

CABINET

17 March 2004

PROPOSED REVERSAL OF ONE-WAY TRAFFIC FLOW, PARCHMENT STREET,  
WINCHESTER

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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RECENT REFERENCES:

None.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

As a result of correspondence and representations about excessive traffic in Parchment Street, Winchester, consultations have taken place regarding requests to reduce the volume of traffic using this narrow city centre road as a short cut 'rat-run' to avoid the main one-way route through the City.

This Report summarises the results of investigations into possible traffic management solutions to prevent the excessive volume of vehicles using Parchment Street, Winchester.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the existing one-way traffic flow in Parchment Street, Winchester be reversed on an experimental order for 18 months, to be reviewed within 12 months with a view to introducing a permanent order or reinstating the existing one-way traffic flow accordingly.

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WINCHESTERREPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICESDETAIL:1 Introduction

- 1.1 Parchment Street is a narrow road in the heart of Winchester. It is predominantly residential with a few businesses and shops located toward the southern end. At present it has a one-way traffic order such that vehicles travel from North to South, this results in the road being used as a short-cut for traffic wishing to avoid the main one-way route through the City. This is shown on the plan attached as Appendix A.
- 1.2 Petitions have been received over a period of time from residents asking for the existing one-way traffic flow to be reversed, together with other correspondence and representations for traffic calming of some sort to be introduced in Parchment Street. Appendix B gives details of the above petition.
- 1.3 The residents have demonstrated an overwhelming desire for something to be done to prevent Parchment Street being used as a rat run, and this is fully supported by the local Members. As a result of meetings with residents' representatives, City Councillors and County Councillors it was agreed to carry out an informal consultation to establish what traffic management measures would be preferred. A copy of the questionnaire and a summary of the results are attached as Appendix C.
- 1.4 The results of this consultation clearly shows that traffic management measures are wanted by the vast majority of residents and businesses, it is significant that despite the possibility of reversing the one-way flow not being an option on the questionnaire, this suggestion was invariably added to the comments section of the form.
- 1.5 The narrow nature of Parchment Street results in vehicles often mounting the footway and therefore putting pedestrians at great risk. The proposal will dramatically reduce the volume of traffic using this route thus providing significant safety benefits for the many pedestrians that use this road, not only for residents, but also for those walking into the City from the St Peter Street Car Park, and for those visiting the shops in Parchment Street.
- 1.6 Traffic movement surveys carried out at peak hours recorded approximately 20% of traffic travelling along North Walls turning into Parchment Street, in peak hours alone this results in over 800 vehicles using Parchment Street. The movement of vehicles from Hyde Abbey Road into North Walls/Parchment Street was recorded and showed that over 45% of this traffic used Parchment Street.
- 1.7 In comparison to the other options reversing the one-way flow is the only definite way of stopping traffic from using Parchment Street. Further investigations were carried out to establish the feasibility of implementing this change. Hampshire County Council's Safety Audit Section was consulted regarding vehicles turning into Parchment Street from St George's Street. The County's Senior Safety Audit Officer, Ian Medd, has confirmed that he has no reasons to refuse the proposal.

- 1.8 The proposal will have an effect on the main road network through the City. Under the Traffic Management Agreement between Winchester City Council and Hampshire County Council these are classified as 'County interest roads' and consequently any proposals must be approved by Hampshire County Council. The County's Group Engineer for Traffic Management, Graham Carter, has confirmed that there are no objections to the proposal being pursued.
- 1.9 Further to the above approvals the proposal to reverse the one-way flow was forwarded to Councillors Peskett, Beveridge, Hiscock, Maynard and Nelmes, Hampshire Constabulary and Winchester City Council's Parking Office for their agreement to proceed to advertise the proposal, all agreements subsequently being confirmed. It should be noted that Hampshire Constabulary also support the proposal on safety grounds as it is their opinion that the existing layout has contributed to four accidents in St George's Street.
- 1.10 Since this proposal was first suggested the Air Quality Management Area for Winchester City has been declared, however, from discussions with Officers involved it is believed that the impact on air quality resulting from this proposal is likely to be minimal. Should the proposal be accepted it has been agreed to install air quality monitoring devices in Parchment Street and Middle Brook Street prior to any revisions being introduced so that before and after figures are available.
- 1.11 Through liaison meetings with cyclists it has been established that there is some opposition to this proposal as it will remove a short and convenient route into the heart of the city. However, this route is also being used by more than 2000 motor vehicles each day and the environmental impact of these on residents in terms of noise and vibration far outweighs the inconvenience to one user group. The feasibility of introducing contra-flow a cycle lane in St Peter Street is to be carried out, however, the reversal of the one-way traffic flow in Parchment Street is only one part of the overall road network available to cyclists and there are still many alternative routes that can be used to get into the centre of the City.
- 1.12 There have also been concerns raised regarding the effect on traffic flows in adjacent streets, in particular Middle Brook Street and St George's Street and North Walls either side of Parchment Street. Should the proposal be accepted it has been agreed to carry out speed and volume counts on traffic using these roads so that before and after figures are available.
- 1.13 Taking into account all of the above points it is felt that the best solution to the traffic problems in Parchment Street is to reverse the existing one-way flow. There are two ways that this can be achieved in terms of Traffic Regulation Orders.

- Experimental Order

This would be advertised and introduced simultaneously. The temporary order must be for a maximum period of 18 months, during which time it is necessary to either consolidate the order permanently or for the existing restrictions to be reinstated.

To make the changes permanent it is necessary to state that this is the intention and that objections should be made within a specified period, nominally 6 months after the experimental order starts. Any objections would then be considered with the intention of making a decision to make the order permanent within 12 months of the experimental order being introduced so that the permanent order can be introduced within 18 months.

- Permanent Order

This would be advertised before any changes are introduced. Notices detailing the proposal would be advertised on-street and in the press for the statutory period of 21 days to allow objections to be made. Any objections would then be considered and a decision made, currently at Cabinet level, as whether to proceed or not. If the proposal is approved, a notice is advertised stating the commencement date the order is to come into force and providing a further period for appeals to be made if it considered that the order making process has not been correctly followed.

- 1.14 It is the recommendation of this Report that an experimental order be introduced for a period of 18 months, objections to be received 6 months thereafter, with the appropriate permanent order being advertised 12 months after the original implementation date.
- 1.15 The implementation date is to be determined, however, it must be noted that this should reflect the need to have air quality monitoring equipment and traffic counters installed in Parchment Street and Middle Brook Street suitably prior to any changes to give usable data. This will also provide suitable time for the necessary alterations to signing and electrical work where necessary.
- 1.16 To minimise the disruption to traffic it is suggested that the revision be introduced during the summer when traffic flows are lighter. An implementation date in July 2004 is likely, if the experimental order is approved.

#### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

2 CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

This proposal is in keeping with the Corporate Strategy in its attempt to improve traffic management and to create a better environment for the community.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

The cost of implementing this proposal is covered by funding through the Traffic Management Agreement with Hampshire County Council.

4 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Correspondence on Engineering Services files Ref: 370201, 380902 & 810402

5 APPENDICES:

Appendix A: Location plan showing existing traffic routes  
(Drawing No 810402/026)

Appendix B: Residents petition

Appendix C: Questionnaire and Summary