

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Regeneration and Development
2.	Date:	14th February 2014
3.	Title:	Revision to proposal to permit 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

To seek permission from Cabinet Member to implement a revised proposal to permit cyclists to use the town centre Vehicle Restricted Area (VRA) and to extend the hours of access for loading/unloading.

6. Recommendations

It is recommended Cabinet Member resolve that:

- i) The proposed changes to allow cycling in the town centre VRA be revised to now permit cycling in both directions on High Street only**
- ii) The change to hours of access for loading/unloading to the town centre VRA from 17:00 to 10:00 to 16:00 to 10:00 be implemented.**
- iii) The proposed changes to permit cyclists to use High Street in both directions between 16:00 and 10:00 be made on an experimental basis for a period of twelve months and during the experimental TRO period monitoring is undertaken and liaison takes place with interested groups on its operation and that objectors are informed of the revised proposal.**
- iv) The proposed Westgate to Clifton Park Cycle Route Phase 1 as reported to Cabinet Member on 11 January 2014 be implemented in full.**
- v) A further report be made setting out the outcome of the monitoring on the experimental TRO on High Street three months after implementation**

7. Proposals and Details

A report was made to Cabinet Member on 2 December 2013 regarding the outcome of consultation on the proposal to permit cyclists to use the town centre Vehicle Restricted Area (VRA) and to extend the hours of access into the VRA for loading/unloading to town centre businesses (Minute number G72 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, attached as Appendix A, shows the areas where cyclists would be permitted within the town centre VRA and the cross town routes that this would facilitate.

Subsequent to this report a further report was made to Cabinet on 13 January 2014 setting out how the operation of this proposal would be monitored along with the timescales for introducing the scheme (Minute C164 refers). At the meeting Cabinet decided that

- This proposal be referred back to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Development Services for further consideration under his delegated powers, having taken account of the discussion in Cabinet.

Cabinet was concerned that the risk to pedestrians and parents with children, blind or partially sighted and elderly people were such that further consideration was required of the decision.

In order to address these concerns it is now proposed that cyclists be allowed to access High Street on an experimental basis for a twelve month period with access restricted to the times that motor vehicles can use High Street for loading/unloading. This would enable an assessment to be made of whether permitting cyclists into the town centre VRA causes any problems. It is proposed that High Street is used for this experimental TRO as it is on the fringe of the town centre VRA and permitting cyclists to use it would be in accord with the proposed Westgate to Clifton Park cycle route which was reported to Cabinet Member on 28 May 2012 (Minute G1 refers).

Permitting cyclists to cycle both ways on High Street would enable the implementation of the proposed Westgate to Clifton Park cycle route Phase 1

scheme which was reported to Cabinet Member on 11 January 2014 (Minute G81 refers). Whilst this proposal is promoted as a cycling scheme, to allow access to High Street, the scheme would also provide

- Improved pedestrian crossing facilities with the provision of push button pedestrian signals for the crossings at the bottom of Ship Hill and on the High Street entry to the junction
- A flat top road hump at the junction of Moorgate Street and High Street, adding an additional traffic calming feature to the town centre 20mph zone and to assist pedestrians to cross
- Environmental improvements to upgrade the existing mismatched and aging paving adjacent to the Imperial buildings to provide a high quality streetscape complementing the proposed Townscape Heritage Improvement works on pedestrianised section of High Street
- New, brighter street lighting in the High Street/Moorgate Street area to complement other works in the area

As detailed in the Cabinet Member report of 11 January 2014 this scheme would still provide significant benefits to town centre users even if the proposed experimental TRO to permit cycling on High Street is not successful.

Should the Westgate to Clifton Park cycle route Phase 1 scheme not be implemented the environmental improvements which complement those made as part of the proposed Town Centre Heritage Improvement scheme on High Street would not be delivered and therefore the environmental enhancement of this part of the town centre would be incomplete.

Should the experimental TRO on High Street prove to be successful it is further proposed that cyclists be allowed to access the town centre VRA on Frederick Street in the same manner. At this time cyclists will not be permitted to ride in any other part of the town centre VRA. However it is proposed to review the provision of cycle parking in those parts of the town centre that are legally accessible by bicycle and to provide new or additional cycle parking where a need for this is identified. This would also help to identify to cyclists the points within the town centre VRA at which they should stop riding.

Drawing number 126/17/TT275, attached as Appendix B, shows the areas of the town centre VRA where cyclist would be permitted in the revised proposal and the cross town routes that this would facilitate.

Over the years significant investment has been made in to improving routes and facilities towards and into Rotherham town centre, to provide a safer and more attractive environment for cycling, for example along Doncaster Road, East Dene and Wellgate. This builds upon the existing cycle facilities along routes into the town centre from Masbrough (cycle lanes on College Road), Moorgate (cycle lanes on Moorgate Road) and Templebrough (cycle lanes and shared use footways on Sheffield Road). By permitting the proposal above these routes would be made more attractive and ensure that the investment made continues to give benefits in terms of active travel increasing travel choice for those Rotherham residents without access to a motor vehicle.

Monitoring of the experimental TRO would take the same form as that reported to Cabinet on 13 January 2014 but would be scaled down to reflect that fact that cycling would only be permitted on one road within the town centre VRA.

8. Finance

The proposed experimental TRO is expected to cost £2,500 to implement 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.

Should the Westgate to Clifton Park cycle route Phase 1 scheme not be implemented the environmental improvements which complement those made as part of the proposed Town Centre Heritage Improvement scheme on High Street would not be delivered and therefore the environmental enhancement of this part of the town centre would be incomplete.

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

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.

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