
**Planning and Transport (City Centre Management) 6 December 2001
Sub-Committee**

Report of the Assistant Director (Development & Transport)

Victor Street – Abuse of Traffic Regulation Order

Summary

- 1 This report draws Members' attention to traffic problems in Victor Street, Bishophill and makes appropriate recommendations

Background

- 2 Victor Street is situated off the south western section of the Inner Ring Road and connects Nunnery Lane with the main residential area of Bishophill. In so doing it crosses the City walls at Victor Bar. Victor Street itself connects with Cromwell Road, which in turn connects with Skeldergate. Via Skeldergate traffic is able to both return to the Inner Ring Road or alternatively enter the centre via Ouse bridge. Prior to 1989 there were also through routes to Micklegate and Skeldergate via Lower Priory Street and Bishophill Senior.
- 3 Because of its location and ease of access to both the Inner Ring road and city centre, Bishophill became increasingly used by long stay visitors and commuters as effectively a huge car park. Conditions for residents as a consequence became intolerable and resulted in the creation of a zone bounded by the City Walls and Cromwell Road into which motor vehicles were prohibited from going unless requiring access. This was introduced in 1975 but did not prove to be particularly effective in dealing with the parking issue. Whilst initially through traffic reduced, when it became apparent that enforcement was sporadic flows increased back to similar levels previously experienced.
- 4 By mid-1988 matters had reached serious levels with residents clamouring for effective action. This call was answered in the following year by the introduction of the first comprehensive traffic calming scheme in the City and a residents parking scheme. The effect of these were dramatic both in terms of the quality of the environment and also with regard to traffic movements. Prior to the change traffic regularly queued to either enter or leave the area and streets were

4
jammed with parked cars. After, vehicles flows dropped to a trickle and large parts of the area were free of parking.

- 5 Difficulties continued (but at a much lower level than previously) with the abuse of the except for access order. Periodic checks by the Police were undertaken but both resulted in significant congestion in the area and very little actual effect on the problem. With some exceptions this state of affairs was largely accepted by the residents and there was no serious attempt on the part of the community to make additional changes.
- 6 Towards the end of last financial year changes were introduced to improve cyclist safety at the Tower Street/Inner Ring Road junction. These alterations reduced the vehicle capacity of the approach to the junction from the Bishophill side of the river substantially. As a result the peak hour delays on the Inner Ring Road approaching the junction increased to the extent that queuing became a regular feature on Prices Lane with the end vehicles visible by approaching drivers on Nunnery Lane (approach from Bishopthorpe).
- 7 Complaints started at this stage to be received from residents of Victor Street about vehicles increasingly using that road as a means to avoid the above mentioned queue. The levels of complaints persisted and increased to such an extent that surveys were carried out showing an increase in peak hour flow in excess of 50% had taken place.
- 8 In late spring 2001 residents were contacted with potential solutions to the problem and their views sought on the scale of the problem and what way forward they would wish the City to follow. The conclusions of this work did not point strongly in any particular direction prompting further work. During the course of this work the work at Copmanthorpe on the A64 commenced resulting in significant extra traffic using the City Centre streets. This in turn further increased the volume of traffic illegally using Victor Street.

Results of Consultation

Initial Consultation

- 9 There were 97 replies from a circulation of just over 200. Only 2 of the replies said that nothing should be done. Three people came up with alternatives – closing Cromwell Road, making the whole of Victor Street one way from Cromwell Road and dividing the area into two by using bollards in the middle of Victor Street.

10 The replies breakdown into the following table:

(NB not everyone answered all of the questions so the votes cast varies between options).

Simple Solutions

Option	Description	% for	% against	Total votes
A	Close Victor Street at the Bar only in the morning peak Monday to Friday	47	39	92
B	As A but also close in the evening peak	54	38	95
C	Make Victor Street one way (Nunnery Lane in only)	12	74	90
D	As C but with exit to Nunnery lane only	38	49	92
E	Close the bar completely (except for cycles and emergency vehicles)	28	61	92

More Complicated Solutions

O	Description	% for	% against	Total votes
1	Close Victor Street at the Bar except for residents by using automatic vehicle identification systems and a rising bollard	37	56	94
2	Charge non residents for using Victor street	28	59	91

11 It is clear from the above that:

- There was a good measure of support for action.
- That Option B (closure of Victoria Bar during both the morning and evening peaks) was perhaps the favoured idea.

