

Decision Session
Executive Member for Transport

24 October 2019

Report of the Assistant Director of Transport, Highways and Environment

Cycling in High Petergate

Summary

1. This report seeks approval to introduce an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) to permit cycling in High Petergate during Footstreet hours (i.e. 10:30 – 17:00) on a trial basis.

Recommendations

2. The Executive Member is asked to:

Approve the introduction of an ETRO to permit cycling in High Petergate in a southerly direction (i.e. from Bootham Bar to Duncombe Place) during the Footstreet hours (10:30 – 17:00), with a report back after 6 months operation, including consultation feedback, to decide if this should be made permanent.

Reason:

To assess if this change improves cycle safety and convenience without introducing safety issues for pedestrians, and to better inform future decisions on the operation of the Footstreets.

Background

3. High Petergate is a narrow city-centre street with one-way traffic flow in a southerly direction (i.e. from Bootham Bar to Duncombe Place). It attracts high volumes of pedestrians, and was made part of the city centre Footstreets scheme back in 2000. Under this scheme all vehicle access (including by cyclists) is legally prohibited between the hours of 10.30 and 17.00 daily (subject to a few special exemptions, e.g. emergency vehicles).

4. In 2001 removable bollards were introduced to help with the enforcement of the restriction by making it physically impossible for cars and bigger vehicles to enter the street during the restricted periods.
5. Under this restriction, the alternatives for cyclists wishing to travel from Bootham into the city centre or to join the cycle route in front of the Minster are to either dismount and walk along High Petergate or to cycle along St Leonard's Place/Duncombe Place.
6. Many cyclists find these alternatives unattractive, and there has continued to be a significant level of illegal cycling along High Petergate during Footstreet hours. Several requests have been received since it became a Footstreet for cycling to be allowed. A recent survey recorded around 30 cyclists per hour riding their bikes along High Petergate during the Footstreet hours. Of these, 23 per hour travelled southbound and 7 travelled northwards (i.e. against the one-way traffic order as well as the Footstreet restriction).
7. Although the current cycle movements during Footstreet hours are illegal, they do not appear to be creating a problem of pedestrian safety. Indeed the Police accident database has no record of casualties linked to cycling during the Footstreet hours since their introduction in 2000. During the recent surveys no significant conflicts between cyclist and pedestrians were observed.
8. Based on levels of cycling along High Petergate outside the Footstreet hours obtained from the recent survey, it is estimated that the level of cycling during the Footstreet hours if the legal prohibition were to be relaxed could be about double what is currently experienced.
9. In 2010 the "Way of the Roses" coast-to-coast route was launched. This route passes through the centre on York using both Bootham and Minster Yard. Allowing cycle tourists to use High Petergate at any time of day would enhance this route and help raise the profile of York as a cycle tourism hub.
10. Since the improved Scarborough Bridge pedestrian/cycle river crossing was opened many more cyclists are now using Scarborough Bridge and then Bootham to access many parts of the city centre, rather than use Lendal Gyratory and Lendal Bridge. Relaxing the current restriction on cycling along High Petergate will help to further promote this safer alternative route for many journeys.

Proposal

11. It is proposed to introduce an ETRO to allow cycling in High Petergate in a southerly direction (i.e. from Bootham Bar to Duncombe Place) during the Footsteet Hours (10:30 to 17:00). In effect, this would allow this cycling movement at all times. There is already a precedent to allowing cycling on a Footstreet as Minster Yard has 24 hour cycle access.
12. No change is proposed to the current one way arrangements for cyclists on High Petergate as the Bootham exit is not signalised and the High Petergate carriageway is considered to be too narrow to introduce a contraflow cycle lane.
13. During the trial a new sign would be erected at the entrance to High Petergate to give road users information about who could enter the Street at what times of day. Removing the restriction on cycling simplifies the signing requirement such that the existing Variable Message Sign (VMS) could be covered by a single sign face. The proposed sign is shown in **Annex A**.
14. Consultation is not necessary in advance of introducing an ETRO. Legally there is a requirement for any formal objections to an ETRO to be lodged within 6 months of it coming into operation. Hence, if the trial is approved, it is proposed to carry out extensive consultation with interested parties during the first 6 months of the experiment. This would enable people to form their views based on real experience and observations. It is proposed to invite road users to submit comments to a dedicated web- address, local business and residents via a letter drop, and a wide range of road-user organisations and the emergency services via email. The feedback would be summarised in a report to the Executive Member for a decision on the experiment being made permanent.

