

DECISION TAKER: Cabinet Member for Economic Recovery – Councillor Martin Tod

REPORT TITLE: GREAT MINSTER STREET AND THE SQUARE EXPERIMENTAL TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDERS

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WARD(S): ST MICHAEL

PURPOSE

This report considers the objections to the Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders in Great Minster Street and The Square, Winchester and whether the Orders should be made permanent.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That 'The Winchester City Council (Great Minster Street and The Square, Winchester) (Experimental Moving Traffic) Order 2021' and 'The Winchester City Council (Great Minster Street and The Square, Winchester) (Experimental Restriction of Waiting and Loading and Parking Places) Order 2021' are made permanent.
2. That the Service Lead: Legal be authorised to make and advertise the Orders.

IMPLICATIONS:

1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME

- 1.1 The scheme contributes to Council Plan priorities to tackle the climate emergency, support the local economy, improve walking and cycling, improve road safety and the local environment, and to manage traffic.

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 The cost of implementing the proposal will be met through the traffic management budget provided by Winchester City Council and funding from Hampshire County Council Strategic Transport.

3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, and associated regulations, set out the requirements for implementing parking restrictions, crossing points and other speed management infrastructure on the public highway.
- 3.2 The Traffic Management Act 2004 places a duty on Traffic Authorities in respect of managing the road network, 'the Network Management Duty'. This sets out a specific duty for local authorities to ensure expeditious movement of traffic on the network.
- 3.3 The scheme is progressed in accordance with The Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 ("the Regulations") which include a statutory period giving any person an opportunity to object to the proposed scheme.

4 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 4.1 The scheme was developed through a series of on-line consultation events with local residents and businesses. Letter drops and emails were used to invite participation and keep stakeholders updated. The proposals were also subject to consultation with Hampshire County Council, the emergency services and elected members of both Councils. The feedback received was incorporated through all stages of the scheme development and a trial period.
- 4.2 A trial of the scheme was undertaken through a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order made by Hampshire County Council under Covid legislation with temporary traffic management measures (signs and barriers). During the trial some minor alterations were made to the traffic management measures and Order to overcome issues and concerns raised. A Road Safety Audit (RSA) was carried out on the trial scheme and no safety issues were identified.
- 4.3 Due to the success of the trial pop-up scheme, not only in assisting with Covid restrictions such as social distancing, but also in providing wider strategic transport, economic and road safety benefits, it was agreed that the scheme should be implemented with permanent measures. This was supported by

key stakeholders including local residents and businesses and Hampshire County Council who gave authorisation to progress the scheme with experimental Traffic Regulation Orders under 'reserved matters' of the Traffic Management Agency agreement.

- 4.4 During informal consultation of the experimental Traffic Regulation Orders with statutory consultees, concerns were raised by Hampshire Constabulary and Hampshire Fire and Rescue regarding access arrangements for emergency services. These concerns were addressed through agreement that any bollards placed on the highway would be removable and secured with a padlock and code (rather than key) with the number provided to their control centres.
- 4.5 Hampshire County Council were consulted on the scheme and supported the proposals. District Councillors and the County Council member for the area supported the scheme.
- 4.6 A stage 1/2 Road Safety Audit was carried out on the design of this scheme in August 2021 and the conspicuousness of the bollards in Great Minster Street was highlighted. This was addressed through the inclusion of reflective banding on the bollards. A stage 3 Road Safety Audit was undertaken recently and no safety issues were identified. Some potential improvements were discussed and will be considered once the full report is received.
- 4.7 On 14th July 2021 statutory consultees were formally consulted on the proposed experimental Traffic Regulation Orders. No objections were received.
- 4.8 The experimental Traffic Regulation Orders were advertised on 30th July 2021 and came into effect on 6th August 2021. There is a six month period from the date an experimental Order comes into effect when objections can be made. During this period three responses were received, one objecting to the scheme and two in support. The responses are presented in the table below.

Table 1: Responses to consultation

| Support / Object | Grounds |
|------------------|--|
| Support | Part of the long term transformation of the city centre into pedestrian friendly low traffic area. |
| Support | <p>I support the proposals as they will provide pedestrian priority over vehicles in the City centre, reduce pollution levels in the City centre, and promote the growth of business in the area subject to modifications.</p> <p>Additionally, I would like to see these restrictions extended to cover all days of the week.</p> |

| | |
|--------|--|
| Object | I am a disabled veteran and regularly get a taxi into the city to the public toilet area. Now my taxi has to go via North Walls and adds a few extra £s onto the fare, this is now getting annoying. |
|--------|--|

4.9 The positive feedback provided on the scheme is noted along with the request to extend the times of operation of the Pedestrian and Cycle Zone restriction. We are currently progressing options to further extend the times of operation.

