

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	Cabinet	
MEETING DATE:	9 November 2011	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 2327
TITLE:	Public Realm and Highway Improvement Scheme for High Street: Options for Orange Grove and Terrace Walk	
WARD:	Abbey	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		
Appendix 1: Pros & Cons of options for Orange Grove/Terrace Walk		
Appendix 2: Technical assessment and sign off of options from the Council in its capacity as Highway Authority		
Appendix 3: Key objectives of Public Realm & Movement Strategy and three main components of the Public Realm & Movement Programme		
Appendix 4: Plans of High Street/Northumberland Place scheme		
Appendix 5: Summary of feedback from former TRO consultation process		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 A public realm and highway improvement scheme has been developed for High Street and Northumberland Place, Bath. This will be the first major 'Transforming Streets and Spaces' project to be delivered under the Council's Public Realm and Movement Programme (PRMP) in 2012 and is approved in the Council's Capital Programme.
- 1.2 While the permanent physical changes and improvements delivered by this particular scheme are confined to the High Street and Northumberland Place, new parking and management arrangements for coaches and taxis are required in the Orange Grove/Terrace Walk area in order to facilitate the delivery of the High Street scheme. The revised arrangements relate primarily to the location and demarcation of the taxi rank and two coach drop-off points for right-hand drive tourist coaches.
- 1.3 This paper therefore seeks a decision from Cabinet on which of three options should be taken forward for implementation.

2 RECOMMENDATION

That the Cabinet:

2.1 Orange Grove/Terrace Walk

Selects its preferred option from the three options presented in this report (see **Appendix 1&2**).

The preferred option will subsequently be the subject of a Traffic Regulation Order report to the Cabinet Member for Transport to be determined under the Single Member Decision process.

2.2 High Street

Delegates authority for the final development and delivery of the detailed scheme for High Street and Northumberland Place to the Strategic Director of Development and Major Projects, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The capital implications of the three options for Orange Grove/Terrace Walk, including the implementation of Traffic Regulation Orders, are included within the approved budget for the High Street/Northumberland Place project.

3.2 Revenue implications

- i) For Orange Grove/Terrace Walk options:
 - a. Option 1 – This option would result in the loss of 1 pay & display space in Terrace Walk. This will have a revenue impact on the Council's Parking Services budget of approximately £1.5k per annum, which will be considered as a budget pressure.
 - b. Option 2 – This option would reduce the current number of resident and pay and display car parking spaces in Terrace Walk by 7 spaces. It is proposed to take out pay and display spaces in York Street to accommodate the loss of resident parking from Terrace Walk. This will have a revenue impact on the Council's Parking Services budget of approximately £10k per annum, which will be considered as a budget pressure.
 - c. Option 3 – This option will require ongoing parking enforcement. It is advised that this can be absorbed within the current enforcement staffing levels. It was the view of local traders during the consultation process that, in addition to ongoing enforcement, marshalling of Orange Grove would be required at peak times to manage conflicts between taxis and tourist coaches in order to make Option 3 work. The Strategic Director of Service Delivery has advised that, should Cabinet select Option 3 as its preferred option (and it is subsequently approved as a Traffic Regulation Order) then this arrangement would be closely monitored over a trial period. If the

need for additional marshalling was demonstrated, consideration would be given to implementing a marshalling scheme in Orange Grove at peak times during the tourist season similar to the one run by Parking Services for the Christmas Market. Under the Christmas Market scheme, coach marshalling is paid for from the income generated from the sale of permits to coaches to enter and park in Bath.

- ii) The reconstruction of the High Street with high quality materials constructed to current British standard details will reduce the on-going maintenance liabilities associated with the current poor quality and degraded pavement materials.

4 CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 4.1 *Improving transport and the public realm* - The new scheme for High Street will improve and enhance the function and experience of streets and spaces for pedestrians and for users of public transport in line with the Council's Public Realm and Movement Strategy for Bath City Centre.

