

Title of meeting: Traffic and Transportation Cabinet Meeting

Date of meeting: 21 January 2016

Subject: Palmerston Road South area review

Report by: Alan Cufley, Director of Transport, Environment, and Business Support

Wards affected: St Jude

Key decision: No

Full Council decision: No

1. Purpose of report

To consider the responses to the public consultation on the proposals under ETRO 10/2014, Palmerston Road (south), and ETRO 2/2015, Villiers Road.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transportation:

- 2.1 Makes the provisions of ETRO 2/2015 (Villiers Road) permanent to allow traffic to use Villiers Road in a westbound direction from The Vale to Palmerston Road (south)**
- 2.2 Makes provisions of ETRO 10/2014 (Palmerston Road (south)) permanent and in turn authorise the following:**
 - 2.2.1 Authorises the advertisement of a new permanent TRO to implement a ban on left hand turns from Auckland Road West into Palmerston Road, to include engineering measures (to discourage use of Netley Road and Auckland Road West by vehicles wishing to access Palmerston Road (south))**
 - 2.2.2 Acknowledges difficulties experienced by visually impaired pedestrians as highlighted in the Equality Impact Assessment, and instructs officers work with Portsmouth Disability Forum to improve usability for all users of the shared space area on Palmerston Road (south)**

3. Background

- 3.1 A decision was taken at Traffic and Transportation Committee in July 2014 to implement an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) to allow traffic to travel in a northerly direction on Palmerston Road (south).

ETRO 10/2014 came into effect on 14th November 2014 allowing traffic to use Palmerston Road (south) in a south to north direction.

To facilitate parking in Palmerston Road (south), ETRO 10/2014 contained the following restrictions; Loading only 7AM-11AM, 20minutes limited wait parking with no return within 1hour 11AM-8PM and no waiting except taxis 8PM-Midnight & Midnight-7AM. These restrictions applied to the newly created parking bays on the East side of Palmerston Road between Villiers Road and Clarendon Road.

- 3.2 Consultation was carried out on each of the two Orders for a period of 6 months from the commencement of the orders. In response to ETRO 10 2014 Palmerston Road South, 18 responses were received. In response to ETRO 2 2015 Villiers Road, 29 responses were received.
- 3.3 ETRO 10 2014 - Out of the 18 responses received, 9 responses (50%) were in favour of the road remaining open to one-way traffic, of these, 4 preferred a reversal of the one-way system to a north-south flow and 3 stated no preference for the direction of travel. The remaining 2 respondents were happy with the current arrangement.
- 3.4 2 replies preferred the road to be closed to traffic once more as they considered the arrangement to be dangerous for pedestrians. 1 respondent wanted the road open for two-way traffic. The remaining 6 responses gave no opinion on Palmerston Road (south), and commented on changes to parking arrangements made as part of the wider scheme.
- 3.5 Following a report submitted to the Traffic & Transport Cabinet Member on 18th December 2014, the decision was taken to reopen Villiers Road in a westbound direction and consult on its effects under ETRO 2 2015. There were 29 responses received in total. 15 wanted to see the closure of Villiers Road made permanent, 14 preferred the road reopened. Of those that support the closure, 13 were residents of Villiers Road, 1 supporter was from Maple Road and the final deputation was made on behalf of the Portsmouth Cycle Forum.
- 3.6 ETRO 2 2015 came into effect on the 3rd February 2015 for a duration of up to 18months. This replaced the previous experimental order (ETRO 24 2013) which prevented through traffic to and from Palmerston Road from Villiers Road. ETRO 2 2015 allowed traffic to travel one way from The Vale in a westbound direction to Palmerston Road.
- 3.7 Responses in favour of opening the road were mostly made from residents of surrounding roads who felt with Palmerston Road reopened, Villiers Road

should also be reopened to traffic. A traffic survey undertaken in Villiers Road in April 2015 showed that there was not a significant volume of traffic using the road and speeds were not excessive as feared by residents of the road. Average speeds were 13mph and 85th percentile speed 19mph. 98% of vehicles using the road travelled at 24mph or less; 24.1mph being the prosecutable threshold in a 20mph limit. The volume of traffic using the road was also low suggesting that this is not a popular 'cut-through' route.

- 3.8 A full summary of options considered for Palmerston Road (south) can be found within the attached appendices (Appendix A).

