

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet
2.	Date:	15 January 2014
3.	Title:	Cycling in Rotherham town centre Vehicle Restricted Area and change to hours of access for loading / unloading.
4.	Directorate:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

Further to the decision to permit cycling in the town centre Vehicle Restricted Area on an experimental basis this report presents details of how the operation of this proposal would be monitored along with the timescales for introducing the scheme.

6. Recommendations

It is recommended Cabinet resolve that:

- i) **Note the proposal to permit cyclists to use the town centre vehicles restricted area on an experimental basis for 12 months**
- ii) **Endorse the methodology proposed to monitor how this proposal works in practice**

7. Proposals and Details

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Development considered a report regarding cycling in the town centre Vehicle Restricted Area (VRA) on 2 December 2013 (Minute number 72 refers). At the meeting Cabinet Member decided that

- Cycling be permitted in the town centre VRA with cyclists allowed to contraflow cycle on some one way streets and be exempt from some prohibited turns.
- The hours during which vehicles are allowed into the VRA for loading or unloading be changed from 17:00 to 10:00 to 16:00 to 10:00.
- These changes will be introduced using an experimental Traffic Regulation Order (TRO).
- During the experimental scheme that liaison is undertaken with interested groups.
- Following the initial three months of operation a report reviewing the monitoring of its operation is made to Cabinet Member.

Drawing number 126/17/TT264, a copy of which is attached as Appendix A, shows the areas of the town centre VRA within which it is proposed to permit cycling and the cross town routes this would facilitate. It is also proposed to permit cyclists to contraflow cycle on some of the one way streets within the town centre.

In recommending that the above scheme should be introduced on an experimental basis Officers undertook significant consultation with interested parties. In summary concerns about safety should cycling be permitted in the town centre VRA were expressed by Action for Blind People, Rotherham Older Peoples Forum, Rotherham Health Network and two town centre residents in response to consultation on this proposal.

South Yorkshire Police have raised no objection to the proposal but in their response they comment about the potential risks associated with the proposals and recommended that, if progressed, the scheme should be introduced experimentally.

Research by the Transport Research Laboratory undertaken for the Department for Transport found no real factors to justify excluding cyclists from pedestrianised areas and that accidents between pedestrians and cyclists were very rarely generated in pedestrianised areas (only one pedestrian/cyclist accident in 15 site years) in the sites studied (Source: *Traffic Advisory Leaflet TAL 9/93 Cycling in Pedestrian Areas*). Throughout England 36 towns and cities permit cycling in vehicle restricted areas at any time with a further 25 permitting cycling during commuter hours (*Cycling in pedestrian areas, Cycle England, 2010*). However to establish if this is the case in Rotherham it is proposed that the order be made experimentally so a measure of its impact on all town centre users can be made.

Prior to implementation town centre users would be made aware that cyclists would be permitted in the town centre VRA at all times. This would be done through extensive publicity with a press release, notices in the town centre, a town centre cycling promotion event and the launch of a Cycling Code of Conduct which has been used elsewhere. A draft Code of Conduct is attached as Appendix B.

Prior to the TRO coming into force the interested groups would be contacted and monitoring meetings will be arranged so that views can be fed into the first quarterly report.

Once the experimental order comes into force new temporary signs would be erected saying that cycling is now permitted in the town centre VRA together with signs indicating the areas where cyclists are not permitted (for example in All Saint's Square). Signs would also be erected which illustrate the Code of Conduct. Rotherham Wardens patrolling the town centre would also be asked to report any instances of anti-social cycling they observe and discussions will take place regarding them talking to cyclists using the town centre in an anti-social manner.

Once the order has been in force for two weeks monitoring would begin. Monitoring would take the form of

- Cordon counts undertaken on one day each month to record the number of cyclists entering the town centre VRA between 07:00 and 19:00
- Observation of how cyclists use the town centre VRA and how they interact with pedestrians undertaken on one day each week during the first month of operation. These observations would be recorded on a dedicated form that seeks to capture how the interaction occurred and what factors contributed to it. After the first month these observations would then be undertaken on a monthly basis. A copy of the form for recording these interactions is attached as Appendix C.
- Monthly reviews of recorded injury accidents within the town centre VRA by examining the South Yorkshire Accident Database and liaising with South Yorkshire Police.

It is currently anticipated that the experimental order would come into force in spring 2014 with the first monitoring report being made to Cabinet Member in summer 2014. The exact date of implementation is subject to discussions with Legal Services and colleagues in Streetpride who are responsible for traffic signs.

Throughout the experimental order period people would be invited to give their views on how they think the change is working via e-mail or in writing.

The signing of the town centre vehicle restricted area would change as a result of the temporary order with the signs at the entry point being changed from a No vehicles restriction (Red bordered white circle) to a no motorised vehicle restriction (Red bordered white circle showing a car and a motorbike). In addition, on the streets where contraflow cycling is permitted the existing one way signs would be changed to one way with contraflow cycling signs. Other than changes to signing no other changes are proposed to the town centre environment.

8. Finance

The proposed scheme is expected to cost £10,000 and funding is available from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund Programme for 2013/2014.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

If cycling along pedestrian streets in the town centre is not permitted in appropriate areas, Rotherham town centre will continue to act as a barrier to accessing employment, retail, and education/ training for the growing number of cyclists in Rotherham. In addition the full benefits of investment in facilities for cyclists along routes into the town centre would not be realised if cyclists could not then continue along direct and safe routes to access facilities and services within the town centre or on the other side of the pedestrian areas.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The scheme supports the Sheffield City Region's Transport Aspirations and more locally it complements Rotherham's Corporate Objectives, with particular focus on:

- Making sure no community is left behind
- Creating safe and healthy communities

11. Background Papers and Consultation

An Equality Analysis has been undertaken on this proposal, a copy of which is attached as Appendix D. This analysis shows that the proposal may affect blind, partially sighted and elderly users of the town centre.

The South Yorkshire Accident database shows that in the last five years there have been no accidents within the town centre VRA involving cyclists. In this same five year period there were eleven accidents in the town centre VRA, eight of which involved pedestrians being hit by motor vehicles and one involving a pedestrian being hit by a mobility scooter.

In 2010 the Government announced the creation of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSFT) and made £560 million of funding available for projects over a four year period to 2014-15. South Yorkshire successfully bid for £24.6M from the fund. This bid was the subject of a report to Cabinet Member on 28 August 2012, Minute 33 refers.

Contact Name: Matthew Lowe. Ext 54490
matthew.lowe@rotherham.gov.uk