



Title of meeting: Cabinet Member for Transport Decision Meeting

Date of meeting: 8th February 2024

Subject: Canal Walk and Somers Road TRO 219/2023

Report by: Felicity Tidbury, Assistant Director for Economy, Planning and Transport

Report author: Abi Kelly, Principal Project Manager

Cabinet Member: Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson

Wards affected: Charles Dickens

Key decision: No

Full Council decision: No

1. Purpose:

1.1 The purpose of this report is to request the Cabinet Member for Transport to consider the representations received in relation to the proposed "Prohibition of Motor Vehicles" on Canal Walk and Somers Road (TRO 219/2023) and decide whether or not a Traffic Regulation Order should be implemented as advertised, amended or abandoned. It is the recommendation of Officers that the proposal be introduced as advertised.

2. Recommendations:

It is recommended to the Cabinet Member for Transport:

2.1 **Approves to make permanent the Traffic Regulation Order (219/2023) for the Prohibition of Motor Vehicles on Canal Walk (between its junction with Somers Road and a point 8 metres east of Bridgeside Close) and Somers Road (between its junction with Canal Walk and a point 42 metres south of its junction with Sydenham Terrace).**

3. Background:

3.1 Canal Walk and Somers Road have been identified as a key route within the Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) working towards achieving the

Portsmouth Transport Strategy of creating a people centred transport network, focussed on walking and cycling by 2038.

- 3.2 As part of the delivery of SEHRT Active Travel, works to enhance the area around Canal Walk and Somers Road/ Raglan Street have taken place to encourage more people to walk and cycle throughout the City.
- 3.3 The eastern end of Canal Walk and northern end of Somers Road have been closed to motor traffic under a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) since September 2020, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The initial TTRO ref: 84/2020 was introduced under new government legislation enabling local authorities to create additional space for social distancing, walking, and cycling and was in place for 18 months.
- 3.4 Following the results of an informal consultation that took place in Summer 2021, where respondents were generally in favour of the restrictions, a new TTRO ref: 27/2022 was implemented for the safety of pedestrians and cyclists and has been in place for a further 18 months and extended by the Secretary of State for an additional 6 months.

4. Informal Consultation:

4.1 A qualitative online survey was launched October 2023 and was promoted through various marketing and communications inclusive of the following:

- Portsmouth City Council Social Media
- 62 Letters delivered to residents and businesses in the local area
- Portsmouth City Council email/ marketing distribution lists
- Media release encouraging participation

4.2 The results of the survey and feedback received, broadly aligned with those received in July 2021. The objective of the survey was to understand how the prohibition of motor vehicles has affected both businesses and residents within the local area and the impact the restrictions have had on experiences of visiting, working and travelling through the area, and whether the public would like the restrictions to become permanent. A summary of the responses is provided below:

Responses (661 received in total):

- 21 residents of Canal Walk
- 72 residents of connecting roads
- 3 businesses on Canal Walk
- 3 businesses of connecting roads
- 471 general Portsmouth residents
- 91 who selected 'other' (mainly visitors)

The outcome is:

- 67% would like the Prohibition of motor vehicles restriction to become permanent
- 30% would like to see the roads reopened to all traffic
- 3% are unsure

4.3 It is recognised that residents (of Canal Walk and connecting roads) would prefer the roads to be open to all traffic (55% do **not** want it to become permanent); the main areas of concern are in relation to more traffic in the surrounding area and access issues to property. however, some residents cited that safer walking/ cycling routes, less traffic noise, fewer vehicles and improved air quality were beneficial outcomes.

4.4 A higher proportion of visitors were in favour of the restrictions, (71% would like it to become permanent) with the main focus of feedback being around safer walking/ cycling routes and fewer vehicles.

5 The Portsmouth City Council (Canal Walk & Somers Road) (Prohibition Of Motor Vehicles) (No. 219) Order 2023:

5.1 Portsmouth City Council issued a notice of intent on 5th January 2024. The effect of the proposed Traffic Order is to introduce a prohibition of motor vehicles in the following roads:

a) Canal Walk, from a point 8 metres east of the eastern kerblines of Bridgeside Close eastwards to its junction with Somers Road; and

b) Somers Road, from its junction with Canal Walk southwards to a point 48 metres north-east of the north-eastern kerblines of Raglan Street

The consultation period ran from 5th January to 26th January 2024.

