

Cabinet Member for City Services

25th October 2023

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for City Services – Councillor P Hetherton

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Director of Transportation, Highways and Sustainability

Ward(s) affected:

St Michael's

Title:

Petition - Far Gosford Street, Objections to Waiting Restriction Changes

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

On the 4th of November 2022, following consultation, Phase 1 of a traffic management scheme was introduced to try to improve safety and traffic flows through the Far Gosford Street Area. The scheme changed access arrangements, making some roads one way and making changes to the places where drivers could park and/or undertake loading/unloading. The scheme also introduced a red route along Far Gosford Street, linking into the existing red route corridor which connects the city centre to the M6.

As the proposed changes were significant, to be able to monitor the impact of the changes, the traffic regulation orders (TRO) required to make the changes were implemented as Experimental TROs. This was to provide the opportunity for continued responses from the public to be taken into consideration, and monitoring whilst the scheme was operating.

The objection period closes on 3rd November 2023. A petition of 45 signatures has been received 'on behalf of the shop owners and traders of Far Gosford Street' requesting that the changes are 'reversed'.

In accordance with the City Council's procedure for dealing with objections to TROs, including Experimental TROs, they are reported to the Cabinet Member for City Services for a decision as to how to proceed.

The cost of introducing and amending TROs, including Experimental TROs, if approved, will be funded from the Highways Maintenance and Investment Capital Programme budget through the Local Transport Plan.

Recommendations:

Cabinet Member for City Services is recommended to:

1. Consider the petition in objection to the Far Gosford Street Area traffic management scheme.
2. Subject to Recommendation 1, approve the current Experimental TRO for waiting restrictions the 'City of Coventry (Far Gosford Street Area) (Red Route & Waiting Restrictions) (Experimental) Order 2022 is revoked.
3. Subject to Recommendation 1, approve that the Traders are consulted on a new Experimental TRO, with the changes as detailed in Appendix C, and subject to a favourable response, implement a new Experimental ETRO.
4. Subject to Recommendation 1, approve that the Experimental TROs for the one way system on Vecqueray Street and Bramble Street are retained and monitoring is continued.

List of Appendices included:

Appendix A – Far Gosford Street Area Scheme 2022 - Changes and Proposed Phasing

Appendix B - Petition text.

Appendix C – Proposed changes to waiting restrictions.

Background Papers

None

Other useful documents:**Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Petition - Far Gosford Street, Objections to Waiting Restriction Changes

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 A traffic management scheme was proposed in the Far Gosford Street area to try to improve safety and traffic flows through the area. This was in response to issues raised; including concerns from the Police due to incidents that had occurred and from the Bus Operator due to difficulty using the route and delays caused by drivers parking obstructively on double yellow lines.
- 1.2 The proposed scheme changed access arrangements, making some roads one way and making changes to the places where drivers could park and/or undertake loading. It also included proposals to make Far Gosford Street a red route, linking into the existing red route corridor which connects the city centre to the M6.
- 1.3 A street news consultation was undertaken in July 2022. 'Drop-in' sessions to discuss the proposed changes were also held on 12th & 19th July 2022.
- 1.4 In response to the consultation engagement exercise, changes were made to the scheme design and it was proposed to introduce the Far Gosford Street Area scheme in phases; monitoring the impact of the first phase before considering whether to progress to Phase 2. Phase 1 was introduced in November 2022 and is the current on-site situation. Phase 2 is the potential reversal of the one way system on Far Gosford Street and the introduction of a bus gate at the north-eastern end of the road. Appendix A details the proposals for each phase following the July 2022 consultation.
- 1.5 As the proposed scheme resulted in significant changes to the traffic management in the area, to be able to monitor the impact of the changes, the traffic regulation orders (TRO) required to make the Phase 1 changes were implemented as Experimental TROs. This was to provide the opportunity for continued responses from the public to be taken into consideration and monitoring, whilst the scheme was operating, before deciding whether to make the changes permanent or not. The Experimental TROs became operational on 4th November 2022. Normally the objection period is the first 6 months of the operation of an Experimental TRO, but it was decided to extend this period to 12 months (up to 3rd November 2023) to give greater opportunity for people to comment.
- 1.6 A petition of 45 signatures, sponsored by Councillor O'Boyle, has been received 'on behalf of the shop owners and traders of Far Gosford Street' requesting that the changes are 'reversed'. No other objections have been received, so far.
- 1.7 The petition advises that:
 - Traders' businesses have been impacted significantly by the changes.
 - There are too many disabled bays.
 - Parking should not be restricted outside 72, 74, 76 Far Gosford Street, it should be available to use for loading purposes.
 - The only benefit of the scheme is to the Council issuing parking tickets.

