
Report to

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

11th May 2005

Report of

Director (City Development)

Title

University Square - Traffic Regulation Order (St Michael's Ward)

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report is responding to the information requested by Scrutiny having called in the Cabinet Member (Urban Regeneration and Regional Planning) report of the 9th December 2004. The original report related to the making permanent of current temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) agreed to enable the new public University Square to be created.
- 1.2 Scrutiny wanted to ensure that those parties directly effected by the changes i.e. Coventry Cathedral, Coventry University and associated groups had been consulted fully on their views of how the traffic regulations had been working over the trial period.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Approve the Traffic Regulation Order as currently drafted (Appendix A).
- 2.2 Agree, in light of the Cathedral's continuing concerns over Coach access into Priory Street, to review the original highway study work. The purpose of which would be to explore the cost and possibility of reversing the current one-way route along St Mary's Street and Bayley Lane with the objective of improving the accessibility for coaches to the Cathedral.

3 Information/Background

- 3.1 26th November 2002 Cabinet approved the implementation of the new public square and the temporary traffic regulations enabling this scheme to be constructed. (Appendix B)
- 3.2 In the recent round of consultation we have been in direct contact with, Coventry Cathedral, Coventry University and CV One (who have been in contact with the Coach operators serving the Cathedral)
- 3.3 Written responses have been received from the University and CV One. Meetings with senior officials at the Cathedral have been held who have also provided written feedback.
- 3.4 This report also addresses the related but distinct issues of snagging the implemented scheme and additional wishes for work outside the originally agreed scheme.

4 Consultation Feedback

- 4.1 Both the Cathedral and the University have re-confirmed that they can give a qualified agreement to the principle of the TRO, restricting access along Priory Street, originally accepted when agreeing the schemes implementation. Management control of access to the area, by means of the rising bollards, rests with these partners.
- 4.2 Accessibility of Coaches along St Mary's Street to the head of Priory Street is the most pressing concern of the Cathedral and coach operators. Feedback indicates that some coaches have been unable to get to the Cathedral due to illegal parking along St Mary's Street restricting its width and preventing the Coaches making a tight right turn to the top of Priory Street. The Cathedral have requested that the current one-way system relating to St Mary's Street and Bayley Lane be reversed, avoiding the tight turn for the coaches.
 - 4.2.1 The reversing of the one-way roads was considered at the preparation stage of the new square by the City's transportation consultants, Jacobs Babtie. They undertook a feasibility study, the outcome of which showed that in highway modelling terms, all turning movements could be made using the existing route. This did assume no physical restrictions to the highway such as illegally parked vehicles.
 - 4.2.2 It has been acknowledged that until the recent deregulation of parking, there were increasing problems of illegal parking along St Mary's Street. The area has been one of the areas specifically targeted since deregulation resulting in a positive reduction in parking problems, albeit continuing enforcement will be required.
 - 4.2.3 Also at the time of the original transport assessment the length of a coach could not exceed 12m. Recent changes to road legislation will now enable coaches of up to 15m in length to travel on UK roads. Therefore the suitability of the existing and possible alternative access route should be assessed in the light of the new regulations.
 - 4.2.4 Assuming that it is technically possible in highway terms to reverse the one-way route so that vehicles turned into Bayley Lane from Earl Street, existing out of St Mary's Street, the potential cost of undertaking this work would need to be assessed. Initial indications from the Jacobs Babtie indicate these could be considerable not only due the physical changes required to the highway surface but also the relocation of the services running within the footway. A detailed design would be required in order that a fully costed scheme could be considered.
- 4.3 Coventry University's main concerns were related to the snagging of scheme, ensuring the scheme functioned properly and not to the restrictions of vehicles over the highway.
- 4.4 Councillor Lee indicated that Funeral cortèges and wedding parties were experiencing difficulties with the schemes design. Having discussed this issue with the Cathedrals representatives an access management solution to this issue has been achieved which alleviates their initial concerns. Effectively on the limited occasions when these events take place, agreement with the University will be reached to restrict any other vehicle movements through the square to enable the due reverence and time required to enable these events to pass off unhindered.
- 4.5 The coach operators contacted also raised the issues regarding the high cost of coach parking in Pool Meadow (£10), comparing it to Stratford-Upon-Avon (£3.50). Officers will be asking Centro who manage the bus/coach station to consider this issue. Additionally regarding pool Meadow it was commented that the café closed too early at 5.00pm. Clearly this is a commercial decision for that business.

5 Other Issues

- 5.1 The two organisations do have other outstanding issues relating to the scheme, but they are prepared to continue to work with the City Council to improve what is already a significant benefit to the area. For completeness these issues include: -
 - 5.1.1 The reliability of the bollard mechanism, initially poor, that has been dealt with under the snagging process of the development scheme. The entry system and rising bollards have now been functioning effectively for many months. A further improvement to the entry system has been ordered which will increase the height of the stainless steel entry column, enabling coach drivers to request access without having to leave their vehicles.
 - 5.1.2 The water feature is working but continues to have work undertaken on it to ensure that the flow of the jets works as originally designed and that the water does not flow across the drainage channels. Further works to the drainage channels may be required and are under consideration.
 - 5.1.3 The Cathedral indicated that the signage of the coach route was not clear. They had received comments from a number of visiting private groups travelling by coach that they were experiencing difficulty identifying the route to the drop off point in the new square from the Ring Road. This has also been raised by coach operators. The location and design of additional signage from the ring road has been identified (a cost estimate and programme of installation is awaited) but a commitment to improve this has been given to the Cathedral.