5.2 As a result of the consultation process six representations were received, four expressing support for the proposals, one (from Hampshire Constabulary) who did not support the original proposal due to insufficient signage however after issuing the detailed design and RSA 1 and 2 for the scheme this has been resolved with no further comments, and one further objection.

5.3 The objection received is from a resident and is deemed on review as relevant, on the grounds that the proposed restrictions would limit access for motor vehicles to Canal Walk and the surrounding roads, particularly when access is already difficult because of long-term roadworks in the city. The objector also feels that the bollards put in place under the TTRO offer no extra safety.

5.4 As part of the detail design new signage has been introduced to ensure that the restrictions are clearly marked and old road markings will be removed.

- 5.5 It is noted that the roadworks that are being completed would be carried out regardless of the TRO.

The representations in full (personal details redacted) are in Appendix A.

6. Conclusion:

- 6.1 The permanent prohibition of motor vehicles on eastern end of Canal Walk and northern end of Somers Road would create a safe walking and cycling route between areas of high-density housing and low car ownership into the city centre and areas of education and employment.

- 6.2 The proposed restrictions would support and promote sustainable travel, prioritising walking and cycling within the City, aligning to both strategic and corporate objectives.

7. Legal Comments:

Under regulation 13 of the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 the Council must consider the objections duly made in the consultation period of 21 days under regulation 8, which have not been withdrawn before 'Making' a Traffic Regulation Order.

8. Finance Comments:

- 8.1 The cost of making Traffic Regulation Order (219/2023) permanent is estimated to be £10,000. This will cover the hydro blasting of road markings and the installation of new sign plates.

- 8.2 The cost will be covered by the South East Hampshire Rapid Transit (SEHRT) Capital budget which is funded by the Transforming Cities Fund grant from the Department for Transport.



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Signed by:

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
Canal Walk Findings Report 2021	Canal Walk Findings Report 2021.pdf
Canal Walk TRO Report	Canal Walk TRO Report.pdf
Canal Walk Consultation Design	HWI1194-TRO-05-C.pdf
Canal Walk Detailed Design	HWI1194-GA-15-B.pdf
LCWIP	https://travel.portsmouth.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/74.463_LCWIP_Plan_Accessible.pdf

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

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Signed by:



Appendix A:

Objections:

1. "We do not support the below proposal and are especially concerned about the current lack of signage. There is no signage stating that it is not a through road, no regulatory signs at the bollards (No motor vehicles). There needs to be more and advanced warning given to drivers."

NB. This statement has been updated since issuing the detailed design drawings demonstrating appropriate signage as per below:

"Thank you for your email and the further information you have provided. With the clearer signing, we do not have any comments."

2. "I am a resident of canal walk and recently took part in the Canal Walk TRO survey. There has been no correspondence to anyone regarding this survey that has been closed almost 3 months.

Can I ask why this is? The bollards there are a complete disgrace, offering no extra safety (worse if anything because pedestrians think they are open) increasing congestion in the busiest areas of the city which are now riddled with roadworks.

It's almost impossible to get home, especially with the pending roadworks starting on the 15th in the city centre and currently taking place on lake road it almost shuts off every route to canal walk.

Can I please request the results to this survey under the right of information to local residents please. And have some sort of correspondence as to what happens next. It's a bit of a joke, I've been into the council multiple times and have no one get back to me."

NB. A response has been issued with the consultation report results.

Support:

1. "I am writing to you to voice my support for this order making the "prohibition of driving" permanent.
I regularly cycle along the route from Fratton Bridge along Sydenham Terrace and Canal Walk to get to and from central Portsmouth.
The reduction in road traffic due to the prohibition makes this a much safer prospect for me and other cyclists and pedestrians."
2. "I would like to support this TRO please.
As a regular cyclist, as well as a pedestrian and motorist, I have found the current temporary arrangement in Somers Road and Canal Walk to make the journey so much more pleasant as well as safer. I frequently use this route between Southsea and the Commercial Road area."



