



17th July 2014

Agenda Item:11

REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR, HIGHWAYS

BRIDGE STREET, BRIDGE PLACE AND CASTLE STREET WORKSOP CONSULTATION UPDATE

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Committee on the initial consultation carried out during June 2014 for the permanent Traffic Regulation Order in respect of the pedestrianised lengths of Bridge Street, Bridge Place and Castle Street in Worksop.

Information and Advice

2. Members will recall that at the Transport and Highways Committee of 31st October 2013 approval was given to commence a revised consultation and subsequent statutory procedure to develop a permanent Traffic Regulation Order in respect of the pedestrianised lengths of Bridge Street, Bridge Place and Castle Street in Worksop.
3. This follows approval by this Committee on 16th April 2012 to make two Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders (ETRO's) that were in place from 22nd May 2012 to 4th July 2012 and subsequent consultation that was carried out during the autumn of 2012 to establish a proposal which will balance the needs of all users of the town centre.
4. As previously reported following the introduction of the ETRO the effects were monitored to determine the impact upon the town and its users. Observations demonstrated that there was a significantly reduced number of vehicle manoeuvres taking place within the pedestrianised area. Whilst at the time it was evident that pedestrian activity was being encouraged several representations were received from holders of Special Access Permits (SAP's) that the changes were causing severe difficulty. The objections were supported by Disability Nottinghamshire. In view of these concerns a decision was taken in 2012 to remove the ETOR's and revert back to the original prohibitions/ restrictions.
5. The current proposals reflect comments and feedback from the consultation exercise that was undertaken during 2012 following the removal of the ETRO.

The consultation finished in Autumn 2012 and generated an excellent response with almost 1000 comments returned. 26% of those who responded were holders of Special Access Permits (SAP) and 37% blue badge holders.

6. Key findings from the previous consultation included:

- The majority of respondents agree that traffic in the pedestrianised zone is a concern. Many believe this is exacerbated by abuse of the blue badge system and illegal parking by other drivers in the zone and could be relieved by better enforcement.
- Most respondents, including the majority of those with a disability, agree that blue badge holders should not be given access to the zone as there is adequate disabled blue badge parking elsewhere within the town.
- The majority of respondents disagreed with allowing access to SAP's holders. However, the majority of these respondents are not disabled and do not have problems in accessing the facilities of the town. The majority of disabled respondents would prefer access given to SAP's holders on all non-market days although over half would be happy with access on limited days.

Proposed Arrangements

7. The proposed arrangements which is subject to further statutory consultation and public advertisement consist of:

Bridge Street (between Newcastle Street and Potter Street):

- Allow access for Special Access Permit Holders at all times except market days;
- Allow access for loading vehicles on all days before 10am and after 4pm;
- No access at any time for disabled blue badge holders.

Bridge Place / Bridge Street (between Priory Centre car park access and Ryton Street) and Bridge Street (between Ryton Street and Newcastle Street)

- No access at any time for special access permit holders;
- No access at any time for disabled blue badge holders;
- Allows access for loading vehicles on all days before 10am and after 4pm.

Access to private off street parking spaces (primarily off Bridge Street between Newcastle Street and Potter Street) would be similar to the current arrangement with entry permitted to the restricted area before 10am and after 4pm with exit at any time. On market days exiting these areas may be restricted, but this would be no different to the current situation.

To maintain convenient access for disabled people, Nottinghamshire County Council propose to introduce a number of designated on street disabled parking bays outside of the pedestrianised area to allow continued access to shops and facilities within the existing pedestrianised area. Initial suggestions for the location of these spaces are

shown on the enclosed plan JB/BridgeSt/01A, these will be finalised following this consultation and included in the future public advertisement. The enclosed plan JB/BridgeSt/01B shows the location of Bridge Street in context of the wider area.

2014 Consultation Update

8. During June 2014 an initial consultation has been carried out, with letters sent to the following:
 - 483 'Special Access Permit' holders in Worksop;
 - 101 'Special Access Permit' holders, this represented a random 20% sample of remaining SAP holders in Nottinghamshire with a Sheffield or Doncaster postcode (residents in north of county);
 - 24 Disability Groups, the same list has been used from 2012;
 - Market Traders;
 - Businesses and residential properties on Bridge Place and Bridge Street;
 - Bassetlaw District Council;
 - County Councillors for Worksop;
 - Nottinghamshire County Council press release on 11th June 2014;
 - Consultation available on County Council website under current consultations;
 - County Council sent out information via social media regarding the consultation providing details of the exhibition dates.
9. Worksop Guardian and Gainsborough Standard published articles related to the proposals on 24th June 2014.
10. As part of the consultation Nottinghamshire County Council Officers exhibited the proposals at 'The Crossing' , Newcastle Street, Worksop, S80 2AT on Wednesday 18th June 2pm – 7pm and Saturday 21st June 10am – 2pm.
11. Eight people attended the event of Wednesday 18th June with one objecting, three supporting the proposals and four comments being recorded. On Saturday 21st June six people attended with three objecting and three comments. Given previous levels of interest, these numbers were disappointingly low in spite of the efforts made to encourage attendance.
12. Over both exhibitions eight of the visitors stated that they held SAP's personally or had family members were holders of the permits. Of these two specifically objected to the proposals. Numerous comments were made to Officers and these are being collated and considered, key issues raised include:
 - The proposed restrictions cover areas which contains shops and services used regularly when visiting the town;
 - Suggestion that limited access still maintained on the two sections between the Priory Centre and Newcastle Street;
 - Enforcement is really important and there is confusion around the restrictions ;
 - Concerned about impact on blue badge holders.

