

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 6 July 2023

Report of the Director of Highways and Transport

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
Lancaster East;

Corporate Priorities:
Delivering better services;

Lancashire County Council (Queen Street and Queen Square, Lancaster, Lancaster City) (Prohibition of Driving and One Way Traffic) Experimental Order 2022

(Appendices 'A' to 'B' refer)

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Brief Summary

This report outlines proposals to permanently make the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order for a prohibition of driving for all motor vehicles on Queen Street at its junction with King Street and one-way traffic on Queen Square, Lancaster, which is required to improve road safety for cyclists using the cycle lane on King Street.

During the statutory 6-month period of public consultation the county council received 22 responses in support, 9 objections and 1 no objection.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to approve the making permanent of the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order as advertised and attached at Appendix 'A' and supporting plan attached at Appendix 'B'.

Detail

During the Coronavirus pandemic, the Government encouraged local authorities to design and implement proposals reallocating road space for walking and cycling. A list of countywide sites was considered based on a number of factors including usage levels, local requests and the road safety record. A Temporary Traffic Regulation Order was advertised to support the introduction of a scheme to protect



the cycle lane at the Queen Street/King Street junction between October 2020 and April 2022. Temporary traffic management including signs, planters and road cylinders were implemented for the scheme. The scheme remained in place over this period and has continued to remain in place following the making of the subsequent Experimental Traffic Regulation Order which commenced in April 2022.

The Government, aware that across the country many of these temporary schemes had been successful, published further advice in early 2022 that required councils to review the temporary schemes they had introduced and assess with a view to making them permanent where appropriate.

Due to the positive responses to the Queen Street scheme, it was modified slightly from the one that was supported by the initial Temporary Traffic Regulation Order, and a supporting Experimental Traffic Regulation Order was advertised to allow further public consultation and monitor the road safety benefit and any unforeseen effects that may arise.

The retained scheme was funded from the county council's budgets for new signs and lines which is prioritised for locations where there is a correlation with the existing road safety record.

In terms of road safety in the previous 5-year period before the scheme was introduced, there were 11 reported collisions resulting in injury, with 7 collisions involving cyclists and 1 pedestrian within the scheme extents. Since the introduction of the scheme in October 2020 there has been one slight injury collision involving a cyclist within the same area.

The Experimental Traffic Regulation Order for the scheme can operate for a maximum period of 18 months and will expire on 8 October 2023 if not made permanent by that date.

Appendices

Appendices 'A' and 'B' are attached to this report. For clarification they are summarised below and referenced at relevant points within this report.

Appendix	Title
Appendix 'A'	The original Experimental Traffic Regulation Order
Appendix 'B'	Supporting Plan

Consultations

Formal consultation for the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order was carried out between April 2022 and October 2022 and advertised in the local press with notices displayed on site. The divisional county councillor was also consulted. Public consultation has resulted in 22 responses in support and 9 responses objecting to the proposal. Both sets of responses included multiple reasons as to why the proposal should be abandoned altogether or retained.



Objections and support

A summary of the responses both supporting and objecting is detailed below along with the county council response where relevant:

9 Respondents objected to the proposal for the following reasons:

Reason 1

There is no evidence to support the proposal and it does not contribute to cyclist safety.

Response

Prior to the introduction of the scheme in the previous 5-year period there were 11 reported collisions resulting in injury with 7 resulting in injury to cyclists and 1 pedestrian, 3 of these were serious collisions involving cyclists within the scheme extents. Since the introduction of the scheme in October 2020 there has been one slight injury collision involving a cyclist.

Reason 2

Motorised traffic will continue to be diverted elsewhere in the surrounding residential areas making roads in residential areas less safe and increasing pollution

Response

Since the introduction of the original Temporary Traffic Regulation Order in October 2020 there is no clear evidence from the injury collision records that collisions resulting in injury have increased in the adjoining streets to the west of the city centre one-way system (outside the scheme), and the area is subject to 20mph with traffic calming. Prior to the scheme introduction in 2020 there were 5 slight collisions resulting in injury in the previous 5 years. Since the introduction of the scheme there has been 1 slight injury collision within the same area. It is accepted that obtaining accurate traffic counts and evaluation are challenging due to changes in travel arrangements during and following on from the Coronavirus pandemic. No monitoring has been completed with regard to pollution and air quality at this time.

Reason 3

This is the incorrect use of resources why doesn't the county fix potholes instead to make road safer for everyone including cyclists.

