

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 7 March 2019

Report of the Head of Service - Highways

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
Preston City;

Lune Street, Preston Link Moving and Parking Provisions Experimental Orders 2017

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Executive Summary

Two Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders were created to manage traffic congestion in Fishergate, with the scheme being introduced as part of the recommendations outlined in the "Preston City Centre Traffic Management" report agreed by Cabinet on 14 September 2017. The congestion on Fishergate was found to be a significant problem for shoppers especially on the run up to Christmas, causing long delays whilst egressing the city centre after using the St George's Street Shopping Centre Car Park. The Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders were introduced to address this situation and have, over the trial period, been seen as a success, measured by a reduction in congestion in the city centre. One objection to the scheme was received.

Of the two orders made, one makes changes to vehicular movements regulating turning and opening Lune Street up to two way vehicular traffic, whilst the second order was necessary to regulate parking to facilitate two way vehicular traffic to move safely on the roads involved. Over the six months the experimental order was open to comment and only one objection was received. This was with regard to the loss of disabled parking caused by the introduction of the new road layout and associated parking restrictions. The loss of parking equates to a reduction of one disabled parking place in this vicinity.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to approve the making permanent of the two Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders. It is recommended that the reduction in disabled parking provision of one space in this general location is proportionate to the benefit to all vehicular highway users in Preston city centre, including those using the disabled parking bays.

Background and Advice

The changes to the road layout and the associated traffic regulations to allow two way traffic on Lune Street, Preston were undertaken to address issues that were raised in reports "Preston City Centre Traffic Management" which were considered by Cabinet on 13 July 2017 and 14 September 2017 respectively. The Traffic Regulation Orders required to allow the new system to work efficiently were introduced as experimental orders, in order to best assess their effectiveness. This legislation allows for changes to be introduced and for the public to make representations relating to the changes for a period of six months following the introduction of the restrictions or the date on which they were last altered, after which they can be continued as permanent regulations by the making of the relevant Order.

The physical works involved the formation of a new access from Lune Street to A59 Ringway. One way traffic on Fleet Street was maintained whilst opening Lune Street up to two way vehicular traffic and allowing vehicles to access A59 Ringway via the new link road. To allow the free flow of two way traffic on Lune Street it was necessary to remove some of the parking provisions on that length of road. This included a length of 15 metres of disabled parking bays, generally accepted as equating to three parking spaces. To address this loss 10 metres of new disabled parking provision was introduced on Fox Street, generally equating to 2 parking spaces. The changes resulted in a net loss of a single disabled parking bay.

The advantages that have been realised by the changes include much improved traffic flows in the city centre and easier egress from the St George's Street Shopping Centre Car Park. It is acknowledged that the loss of one disabled parking bay is regrettable but in addition to the retained on street parking provision there is also disabled provision in both the St George's Street Shopping Centre Car Park and the dedicated disabled carpark that is associated with the Mobility Centre. Consequently specific disabled parking provision continues to be well supported in the immediate area. It is felt that the benefits of the experimental scheme significantly outweigh the impact of the loss of a single disabled parking space.

Consultations

The Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders were introduced on an experimental basis on 13 November 2017. As part of this introduction the council consulted with its usual consultees as well as displaying notices on site and in the local newspaper. The consultation period lasted for a period of 6 months.

A decision regarding the making permanent of these restrictions was postponed until the new-year to enable the effect of the restrictions during the 2018 Christmas shopping period to be considered.

Objections

During the consultation period one objection was received noting that the changes to the parking order removed disabled parking provision leading to the objectors concern that disabled people are being driven out of Preston city centre.

Ideally any loss of disabled parking should be avoided, however the overall benefit of the changes must be considered and a proportionate approach taken. The team designing the changes was aware of the need to preserve parking for blue badge holders and for that reason formed a new disabled parking bay on Fox Street. This new parking provision is one vehicle shorter than the provision on Lune Street but this could not be avoided in order to facilitate the new two way traffic flow.

The new scheme has been designed to preserve as much disabled parking as possible in the city centre and, in the case of Lune Street, there is disabled provision in both the dedicated disabled car park associated with both the nearby Mobility Centre and the St. George's Street Shopping Centre. This maintains a high level of provision of disabled parking in the immediate area around Lune Street.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

Traffic Management

Not implementing the recommendations will result in a return to increased congestion and delays along Fishergate as vehicles using Lune Street will be required to use Fishergate to cross to Chapple Street and subsequently exit the city centre. The removal of two way traffic on Lune Street will increase levels of congestion on Fishergate and throughout the city centre including the adjacent residential areas. Drivers will be discouraged from using Lune Street and the St George's Street Shopping Centre Car Park due to the delays that would be experienced whilst leaving the city centre after their visit.

Legal

If the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order on Lune Street is not made permanent before 12 May 2019 the previous restrictions will revert to being in force. This would include returning to the one way order on Lune Street. It should be noted that the authority has a duty, in its role as a traffic authority, to act to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians) and the provision of suitable and adequate parking facilities on and off the highway.

Financial

There are no financial implications if the recommendations are agreed within this report. Not implementing the recommendations will result in a need to revert to the previous restrictions. Such a change will require new road signs and road markings the cost of which will be contained within the existing highway revenue budgets.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A