In the comments accompanying the questionnaire it was noted however that there was concern over the day to day effects of the

simple options on residents. There was also a worry that the more complex solutions were too expensive and may involve residents in costs directly.

Discussions on this issue have taken place at the Bishophill Ward Committee meetings and the offer of financial help has already been indicated.

Further Consultation

- 12 Further investigation on how to achieve the delivery of Option B was undertaken with the comments of residents and their aspirations very much in mind. This concluded that the most appropriate way would possibly be to provide removable bollards which were put in place daily at the relevant time. The cost of the bollards would be relatively small but because of the problem of actually putting the bollards in and taking them out at a reasonable cost it was suggested that this would be an ideal opportunity for the local community to provide a workable solution.
- 13 As an alternative and bearing in mind the comments made about the effect of a fixed bollard upon residents, the costs associated with providing an automatic bollard that would prevent all but residents (and emergency vehicles) from entering the area was explored.
- 14 Both options were put to some 350 residents and 96 responded (a full breakdown will be available at the meeting). All supported action with the overwhelming majority favouring the automatic device subject to no costs falling upon local residents. There was also a very strong view expressed that, if adopted, the automatic bollard solution should operate 24 hours a day.

Technical Considerations

- 15 To be effective and safe the location of the bollard would need to be directly under Victor Bar. As this is a scheduled ancient monument very great care will need to be exercised in the positioning of the necessary control equipment so as to both avoid any physical damage to the structure and also to its visual setting. These constraints, particularly the latter, preclude the use of equipment such as is in use in the Stonebow.
- 16 The need to be able to simply identify the vehicles of residents as well as those of the emergency services also poses some difficult issues both associated with the type, appearance and location of roadside equipment but also the cost and ease of use of any device operated by residents.

- 17 A draft output based specification for the required products was thus prepared and the market investigated. The result showed that there were at least two manufacturers who were in a position to supply suitably discrete roadside equipment and who had in car devices that were easy to use at a reasonable cost. These latter require no permanent fixing to the vehicle but can be uniquely coded so as to allow random checks to be made of the users entitlement.

Financial Considerations

- 18 The use of a fixed removable bollard would cost in the region of £1000. however, because the city does not have any staff regularly in the Bishophill area, putting in and removing the bollard twice per day would have to be undertaken either by a contractor or by community volunteers. Approaches to various contractors, including our own Commercial Services organisation, indicate that the lowest annual charge for the service would be in the region of £10,000. No revenue budget provision for this level of cost has been identified. Only two community volunteers have come forward as a result of the approaches made. It is therefore considered that reliance upon the community as a long term objective is not feasible. On both a cost and practicality basis it is apparent that the long term use of removable bollards cannot be recommended.
- 19 Budgetary guidance from suitable manufacturers for the automatic option suggest that a suitable package could be obtained and installed for around £10,000, including the supply of up to 200 electronic passes for residents. Ongoing revenue charges to support this system would amount to some £1000 p.a. Should Members wish to make a charge for the electronic passes then the cost would vary, depending upon the overall system adopted from between £10 and £15 each. These devices have a very long life and would not need replacement in normal use for many years.
- 20 Provision of £40,000 has been made within the Local Transport Plan for the development of Policing without Police measures. It is therefore suggested that this application would be a suitable measure to be funded from that development budget.

Recommendation

- 21 It is recommended that:
1. An Order be advertised and if no objections are raised, be made, which prohibits all vehicles, except cycles, emergency vehicles in an emergency, essential road maintenance vehicles used in the clearance of snow and ice and the holders of permits from driving beneath Victor Bar in Victor Street.

2. Permits be issued in regard to the above only to residents who live in one of the following streets, appear on the Electoral Roll at the address in that street and own a vehicle: Victor Street; Lower Priory Street; Newton Terrace; Hampden Street; Fairfax Street; Kyme Street; Baile Hill Terrace; Falkland Street, Buckingham Street, Lambert Court, Bishophill Senior, Cromwell Road.
3. Tenders be obtained from suitable manufacturers for the required equipment, including the necessary electronic permits, and the costs and details be reported back to a subsequent meeting in order to further assess:
 - a) The impact upon the setting of the ancient monument.
 - b) The issue of payment for the in vehicle electronic permits.

Contact Details

Author:
Peter Evely
Head of Highway Regulation
Phone No 551414

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:
Bill Woolley
Assistant Director, (Development and Transport)

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers

None.

PGE/RD
28 November 2001

0612vsat