Road Safety Audit

15. A Road Safety Audit assessment has been carried out on the proposed trial. No audits are considered necessary in advance of the trial, but an independent safety assessment would be carried out during the trial to feed into the report on its long term future.

Options

17. The Executive Member is asked to consider the following options:

- a) Authorise advertisement of the proposed ETRO, with a commitment to report back on the experiment after the trial has been in place for a period of 6 months with a recommendation as to whether it should be retained, amended, or removed. As part of the ETRO, extensive consultation would take place with interested parties and a Road Safety Audit would be carried out to help inform the ultimate decision.
- b) Drop the proposal and take no further action.

Analysis

18. Taking no action is not recommended because it would not achieve the aim of improving cross city centre cycle route facilities. There is currently no evidence that allowing cyclists to use High Petergate at any time of day would be a significant problem for pedestrian safety, so it is recommended that the proposed ETRO is implemented. During the trial interested parties would be consulted to gather feedback and gauge if there is support for making the Traffic Order permanent.

Council Plan

19. This 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

The proposal responds to cyclists' clear desire to travel along High Petergate at all times of the day.

Implications

20.
 - **Financial** - The trial would cost approximately £5K to implement, monitor, and report back on. An adequate budget allocation within the Transport Capital Programme for 2019/20 is available to cover this as part of the Scarborough Bridge Sub-Projects package.
 - **Human Resources (HR)** - There are no HR implications.
 - **One Planet Council / Equalities** - There are no equalities implications.

- **Legal** - the proposed trial will require an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order to be made, which can last for up to 18 months. Objections need to be submitted within the first 6 months, and decisions about the trial possibly being amended, and ultimately being made permanent, need to be made before the maximum 18 month duration.
- **Crime and Disorder** - There are no crime and disorder implications, other than the Experimental Order would legalise cycling that is currently contravening the existing Traffic Order.
- **Information Technology (IT)** - There are no IT implications.
- **Property** - There are no property implications.

Risk Management

21. **Physical** - there is always a potential for new safety issues to arise whenever an existing traffic arrangement is altered, and particularly where vulnerable road users are involved. However, a significant level of cycling is already taking place in High Petergate during Footstreet hours without problems, and during the experiment close monitoring of the situation will be carried out, including a road safety audit.
22. **Organisation/Reputation** - there is a risk of criticism from the public in implementing a scheme to which some people may have objections, but equally there could also be criticism from potential supporters of the scheme if it is not implemented. Good quality consultation should ensure that well informed decisions are made about the scheme and reduce the risk of public criticism.

23.

Risk Category	Impact	Likelihood	Score
Physical	Medium	Unlikely	6
Organisation/Reputation	Medium	Unlikely	6

Measured in terms of impact and likelihood, the risk scores have all been assessed at lower than 16. This means that at this point, the risks need only to be monitored, as they do not provide a threat to the achievement of the objectives of this report.

Contact Details

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Report **Date** 04.10.19
Approved

Wards Affected: Guildhall

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

City Centre Footstreets Review – report to Cabinet Member for City Strategy Decision Session meeting on 1/12/2011.

City Centre Footstreets TRO Amendments (part 1) Objections - report to Cabinet Member for City Strategy Decision Session meeting on 8/3/2012.

Annexes:

Annex A – proposed entry sign.