

CABINET

5 July 2004

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT - PARCHMENT STREET, WINCHESTER AND SURROUNDING ROADS

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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RECENT REFERENCES:

CAB836 – Proposed reversal of one-way traffic flow, Parchment Street, Winchester – 17 March 2004

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

As a result of correspondence and representations about excessive traffic in Parchment Street, Winchester Report CAB836 was taken to Cabinet on 17 March 2004 with a proposal to reverse the traffic flow in Parchment Street, Winchester. Following representations and debate it was recommended that wider investigation and consultation was required before any decision could be made.

This Report covers the outcome of these investigations and summarises the considerable volume of correspondence that has taken place as a result of the proposal.

A number of possible options are put forward for consideration.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Cabinet

1. Consider whether to agree in principle to the following changes on an experimental basis:-

- Parchment Street – reversal of one-way traffic flow
- Middle Brook Street – reversal of one-way traffic flow from Cossack Lane to North Walls and contraflow cycle lane from North Walls to Cossack Lane
- St Peter Street – introduce a contraflow cycle lane from North Walls to St George's Street
- North Walls – introduce an Advanced Stop Line for cycles at Middle Brook Street
- Upper Brook Street – no change

2. That the City Secretary and Solicitor be authorised to make the Order as soon as possible.
3. That the effects of the traffic scheme be referred to the Air Quality Informal Member/Officer Working Group for detailed evaluation as part of the preparation of the AQMA action plan in order to ensure that any impact of implementation of the proposals does not have an adverse affect on air quality elsewhere in the town.

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DETAIL:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Further to Report CAB836 and following the representations and debate at the Cabinet meeting on 17 March 2004 additional consultation has taken place, as recommended, to establish the wider views of the residents and businesses of Middle Brook Street, Upper Brook Street, Parchment Street and St Peter Street, Winchester in relation to possible traffic management within these streets.
- 1.2 To comply with the above requirements a questionnaire was sent out to all properties fronting or with access onto the above streets, together with a covering letter. See Appendix A.
- 1.3 The questionnaire was copied without the permission of the Council and distributed to properties and vehicles in the Hyde area of the City with a flyer attached. See Appendix B.
- 1.4 The response to the official questionnaire was reasonably good at approximately 50%, and although it is not known how many copied questionnaires were distributed, a large number of these were also returned accounting for nearly half of all responses. The majority of these replies were outside the official return date of Friday 23rd April 2004. However, to provide the best possible over-view of this matter they have been included in the summary. See Appendix C.

2 Response from Consultations

- 2.1 From these returns it is clear that the residents of Parchment Street are in favour of both a reversal of the one-way traffic flow in Parchment Street as well as a weight restriction. The option of a weight restriction is also popular with the residents of Middle Brook Street, Upper Brook Street and St Peter Street.
- 2.2 When considering the replies from the Council's survey of residents of Middle Brook Street, Upper Brook Street, Parchment Street and St Peter Street this showed that 28% are in favour of a reversal of traffic in Parchment Street with 49% being in favour of weight restrictions in Parchment Street. Weight restrictions in the Middle Brook Street, Upper Brook Street and St Peter Brook Street are also fairly popular (25%, 24% and 27% respectively) although 45% were in favour of no changes.
- 2.3 When taking into account all responses to both the Council's survey and the copied form the percentages in favour of weight restrictions are fairly similar to those of the residents of the four streets, with 54% in favour of no change compared with 45%

from residents of Parchment Street, Middle Brook Street, Upper Brook Street and St Peter Street.

- 2.4 The other suggested options of additional traffic calming and reversing the traffic flows in other streets did not receive any significant support.
- 2.5 It should be noted those replying 'no change' often did so with a comment that they would be in favour of the introduction of a "prohibition of motor vehicles except for access" order. This would, however, not be an acceptable option as it is not observed by many motorists and it is very difficult to enforce. The police have indicated that they would not support this option due to the enforcement problems that would be created.