4. Reasons for recommendations

- 4.1 The current arrangement at Palmerston Road (south) has reintroduced traffic flow and parking, providing a link for vehicle traffic between the seafront and the busy commercial area of Osborne Road. It has also presented further opportunity for local businesses to become more visible to passing vehicles whilst maintaining a focus on pedestrian movement and enjoyment of the area. There have been no incidents reported and the introduction of traffic to the road has helped reduce anti-social behaviour at night as taxis are now able to pick up outside the various bars and restaurants.
- 4.2 Of the consultation responses received, the majority of respondents were pleased to have the road open to traffic again and would wish it stay that way. Whilst a reversal of flow was desired by some, taking into account the wider area it is felt that this would result in increased traffic on Lennox Road South.
- 4.3 Residents of Netley Road and Auckland Road West have raised issue with the current layout because they feel there has been an increase in vehicles using these roads to access Palmerston Road (south). This assertion was validated through a CCTV survey. It is therefore proposed to investigate banning the left turn from Auckland Road West. The banned turn would be reinforced with engineering measures. This should discourage much of the unnecessary use of these roads and encourage vehicles to utilise the more appropriate Clarence Parade.
- 4.4 Whilst there have been no reported incidents in the pedestrianised area subsequent to traffic being authorised to use Palmerston Road in a northbound direction; disability groups have reported difficulty negotiating the shared space. These issues are outlined within the attached EIA, and are exacerbated through vehicles parking over the corduroy paving used to distinguish the footway from carriageway.
- 4.5 The recommendation is to make permanent the current south to north direction of travel on Palmerston Road. A reversal of the one way is not recommended due to concerns of creating traffic issues in other areas and the expected uplift of traffic should the direction of travel be changed.

It is proposed to implement the following to support making permanent the current layout of Palmerston Road:

- i) Banning the left turn from Auckland Road West to Palmerston Road to discourage use of Netley Road and Auckland Road West as a cut-through route through the advertisement and making of a new permanent TRO.

And

- ii) Work in conjunction with Portsmouth Disability Forum to address key accessibility issues as raised in the Equality Impact Assessment.

There are concerns surrounding the co-existence of three restrictions on Palmerston Road (south) mainly due to the difficulty for users to determine which restriction is in force and when. Consideration was given to removing one of the three waiting restrictions currently in place within the restricted zone on Palmerston Road (south) however in order to meet the competing demands of businesses, motorists and Taxis it is recommended to retain the current arrangements.

- 4.6 Villiers Road had broadly even numbers of support both for and against keeping the road open to traffic. With Palmerston Road South open to traffic however, the initial justification for closing the road has been removed as there is no 'cut-through' benefit. The results of the traffic survey suggest that vehicle speeds are low with volumes considerably less than the neighbouring Netley Road and Lennox Road South. The recommendation therefore is to continue to allow traffic to travel one way from The Vale to Palmerston Road, retaining as part of the road network.

5. Equality impact assessment

A full EIA has previously been conducted for the scheme to pedestrianise Palmerston Road (South) and has been updated accordingly most recently to include the implementation of ETRO 10/2014 in November 2014.

Consultation has been carried out both formally and informally throughout the Palmerston Road scheme. Through this consultation with various disability groups, issues have been raised as detailed in the previous section of this report. This is also referenced in the EIA attached to this document and is reflected in the recommendations in section 2 of this report

6. Legal implications

The procedural provisions for giving permanent effect to an experimental order is set out in regulations 23 and schedule 5 of The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 (LATOPR 1996).

Regulation 23 provides that an experimental order can be made permanent providing the following requirements are adhered to:

- 1. The following statements were included in the notice of making the experimental order:*
 - that the order making authority will be considering in due course whether the provisions of the experimental order should be continued in force indefinitely*
 - A person may object to the experimental order continuing for an indefinite period within 6 months of the order beginning on the date the order came into force (or within 6 months beginning on date the order is varied or modified)*
 - That any objections must be in writing, state the grounds on which it is made and be sent to an address specified in the notice*
- 2. The following documents were deposited and kept available for inspection beginning from the date on which the advertisement of the experimental order is first published and ending on the date the order ceases to have effect:*
 - a) a copy of the relevant notice of proposals and, if the order has been made, of the relevant notice of making;*
 - b) a copy of the order as proposed to be made or as made (as the case may be);*
 - c) a map which clearly shows the location and effect of the order as proposed to be made or as made (as the case may be) and, where appropriate, alternative routes for diverted traffic;*
 - d) a statement setting out the reasons why the authority proposed to make the order including, in the case of an experimental order, the reasons for proceeding by way of experiment and a statement as to whether the authority intends to consider making an order having the same effect which is not an experimental order;*
 - e) if the order varies, revokes, applies or suspends another order, a copy of that other order;*
 - f) if the order has been made after the holding of a public inquiry, a copy of the report and recommendations (if any) of the inspector; and*
 - g) where the experimental order has been modified in accordance with section 10(2) RTRA a statement of the effect of each such modification*
- 3. Where the above has been satisfied regulations 6 (consultation), 7 (notice of proposals) and 8 (objections) do not apply*