4.10 The objection relates only to the moving traffic order and is not relevant to the static order which includes the waiting and loading restrictions. Therefore under Regulation 9 of the Regulations, there is no requirement to hold a public inquiry to consider the objection. In reaching the recommendation to make the moving traffic order permanent, the objection has been carefully considered. It is acknowledged that the additional travel time is an inconvenience, however, as there are alternative toilets and other facilities and drop off areas that can be used within the vicinity, on balance, the positive impact and wide-ranging benefits of the scheme along with strong community support outweigh the objection.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 This scheme has a positive impact on air quality and the public realm through the reduction of motorised traffic.

6 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSEMENT

6.1 The removal of through traffic has enhanced the public realm and safety for all road users in particular, pedestrians and cyclists. Access for those with mobility impairment and cyclists has been maintained through the closed section of highway and past tables and chairs on the highway. The objection raises issues related to disability, however, this has been considered in paragraph 4.10 above and for the reasons given, it is considered that the positive impacts of the scheme outweigh the limited negative impact identified by the objector. The Equality Impact Assessment, see Appendix 2, did not identify any other equality issues with this proposal.

7 RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 It is considered that risks have been mitigated throughout the trial and subsequent experimental scheme. Independent safety audits have been undertaken and all risks addressed.

| Risk | Mitigation | Opportunities |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Financial Exposure | The scheme has been implemented on site under the Experimental | N/A - This is required as part of the statutory process. |

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|------------------------|---|--|
| | Traffic Regulation Orders. The making permanent of the Orders will incur minimal costs including staff resources and advertising. | |
| Exposure to challenge | In accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and The Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996, the objection received during the consultation period has been considered and is set out within this report. If approved, the Orders will be made permanent and a six week period then follows where the Orders can be challenged in the High Court on procedural grounds. | To consider all representations received prior to making a decision on how to proceed. Opportunities for further work (see Other Key Issues). |
| Innovation | N/A the scheme has been designed and implemented. | Opportunities for further work (see Other Key Issues). |
| Reputation | As above in 'exposure to challenge'. | |
| Achievement of outcome | The objectives of the scheme have been delivered. | |
| Property | N/A | |
| Community Support | As referenced in the report, no further risks. | |
| Timescales | An experimental traffic order can only continue in force for up to 18 months. A decision on how to proceed is therefore required before its expiration (and following the six month consultation period). | |
| Project capacity | N/A | |
| Other | N/A | |

8 OTHER KEY ISSUES

8.1 Opportunities for further improvements within The Square have been identified through the development of this scheme and work will continue to explore options for the following:

- Extension of the times of operation of the pedestrian and cycle zone.
- Cycle access along Symonds Street to Great Minster Street.
- Review of residents parking zone S boundary and operation times.
- Review of loading availability/demand and amendments to restrictions as required.
- Review of disabled parking demand and availability.

9 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

9.1 Background

9.2 The site is within the centre of Winchester City and includes Great Minster Street and The Square. It comprises a mix of uses including residential and business premises such as eateries and retail. Winchester Cathedral grounds are adjacent to the site and the access to St Lawrence Church is via The Square.

9.3 The overall objectives of the scheme are to: remove through traffic, support businesses and residents who live and operate in Great Minster Street and The Square, and to pedestrianise the Square.

9.4 Through the reduction of traffic it also brings about improvements to air quality, road safety, opportunities for walking and cycling and provides a safe environment for tables and chairs on the highway.