3 Data Collected

- 3.1 Traffic surveys were carried out during the period 10th May 2004 to 16th May 2004. See Appendix D.
- 3.2 The traffic survey in Middle Brook Street does not include vehicle movements exiting the Middle Brook Street Car Park. The figures for the number of vehicles using the car park have been obtained directly from records for the automatic car park barriers. See Appendix E.
- 3.3 These show that Middle Brook Street has an average of 420 vehicle movements per weekday on its main section plus 889 generated by the Car park, thus giving a total of 1309 per day. Upper Brook Street has an average of 1915 vehicles per day, St Peter Street an average of 1107 vehicles and Parchment Street an average of 3278 vehicle movements per day.
- 3.4 Air quality measurements are continually carried out on many roads within the City, temporary measuring stations were also placed in Middle Brook Street and Parchment Street to assess the impact of traffic on these streets. The results of measurements taken from 25th September 2003 through to 3rd June 2004 are attached as Appendix F. Taking the results for April and May 2004 shows that the figures for Parchment Street are just above average for the whole town, whilst the levels in Middle Brook Street are among the lowest in the town. However, due to the limited data obtained for Parchment Street and Middle Brook Street care has to be taken not to read too much into these results.
- 3.5 Footfall figures have also been obtained for a couple of sites within the city for the corresponding periods. See Appendix G. These are not overly relevant at present, but may prove useful in assessing any changes should any alterations be introduced. Retailers in Parchment Street have expressed some concerns over trade declining should the traffic flow be reversed and future footfall figures might prove useful in assessing whether this is justified.

4 Possible Options

- 4.1 The main contention of the residents of Parchment Street is that as a narrow residential street it is not suitable for the volume of traffic that regularly uses it and this poses an unacceptable safety risk to all road users, especially pedestrians. The nature of the roads potentially affected is demonstrated in the photographs attached as Appendix H.

- 4.2 The overall layout of the roads within this area of the City and more detailed plans with dimensions for the individual roads are attached as Appendix J. This substantiates the impression given by the photographs.
- 4.3 The contention of residents of other adjacent roads is that it is not fair to simply remove the traffic problems of one street (namely Parchment Street) and to transfer these on to another (namely Middle Brook Street). It is not possible to accurately predict how drivers' habits would change should restrictions be implemented in one or more of the streets mentioned and this is the reason for the original proposal being an experimental order.
- 4.4 The possible permutation of options for traffic management are many. However, the most logical solutions to this problem are:-
- Experimental order for reversal of one-way traffic flow in Parchment Street
 - Permanent or experimental order for reversal of one-way traffic flow in Parchment Street and Middle Brook Street, including reversal of contra-flow cycle lane in Middle Brook Street and redesign of traffic signals at Middle Brook Street/North Walls
 - 7.5T weight limit or 6' 6" width limit on Parchment Street and Middle Brook Street
 - No change to Parchment Street at present, but review with the County Council other options for changing traffic patterns
- 4.5 The City Council should ensure the best possible environment for its residents and whilst it is accepted that the conditions for residents of Parchment Street are not ideal any proposal to improve conditions should not generally benefit one group of residents to the detriment of another.
- 4.6 From the substantial correspondence generated by the earlier proposal and the consultation carried out in preparation for this report, it is considered appropriate to pursue the reversal of the traffic flow in Parchment Street on an experimental basis but only with other measures in place. These will include reversal of one-way traffic flow in middle Brook Street from Cossack Lane to North Walls, revised contraflow cycle lane in Middle Brook Street from North Walls to Cossack Lane, contraflow cycle lane in St Peter Street, advanced stop line for cycles at traffic signals at North Walls/Middle Brook Street. This will also require the installation of traffic signals at the end of Middle Brook Street onto North Walls.
- 4.7 Since there has now been extensive consultation and collection of data, the impact of reversing only Parchment Street is apparent. A reversal of the traffic flow on Middle Brook Street would also be needed to ensure that the Parchment Street traffic is not displaced along Middle Brook Street instead of remaining on the one-way system. A reversal of traffic flow on Middle Brook Street could be carried out as an experimental order provided works to modify the contra-flow cycle lane and redesign of the traffic signals at its junction with North Walls are carried out as part of the experimental order.
- 4.8 If the traffic flow is reversed in Middle Brook Street it would only apply to that length north of Cossack Lane. This would mean that access to Middle Brook Street would be via Friarsgate, Lower Brook Street and Cossack Lane thus preventing direct access from North Walls or Friarsgate and discouraging any possible use of Middle Brook Street as a short cut to avoid the one-way system.