The text of the petition is provided in Appendix B.

- 1.8 Officers and a Local Ward Councillor have met with traders to discuss the issues.
- 1.9 Site visits have been undertaken to observe the use of the limited waiting, disabled parking and loading bays.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

2.1 In considering the objection received, the options are to:

- i) Retain the existing Experimental TROs.
- ii) Revoke the waiting restriction Experimental TRO and revert back to the previous restrictions.
- iii) Revoke the Experimental TRO and introduce a new waiting restriction scheme, using a new Experimental TRO to allow the changes to be monitored and traders and others to see their effect before considering whether to object or comment.

2.2 Option 2.1 (i) is not recommended due to the issues raised by the traders. Site visits have also shown that the road space is still being fully utilised but not in the way designated in the Experimental TRO.

2.3 Option 2.1 (ii) is not recommended as changes were required to try to address concerns; including issues raised by the police and obstruction issues that were impacting on bus journeys (and the public using them).

2.4 Option 2.1 (iii) is the recommended option. There is not sufficient time to vary the existing Experimental TRO, make changes on site and allow sufficient time to monitor and people to have time to see the impact of the changes before deciding whether to make any objections or representations. Therefore, it is recommended that the current Experimental TRO is revoked and a new Experimental TRO is implemented. An Experimental TRO is recommended to enable monitoring of the impact of changes, before a final decision is made whether they are made permanent.

2.5 The proposed changes to some waiting restrictions and retention of others are detailed in the Table in Appendix C

2.6 It is also recommended that the traders are consulted about the proposed changes to the Experimental TRO, before implementation.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

3.1 A Street News consultation was undertaken in July 2022. 'Drop-in' sessions to discuss the proposed changes were also held on 12th & 19th July 2022. The result of the consultation was the proposed undertaking of the scheme in phases (Appendix A) and changing the original proposals to retain more of the limited waiting places. An updated Street News advising of these outcomes was issued in October 2022.

3.2 The Experimental TRO was advertised in the Coventry Telegraph on 27th October 2022 and came into operation on 4th November 2022. This commenced an extended 12 month objection period. The 45 signature petition has been received in response (Appendix B); no other objections have been received so far.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

4.1 It is proposed, subject to approval, to revoke the existing waiting restriction Experimental TRO and immediately introduce a new waiting restriction Experimental TRO, as soon as possible.

5. Comments from the Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer) and Chief Legal Officer

5.1 Financial implications

The cost of making changes to the waiting restrictions, if approved, will be funded from the Highways Maintenance and Investment Capital Programme budget through the Local Transport Plan.

5.2 Legal implications

The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 allows the Council to make a Traffic Regulation Order, including an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order, on various grounds e.g. improving safety, improving traffic flow and preserving or improving the amenities of an area provided it has given due consideration to the effect of such an order.

In accordance with Section 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, when considering whether it would be expedient to make a Traffic Order, the Council is under a duty to have regard to and balance various potentially conflicting factors e.g. the convenient and safe movement of traffic (including pedestrians), adequate parking, improving or preserving local amenity, air quality and/or public transport provision.

An experimental order takes effect 7 days after public notice is given and can remain in force for up to 18 months. Objections may be made during the first 6 months of operation.

The Authority is obliged to consider any representations received. If representations are received, these are considered by the Cabinet Member for City Services before any decision to make the order permanent.