13. During the June 2014 initial consultation the County Council has received eleven telephone calls with five supporting the proposals, four objections and two comments. Objections include comments that full access should be maintained one day per week. Comments included a query about parking on double yellow lines and a suggestion that provision for rear loading is included in the designated disabled bays.
14. A formal objection has been received from an Optician on Bridge Street, it is suggested that the proposals will have a detrimental effect on disabled blue badge holders who do not hold a SAP and require access to the business. An option put forward is the use of vouchers that the business can give out if required that would enable access to the Opticians.
15. Three formal objections have been received from Worksop residents who object to not being able to drive and park along the proposed restricted sections as this will prevent them from parking outside shops that they visit regularly and due the distance that can be walked not be able to use if the proposed restrictions are implemented, reference has been made that not everyone can use mobility scooters.
16. A local Solicitor on Bridge Street has also commented on the proposals. Whilst in general the business support the proposals it suggests that as the heart of the retail areas is found between Ryton Street and the Priory Centre then SAP should be permitted here rather than on the section between Potter Street and Newcastle Street and without this those with disabilities will be disadvantaged.
17. The consultation documents available on the authorities' website up to 25th June 2014 received a total of 41 unique views.
18. As part of the initial consultation a total of eleven formal (seven written) objections have been received and eight in support.

Next Steps

19. The next step as part of the procedure to implement a permanent Traffic Regulation Order is to carry out a statutory consultation and public advertisement of the proposals.
20. It is recommended that this next stage is undertaken during August and early September to allow comments and objections to be received and to avoid this being done entirely within the summer holiday period.
21. Based on feedback as part of the consultation the exact location of designated disabled bays will be fixed with consideration given to both traffic movements and the provision for rear loading. Further discussions are taking place with Bassetlaw District Council with reference to the use of bollards to enforce the restrictions between 10am and 4pm on the sections of Bridge Place / Bridge Street between the Priory Centre / Ryton Street and Ryton Street / Newcastle Avenue.

22. A future report will be brought to Transport and Highways Committee with full details of objections received and recommendations based on the full consultation process and completion of an updated Equality Impact Assessment.

Other Options Considered

23. There are numerous variations relating to the hours of access and which groups may be permitted access. Many of these have been considered in the context of the previous consultation exercise but discounted as not being in keeping with its findings.

Comments from Local Member

24. The member for Worksop West is in support of the proposal.

Reasons for Recommendations

25. It is considered that the proposal represents a scheme which seeks to balance the needs of all users of the town centre and reflects the wishes of the wider community as stated via the consultation exercise carried out in 2012.

Statutory and Policy Implications

26. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Equality Implications

27. The Council has a duty to provide a fair service to all users of the town. However, the Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies 'to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not'. Disability is a protected characteristic. Therefore the Council has a duty to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled people can continue to use the facilities of the town.
28. As the revised scheme is developed and consultation undertaken, their needs will continue to be assessed and will be incorporated into a revised equality impact assessment that will be included in a future committee report. Previous equality impact assessments are available on request.

Financial Implications

29. Funding provision has been made from the 2014/15 Integrated Transport Measures block and will cost in the region of £20,000.

RECOMMENDATION/S

It is RECOMMENDED that the Transport & Highways Committee:

- Note the progress on the consultation to date
- Approve proposals for the making of a permanent Traffic Regulation order to progress to formal advertisement and statutory consultation; and:
- Note that the permanent Traffic Regulation Order will consist of:

Bridge Street (between Newcastle Street and Potter Street) and the pedestrianised section of Castle Street off Bridge Street

- Allows access for Special Access Permit Holders at all times except Market Days (which are Wednesday, Friday and Saturday) on the inclined section of Bridge Street (between Newcastle Street and Potter Street) and the pedestrianised section of Castle Street off Bridge Street;
- Allows access for loading vehicles on all days before 10am and after 4.00pm;
- No permit access at any time for Disabled Blue Badge Holders.

Bridge Place (between Priory Centre car park access and Ryton Street) and Bridge Street (between Ryton Street and Newcastle Street)

- No permit access at any time for Special Access Permit Holders;
- No permit access at any time for Disabled Blue Badge Holders;
- Allows access for loading vehicles on all days before 10am and after 4.00pm.

Introduction of additional on-street designated disabled parking spaces in the town centre where available.

Name of Report Author

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Title of Report Author

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For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (KSK 01.07.14)

30. The proposals in this report are within the remit of the Transport and Highways Committee.

Financial Comments (TMR 01.07.14)

31. The financial implications are set out in paragraph 29 of the report.

Background Papers

Report to Transport and Highways Committee Meeting: 31st October 2013

Report to Transport and Highways Portfolio Meeting: 7th February 2012

Report to Transport and Highways Portfolio Meeting 16th April 2012
Report to Transport and Highways Committee 12th July 2012

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

Worksop West, Councillor Greaves
Worksop East, Councillor Gilfoyle
Worksop North, Councillor Fielding
Worksop North East and Carlton, Councillor Rhodes