

Traffic Management Sub-Committee

06 March 2024



Reading
Borough Council
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Title	Station Hill – Alterations to Existing Restrictions on Friar Street and Garrard Street – Results of Statutory Consultation
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Report author	Darren Cook, Transport Development Control Manager
Lead councillor	John Ennis
Corporate priority	Healthy Environment
Recommendations	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Note the content of this report2. That objections noted in Appendix 2 are considered and the Sub-Committee agrees to either implement, amend, or reject the proposals.3. That the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to seal the resultant Traffic Regulation Order, if applicable.4. That respondents to the statutory consultation be informed of the decisions of the Sub-Committee accordingly, following publication of the agreed minutes of the meeting.5. That the Highways & Traffic Services Manager, in agreement with the lead Councillor and Ward Councillors, be allowed to make minor alterations to the proposals as may be necessary.6. That no public inquiry be held into the proposals

1. Executive summary

- 1.1. Planning permission for Station Hill Phase 1 was permitted on 10th December 2019 and was part of a complex permission requiring four separate planning applications, the references of which are 190441/VAR, 190442/VAR, 190465/REM, 190466/REM (the Committee Report is available [here](#)). As part of the agreed planning permissions at Station Hill Phase 1, situated between Friar Street and Garrard Street, proposed alterations to the Highway layout were agreed.
- 1.2. Although the Highway layout was agreed through the planning process alterations to the surrounding Traffic regulation orders are required. The proposed alterations included the provision of shared taxi/loading bays on Friar Street, increasing the existing capacity as well as the introduction of a loading bay and the repositioning and increase of existing pay and display bays on Garrard Street.
- 1.3. The developer is undertaking the works required through the S278 Highway Works Agreement.
- 1.4. This report informs the Sub-Committee of objections resulting from the statutory consultation for the proposals agreed at the March 2023 Sub-Committee meeting (report available [here](#) and Appendices 1-3 are the scheme drawings). Members are

asked to consider the objections at Appendix 4 and conclude the outcome of the scheme.

2. Policy context

2.1. The proposals align with the following theme in the Council's Corporate Plan for the years 2022/25.

- Healthy Environment

2.2. If agreed for implementation, the proposals are expected to align with the Council's Local Transport Plan, Climate Emergency Strategy and Health and Wellbeing Strategy by improving local public transport accessibility and improving accessibility for users of the currently constricted footway.

3. The proposal

Current Position

3.1. Works at Station Hill are progressing with the Highways works scheduled to finish at the end of March 2024.

3.2. The alterations to Friar Street include the following:

- The relocation of the existing build out on Friar Street to the east of its current position.
- The existing taxi rank to the east of the build out is reduced by a distance of 10m, which retains an 8m long taxi rank that facilitates 24 hour use by the taxi trade.
- The creation of a replacement 17.5m long bay to the west of the relocated build out.
- The proposed new bay would facilitate the following restrictions:
 - No Waiting At Any Time Except Hackney Carriages between 11pm and 5am
 - Loading Only between 5am and 11pm
- The red route restrictions will surround the build out as is currently the case.

3.3. The alterations to Garrard Street include the following:

- Reduction in length of the existing pay and display bay from 22m to 18m at the western extent of the site to facilitate improved vehicular access to the development.
- The introduction of a 12m long 2 hour no return within 2 hours pay and display bay at the eastern extent of the site. This being consistent with the bays currently / previously provided along Garrard Street.
- The introduction of a 12m long Loading Bay at the eastern extent of the site.
- Double Yellow line restrictions along the remainder of the Garrard Street and Merchants Place frontages.

3.4. On Friar Street the proposed alterations increase the taxi facilities during the evening and overnight and also provide an additional loading bay facility for buildings on the northern side of Friar Street, which includes some of the commercial facilities that form part of the Station Hill development. Whilst on Garrard Street the proposed alterations include an increased amount of short stay parking and a dedicated loading facility to aid the development but also the surrounding businesses.

- 3.5. The developer has undertaken a proportion of the works through the S278 Highway Works Agreement with elements on Garrard Street still to be progressed.
- 3.6. Alterations to Highway waiting restrictions and traffic restrictions require statutory consultation, and following agreement to do so at the March 2023 Sub-Committee meeting, officers undertook this process between 14th December 2023 and 7th January 2024.
- 3.7. The statutory consultation process is a consultation with the public and other statutory consultees to create and seal a Traffic Regulation Order. Traffic Regulation Orders underlie on-street restrictions and allow them to be implemented and enforced.

