Decision Session **24 October 2019**
Executive Member for Transport

Report of the Assistant Director of Transport, Highways and Environment

The Groves Area Experimental Traffic Regulation Order

Summary

1. Consultation and surveys undertaken for the Groves Regeneration Project have identified that there is a significant level of through traffic in the area which residents consider to have an adverse effect on the local community.

2. Strategic Traffic modelling undertaken to determine the impact of the potential closure of through routes (Lowther Street and Penley's Grove Street) indicates that there would be an impact on the network operation but this could be considered to be acceptable, subject to more detailed evaluation of junction delay. Additional work to determine the location of potential road closures has shown that there appear to be potential viable positions where closures could be sited which would restrict through traffic whilst maintaining local access.

3. This report seeks Approval in Principle to undertake detailed preparatory work and implement a set of measures on an experimental basis aimed at trialling the removal of through traffic from The Groves area to improve the environment for local residents.

Recommendation

4. It is recommended that:

   - A firm set of designs be drawn up to achieve road closure Layout Option 1 shown in Annex C put forward by the consultants.

   Reason: to confirm the ability / practicality to take these measures forward

   - Approval in Principle for the implementation of an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) in line with Layout Option 1 is

granted subject to the outcome of detailed design, with approval of the detail of the implementation delegated to the Assistant Director Transport, Highways and Environment after consultation with the Executive Member and Ward Members..

Reason: Because although the modelling indicates the impact on the surrounding road network is potentially acceptable there is the possibility that actual driver behaviour will have a greater impact than anticipated not only on the immediate road network but also on the local residents the scheme is designed to benefit.

- An Experimental TRO be implemented to merge the existing Residents parking zones in the area when the road closures are taken forward.

Reason: Because the proposed changes to the vehicle routes in the area do not fit with the existing residents parking zone boundaries and this will likely have an impact on how and where residents choose to park.

- The Experimental TRO does not start until the planned roadworks have been completed in the Lord Mayor's Walk area.

Reason: Because the experiment needs to be conducted at a time when road and traffic conditions are not impacted by temporary circumstances.

- Authority be delegated to the Assistant Director Transport, Highways and Environment in consultation with the Executive Member for Transport and Ward Members to approve any amendment to the Experimental TRO considered desirable during the course of the experiment, including suspension / ending of the Experimental TRO.

Reason: Because this allows the greatest level of flexibility to respond to unexpected issues in a timely manner.

Background

5. A regeneration project has been underway for some time in the Groves area (see Annex A). A key message that has come out from the consultations carried out is that the level of through traffic has a significant adverse effect on the local community. Additionally, it is thought by residents that the opening of the new road linking Layerthorpe to Heworth Green has resulted in an increase in through traffic.

6. Close work with residents and community groups throughout the duration of the Groves Regeneration Project has consistently highlighted that the primary issue concerning local people in the Groves has been the flow and build-up of through-traffic, through the narrow roads down Lowther Street, Penley's Grove Street and Neville Street. Residents feel that there is a physical barrier dividing the community which threatens safety both in terms of risk of accidents and poor air quality. Cars frequently queue along Lowther Street, next to Park Grove Primary School, with their engines idling and many residential homes are situated close to the road.

7. At the most recent engagement event held in May of this year, residents were invited to submit a formal paper or online survey as well as post-its with comments on to consultation boards. All survey responses suggested that the traffic in the Groves was a problem, nearly two thirds showed support for an option to investigate the closure of Lowther and Penley's Grove Street and nearly a quarter suggested other ideas to mitigate the impact of the traffic (for example a crossing, speed reduction measures, resident-only access and restriction of heavy goods vehicles).

8. There are 2 main through routes in the Groves area, Penley's Grove Street / Townend Street (one way towards Clarence Street) and Lowther Street(one way towards Huntington Road). There are also other more convoluted routes through the area which could become more widely used over time if the main through routes are restricted.

9. Citywide strategic transport modelling work has been carried out that indicates the closure of the through routes will, not unsurprisingly, have a significant effect on the way traffic moves around this area of the city. Further assessment of junction operation would be needed prior to implementation to ensure traffic signal timings were adjusted to minimise delay.