A proposed permanent TRO must be advertised and the public given a 3 week consultation period where members of the public can register their support or objections. If objections are received to the proposed order the matter must go before the appropriate executive member for a decision whether or not to make the order, taking into account the comments received from the public during the consultation period

7. Director of Finance's comments

The proposed Palmerston Road Improvements scheme will cost in the region of £35k. The source of funding will be corporate resources set aside for the delivery of the Local Transport Plan as per the Capital Programme.

Within the 2015/16 capital programme £67k is available for Palmerston Road Improvements.

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Signed by:
Alan Cufley
Director of Transport, Environment and Business Support

Appendices:

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
Traffic & Transportation meeting report Dec 2014 (TRO 43/2014 Villiers Road)	
Traffic & Transportation meeting report July 2014 (Southsea Town Centre Improvements)	

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/
rejected by on

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Signed by:
Councillor Ellcome
Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transportation

Appendix 1
Palmerston Road South area review

Palmerston Road South Options	Pros	Cons
Make experimental order permanent	<p>Users are already familiar with the road layout and there would be minimal disruption to residents and businesses when/if remedial works were to be carried out.</p> <p>Costs would be minimal to retain current layout however there may be some additional costs to discourage use of Netley Road as a shortcut by building out kerbs at the end of Auckland Road West and banning a left turn manoeuvre. Retains access for businesses, visitors and Taxis at key times.</p>	<p>The issue of some vehicles using nearby Netley Road and Auckland Road West to access Palmerston road remains however this could be mitigated by banning vehicles from turning left out of Auckland Road West. Triple parking restriction can cause confusion and is difficult to enforce.</p>
Revoke experimental order effectively banning through traffic	<p>There have been comments that users find the shared space arrangement confusing and potentially dangerous to pedestrians. Closing the road again would remove this confusion; however there have been no reported accidents since the road reopened and measures are proposed to mitigate impact</p>	<p>Some businesses will once again be unhappy about 'passing-trade' being removed. This may have a detrimental effect on businesses and would be unpopular with some businesses and residents. Results on the consultation thus far have shown minimal support for closing the road again.</p>
Reverse flow of one way system to North-South	<p>This option has been suggested a number of times during the consultation period and is likely to be popular with residents and businesses. There are minimal costs associated with making this change however there would be a requirement to consult on a new Traffic Regulation Order.</p>	<p>Traffic would still need to travel north at some point, the road most likely to be used for this would be Lennox Road South as it is the closest road and also provides easy access to Victoria Road South. Given historic problems in this road the decision would be controversial and a wider strategy would need to be developed to prevent the projected uplift in vehicles using Lennox Road South should the flow direction on Palmerston Road South be</p>

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		<p>changed.</p> <p>There is also concern that the current road surface in Palmerston Road South would be unable to cope with the projected increase in traffic using the road and may require significant remedial work to withstand the additional stresses. When the scheme was first implemented, traffic surveys showed that traffic flow was heavier in the southbound direction and as such with the concerns over the block paved surface and the will to discourage the road being used as a major through-route the decision was taken to have a northbound flow.</p>
<p>Implement part-time closure of Palmerston Road similar to Guildhall Walk arrangement</p>	<p>This option would allow access to shops/businesses throughout the day and should reduce the use of Netley Road/Villiers Road by Taxis in the evenings as there would be no access to Palmerston Road at night.</p>	<p>Police have reported a decrease in anti-social behaviour at night after the introduction of through-traffic to Palmerston Road South. If vehicles were banned at night these incidents could rise.</p> <p>The decision would also not be supported by the taxi trade and potentially the Police. The closures would also need ongoing resource to manage and a budget assigned to cover this unless an agreement could be reached with a local licensed bar/pub/restaurant to manage as is the case in Guildhall Walk.</p>