The statutory consultation process is the Council proposing a new Traffic Regulation Order and in doing so, it must seek any objections so that these may be considered as part of the decision on whether the restrictions be implemented.

Statutory consultations are not voting processes, where a higher number of objections compared with comments of support would necessarily lead to proposals not being implemented. Rather, it is expected that the responses will be balanced toward objections and the Council needs to consider the reasons provided in the objections and decide whether a scheme is amended, removed or installed as advertised.

Statutory consultations are open for anyone considered to be impacted to respond, meaning that the respondent's address and other personal information is irrelevant. Under Data Protection law, capturing this information is not necessary and therefore is not a requirement.

Options Proposed

- 3.8. The Sub-Committee is asked to consider the consultation feedback in Appendix 4 and decide whether the scheme may be implemented or be amended.

If agreed for implementation, it is recommended that the Highway & Traffic Services Manager, in agreement with the lead Councillor and Ward Councillors, be allowed to make minor alterations to the proposals as may be necessary and within the scope of the advertised Traffic Regulation Order.

- 3.9. When considering the outcome for this scheme, the Sub-Committee is asked to note that the proposal does have planning permission that secured the physical changes included within the report and these would be retained irrespective given the benefits they provide to pedestrian movements within the town centre area. The only matters for consideration within this report are those relating to the Traffic Regulation Orders themselves.

Other Options Considered

- 3.10. Due to the planning requirements that included the use of loading facilities on Friar Street, there is very limited scope for variation of the scheme and officers believe that the proposal in Appendices 1-3 provides the best benefits to the area. However, there is potential for two variations to the proposed layout which are as follows:
 - The longer 17.5m bay to the east of the build out is also provided as a dedicated 24 hour taxi rank.
 - The longer 17.5m bay is removed from the scheme and is replaced with the red route restriction.
- 3.11. Both of the above options remove the provision of the loading bay for the northern side of Friar Street in particular the Station Hill development which has an agreed strategy to be serviced from Friar Street and both options would require a further consultation to be undertaken.

- 3.12. As advised above the physical alterations to the Highway have been secured through the planning application and therefore not implementing any alterations to the Traffic Regulation Orders would not be recommended as this will result in areas of Friar Street and Garrard Street being unenforceable given that current restrictions would not align with the Highway layout.

4. Contribution to strategic aims

- 4.1. The Council's new Corporate Plan has established three themes for the years 2022/25. These themes are:

- Healthy Environment
- Thriving Communities
- Inclusive Economy

- 4.2. These themes are underpinned by "Our Foundations" explaining the ways we work at the Council:

- People first
- Digital transformation
- Building self-reliance
- Getting the best value
- Collaborating with others

- 4.3. Full details of the Council's Corporate Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the [Council's website](#). These priorities and the Corporate Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective and economical.

- 4.4. This proposal contributes to the Council's Corporate Plan Themes as set out below:

Healthy Environment

The proposal, if agreed for implementation, is expected to improve accessibility along the currently constricted footway, making the area easier to travel around and reducing risks to users. It brings additional bus stop capacity to improve access to public transport.

5. Environmental and climate implications

- 5.1. The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers) and as such recognises the need to minimise the climate impacts of its decisions.

- 5.2. A climate impact assessment has been undertaken and concludes that consultation and implementation of the proposals would have a 'Net Low Positive' impact.

There will be some negative impact from energy use, waste generation and use of transport associated primarily with the implementation of the scheme (if agreed). However, these will be 'one-off' impacts, with there being no expected additional ongoing impacts.

It is expected that these delivery impacts would be outweighed by the positive ongoing impact of the scheme. This is primarily in relation to the increased loading and bus stop provision, which will reduce emissions through seeking alternative/unnecessary waiting for access to these facilities.

- 5.3. The construction works will be delivered by the Council's Highways & Drainage team who include carbon reduction targets and improved sustainability within works programmes. The intent is to reduce the amount of carbon used to produce the materials at source, using recycled materials where possible, lower temperature bitumen, reducing the uncontrolled waste in the environment to reduce pollution of the natural environment, and using electric vehicles and plant where possible.

