

**Decision Session - Executive Member for
Planning and Transport**

12 November 2015

Report of the Acting Director City and Environmental Services

City Centre Strategy

Summary

1. To consider options for further investigation regarding the regulation of vehicles and other operational issues in the central retail area of the city.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that the Executive Member approves the further investigation into the regulation of the city centre as identified in options 2, 4, 6, 9 and 11.

Reason: To enable a comprehensive and coherent review of the operation of the public highway in the city centre to be undertaken with the aim of minimising the impact of vehicular traffic whilst maintaining access for visitors, residents and businesses where appropriate.

Background

3. At the conclusion of the last set of changes to the operation of the traffic management in the city centre pedestrian zone in 2014 some further possibilities were outlined for future consideration. In addition, the ongoing evolution of the central area, through new developments for example, opens up other operational issues for consideration. Hence this report is not confined to the extents of the existing pedestrian zone.
4. At the core of the last changes put forward in 2012 was the desire to bring greater unity to the operating hours of the Pedestrian zone to promote, through simplifying the restrictions, a better understanding and compliance with the regulations and to more vigorously restrain the use of the area by motor vehicles. This approach achieved the aims set out at that time, however there are still significant differences in the regulations in place as indicated on the plan in Annex A (the different restrictions are colour coded and include the streets surrounding the pedestrian zone)

There are further options that can be considered to further simplify ongoing management of the city centre.

5. Some issues listed below can be considered or progressed in isolation whilst other issues are more firmly linked with each other and would have to form part of a package of measures.
 - Extending loading and unloading only periods either side of the pedestrian zone (excluding Stonegate and The Shambles)
 - Standardise the general vehicle access restriction outside the daytime pedestrian zone / loading period hours(excluding Stonegate)
 - Extending the period of the road closure at the Nessgate / Spurriergate junction into the evening or through the night
 - Blue badge and Green permit access to the pedestrian zone
 - Piccadilly / Pavement / Stonebow vehicle access and enforcement

Options and Outline Analysis

Extending loading and unloading only periods

6. Option 1 – confirm the loading only period as it is now (8 to 10.30am and 5 to 6 pm. Although this restriction does not necessarily aid improvements to the early evening economy due to increased traffic, the restriction is standard across the pedestrian zone area, hence it can be recommended.
7. Option 2 – extend the loading only period to 7 to 10.30am and 5 to 7pm). One of the criticisms of the previous extension of the pedestrian zone hours was the reduced period of time when loading could take place. By extending the loading only period some additional priority is provided to delivery drivers over general traffic making use of the streets for non-loading purposes. At present blue badge holders are also able to use the streets during the loading period and it is suggested this remains so. By extending the loading only period at the start and end of the day there should be a reduction in use of the city centre streets by more general traffic movements which may assist in improving conditions for the early evening economy. This restriction would be put forward for the whole of the pedestrian zone, hence further investigation of this option can be recommended.

General access outside the pedestrian zone / loading period hours

8. Option 3 – retain the current system whereby some streets are open for use by all and others are restricted for access only use. This mixture of restrictions can lead to inadvertent misuse of the restricted streets. In addition, the use of these streets by general traffic adds to the number of

vehicles in the central area making cross town journeys rather than using the inner ring road. The volume of traffic during the early evening is a source of complaint for some. Because the changes to restrictions within the area cause some confusion this option is not recommended.

9. Option 4 – unifying the restrictions outside the pedestrian and loading only hours should assist in aiding clarity of restrictions and reducing the volume of traffic in the early evening and through the night. This change to the restriction could be taken forward regardless of what hours of operation the loading only period are following investigation. Hence investigating this option is recommended.