10. In summary the following impact is predicted by the transport model:

- There is widespread reassignment of traffic from the Groves, particularly to Clarence St/ Lord Mayor's Walk and Haxby Rd/ Haley's Terrace
- There is also substantial reassignment to Dodsworth Avenue (up to 37% increase in flow), however, levels of delay on Dodsworth Ave and its junctions with Fossway and Heworth Green fall, so there is a neutral effect on delay here (but some impact on amenity in Dodsworth Ave).
- Delay on the network, at least in the peaks, does not appear to change materially on Gillygate/ Clarence St/ Haxby Rd/ Wigginton Rd/ Haley's Terrace – a largely neutral effect on bus journey times
- There is additional delay on Lord Mayor's Walk, west bound, of approx. 100 seconds (103 sec. existing delay increase to 205 secs). However, this delay is averaged across the AM peak hour, and it is likely that delays during the "peak of the peak" may be greater than this.
- Some trips to/from the Groves would become more convoluted (e.g. travelling from inside the Groves to Wigginton Road or Huntington Road would need to go via Lord Mayor's Walk or Haley's Terrace for some trips.

11. The modelling work shows that, whilst some junctions see increases in the volume of traffic using them, most have sufficient spare capacity for the additional traffic not to impose a delay at the junction.

12. As such, although there are delays to vehicle drivers on Lord Mayor's Walk, the modelling work undertaken does not show any delays to bus services, because no scheduled bus services in York travel along Lord Mayor's walk, unless they are being diverted away from their normal routes. Further information on the modelling is in Annex B, and an important element of an ETRO process will be monitoring the effect of any restriction in the Groves on general traffic and bus services, both at specific junctions and more generally.

13. Modelling work undertaken for the Outer Ring road dualling has indicated that there would be a reduction in traffic flows in the area as a result of traffic making use of the additional orbital road capacity.

14. Consultants have developed 2 Layout Options for consideration to remove the through traffic, these are shown in Annex C. Layout Option 1 broadly splits the area into two and Layout Option 2 creates 6 areas which could control movement between the areas more effectively, however local residents would not be able to freely move between these zones in vehicles and more parking would be lost. Because Layout Option 1 has fewer changes to the existing internal road network it is recommended that this layout is progressed as it will have less impact on local residents.

15. Introducing road closures, altering the direction of traffic flows and parking restrictions will require changes to the TRO's. There are 2 TRO processes that can be used:

    The permanent TRO process, and

    The Experimental TRO process

16. The permanent TRO process requires a 3 week consultation exercise to be gone through during which time anyone can make an objection to the proposal. All the objections made are then considered before deciding whether to introduce the proposal or not.

17. The Experimental TRO process is often used where the outcome is less certain and there may be a need to make a rapid change to what is in place. In this process temporary measures are put in place to achieve the desired outcome for up to a maximum of 18 months. During the experimental period people are able to directly assess the impact the proposal has on them before making an objection. An Experimental TRO has to be in place for a minimum of 6 months unchanged after which all the objections can be considered and a decision made on whether to make the proposal permanent or not.

18. Because the proposal is a very significant change to the existing situation and there are many variables the Experimental TRO process is considered the most appropriate on this occasion.

19. Clearly the introduction of new road closure positions will impact on local residents travel routes and where they might normally have chosen to park. Hence it is suggested that an experimental merging of the local

Residents Parking zones also takes place to reduce potential adverse parking impact on residents (see Annex D).

20. There are a number of planned works coming up on the local road network that would most likely interfere with the introduction of measures within the Groves area. It is suggested therefore that these works be completed before a scheme is introduced so that a reliable assessment can be made. It is anticipated that the works, specifically to the Monkgate/ Lord Mayor's Walk/ St Maurice's Road junction, will be completed by the end of February 2020. Assuming a month is allowed for fine tuning the new traffic systems at the junction, it is anticipated that the earliest an ETRO for the Groves could start would be the beginning of April.

21. Residents and road users will be notified well in advance of the implementation of any changes to the traffic restrictions in the area to minimise the impact of the new arrangements.