Response

The scheme is funded by county council budgets which are prioritised primarily for minor improvements linked to reducing collisions resulting in injury and to assist local sustainable travel routes on and adjacent to the busy one-way system in Lancaster city centre. The county council continues to invest significant resource into maintaining the road network consistent with its published policies and plans.



Reason 4

The experiment has increased anti-social behaviour incidents.

Response

The police have confirmed their view that any anti-social behaviour recorded is not connected to the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order and the restriction on motorised vehicles exiting from Queen Street onto King Street.

Reason 5

The proposal has increased congestion on the gyratory.

Response

While no specific monitoring of the one-way system has taken place following the introduction of the prohibition of driving at the Queen Street junction, there is no contrary evidence to suggest this has increased motor vehicle traffic volumes and contributed to peak time congestion. Motorised traffic previously using Queen Street to access the one-way system now predominantly uses the signalised junctions to the north and south of the access restriction using Aldcliffe Road/Penny Street and at Meeting House Lane signalised junctions. This also removes Queen Street as a rat-run to through traffic shortcutting the one-way and avoiding the signal-controlled junction at Aldcliffe Road.

Reason 6

There was not a problem that required fixing. Also see response to **Reason 1**.

Response

In the 5-year period preceding the introduction of the initial Temporary Traffic Regulation Order in October 2020 to improve cyclist safety there were 11 collisions resulting in injury with 7 involving cyclists and 1 involving a pedestrian. During the Temporary Traffic Regulation Order and the subsequent retention of the scheme under the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order there have been no recorded injury collisions involving pedestrians and cyclists at the Queen Street junction however it is noted there was one slight injury collision involving a cyclist near to the Queen Street junction.

Reason 7

No consultation took place regarding the proposals during the temporary COVID Traffic Regulation Order and Experimental Traffic Regulation Order. The proposal was temporary and is now proposed as permanent.

Response

Initially there was no requirement to consult during the Temporary Traffic Regulation Order between October 2020 and April 2022 and the county council complied with all statutory requirements, alongside the advertising of the statutory notices, temporary information signs were placed to inform road users of the reason and change to the traffic arrangements. The measures, with minor changes, were then retained under the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order as detailed and the consultation took



place during the initial statutory 6 months period while the measures remained in place and a decision will be taken whether to remove or retain the scheme on or before the 8 October 2023 when the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order expires.

Reason 8

The diversions and alternatives will add to driver journey times and costs. There should be more public transport within the area.

Response

There is no significant re-routing required for drivers of motor vehicles who can either access the one-way system via Aldcliffe Road junction or Market Street junction as the main points of access. The maximum extended journey for a driver is around 400 metres. There is no diversion for cyclists or pedestrians.

Reason 9

Access problems have been created for certain properties and businesses.

Response

There is no significant re-routing required for drivers of motor vehicles who can either access the one-way system via Aldcliffe Road junction or Market Street junction as the main points of access. The maximum extended journey for a driver is around 400 metres.

Reason 10

Queen Street is a historic road with no reason to change access.

Response

The majority of roads and streets within the centre of Lancaster are historic and the county council has introduced modifications to these over the intervening time to address the prevalent issues, including safety concerns, changes in transport modes and the surrounding built environment. Motorist access to the one-way system has been retained albeit by an alternative route. As highlighted, the scheme is aimed at promoting cycle access and provision alongside cyclist safety within the city centre.

22 Respondents supported the proposal or raised no objection with the following reasons given.

- Numerous benefits since the closure to motor vehicles at the King Street junction was introduced.
- Reduced risk to cyclists and pedestrians.
- Not as chaotic with bus drops for school pupils at King Street/Queen Street.
- Happy to see things remain as they are now and much preferring walking in the area.



- Disagrees with observed comments made that combined with the new supermarket development (previously a DIY superstore) this has contributed to increased rat-running and traffic volumes in the area.

Other comments received

The proposal is supported by the divisional county councillor for Lancaster East.

United Utilities has confirmed no objection to the proposal.

The local cycling representative group has responded confirming that it supports the proposals.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Financial

The costs of implementing the proposals are estimated at £1,200 and will be funded from within the 2023/24 Highways revenue budget.

Risk management

If the making permanent of the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order and measures as detailed in this report are not approved by 8 October 2023 the order will expire and road safety and amenity for vulnerable road users will be reduced due to the requirement to remove the scheme. There will be an additional cost in removing the signs road markings and reverting to the original layout. The costs of removing the scheme are estimated at £4,500.

The proposal also meets the council's wider aims to promote walking and cycling as an alternative to vehicle usage for short journeys.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
None		
Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate		
N/A		