The 1984 Act provides that once a Traffic Order has been made, it may only be challenged further via the High Court on a point of law (i.e. that the Order does not comply with the Act for some reason).

6. Other implications

6.1 How will this contribute to the One Council Plan?

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/strategies-plans-policies/one-coventry-plan>

The proposed changes to the waiting restrictions as recommended will contribute to the City Council's aims of ensuring that citizens, especially children and young people, are safe and the objective of working for better pavements, streets and roads.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

None

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

None

6.4 Equalities / EIA

The waiting restrictions will reduce obstruction of the carriageway, therefore increasing safety for all road users.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) Climate Change and the Environment

None

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None

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Graham Clark	Lead Accountant	Finance	12/10/2023	12/10/2023
Rob Parkes	Team Leader, Legal Services	Law and Governance	12/10/2023	13/10/2023
Councillor P Hetherton	Cabinet Member for City Services		12/10/2023	12/10/2023

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Appendix A – Far Gosford Street Area Scheme 2022 - Changes and Proposed Phasing

Proposed Change	Phase 1	Phase 2
Reversing the flow of the traffic on Far Gosford Street, making it one-way from Sky Blue Way to Bramble Street (travelling towards the city centre) and two-way between Bramble Street and Vecqueray Street	X	✓
A bus gate at the Walsgrave Road end of Far Gosford Street, so only buses, taxis, private hire vehicles, and cycles will be able to enter Far Gosford Street from Walsgrave Road or Sky Blue Way	X	✓
A new entrance for vehicles is already under construction from Gulson Road into Binley Road service road as part of the Binley Cycleway. This will provide easier access into Far Gosford Street from Gulson Road. Once this is completed there will be no left turn from Gulson Road into Sky Blue Way.	✓	X
The existing bus gate on Gosford Street will be removed, making it easier for traffic from the city centre to enter Far Gosford Street at the roundabout	X	✓
Changes to the waiting restrictions, including a red route on Far Gosford Street which means that stopping will not be allowed at any time other than in parking and loading bays	✓	X
Increasing the loading bays and blue badge parking bays on Far Gosford Street. The short-stay parking bays removed from Far Gosford Street to be able to make the changes will be replaced by increasing short-stay parking bays in the adjoining side streets. Blue badge parking bays and loading bays will operate 24 hours a day	✓	X
Bramble Street to become one way southbound – from Far Gosford Street towards Gulson Road – except cycles who will still be able to travel two-way. Additional short stay and resident permit parking spaces will be installed	✓	X
Vecqueray Street to become one way only northbound – from Gulson Road towards Far Gosford Street – except cycles who will still be able to travel two-way. Additional short stay and residents permit parking spaces will be installed	✓	X
The no right turn from Bramble Street into Gulson Road will be removed	✓	X
Short-stay parking maximum stay will be increased from one hour to two hours on Far Gosford Street, Bramble Street and Vecqueray Street. Harnall Row parking (Sainsbury's) will remain one hour maximum stay	✓	X

Appendix B – Petition Text

I am writing on behalf of all the traders who occupy premises for conducting business on Far Gosford Street.

It is now six months since the road layout/signage on Far Gosford Street was resigned and at various points disabled bays were introduced along with loading only spaces. At other areas the yellow lines were replaced with red lines.

Presumably this was all carried out to facilitate traffic and foot fall in the area to benefit the traders conducting business along Far Gosford Street.

We have no doubt that a lot of data would have been collated by the civil servants to assess the best changes to be made to best benefit the area and businesses. That having been said and having seen the results and impact these changes have had on the businesses I can only conclude that the changes have been an unmitigated disaster for the revenue flows of the businesses, many of which are now struggling to survive as a result of the traffic changes.

Some have already closed.

There are far too many disabled spaces, the dimensions of which are below the legal requirements. There is a red line outside 72/74/76 Far Gosford Street, which is actually a parking bay. It could be used for loading to assist these businesses and yet all parking of any kind is restricted. It makes no sense at all.

