

Proposed One Way Restriction - Bartholomew Street East and West, Exeter

Report of the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.

Recommendation: It is recommended that:

- (a) a traffic regulation order for the one way and contraflow cycle lane on Bartholomew Street East and Bartholomew Street West be advertised and, if no objections received, be made and sealed;**
- (b) the scheme shown on plan B23006DU-1200-001, included in Appendix I, is approved for construction at an estimated cost of £53,000, subject to the outcome of the traffic order consultation; and**
- (c) that the Head of Planning, Transport and Environment be given delegated powers, in consultation with the Chair of HATOC and the local member, to make minor amendments to the scheme details.**

1. Introduction

The report seeks scheme approval to introduce a southbound one-way traffic restriction on Bartholomew Street East and West between Mary Arches Street and Allhallows Court. To improve facilities for cyclists, a northbound contraflow cycle lane is also proposed as part of the scheme.

2. Background

Located inside the historic city walls, Bartholomew Street East and Bartholomew Street West connects Fore Street to the south and Mary Arches Street to the north. The existing route has residential frontages and a 20mph speed limit.

Bartholomew Street East and West has had temporary one-way traffic restrictions in place since 29 January 2018. Up until this point the roads have provided two-way access for vehicles. The route is generally narrow for two-way flow and includes two tight 90-degree turns which are pinch points on the route with poor visibility for motorists and cyclists.

The temporary Traffic Order (TTRO1823482) making the route one-way southbound from Mary Arches Street to Friernhay Street, was required to provide a suitable route for construction traffic egressing from the Quintana Gate Development.

During the temporary closure, the County Council received correspondence from a local resident stating the improvements to access, noise and air pollution as a result of the TTRO. With the temporary TRO establishing support for the one-way system, and agreement from the local member, we now want to capitalise on the benefit of the temporary arrangements and make them permanent.

A scheme here would also align with the emerging Exeter Transport Strategy, contributing to the following aims:

- To reduce the impact of vehicles in the city centre.
- To utilise trials and testing of new measures on the network.
- To provide a more attractive environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

This report provides details of the preferred design and the results of the public consultation undertaken.

3. Proposal

The proposal seeks to make the current vehicular access arrangements under the temporary TRO permanent. A northbound contraflow lane for cyclists is also proposed. Plan B23006DU-1200-001 in Appendix I provides a detailed scheme plan.

From Mary Arches Street, Bartholomew Street East and West would be one-way to southbound traffic only, prohibiting northbound traffic except cycles from Allhallows Court onwards. Two-way access from Fore Street to Allhallows Court and Homecourt House will be maintained under this proposal. An overview of the traffic arrangement in the recommended scheme can be found in Appendix II.

Advanced warning signs will be placed at the entrance to Bartholomew Street West at the cross roads with Fore Street, West Street and New Bridge Street notifying motorists there is no through route for northbound trips. Where possible the proposal seeks to utilise existing posts to mount the required signage.

The southern spur of Bartholomew Street West opposite the Picture House provides sufficient space for a turning head, the suitability of which has been confirmed by swept path analysis.

Such works provide an opportunity to improve accessibility for cycle movements, therefore a 1.5m wide northbound cycle contraflow lane starting just north of Allhallows Court is proposed. A new dropped kerb will be provided for the transition from the contraflow cycle lane onto the existing footway on the north of Bartholomew Street West overlooking the cemetery. This footway is of sufficient width and will be converted to a shared use path.

To accommodate the northbound contraflow system and maintain the existing pedestrian facilities, the existing bollards, chicanes and speed hump at a point approximately 40m north of Allhallows Court is to be removed.

A combined Stage 1/2 Road Safety Audit is currently pending. Nevertheless, the design of the scheme has been progressed with input from the County Road Safety Officer and therefore only minor changes, if any, are expected as a result of the safety audit. Any changes will be agreed in liaison with the local member and HATOC Chair prior to construction.

Subject to approval, it is proposed to progress the permanent TRO imminently, with a view to constructing the scheme in Winter 2019/20.