3. "I would like to extend my support for the TRO for Canal Walk.

This is the route that my son walks from home to [REDACTED] school and back. On the times when I have been able to meet him or attend Parents' Evenings it has been an ideal low traffic route as there aren't motor vehicles trying to rat-run.

I've recently taken a job at [REDACTED] and this is now part of my commute to avoid the traffic and congestion up London Road. Instead I have a longer, but mostly low-traffic route from Southsea to Hilsea via Whale Island and the Mountbatten Centre.

I would like to see more direct routes for cyclists across and up and down Portsmouth. It feels as if more vulnerable road users have to travel further in order to travel safely. This is counter productive. Please look at creating safer roads that enable people to try active travel with confidence."

3. [REDACTED] strongly supports the referenced traffic regulation order to make the existing closure of Canal Walk / Somers Road North section closed to motor vehicles permanent.

Having been implemented as part of the COVID related road closures to help assist social distancing, since 2020 there has been further work either side of the closure to improve the connectivity of walking and cycling routes between Fratton, Southsea and the City Centre.

The environment has been much improved by the closure. The corner immediately north of the bridge over the railway was always quite dangerous for all road users when it was open as it is an unsighted, ninety degree bend. If you were a cyclist wanting to turn right into Sydenham Terrace and were positioned on the centre line accordingly, you ran the risk of being hit by a vehicle travelling south. The closure has all but eliminated this issue as the only vehicles now travelling through the zone are cycles, scooters and the occasional moped.

Additionally the recently installed improvements along Canal Walk, Sydenham Terrace and Raglan Street as part of the Transforming Cities funded schemes have helped to build upon this low traffic quieter route as the location has six schools within 500 metres. This gives a safer route to school for children aged 4 to 16 meaning they do not have to travel alongside polluted roads for part of their journey, thus both encouraging and enabling active sustainable travel that prioritises people and which fully aligns with the vision statement of the City Council's current Local Transport Plan.

We believe that following the permanent closure, and when funding allows, there is still some work to do to better delineate the walking and cycling areas whilst retaining enough 'road' width to allow access for emergency vehicles as required. The space could even be 'taken over' and become part of the southern border of Landport Park, using greening initiatives to enhance the environment and make it



look less than a section of closed road. We would be happy to discuss these ideas with relevant members and officers when the time is right.

As stated at the start, we fully support this TRO and look forward to the future development of the route."



Appendix B.

- Official -

**THE PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL (CANAL WALK & SOMERS ROAD)
(PROHIBITION OF MOTOR VEHICLES) (No. 219) ORDER 2023**

1. Notice is hereby given that the Portsmouth City Council proposes to make the above Order under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The effect of the Order would be to introduce a prohibition of motor vehicles in the following roads:
 - a) **Canal Walk**, from a point 8 metres east of the eastern kerbline of Bridgeside Close eastwards to its junction with Somers Road; and
 - b) **Somers Road**, from its junction with Canal Walk southwards to a point 48 metres north-east of the north-eastern kerbline of Raglan Street

2. Copies of the draft Order, Statement of Reasons and Map are available to view on Portsmouth City Council's website: Search "Traffic Regulation Orders 2023" at www.portsmouth.gov.uk. Alternatively, they can be viewed at the Civic Offices, Guildhall Square, PO1 2AL, Monday to Friday between 9am - 4pm.

Printed copies can be obtained by calling 023 9268 8501.

3. Persons wishing to object to or make other representations with regard to these proposals must do so in writing, stating the grounds on which they are made.

Representations must be sent to TROteam@portsmouthcc.gov.uk or by post to TRO team, Portsmouth City Council, Civic Offices, Portsmouth PO1 2NE, quoting ref TRO 219/2023 within 21 days of the date of this Notice (i.e. by 26 January 2024) stating the grounds for the objection.

Under requirements of current access to information legislation, please note that all representations submitted in response to this Notice may be made available for public inspection.

Full details of the Council's Data Protection privacy notice can be viewed on the website.

5 January 2024

Felicity Tidbury, Assistant Director of Regeneration (Transport)
Portsmouth City Council