

Cliff Webber

Leader, thank you for this opportunity to speak.

I find the purpose and rationale of the proposed partial closure of Dorchester Street completely baffling. It cannot eliminate the conflict of pedestrians and vehicles; if anything, by speeding up the flow of eastbound buses and taxis it will put unwary pedestrians at greater peril.

What is the point of partially closing the street between 10 am and 4 pm, while leaving it fully open at the beginning and end of the working day when the street is most congested? Even allowing for the fact that personal observation can be misleading, I am struck how often in the middle of a weekday I can count the number of cars in Manvers Street on the fingers of one hand. On Sundays their absence is even more noticeable.

More eastbound traffic will be sent via the A36, which allegedly has spare capacity during the middle of the day. But that may change when Rossiter Road is made two-way. Would it not be prudent to defer the experiment at Dorchester Street until after the Rossiter Road scheme has been implemented? In any case, even now, the school run and congestion at Widcombe School starts well before 4 pm.

More traffic will be forced to enter the city centre via North Parade Road, which is heavily used by pedestrians - adults and children - passing along the narrow pavements to and from the Leisure Centre.

I know that the report says that it will be easier for vehicles to exit the east end of North Parade Road because there will be less through-traffic. However, the whole notion of closing Dorchester Street has been predicated on the belief that many cars use Dorchester Street as rat-run between Pulteney Road and Southgate Street. I have never seen any figures to bear that out.

The report asserts that the proposed closure will entail only modest inconvenience for residents and businesses between the train station and the High Street. Evidently, they do not agree.

Two final remarks. What a circuitous journey people from the south and west of Bath will need to make in order to meet or drop off passengers at the train station. And secondly, how will the no-left-turn out of Manvers Street car park be enforced? It is hardly welcoming to Bath to make use of that car park more difficult and then to make up the lost revenue from penalty tickets for failing to notice the ban on entering Dorchester Street from the west.

All in all, the proposed closure seems to be the wrong solution to an overstated problem. Sometimes the optimum solution is to do nothing