4. Options/Alternatives

The proposed scheme seeks to build on the positive outcomes that have arisen from temporary traffic arrangements. The temporary arrangements have highlighted that the alternative of returning to two-way vehicle route would be a worse outcome.

Alternative options in the design, focused around cycle provision and length of one-way system. Providing no contraflow system would be approximately £13k less than the preferred option. However, this option is considered contrary to the current and emerging transport strategy.

Reducing the length of one-way to provide northbound access to either Friernhay St and/or garages adjacent the Mint was felt to reduce the positive benefits of the scheme for residents, cyclists and pedestrians. There would also not be a suitable turning provision for any vehicles who had travelled northbound to this point. Therefore, the extent of one-way similar to the current temporary arrangements is proposed.

5. Consultations

Consultation was carried out through a letter drop on 14 May to approximately 100 properties in the direct vicinity of the route. In the following 3 weeks, 16 email responses were received via the transport planning mailbox.

The responses have been strongly in favour of the proposals, with 15 of the 16 responses in support. The key points raised by the residents was the improvements in congestion, safety, noise and air pollution due to the temporary arrangements. These residents consider the existing arrangement to be an improvement (on the previous two-way arrangements), and the refined proposals to make these traffic restrictions permanent were repeatedly identified as an enhancement to the local area.

Two comments were received regarding access to the garages adjacent the Mint, but as identified above, this is not felt to be suitable to provide.

The response against highlighted that the proposal would increase the taxi fare for residents of Homecourt House to Exeter St David's and Exeter Central railway stations. Following the letter drop, a talk was held by residents at Homecourt House to discuss the proposals. It was reported back that no further objections were raised by the residents.

A formal consultation will be required as part of the traffic order process before a final decision can be made.

6. Financial Considerations

The estimated scheme cost for the proposal is £53,000.

The proposal will be funded through the 2019/20 Local Transport Plan budget and is identified in the Transport Capital program.

7. Environmental Impact Considerations

By prohibiting northbound traffic and reducing vehicle capacity, the proposal will have a positive impact on the environment by reducing vehicle flow, noise and pollution.

Continued enhancements to the cycle network will continue to promote active travel within the city.

8. Equality Considerations

The improvements are anticipated to improve safety and accessibility for people with visual and mobility impairments.

For residents of Homecourt House to Exeter St David's and Exeter Central railway stations the scheme will result in an increased taxi fare. This is a slight negative which is outweighed by the positive impact of the improvements to the surrounding environment and sense of place.

9. Legal Considerations

When making a Traffic Regulation Order it is the County Council responsibility to ensure that all relevant legislation is complied with. This includes Section 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 that states that it is the duty of a local authority, so far as practicable, secures the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of traffic and provision of parking facilities.

The one-way restriction introduced by the temporary order was due to expire on 29 July 2019. However, as the Council are pursuing a permanent Order to reproduce the effect of this temporary Order, The Secretary of State is satisfied this temporary Order can remain in place for a further six-month period, whilst this is on-going. Therefore, he now grants an extension of the said Order until 29 January 2020, or until the permanent Order is in effect, whichever is the earlier.

10. Risk Management Considerations

The impact of the proposed traffic changes has been established from the temporary traffic order which has been in place for the last 18 months and no significant adverse impacts have been identified.

11. Public Health Impact

The proposed scheme will reduce the impact of vehicle traffic within a historic part of the city. Reduced traffic flow and improved facilities for cyclists will help to improve the attractiveness of the area for residents, pedestrians and cyclists. It will promote a sense of place and slightly improve the promotion of healthy and sustainable travel within the community.

12. Reasons for Recommendations

The proposal seeks to make permanent the temporary measures that have led to an improved environment and are strongly supported by local residents.

It is recommended that the scheme can be approved for construction in order to reduce the impact of vehicles in the city centre and provide a more attractive area for residents, pedestrians and cyclists.

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Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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Background Paper	Date	File Ref.
1. HATOC Report		
2. HATOC Report		

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Appendix I To PTE/19/27