Sustainable Growth – Enhanced public spaces will encourage more people to use the city centre and linger, helping to keep the economy strong and increasing footfall to support retail and other attractions in the city. Investment in creating more and improved public spaces will improve the environment for the community, visitors and businesses and boost the image and reputation of Bath as an international visitor destination and centre for business and wellbeing.

Feeling Safer – The scheme and other forthcoming public realm projects will encourage more people to spend more time in the city centre, helping to support the evening economy and to dilute anti-social behaviour.

Climate Change – The new scheme encourages more pedestrians to use the city centre, to walk and to cycle and enhances the experience for users of public transport in High Street.

5 THE REPORT

High Street and Northumberland Place Scheme

- 5.1 This report presents the proposed public realm and transport scheme for High Street and the three options for future parking and management arrangements in the Orange Grove and Terrace Walk area. The pros and cons of the three options for Orange Grove/Terrace Walk is attached at **Appendix 1** and a technical appraisal and plans of the three options, produced by the Highway Authority, is attached at **Appendix 2**.
- 5.2 The High Street scheme and all three Orange Grove/Terrace Walk options have been submitted to and approved by the Council in its capacity as statutory Highway Authority to confirm that all options presented are implementable and acceptable highway solutions, see **Appendix 2**.
- 5.3 Background information on the Council's approved Public Realm and Movement Strategy for Bath City Centre entitled 'Creating the Canvas for Public Life in Bath' and its associated delivery vehicle the Public Realm and Movement Programme (PRMP) is outlined in **Appendix 3** of this report. High Street and Northumberland

Place is the first 'Transforming Streets and Spaces' Project to be delivered by the Programme.

- 5.4 A highways improvement scheme for High Street was previously developed by the Council's Transport service and informally consulted upon in 2009 as part of the city centre proposals for the Bath Transport Package. The lead responsibility for the delivery of this particular scheme transferred from the DfT-funded components of the Bath Transport Package to the Public Realm and Movement Programme (PRMP) in Quarter 1 of 2011. The scheme is still an integral element of the base business case of the BTP submitted to the DfT in Sept 2011 and currently under consideration.
- 5.5 The PRMP reviewed the original highway design during 2011 in consultation with a range of stakeholders to reflect the pedestrian priorities and agreed design values for Bath's public realm. It also aligned future aspirations for the enhancement of Orange Grove as a major public space in line with the adopted Public Realm and Movement Strategy.
- 5.6 The revised scheme for High Street and Northumberland Place makes a significant improvement to the public realm particularly for pedestrians. However, it will also improve the functionality of the space for cyclists and public transport vehicles, reflecting its importance as one of Bath's key arrival and departure spaces.
- 5.7 The scheme also seeks to enhance the quality of the streetscape through the use of historic and new natural pennant stone and new bespoke furniture products and to de-clutter the space to enhance the setting of Bath Abbey, the Guildhall and other listed buildings.
- 5.8 A plan of the High Street scheme and plan of the Northumberland Place scheme is attached at **Appendix 4**. High Street is seen as Phase 1 of a two phase Transforming Streets and Spaces scheme. Phase 2, the reconfiguration of Orange Grove, is currently identified as a capital project to be delivered towards the end an initial 5-year Programme i.e. 2016/17 subject to funding approval.
- 5.9 In order to rationalise bus movement and ease congestion within the High Street, the location of bus stops and pedestrian crossings have been re-arranged within the new scheme. Consequently, the existing space at the intersection of High Street and Orange Grove will reduce the taxi rank necessitating the new parking arrangements for coaches and taxis in the Orange Grove/Terrace Walk area.

Orange Grove/Terrace Walk

- 5.10 Consultation undertaken as part of the High Street/Northumberland Place scheme raised concerns about the proposed changes and revealed a long-standing tension between the taxi rank and coach drop-off points in Orange Grove. The location of Orange Grove adjacent to one of the city's leading landmarks Bath Abbey (350,000+ visitors per annum) and in close proximity to the major visitor attractions of the Roman Baths (900,000+ visitors per annum) and the Tourist Information Centre (535,000 visitors per annum) has inevitably resulted in competing pressures between taxis, coaches and pedestrians using the space. In addition, the profile of traders within Orange Grove has evolved to reflect its location as a prime tourist arrival and departure point.