9.5 Scheme Details

9.6 The scheme was introduced through two experimental Traffic Regulation Orders, one for the moving traffic restrictions and the other for the static restrictions:

- a) *The Winchester City Council (Great Minster Street and The Square, Winchester) (Experimental Moving Traffic) Order 2021*
- b) *The Winchester City Council (Great Minster Street and The Square, Winchester) (Experimental Restriction of Waiting and Loading and Parking Places) Order 2021*

- 9.7 The general effect of The Winchester City Council (Great Minster Street and The Square, Winchester) (Experimental Moving Traffic) Order 2021 is to:
- a) Suspend the existing Prohibition Of Driving (except for access) restriction on Great Minster Street, The Square and Market Street and replace it with a Prohibition Of Driving restriction in Great Minster Street between its junction with Little Minster Street and the boundary of no. 6 and no.7 Great Minster Street, with access permitted to off street premises on that section via its junction with Little Minster Street. Bollards have been installed at the boundary of no. 6 and no. 7 Great Minster Street preventing motor vehicle access between The Square and Great Minster Street. The bollards are removable and exemptions for emergency services are provided for.
 - b) Suspend the 'One-Way Traffic' restriction on Great Minster Street to enable access and egress via Symonds Street/Little Minster Street to premises on the affected section of Great Minster Street.
 - c) Introduce a 'Pedestrian and Cycle Zone' Saturday 10am to Sunday midnight from the boundary of no. 6 and no.7 Great Minster Street to Boots pharmacy's western property boundary (an exemption is included for emergency services access and to allow for a hearse used in the course of a funeral when required with prior approval).
- 9.8 The general effect of The Winchester City Council (Great Minster Street and The Square, Winchester) (Experimental Restriction of Waiting and Loading and Parking Places) Order 2021 is to:
- a) Suspend a section of 'No Loading At Any Time' on Symonds Street south of its junction with Great Minster Street to provide an informal place for loading/unloading to properties affected by the movement restrictions on Great Minster Street.
 - b) Introduce a 'No Waiting At Any Time' and 'No Loading At Any Time' restriction on the wider section of Great Minster Street (east side) to facilitate turning movements.
 - c) Suspend the loading bay in The Square hammerhead to the western frontage of no. 23 The Square and introduce a 'No Waiting At Any Time' and 'No Loading At Any Time' restriction. This is to improve road safety and reduce the likelihood and vehicle pedestrian conflict. (An exemption is included for emergency services access and to allow for a hearse used in the course of a funeral when required with prior approval).
 - d) Suspend the eastern section of the 'Goods Vehicle Only' bay on the north side of The Square and replace with a 'No Waiting and No Loading Saturday 10am to Midnight and Sunday At Any Time' restriction, with 'Goods Vehicle Loading Only Monday to Friday At Any

Time and Saturday 6am to 10am'. Preventing waiting and loading during the operational hours of the Pedestrian and Cycle Zone facilitates turning movements whilst the turning head is unavailable to motorised traffic.

- e) Suspend a section of the 'Pay and Display' parking at the eastern extent of the bay on the south side of The Square and introduce 'Pay and Display Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm, Max stay 1 hour, No return within 2 hours, Loading Only Saturday and Sunday 8am to 6pm'. This provides an alternative loading facility whilst the Pedestrian and Cycle Zone is in operation.
- f) Suspend a section of the 'Pay and Display' parking at the western extent of the bay on south side of The Square and introduce 'No Waiting and No Loading Saturday and Sunday, Pay and Display Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm Max Stay 1 hour no return 2 hours'. Preventing waiting and loading during the operational hours of the Pedestrian and Cycle Zone facilitates turning movements whilst the turning head is unavailable to motorised traffic.

9.9 The experimental scheme has been successful and only one objection has been received (which is detailed above). The Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders and the installation of the two bollards within Great Minster Street have stopped through traffic. Surveys carried out straight after the scheme had been introduced showed that traffic flows on Great Minster Street had reduced to just 20% of its previous levels when the road was open. During the early stages of implementation, there were reports that some people had driven into the road before realising that the route is no longer open. This has improved over time and an additional no through road sign is being considered.

9.10 Between the hours of 10am on Saturdays and midnight on Sundays, the Pedestrian and Cycle Zone enhances the public realm and provides local businesses with the opportunity to place tables and chairs on the carriageway. Pedal cyclists are permitted through the restrictions and bollards on Great Minster Street enabling access to and from the city centre. Tables and chairs licences are conditioned with the requirement to allow 1.2 metres clearance on the carriageway for cycles to pass safely. Cycle and pedestrian access has been improved and made safer due to the reduction in traffic volumes and the removal of the loading bay within the turning head where there is high pedestrian footfall.

10 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Not applicable.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Previous Cabinet/Committee Reports or Cabinet Member Decisions:-

None

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 Plan 810402/500/007B

Appendix 2 Equality Impact assessment