Options for Consideration

22. Option 1 – Note the outcome of the consultations carried out so far as part of the Groves regeneration project but take no action at present with regards to implementing traffic management changes in the area. This is not the recommended option.

23. Option 2 – Approve further work be carried out to determine the practicality of proposals to implement Layout Option 1. This will include Road closures, changes to the permitted movements and changes to waiting restrictions which may be required to provide space for the revised vehicle movements. This is a recommended option.

24. Option 3 – Approve further work be carried out to determine the practicality of proposals to implement Layout Option 2. This will include Road closures and changes to the permitted movements, changes to the waiting restrictions. This is not a recommended option.

25. Option 4 – depending on options 2 and 3 above approve the taking forward of a permanent TRO proposal. This is not a recommended option.

26. Option 5 - depending on options 2 and 3 above, approve the introduction of an Experimental TRO after works on the local road network have been completed - currently programmed for April 2020. This is a recommended option.

27. Option 6 –depending on option 4 or 5 above approve the taking forward of a permanent TRO or an Experimental TRO to merge the existing Residents Parking zones as shown in Annex D. This is a recommended option.

Consultation

28. Depending on the options confirmed for taking forward the consultation would be in line with the legal requirements set out in paragraphs 16 and 17.

Council Plan

29. The above proposal contributes to the City Council's draft Council Plan of: his report helps ensure the Council achieve its emerging Council Plan current being consulted upon by delivering:-

    - getting around sustainably
    - a greener and cleaner city
    - creating homes and world-class infrastructure
    - an open and effective council

Implications

30. This report has the following implications:

    Financial – The design, implementation and monitoring of the proposed scheme is anticipated to cost in the region of £20k. It is proposed to fund this expenditure initially from within existing Transport budgets including the Local Transport Plan allocation.

    Human Resources – None

    Equalities – None.

    Legal – before a residents parking scheme can be implemented the correct legal procedure has to be gone through.

    Crime and Disorder – None

    Information Technology - None

    Land – None

    Other – None

Risk Management

31. Road Safety - there is always a potential for new safety issues to arise whenever an existing traffic arrangement is altered. Traffic levels along the streets proposed to be closed in the experiment will reduce significantly which is likely to reduce the road safety concerns on those streets however traffic levels will increase on other arterial roads in the area. In mitigation the design of the road closures will be progressed through a road safety audit process and any impact on road safety will be closely monitored during the experimental period and additional mitigation measures introduced where necessary.

32. Environmental – It is anticipated that air quality in the area where the streets are proposed to be closed to through traffic would improve however there is a risk that increased traffic levels could result in a worsening of air quality on other streets. A review of existing air quality levels and the potential impact of the scheme will be undertaken prior to the decision on implementation. Air quality levels will be monitored through the experimental period to help inform any decision on whether the closures should become permanent.

33. Servicing – The proposed road closures will have an impact on the way the Groves area is serviced (waste, retail etc.) and how emergency services access the area or use the roads as a through route. Alternative routes are available via Haleys Terrace and Lord Mayor's Walk for the cross city movements, however there is a risk that the re-routing will have a negative impact on the current levels of service. A detailed review will be undertaken with service providers prior to a decision being taken on implementation. The impact of the closures will be monitored during the experimental period.

34. Statutory – The Council has a Network Management Duty under the Traffic Management Act (2004) to secure the expeditious movement of traffic on the authority's road network. The proposed road closures will have an impact on the way traffic moves around the city. Initial modelling suggests that the remaining network should be able to accommodate the redistribution of traffic with additional delay at isolated locations. However, there is a risk the traffic modelling has not accurately predicted the impact of the closures. To mitigate against this risk, subject to further detailed work, it is proposed to progress the scheme on an experimental basis to confirm the impact in practice prior to making any decision on whether to make the arrangement permanent.

35. These risks will be monitored throughout the development and implementation of the scheme and further mitigation measures introduced to address the risks where necessary.

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Date:
04/10/2019

Specialist Implications Officer(s)
None.

Wards Affected: Guildhall, All

For further information please contact the author of the report.

Background Papers: None.

Annexes:

Annex A The Groves Area

Annex B Transport Modelling

Annex C Options 1 and 2

Annex D Residents Parking