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# A339/Bear Lane Improvements

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**Committee considering report:** Executive on 27 July 2017

**Portfolio Member:** Councillor Jeanette Clifford

**Date Portfolio Member agreed report:** 6 July 2017

**Report Author:** Neil Stacey

**Forward Plan Ref:** EX3318

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## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To report the results of the public consultation into the proposed highway improvement project and approve an appropriate way forward. The public consultation proposed the following:
- (1) making Bear Lane one-way eastbound between Wharf Road and the A339;
  - (2) replacing the traffic signals at the A339/Bear Lane junction with new more efficient equipment;
  - (3) adding a third lane to the northbound approach to the A339/Bear Lane junction for the benefit of traffic intending to turn right into Kings Road/Mill Lane;
  - (4) constructing a new signal controlled junction from the A339 into Cheap Street to allow traffic travelling from the north and east to access the town centre;
  - (5) removing the central reserve on the A339 between Bear Lane junction and the new Cheap Street junction to provide a right turn lane;
  - (6) restricting parking on Cheap Street (south) to accommodate the additional flow of traffic;
  - (7) introducing a new pedestrian crossing on Cheap Street (south); and
  - (8) introducing a new mini roundabout at the Market Street and Cheap Street junction.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the A339/Bear Lane Improvements and associated highway improvement works are progressed, albeit with some changes to the proposals advertised in the consultation. The amended scheme is described as “Option 3” in Appendix A to this report, and involves:
- (1) Retaining the on-street parking on Cheap Street (south);

- (2) Replacing the “give way” priority junction at the Cheap Street/Market Street junction with a new traffic signal controlled junction incorporating controlled pedestrian crossings on all arms and a “no-entry” restriction which prevents access (except cycles) to Cheap Street (south);
- (3) Removing the existing pedestrian crossings on Cheap Street (north) and Market Street (these will be replaced by the crossings at the above junction);
- (4) Not implementing the proposed mini roundabout or pedestrian crossing on Cheap Street (south).

2.2 It is recommended that Traffic Regulation Orders to give effect to the various traffic restrictions required to deliver the project are taken to statutory advertisement and consultation, with any objections received being reported to the Executive Member for Highways and Transport for Individual Decision.

2.3 It is recommended that, if approved, the revised proposal detailed in Paragraph 2.1 is assessed by the VISSIM traffic modelling software prior to construction to check that the benefits are similar to the benefits of the original proposals.

2.4 It is recommended that, if approved, an assessment of the air quality implications of the revised scheme is carried out.

### 3. Implications

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|-----|-------------------------|--|
| 3.1 | <b>Financial:</b>       | The recommended option will cost in the region of £1.5 million and will be funded from the 2017-18 and 2018-19 capital programmes. |
| 3.2 | <b>Policy:</b>          | None   |
| 3.3 | <b>Personnel:</b>       | None   |
| 3.4 | <b>Legal:</b>           | Traffic Regulation Orders will be processed by Legal Services.   |
| 3.5 | <b>Risk Management:</b> | The project will be managed in accordance with the Transport and Countryside Service’s approach to risk.                           |
| 3.6 | <b>Property:</b>        | None. The project will be delivered entirely within the boundary of the existing public highway.                                   |
| 3.7 | <b>Other:</b>           | A public and media relations strategy for the project will be developed in conjunction with the Council’s Communications Manager.  |

### 4. Other options considered

#### Option 1

- 4.1 Implement the proposals unaltered.

#### Option 2

- 4.2 Implement the proposals, with the following amendments:

- (1) Retain the on-street parking on Cheap Street (south);
- (2) Retain the current “give way” priority junction at the Cheap Street/Market Street junction but implement a “no-entry” restriction which prevents access (except cycles) to Cheap Street (south);
- (3) Do not implement the proposed mini roundabout or pedestrian crossing on Cheap Street (south).

