

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Cllr Clarke, Cabinet Member for Transport	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	On or after 15th – April 2017 (for single Member decision)	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E2960
TITLE:	Dorchester Street Traffic Study – Full Budget Approval	
WARD:	Abbey	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: None		

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 Dorchester Street is a busy city centre road serving the bus and rail stations, and is particularly susceptible to congestion arising from relatively minor issues and changes in traffic conditions. An incident can quickly lead to queues which back into adjoining streets. The objective of this review is to identify traffic management improvements and implement those that can be funded within the budget available in order to increase the resilience and flow of traffic in this part of the city centre.

2 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet Member agrees that the £100,000 provision approval in the 2017/18 Budget be given full approval in order to investigate and develop traffic management improvements in the Dorchester Street area.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

3.1 £100,000 has been provisionally approved in the 2017/18 Capital Budget which will be funded through Corporate Supported Borrowing.

3.2 Whilst various options will be considered, it is anticipated that improvements to the flow of traffic can only be gained through the cumulative impact of a range of interventions, such as alterations to the operation of traffic signals, changes to the marking of lanes and signage, and a review of bus movements/layby usage. Such improvements are only likely to have a minimal impact of future revenue costs.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

- 4.1 This review supports the Council's duty under the Traffic Management Act 2004 to keep traffic flowing.
- 4.2 Any improvements to the flow of traffic in Dorchester Street will support local businesses and improve access for public transport.

5 THE REPORT

- 5.1 As one of the main routes through Bath's historic core and the access to both the railway and bus stations, congestion in Dorchester Street can have an impact on many residents, workers and visitors. It affects the reliability of bus services, has a negative impact on air quality and makes journey times through this part of the city centre unpredictable for all road users. Dorchester Street is within the designated Air Quality Management Area.
- 5.2 There are numerous factors which affect the flow of traffic and the capacity of the road, such as the number of traffic signals, high volumes of pedestrians crossing the road, and frequent bus services entering and exiting the laybys. This means congestion can occur suddenly and queues build into adjoining streets when the road does not operate as intended. For example, a vehicle blocking a yellow box marking or a bus needing to stop but being unable to access one of the laybys.
- 5.3 This review will look at the various factors which affect the flow of traffic and identify where changes can be made that are likely to bring about improvements, such as reductions in journey time, more reliability of journey times, and greater resilience from incidents and changes in traffic flow.
- 5.4 Issues to be investigated will include a review of traffic signal operation (including the possibility of signals plans for major events), locations of crossing points, use of bus stop laybys, traffic signing for through traffic, lane markings, and potential junction alterations.
- 5.5 It is envisaged that some identified improvements can be delivered during the latter half of 2017/18 from the budget available. Any other improvements identified but beyond the budget will be costed for further consideration.
- 5.6 The Highways Team shall be leading the review with input from the Public Transport Team.

6 RATIONALE

- 6.1 The review will identify if there are any measures that can be taken to improve the flow of traffic and reliability of journey times in Dorchester Street. If this is achievable it will bring benefits to bus services, businesses and residents in the form of more predictable journeys. The Bus Expert Panel has previously raised concerns about congestion in the road.
- 6.2 If the review is not undertaken the possibility of identifying measures to ease congestion cannot be achieved.

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 A wider traffic modelling exercise in the city centre is due to be undertaken during 2017/18 in order to assess the traffic impact from potential access restrictions within the historic core. Whilst Dorchester Street is covered by the traffic model, it would not be sensitive enough to capture the potential impact from the level of interventions that are likely to be feasible.

8 CONSULTATION

8.1 Ward Members will be involved and given opportunities to comment during the review.

8.1 Council teams, including legal (monitoring officer), highways, & finance (s151 officer) have had opportunity to review and input into this report.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 A risk assessment related to the issues and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

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Background papers	None
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