Extending the period of the Nessgate junction road closure

10. Option 5 – make no changes to the current restriction. This location is controlled by the various traffic regulation orders that prohibit traffic during the pedestrian only hours (when the bollards are in place), the loading only hours and the access only hours (when signs indicate the restriction in place). Although this option can be recommended, because there is existing abuse of the regulations taking no action at this junction would not lead to a reduction in the number of vehicles in the central area outside the pedestrian only hours.
11. Option 6 – investigate extending the period of time when the bollards are in place. Because many vehicles use this junction to gain access to the city centre streets – often to just pass through the area - this option helps enhance the city centre in the evening. Because the ability to access the area to carry out activities such as loading would still be maintained via other entry points businesses would not have to make significant adjustments to their current practises. Clearly the period of time where this entry point is most useful is during the morning loading period and it is therefore suggested that this should remain as now available to drivers of delivery vehicles. At the end of the pedestrian only period and early evening is where the most benefit to improving the city centre can be made, however the question is then at what time should the road be reopened. This is the recommended option and two outline suggestions are put forward for further investigation:

- a. Reopen at some point during the evening.
- b. Reopen in the early hours of the morning.

Blue Badge and Green Permit Access to the Pedestrian Zone

12. There are a number of issues relating to this item that would require further investigation in order to bring about change to access to the city centre.

- a. Continued abuse of the restricted route (currently reserved exclusively for green permit holders) into St. Sampson's Square by Blue badge holders and others during the pedestrian only hours.
 - b. The continuation of a two tier system (Blue badges and Green permits) of exempting drivers in the central area during the pedestrian only hours.
 - c. Potential revision of the ability of those with Blue badges to enter the pedestrian zone via the Blake Street / Lendal and Goodramgate / Colliergate access loops and Castlegate.
 - d. The provision of dedicated blue badge holder parking bays close to the central area.
13. Option 7 would be to leave these issues as they are now. This is not the recommended option because green permits are no longer operationally supported and there is regular ongoing abuse of the Church Street / St. Sampson's Sq. element of the pedestrian zone.
14. Option 8 is to investigate 1, 2 or 3 of these issues rather than all 4 issues. This is not the recommended option because there are overlaps with each issue that would likely have an impact on other issues.
15. Option 9 is to investigate all these issues and bring back a series of practical options / recommendation on how to progress. This is the recommended option because it has the potential to bring about better compliance with the regulations.

Piccadilly / Pavement / Stonebow / Fossgate / St. Saviourgate Vehicle Access and Enforcement

16. These streets form routes in the city centre. They and the streets that lead on to or away from them are covered by different regulations to the extent that drivers heading in on The Stonebow are covered by one regulation and those leaving are covered by a different regulation. Whilst the signing of the various traffic regulation orders at the entry points may be correct giving a driver little excuse for contravening the regulations it is nonetheless a complicated matter that would benefit from investigation the aim of which would be to determine a more uniform set of restrictions. This investigation would link into work put forward for investigating options for the regulation and control of Coppergate.
17. Option 10 is to take no action at present. This is not the recommended option.
18. Option 11 is to begin an investigation and report back on recommendations that would aid compliance and enforcement. These recommendations would have to tie in with the outcome of the

investigations of the preceding options above and proposals for Coppergate. This is the recommended option because it has the scope to improve driver compliance with the regulations and reduce general traffic on key public transport routes through the city centre.

Consultation

19. No formal consultation is required at this stage in the process however there will be consultation at the next stage depending on what options result from the investigations recommended.

Council Plan

20. The above proposal contributes to the Council Plan aims of thriving local businesses and efficient and affordable transport links.

Implications

21. This report has the following implications:

Financial – None

Human Resources – None

Equalities – Any proposed changes to the Traffic Regulation Orders as a consequence of the recommended further investigations will be subject to more detailed consultation / assessment with regards to how they might impact on those in the community who would experience increased difficulty due to mobility difficulties compared to the impact of the current restrictions. The outcome would form part of the Community Impact Assessment.

Legal – None

Crime and Disorder – None

Information Technology - None

Land – None

Other – None

Risk Management

None.

Contact Details

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	Report Approved	✓	Date 27/10/15
Specialist Implications Officer(s) <i>List information for all</i>			
Wards Affected: Guildhall		All	
For further information please contact the author of the report			

Background Papers

None.

Annexes

Annex A Plan showing variation in Traffic Regulation Order access restrictions