Option 4

4.3 “Do minimum”:

- (1) Replace the traffic signals at the A339/Bear Lane junction with new equipment and implement a new control strategy;
- (2) Add the third lane to the northbound approach to the A339/Bear Lane junction;
- (3) Do not implement any of the other proposals

## Executive Summary

### 5. Introduction / Background

- 5.1 On 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2017, the Council began a consultation into a proposed major highway improvement project in Newbury town centre. The project involves:
- (1) making Bear Lane one-way eastbound between Wharf Road and the A339;
  - (2) replacing the traffic signals at the A339/Bear Lane junction with new more efficient equipment;
  - (3) adding a third lane to the northbound approach to the A339/Bear Lane junction for the benefit of traffic intending to turn right into Kings Road/Mill Lane;
  - (4) constructing a new signal controlled junction from the A339 into Cheap Street to allow traffic travelling from the north and east to access the town centre;
  - (5) removing the central reserve on the A339 between Bear Lane junction and the new Cheap Street junction to provide a right turn lane;
  - (6) restricting parking on Cheap Street (south) to accommodate the additional flow of traffic;
  - (7) introducing a new pedestrian crossing on Cheap Street (south); and
  - (8) introducing a new mini roundabout at the Market Street and Cheap Street junction.
- 5.2 The proposals are shown in Appendix C, in the form of a preliminary design drawing and a consultation leaflet.
- 5.3 The consultation closed on 4<sup>th</sup> June and the purpose of this report is to summarise the responses received, address the issues raised, consider alternatives to the proposals where appropriate and recommend a course of action.

### 6. Proposal

- 6.1 In view of the consultation responses and the Officer comments in Appendix D, four distinct options have been identified:

#### Option 1

- 6.2 Implement the proposals unaltered.

#### Option 2

- 6.3 Implement the proposals, with the following amendments:

- (1) Retain the on-street parking on Cheap Street (south);

- (2) Retain the current “give way” priority junction at the Cheap Street/Market Street junction but implement a “no-entry” restriction which prevents access (except cycles) to Cheap Street (south);
- (3) Do not implement the proposed mini roundabout or pedestrian crossing on Cheap Street (south).

Option 3

6.4 Implement the proposals with the following amendments:

- (1) Retain the on-street parking on Cheap Street (south);
- (2) Replace the “give way” priority junction at the Cheap Street/Market Street junction with a new traffic signal controlled junction incorporating controlled pedestrian crossings on all arms and a “no-entry” restriction which prevents access (except cycles) to Cheap Street (south);
- (3) Remove the existing pedestrian crossings on Cheap Street (north) and Market Street (these will be replaced by the crossings at the above junction);
- (4) Do not implement the proposed mini roundabout or pedestrian crossing on Cheap Street (south).

Option 4

6.5 “Do minimum”:

- (1) Replace the traffic signals at the A339/Bear Lane junction with new equipment and implement a new control strategy;
- (2) Add the third lane to the northbound approach to the A339/Bear Lane junction;
- (3) Do not implement any of the other proposals

6.6 For Options 2 and 3, a small number of parking bays may have to be removed to accommodate design changes to the junctions at either end of Cheap Street but these would be kept to a minimum.

6.7 Options 2 and 3 satisfy the main concern raised in the consultation in that they enable the on-street parking to be retained on Cheap Street (south). There is a risk that under Option 2, traffic would have difficulty in exiting Cheap Street (south), particularly turning right towards the Wharf. Option 3 gives a greater degree of control, as the configuration of the traffic signals can be varied to accommodate the needs of vehicles approaching from each direction and pedestrians wishing to cross the roads. Option 3 would, however, increase the cost of the project by around £100,000.

6.8 Option 4 would reduce the cost of the project to around £400,000, be less disruptive to build and would enable further improvements to be carried out at a later date. It would, however, not offer the same overall benefits as the other options.

## 7. Conclusion

- 7.1 It is clear from the consultation and parking survey that Option 1 is not popular with road users and business owners in Cheap Street and removes a well used parking facility. Officers consider that Option 3 is an acceptable compromise, subject to it being checked by the traffic model and a more detailed air quality analysis being carried out.
- 7.2 The delivery of Option 3 will require new Traffic Regulation Orders, to give effect to the various traffic restrictions which form part of the project. Statutory consultations must therefore be held, with any objections received being reported back to the Executive Member for Highways and Transport for Individual Decision.

## 8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A – Supporting Information
- 8.2 Appendix B – Equalities Impact Assessment
- 8.3 Appendix C – Plans and drawings of the options for improvement; Frequently Asked Questions from the consultation process
- 8.4 Appendix D – Consultation responses and Officer Comments