
Economic & City Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee

17th May 2010

Report of the Head of Civic, Legal & Democratic Services

Cover Report – Water End Final Report

Summary

1. This report presents Members of the Committee with the draft final report of the Water End Task Group (Appendix 1 refers) and asks them to approve the recommendations arising from the Water End Councillor Call for Action (CCfA).

Background

2. In coming to a decision to further look at this CCfA the Economic & City Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee recognised certain key objectives and the following remit was agreed:

Aim

3. To determine the best solution for the problems local residents are experiencing and to look at what lessons can be learnt in order to inform the implementation of similar schemes within the city.

Key Objectives

- i. To establish whether local concerns still exist in the light of the Executive Member's decision
 - ii. To explore whether further improvements can be made to address the current traffic issues
 - iii. From experience to date, identify those measures or actions that can be taken to assist in the smooth implementation of similar schemes in the city
 - iv. To understand the context of the Land Compensation Act 1973 in relation to this CCfA.
4. A Task Group comprised of Members of the full Committee was tasked with undertaking the work.

Consultation

5. Consultation for this Councillor Call for Action took place with the relevant technical officers within the Council. A public event was also held to hear residents' view. In addition to this residents have spoken under the Council's Public Participation Scheme at various public meetings where this issue has been discussed.

Options

6. Having considered the findings of the Task Group contained within the final report and its annexes, Members may choose to support all, some or none of the recommendations shown in paragraph 10 of this report.

Analysis

7. In regards to the aims and objectives of this review, the final report attached at Appendix 1 analyses all of the information gathered.

Conclusions Arising from the Councillor Call for Action

8. The Task Group drew the following conclusions based on the evidence they had received:
 - As a consequence of the Water End highway project, traffic levels in Westminster Road and The Avenue have increased substantially
 - These consequences were unforeseen during the testing of the future traffic flows using the macro traffic model which did not include Westminster Road, The Avenue or other side streets
 - The consequences were also unforeseen by the large number of agencies, Councillors and residents who were also consulted about the proposals
 - The new junction arrangements were undertaken as part of a longstanding, well-considered cycling strategy and partially funded by a Government grant for Cycling City
 - The sought increased usage by cyclists has been achieved
 - The delays encountered by other traffic using the junction have not been greatly increased
 - However, the increase in cycle movements and absence of significant delays has been achieved by a driver instigated diversion of some traffic along Westminster Road and The Avenue
 - On its own, point closure of Westminster Road and/or The Avenue would lead to substantial congestion at Water End.

9. It was apparent that there was very limited space to widen the carriageway as the Village Green could not be impinged on and the cobbles on the other side were part of the Conservation Area. The Task Group were not prepared to support the loss of the cycle lane in order to reinstate the left hand turn. However, they realised that if there were to be a point closure on either Westminster Road or The Avenue then there would need to be a left hand filter lane to aid traffic flows on Water End.

Recommendations Arising from the Councillor Call for Action

10. In light of the conclusions drawn from the evidence received the Task Group agreed the following recommendations:
 - i. That Council Officers urgently develop new, comprehensive proposals for the Water End junctions to improve the current junction and reduce greatly traffic flows in Westminster Road/The Avenue
 - ii. That the Council should, in future, use traffic models which incorporate side streets when assessing and designing junction improvements
 - iii. That the present policy of reviewing new highway schemes only after a period of twelve months should be modified to enable a review after three months when unforeseen consequences have arisen and when Ward Members request.

Corporate Strategy 2009/2012

11. Although this topic does not directly fall in line with any of the themes in the Corporate Strategy 2009/2012, the Economic & City Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee had an obligation to address the issues raised within the formally registered CCfA. They have done this by forming a Task Group to investigate the issues. The Task Group directly reported to the Economic & City Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee with their findings.

Implications

12. There are no implications associated with this report. The Implications arising from the review are set out in paragraphs 128 to 133 of the final report.

Risk Management

13. There are no known risks associated with the recommendations within this cover report. Risks associated with the recommendations arising from the Councillor Call for Action are at paragraphs 134 to 136 of the Draft Final Report at Appendix 1 to this report.

Recommendations

14. Members are asked to note the contents of the attached final report and its annexes and approve or suggest amendment to the recommendations as shown in paragraph 10 of this report.

Reason: To ensure the remit of this CCfA has been satisfactorily addressed.

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Report Approved

Date 6th May 2010

Specialist Implications Officer(s) None

Wards Affected: Clifton

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

None

Annexes

Appendix 1 Draft Final Report & Associated Annexes