesses in the High Street area will also be affected by reduced access from Dorchester St for deliveries, customers and workers.

5.22 A careful balance needs to be struck between protecting and enhancing the qualities of the World Heritage city whilst maintaining access for businesses and residents. The need to provide priority access for buses along Dorchester St and Manvers St was recognised at the planning stages of the Southgate Development, but not considered to be essential following the introduction of the High Street bus gate restrictions.

5.23 The location of the railway station, bus station and various car parks nearby provides a highest degree of accessibility in the district by all transport modes. Access by private car is therefore less of a priority in the pursuit of creating a high quality sustainable transport hub for the city as a whole. Bus operators are particularly supportive of the proposed scheme.

5.24 Residents living in the area will be inconvenienced to some degree by having to make slightly longer journeys by car, but at the same time will benefit from city centre improvements that investment in sustainable modes of transport will continue to bring in the future. The Council's priorities to improve walking, cycling and public transport are clearly set out in the Public Realm and Movement Strategy and Joint Local Transport Plan³.

5.25 Requests have been made by residents, particularly from those living at the Empire to be exempted from the bus gate restrictions to compensate. Such an exemption would significantly undermine the enforceability of the bus gates and would not therefore be acceptable.

5.26 To reduce the impact on access for local businesses and residents, the recommended option is shown in Appendix F with the proposed restriction on Dorchester Street applying between 10am and 4pm in the eastbound direction only.

Enforcement

5.27 A number of concerns referred to the difficulty in enforcing the scheme put forward for consultation. The proposed experimental scheme has been revised following consultation to allow enforcement using CCTV cameras to be used.

Longer journeys and higher pollution

5.28 The proposed experimental scheme has been revised following consultation to reduce the impact of the scheme on journey times and air pollution. Air quality is monitored annually in the city and will be used to assess any changes resulting from the experimental scheme.

Bus Operator views

5.29 Bus operators were invited to give their comments on Options A, B and C. First preferred Option C, but recognised the potential delay in gaining DfT approval for the signs and would accept Option B as an alternative, whereas Wessex Connect preferred Option A.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 The report author and Lead 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.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 There are no EqlA implications and an EqlA has not been carried out.

8 RATIONALE

8.1 The rationale for the scheme is to reduce congestion in Dorchester Street and improve the environment for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users in this area.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 All the options considered are set out in the report.

10 CONSULTATION

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

10.2 The consultation with local residents and businesses was carried out by a letter drop. Other consultees were contacted by email.

11 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

11.1 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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Sponsoring Cabinet Member	<i>Councillor Roger Symonds</i>
Background papers	<i>Public Realm and Movement Strategy</i> <i>Joint Local Transport Plan JLTP3</i>
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	