- 4.9 This would also allow traffic exiting Middle Brook Street and Cossack Lane car parks to turn either left or right along Middle Brook Street. A survey of the behaviour of traffic leaving the car parks shows that approximately 40% turns directly into Upper Brook Street. This would therefore result in an additional 356 vehicle movements along Middle Brook Street from Cossack Lane to North Walls. However, the existing flow of 420 vehicles per day would be reduced to only those vehicles requiring access to Middle Brook Street, probably no more than 200 movements per day. This would therefore result in a total of approximately 556 vehicle movements per day in Middle Brook Street from Cossack Lane to North Walls and 533 vehicles from Cossack Lane to Friarsgate. There would be a comparable reduction in the vehicle movements in Upper Brook Street, resulting in an average of 1559 vehicles per day.
- 4.10 The introduction of weight or width limits would probably result in lorries using the main one-way system through the City and thereby reducing the environmental impact of such vehicles on the narrow residential roads. However, any such order would by necessity have an exception for loading, and consequently the orders may be difficult to enforce. The police have indicated that they would not support the introduction of weight or width limits.
- 4.11 When investigating the options directly related to Middle Brook Street, Upper Brook Street, Parchment Street and St Peter Street the wider traffic patterns of Winchester have been reviewed and it is apparent that there is no easy route from the north of the city through to the south. Alternatives to provide a solution to this would require significant resources to undertake.
- 4.12 Possible options could include reversal of the one-way flow in the upper section of the High Street between the Westgate and Southgate Street. Modelling for major revisions of this nature would need to be carried out by Hampshire County Council since they have an impact on junction capacity of various traffic signal controlled junctions.

5 Air Quality Considerations

- 5.1 Traffic management changes outlined in the report fall within the Air Quality Management Area and therefore need to be considered within the action plan framework being developed to improve air quality within the City Centre. The completed Action Plan has to be submitted to DEFRA for approval who will expect detailed evaluation of any traffic flow changes within the AQMA, to ensure that these do not have an adverse affect on air quality and, wherever possible, can lead to improvements.
- 5.2 Such evaluation will be based upon modelling of the impacts of changes of traffic flows and this methodology is still being refined to ensure that this provides the most accurate predictions of the likely outcome of any changes. The factors affecting air pollution levels included traffic flows, vehicle mix, traffic speeds and topography.
- 5.3 Detailed evaluation of the proposals in this paper is not possible at this stage but could be incorporated within the air quality action plan for consideration. However, initial desk top assessments based on traffic flow data suggest that there would be an improvement in roads where traffic flows reduce but with a corresponding increase for main routes such as North Walls and St George's Street. Overall traffic

numbers will not increase but its distribution plainly will. Ultimately it is a balance between residential amenity and air quality. As the scheme is an experimental one it can be withdrawn at any time if either residential amenity or air quality issues are significantly affected and the Traffic Order will need to be made permanent or withdrawn within 18 months in any case as it as an Experimental Order.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 The recommended changes can be made in an experimental order which will not need further public consultation. However, any physical changes to implement the proposals will not be introduced for several months because of the need to obtain funding approval from the County Council.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

7 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.

8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

The cost of implementing traffic regulation orders is covered by funding through the Traffic Management Agreement with Hampshire County Council. Changes to road layouts would need to be added to the County's list of capital projects.

9 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

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

10 APPENDICES:

Appendix A: Letter and questionnaire to all residents of Middle Brook Street, Upper Brook Street, Parchment Street and St Peter Street

Appendix B: Flyer distributed with copied questionnaires in Hyde area.

Appendix C: Summary of responses to questionnaire

Appendix D: Summary of Traffic Counts – Middle Brook Street, Upper Brook Street, Parchment Street & St Peter Street

Appendix E: Middle Brook Street Car Park Movement Figures

Appendix F: Summary of Air Quality Figures – Including Middle Brook Street & Parchment Street

Appendix G: Winchester City Centre Footfall Details

Appendix H: Photographs - Middle Brook Street, Upper Brook Street, Parchment Street & St Peter Street.

Appendix J: Location plan and details of Middle Brook Street, Upper Brook Street, Parchment Street & St Peter Street