5.11 A range of views have been expressed during the consultation process about possible long-term solutions to relieve the pressure in Orange Grove. These range from removing the coaches entirely from this part of the city centre (because of their impact on the World Heritage Site and traffic congestion), to maintaining coach drop-off (as an essential driver of the tourism economy) and redistributing taxi rank spaces across a wider area of the city centre. While in the medium term, a coach strategy and a new public realm scheme for Orange Grove are planned, until such time as these are delivered an enduring, workable solution is required for the taxi rank and for coach drop-off/pick up in this area in order to facilitate the delivery of the High Street scheme in 2012. The following three options have been prepared on that basis.

Options for Orange Grove Terrace Walk

5.12 More detailed documents outlining the three options for Orange Grove, including the plans and pros and cons for each option (**Appendix 1**), the views of consultees (**Appendix 5**) and the technical advice of the Council in its capacity as Highway Authority (**Appendix 2**) are included in the appendices. However, in summary, the three main options are as follows:

- **Option 1** – Taxi rank in Orange Grove (in front of shops) and 2 RHD tourist coach bays in Terrace Walk;
- **Option 2** – 2 RHD tourist coach bays in Orange Grove as current; Taxi rank in Terrace Walk during the daytime (8am-7pm) and returning to Orange Grove (in front of shops) during the night-time (7pm-8am);
- **Option 3** – 2 RHD coach bays in Orange Grove as current; 2 bay taxi rank in Orange Grove next to (but formally separated from) the two tourist coach bays and a 5 bay taxi feeder rank adjacent to Orange Grove island during the daytime; full taxi rank in front of shops during the night-time.

5.13 The most recent meeting with trader and taxi driver representatives was held on 13th September 2011 to present the three options and gain an understanding of their views. Options 1 or 2 were rejected by one or other group. The consensus was in favour of Option 3, which was seen as a compromise that allowed both coaches and taxis to remain in the space. However, in order to make Option 3 work, it was felt that the following additions were also required:-

- Greater regularity of highway enforcement, to prevent inappropriate parking;
- Inception of a management regime for coach drop-off/ pick-up, similar to that used during the Christmas Markets, which would help manage tourist coach parking at peak periods throughout the year and would help reduce congestion in the area.

5.14 Residents of The Empire and managers of Browns and Garfunkel's restaurants have received plans for all three options and have been asked for their views. Browns and Garfunkel's have not replied, but a letter has been sent in by The Empire Owners' Association. They support Option 2 as a temporary solution pending a coach strategy and feel that a management regime for coaches using

Orange Grove is necessary. They do not support Option 1 and are opposed to Option 3.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 A failure to resolve a preferred option for Orange Grove/Terrace Walk that can go forward for consultation and approval as a Traffic Regulation Order alongside the other TRO's for High Street previously consulted upon will prevent the High Street scheme from proceeding at the scheduled time.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been prepared for the High Street public realm scheme which includes the three options for the Orange Grove/Terrace Walk area. Relevant issues relating to the three options for Orange Grove/Terrace Walk are considered in **Appendix 1 and 2**. The impact of the three options on persons with protected characteristics is summarised as follows:

- **Option 1** – On an infrequent basis coaches with disabled passengers parking on the offside of the road and with no nearside door facility, would have to alight/ board disabled passengers into/ from the road. Although not technically acceptable, traffic flow is considered light and travelling at low speed in this location. Assistance from coach drivers and tour guides is also likely to be available.
- **Option 2** – A very similar scenario to option 1, where taxis (hackney carriages) with disabled capability would be required to alight/ board disabled passengers into/ from the road. Although not technically acceptable, traffic flow is considered light and travelling at low speed in this location. Assistance from the taxi drivers is also likely to be available. The highway technical report points to a mitigation measure for this situation where an echelon bay is provided specifically for taxis with disabled capability.