The only benefit that is being derived from this fiasco is that the Council having restricted parking is now engaged in a ferocious exercise in handing out as many parking tickets, they can, to the poor luckless souls who dare venture to the street. The passage of time and the constant stream of tickets being handed out are cruelly curtailing the revenue of the businesses along the street.

The Council will know that you can't keep handing out hundreds of parking tickets a week and expect the area where they are being handed out to become a vibrant economic hub.

On behalf of the shop owners and traders on Far Gosford Street I am presenting a petition to reverse these traffic and road layout changes that have been implemented. They clearly haven't worked.

None of your officers had the curtesy to visit every Trader to ask them how they are trading in regards to the new changes of the double red lines that have been put throughout the street. Reassess the loading bays and parking bays and reverse the changes on the street as these red routes have had a detrimental effect on our businesses

We the undersigned support this petition to reverse the road changes that have been implemented on Far Gosford Street, Coventry by the Coventry City Council since January 2023.

They have not achieved their purpose and have contributed to the collapse of some of the business and have had a severe damaging effect on the remaining business.

Appendix C – Far Gosford Street Area Scheme - Proposed changes to waiting restrictions 2023.

Proposed Changes to Waiting Restrictions	Reason
<p>Change maximum length of stay in the limited waiting bays on Far Gosford Street from 2 hours to 30 minutes.</p>	<p>Changing the permitted length of stay for limited waiting on Far Gosford Street would create a turnover of parking spaces, which would assist customers wishing to make quick visits to the businesses on the street and increase the likelihood of finding a space.</p> <p>For people wishing to park and stay longer, there is up to 1 hour parking available in the parking area by Sainsbury's and up to 2 hours parking available in the parking area at the northeastern end of Far Gosford Street. 2 hour parking is also available on Vecqueray Street and Bramble Street. Further parking is available in the Car Park</p> <p>Blue Badge Holders, when parking in accordance with the rules of the Blue Badge Scheme can park longer than the maximum permitted time in limited waiting bays.</p> <p>A 30 minute time limit was also raised as an option in the meeting undertaken with traders</p>
<p>Reduce number of disabled parking bays – increase limited waiting spaces</p>	<p>The current scheme increased the number of disabled parking spaces. It is proposed to reduce the number of spaces (but still have more spaces than in October 2022) and increase the limited waiting spaces.</p> <p>Blue Badge Holders, when parking in accordance with the rules of the Blue Badge Scheme can park longer than the maximum permitted time in limited waiting bays.</p>
<p>Area o/s 72/74/76 – change restriction to loading and limited waiting</p>	<p>This area was previously 'no waiting at any time' (double yellow lines) in case space was needed for vehicle turning movements for Far Go located opposite.</p> <p>It is proposed to create a loading bay and a limited waiting bay in this layby area.</p>
Proposed Waiting Restrictions to Remain	Reason
<p>Restrictions on Vecqueray Street</p>	<p>The November 2022 scheme increased the available shared use parking bays (allowing limited waiting or permit holder parking) on Vecqueray Street.</p> <p>The scheme also increased the limited waiting time from 1 hour to 2 hours.</p> <p>It is suggested this increase in limited waiting places and possible parking time is retained as it will allow people time to park and walk to Far Gosford Street if they require a longer time for their visit.</p>

Restrictions on Bramble Street	<p>The scheme increased the limited waiting time from 1 hour to 2 hours.</p> <p>It is suggested this increase in limited waiting places and possible parking time is retained as it will allow people time to park and walk to Far Gosford Street if they require a longer time for their visit.</p>
Red Route	<p>The scheme was introduced due to traffic management concerns including the impact obstructive parking was having on bus journey times. The red route which utilises the 'no stopping at any time' double red lines and enforcement enables the movement of traffic along the route to be improved</p>
30 minute maximum stay in loading bays	<p>The scheme introduced a maximum loading time of 30 minutes, in the loading bays. This is to be retained to ensure the turnover of available loading spaces.</p> <p>The number of loading bays are to be retained, as the red route does not permit loading on double red lines.</p>