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(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

Title of meeting:	Cabinet Member for Transport Decision Meeting
Subject:	District, Local & Town Centre Project: Castle Road TRO
Date of meeting:	Wednesday 13 th December 2023
Report by:	Kerri Farnsworth, Director of Regeneration
Report Author:	Abi Kelly, Principal Project Manager
Wards affected:	St Thomas Ward
Key Decision:	No
Full Council Decision:	No

1. Requested by

1.1 Report requested by the Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transportation.

2. Purpose:

2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on Castle Road TRO 120/21.

3. Background:

3.1 Castle Road has been temporarily closed since 2020 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic under a Temporary Traffic Regulation order (TTRO) that was introduced under new government legislation. This legislation allowed local authorities to create additional space for social distancing, walking, and cycling and to temporary close roads.

3.2 This area has been closed for 3 years and forms part of a wider programme of works known as the District Local Town Centre Schemes (DLTC). The objective of the scheme on Castle Road is to enhance and transform the street to encourage active travel and to help boost the economy. The permanent closure of Castle Road will help to support local businesses emphasising the importance of good placemaking in an urban setting.



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- 3.3 In 2022 a new gateway entrance was constructed at the southern end of the road, which included widened footway, a raised crossing area with additional amenity space and planting.
- 3.4 Since the road was temporarily closed to through traffic, Portsmouth City Council has been in consultation with the local community regarding a permanent closure.

4. Initial Consultation:

- 4.1 In Summer 2021 a survey sought feedback about the road closure from local businesses within the area, residents living directly on Castle Road and its connecting roads, and visitors that travel to/ through the area. In total 1,474 interacted with the survey. Over three quarters (76%) of respondents reported that the temporary road closure had a positive impact on their daily activities or experience, with most residents, businesses and visitors wanting Castle Road to remain closed to vehicles.
- 4.2 Feedback from the consultation identified that reduced levels of vehicles in Castle Road and the fact that it has become a safer walking and cycling route were amongst the top positive impacts of the road closure for all users of Castle Road. Improved air quality and Castle Road feeling like a better place to visit were also provided as reasons for wanting the road to remain closed.
- 4.3 Following this feedback, the project team worked closely with residents, businesses, school, and other key stakeholders to design a permanent Traffic Regulation Order (TRO 120/21) for a pedestrian and cycle zone on Castle Road that will enable benefits experienced during the TTRO to be maintained.
- 4.4 The TRO has also sought to address issues raised, with access for local residents and businesses, emergency vehicles and other statutory exceptions, along with timed access for deliveries remaining.
- 4.5 Following initial consultation amendments were made to address the feedback received and the Authority gave notice to a revised TRO.

5. Revised TRO 120/21:

- 5.1 The consultation period on the revised TRO ran between 24th January 2022 to 14th February 2023. There was one objection within the 21 day consultation and this objection was later withdrawn.

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- 5.2 It is noted that this particular TRO differs in nature to the more typical TRO's that the Local Authority is used to. Due to the restrictive nature of TRO 120/21 Portsmouth City Council must ensure that all objections are removed before proceeding with a sealed TRO otherwise a public enquiry is to be held. This therefore is not a decision for the Transport Cabinet as the matter could not proceed with any objections.
- 5.3 The Director or Regeneration has delegated power providing all objections have been withdrawn to grant or refuse consents, to serve notices and take any necessary action including recovery of costs in respect of the following;

"Powers and duties in respect of traffic regulation orders where no objections are received to a proposed order or where an objection is received but subsequently withdrawn."

6. Issues:

6.1 In accordance with the legislation around consultation for a TRO, a fair process has been undertaken to review and respond to each objection raised. The process has taken some time primarily due to the nature of the order being sought, and the context of the site, combined with the Council's strong desire to work with the residents and businesses in Castle Road to ensure the best outcome possible.

6.2 The primary issue raised by residents throughout the consultations was in relation to access. The particulars of TRO 120/21 have been reviewed. The Council has confirmed that when TRO 120/21 is sealed, all residents living within the pedestrian and cycle zone will be able to access their property at any point they need to (24/7).

6.3 Owning or living at the property within the restricted section will be classed as the reason for accessing. This reason covers activities including - deliveries on residents' behalf (such as post, shopping and/or larger goods) and private hire vehicles picking up and/or dropping off residents or their guests.

6.4 In ensuring that the above issues have been dealt with accordingly a letter has been drafted and issued by Portsmouth City Council's City Solicitor providing assurance to these residents and confirming their access arrangements. As such through the development of detailed design Portsmouth City Council will need to ensure compliance with this requirement.



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6.5 There have also been issues raised in respect of aspects of the wider design, crime and disorder, and licencing. The issues highlighted are not relevant to this TRO process as they are not related to the prohibition of traffic and are environmental factors, however the project team will continue to work with residents and businesses in the road to address these concerns throughout the remainder of the project.

7. Next Steps:

7.1 Now that all relevant objections to the TRO have been withdrawn, the Council will proceed with TRO 120/21 using the delegated authorities outlined above.

7.2 TRO 120/21 will be sealed and associated infrastructure works completed to close Castle Road from vehicles.

7.3 In 2024 phase 2 of Castle Road works are due to commence. It is intended for residents and businesses to remain actively involved in the design process, working with the project team to consider the future design for the new public realm. The vision for the area is to create an enjoyable space, that celebrates creativity, and promotes sustainable solutions.

7.4 Castle Road provides a unique setting and with a collaborative approach to design this area provides an ideal opportunity to evidence how a well-designed high street can help activate communities and provide better social, environmental and economic capital for all.

8. Legal Comments:

8.1 The appropriate Legal Officer has been consulted in drafting this report and is satisfied with its contents.

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Signed by Kerri Farnsworth, Director of Regeneration


Appendices:

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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
The Portsmouth City Council (Castle Rd) (Pedestrian and Cycle Zone, one-way traffic and amendments to waiting restrictions (No 120) Order	www.portsmouth.gov.uk/services/parking-roads-and-travel/roads/traffic-regulation-orders-2021
Castle Road – road closure consultation 2021	https://yourcityyoursay.portsmouth.gov.uk/castle-road-road-closure-consultation-2021/
Access Letter - Peter Baulf (10.11.23)	 Castle Road - Access Letter.docx