In the situation where the technical solution cannot be achieved, but the risk to public safety is considered low, the authority should undertake consultation with mobility/visually impaired groups highlighting this area of the city.

- **Option 3** – The option requires the reduction of the existing taxi rank in Orange Grove from 7 to 2 and proposes a length of “permit holder” parking for taxis (Hackney Carriages) on the eastern side of the Obelisk (Alkmaar Garden) to allow taxis to wait until one of the two spaces in the rank are free, to enable them to pull forward. There is a potential impact on disabled persons waiting for pick up if the first taxi vehicle in line is not adapted to their needs.

Licensing has advised that an informal arrangement already exists between taxi drivers that should a taxi at the front of the rank not be adapted for disabled needs when required, the first taxi in the rank that is adapted is called forward. It is also advised that the risk of this situation occurring in the future will be reduced as new licenses require taxis to be adapted for disabled users.

8 RATIONALE

- 8.1 The High Street and Northumberland Place scheme is the first major public space scheme to come forward to deliver the Council's approved Public Realm and Movement Strategy and associated delivery programme – see **Appendix 3** for further information on the Strategy and Programme.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

High Street: a range of options for city centre public spaces to be transformed through the PRMP have already been assessed in consultation with internal and external stakeholders. This resulted and prioritised into a 5-year programme which has been tested with a range of internal and external stakeholders. This will be reviewed on an on-going basis in line with the Council's priorities and objectives and the availability of capital funding.

Orange Grove/Terrace Walk: A range of different options, suggested by officers of the Council and external stakeholders for the allocation of the taxi rank and tourist coach drop-off points have been explored and tested. The three options presented within this report represent the three technically feasible and deliverable options that have emerged from the process.

10 CONSULTATION

- 10.1 *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.*

- 10.2 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, which allowed sufficient time for key stakeholders to provide all comments and objections to the proposals.

Further consultation with traders took place on 8th /14th and 16th June 2011 and again on 14th September 2011.

Further consultation with taxi representatives and taxi drivers took place on 27th July, 24th August and again on 14th September 2011.

- 10.3 The Council undertook a consultation in May/June 2011 which:

- i) Presented the design of the proposed public realm improvement scheme for High Street/Northumberland Place
- ii) Formally consulted on Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's) for High Street - these included the allocation of disabled parking bays, loading bays and single/double yellow lines to reflect the highway layout of the new scheme. It also sought to formalise two additional coach parking bays on North Parade;

- iii) Informally consulted on a revised coach parking and taxi rank arrangement for Orange Grove/Terrace Walk (to be secured by a future TRO) to facilitate the High Street scheme. The proposed parking arrangement (subsequently identified as Option 1) relocated the two RHD coach drop-off points currently in front of the existing shops into Terrace Walk. The taxi rank then moved further east into Orange Grove in front of the existing shops. This arrangement provided the best solution from a vehicle traffic management perspective.

10.4 While, the consensus of feedback received during consultation on the formal High Street proposals was generally positive (with the exception of a particular concern about the reduction in length of the bus lane - see Appendix 1), the informal proposal for Orange Grove/Terrace Walk created a high level of concern and revealed a long-standing tension between the taxi rank and coach drop-off points within the space. Further information on feedback received during the consultation process is outlined in **Appendix 5** of the report.

10.5 As a result of more detailed, on-going consultation, particularly with taxi drivers and Orange Grove/Terrace Walk traders, two additional options for this area have been developed and tested by the Council (Options 2 and 3).

11 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

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

12 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.

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Sponsoring Cabinet Member	Councillor Cherry Beath
Background papers	Public Realm and Movement Strategy for Bath City Centre <i>http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/environmentandplanning/majordevelopments/Pages/Public%20Realm.aspx</i>
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