- 5.4. The Council on 15th October 2019 formally adopted of the 'Unite Construction Charter' where the Authority supports the 'Get Britain Building' campaign, which is aimed at supporting and sustaining the British construction industry. As a result, all relevant construction projects will be required to comply with the Authority's Sustainable Buying Standard for Highways and Construction Materials, which requires structural steel and other relevant materials to be covered by BES 6001 Responsible Sourcing of Construction Product certification, or equivalent.
- 5.5. The Council is committed to a tree planting programme to increase canopy cover, improve biodiversity and reduce localised flooding. The Council has committed up to 1% of the value of the road resurfacing programmes towards this initiative and the Town Centre will also benefit from this programme.
- 5.6. The Reading Climate Emergency Strategy, which was endorsed by the Council in November 2020, highlights the importance of adapting to climate impacts as well as reducing the emissions which are driving climate change. The Council will regularly review design standards for roads, in conjunction with industry bodies, to take into account the extreme weather events (both extreme heat and extreme cold) to ensure sustainability of the public highway network.

6. Community engagement

- 6.1. The planning applications (Section 1.1 refers) where the Highway alterations were proposed in principle have previously been available for public viewing and have been subject to Council Committee consideration.
- 6.2. Statutory consultation(s) have been carried out in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996, advertised on street, in the local printed newspaper(s) and on the Council's website (the 'Consultation Hub'). Notices were advertised in the local printed newspaper and have been erected on street, as close as possible to affected areas.
- 6.3. Where this report contains petitions that have not been separately reported, the lead petitioner(s) will be informed of the decision of the Sub-Committee, following publication of the agreed meeting minutes. Respondents to statutory consultations will also be informed of the Sub-Committee decisions.
- 6.4. Traffic Management Sub-Committee is a public meeting. The agendas, reports, meeting minutes and recordings of the meetings are available to view from the Council's website.

7. Equality impact assessment

- 7.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—
 - eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
8. It is not considered that an Equality Impact Assessment is relevant as the proposals are not deemed to be discriminatory to persons with protected characteristics. A statutory consultation will be conducted, providing an opportunity for objections/support/concerns to be considered prior to a decision being made on whether to implement the proposals. Waiting Restrictions can have a positive impact whereby the roads are made safer for all users as locally problematic parking issues are reduced.

9. Other relevant considerations

- 9.1. Procedural Requirements and Regulatory Duties – Section 9 refers to the regulatory requirements for advertising and sealing Traffic Regulation Orders.

10. Legal implications

- 10.1. The proposed alterations to waiting restrictions and traffic direction reversal required statutory consultation, whereby the new Traffic Regulation Order(s) were drafted under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and advertised in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

The resultant Traffic Regulation Order(s) will be made under the same regulations, if agreed.

- 10.2. Following the making of this Order, the public must be afforded a period of six weeks to raise any legal challenge, prior to the implementation of any elements contained within.
- 10.3. This report seeks agreement for the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services to undertake these processes.

11. Financial implications

- 10.1 All works are to be undertaken by the developer with funding also secured for the consultation process therefore there are no funding implications for the Council.

12. Timetable for implementation

- 12.1. Should the Sub-Committee agree to the implementation of the alterations, the Traffic Regulation Order(s) will be sealed and, following a six-week period for any legal challenges to be raised, the scheme will be lining and signing of the Traffic Regulation Orders will be fully delivered by the developer.

13. Background papers

- 13.1. There are none.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - SHR-RMB-X0-EX-DR-C-03-100531 Rev P08 SOUTH SITE S278 WORKS PROPOSED KERB, TRAFFIC SIGN AND ROAD MARKING SHEET 1

Appendix 2 - SHR-RMB-X0-EX-DR-C-03-100532 Rev P08 SOUTH SITE S278 WORKS PROPOSED KERB, TRAFFIC SIGN AND ROAD MARKING SHEET 2

Appendix 3 - SHR-RMB-X0-EX-DR-C-03-100533 Rev P10 SOUTH SITE S278 WORKS PROPOSED KERB, TRAFFIC SIGN AND ROAD MARKING SHEET 3

Appendix 4 – Station Hill – Objection Report