6 Proposal and Other Option(s) to be Considered

- 6.1 In recognition of the concerns over the approach route for coaches, it is proposed to revisit the original appraisal of the route and assess if there is a way to improve it including the option of reversing the one-way system along Bayley lane / St Mary's Street.
- 6.2 The cost of reversing the traffic flow in Priory Street and or the reinstating of two-way traffic into the scheme, requiring a fundamental redesign of the scheme, would invariably be very expensive. It would also negate the significant environmental improvements achieved.
- 6.3 Controlled one-way access from Fairfax Street would not be possible as there is no 'escape route', or space to turn vehicles round back onto Fairfax Street that were not allowed to enter the square.

7 Other specific implications

7.1

	Implications (See below)	No Implications
Area Co-ordination		✓
Best Value		✓
Comparable Benchmark Data		✓
Coventry Community Plan		✓
Crime and Disorder		✓
Equal Opportunities		✓
Finance	✓	

	Implications (See below)	No Implications
Human Resources		✓
Human Rights Act		✓
Health and Safety		✓
Information and Communications Technology		✓
Legal Implications	✓	
Property Implications		✓
Risk Management		✓
Sustainable Development		✓
Trade Union Consultation		✓
Voluntary Sector – The Coventry Compact		

7.2 **Finance** – Cost for the making of the Traffic regulation Order will be met from funds within the original budget. The cost of reviewing the original highway study will come from directorate budgets.

7.3 **Legal Implications** – The regulation of traffic by the Council is made by the introduction of Traffic Regulation Orders pursuant to the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Any objections received to the draft order (outlined in appendix b) would have to be considered by Cabinet Member (Urban Regeneration & Regional Planning) before the order could be confirmed and given legal effect.

8 Monitoring

8.1 Working with Legal & Democratic Services, Development Projects will monitor the order during the statutory 21day objection period.

9 Timescale and expected outcome

9.1 Assuming approval, advertise the Traffic Regulation Order within the Coventry evening Telegraph paper at the earliest date thereafter, with the TRO then coming into force 21 days thereafter, assuming no formal objections.

List of background papers

Proper officer: Director of City Development

Author: Telephone 1377
Paul Beesley, Team Leader - City Centre Property Development, Development Projects
(Any enquiries should be directed to the above)

Other contributors:

Papers open to Public Inspection

Description of paper

Location CC4/5.03

Correspondence Various

Highway study vehicle movement swept paths

Appendix A – Terms of Proposed Traffic Order

It was intended that University Square was to be traffic-free and with the exception of authorised vehicles, traffic will not be permitted to enter. In order to exclude vehicles it will be necessary to prohibit driving in Priory Street. Exemptions to the prohibition of driving would be included where necessary for authorised vehicles such as coaches setting down visitors to the Cathedral and funeral and wedding vehicles. The Traffic Regulation Orders will also need to include the usual exemptions for emergency services vehicles and vehicles being used for maintenance of, or improvements to, roads, street lighting, utilities and adjacent buildings. Access to Priory Street for authorised vehicles will be from Bayley Lane only, by means of rising hydraulic bollards controlled by the University and Cathedral.

PROHIBITION OF DRIVING

- 1 Prohibit driving in that section of Priory Street from its junction with Bayley Lane to its junction with Fairfax Street except for authorised vehicles and only in a north easterly direction from a point 20 metres north east of its junction with Bayley Lane to its junction with Fairfax Street.

PROHIBITION OF WAITING

- 1 Revoke the existing limited waiting of 30 minutes In any hour 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. to Saturday on the south east side of Priory Street.
- 2 Revoke the existing prohibition of waiting from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Saturday on the south side of Priory Street.
- 3 Revoke the existing prohibition of waiting at any time.
 - i) on the south east side of Priory Street from its junction with Fairfax Street to a point 20 metres south west of that junction.
 - ii) On the north west side of Priory Street from a point 20 metres north east of it junction with Bayley Lane to its junction with Fairfax Street.

PROHIBITION OF TURNS

- 1 Prohibit left hand turns from the westbound carriageway of Fairfax Street into Priory Street.
- 2 Prohibit right hand turns from the eastbound carriageway of Fairfax Street into Priory Street.
- 3 Prohibit the straight-ahead movement from that section of Priory Street north of Fairfax Street into that section of Priory Street south of Fairfax Street.

CYCLE LANE

- 1 Prohibit any vehicle other than a pedal cycle proceeding in a south westerly direction to enter, wait or proceed at any time in the cycle lane on the south east side of Priory Street from a point 16 metres south west of its junction with Fairfax Street to a point 35metres south of Cope Street.

Appendix B – Traffic Regulation Order Plan

