

Individual Decision

Title of Report: **Newtown Road – North (St John’s Roundabout to Blackboys Bridge), Newbury - Environmental Improvements Scheme**

Report to be considered by: Councillor Sally Hannon on: 09 September 2004

Forward Plan Ref: ID 0791

Purpose of Report:

To advise the Executive Member for Highways and Transportation of the results of the consultation process on measures designed to mitigate the concerns of residents over the effects of the Newtown Road – North Scheme and to recommend a course of action.

Recommended Action:

That the Executive Member resolves to:-

- 1) Authorise the advertisement of Traffic Orders necessary to close Hampton Road and Rectory Close to all through traffic other than cycles.
- 2) Authorise the construction of turning heads at the joining point of Hampton Road and Rectory Close subject to funding.
- 3) Authorise the advertisement of Traffic Orders to introduce no waiting restrictions in the turning heads created.
- 4) Confirm implementation of the previously advertised Traffic Order enabling Derby Road to be made one way from Argyle Road to St John’s Roundabout.

Reason for decision to be taken:

- To enable construction of the turning heads and associated works and advertisement of the necessary Traffic Orders to proceed.

List of other options considered:

- As detailed under supporting information.

Key background documentation:

- Drawing No 81224/4 – Proposed no entry and one way restrictions.
- Drawing No 81224/15A – Location of turning heads to turn Rectory Close and Hampton Road into cul-de-sacs.
- Drawing No 81224/16 – Proposed parking restrictions.

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Supporting Information

1. Background

- 1.1 Consultation on the scheme took place between 30th March and 26th April 2004.
- 1.2 In addition to formal advertisement in the press of the proposed changes to Traffic Regulation Orders, letters accompanied by drawings detailing the proposed scheme layout (81224/1B) and the proposed amendments to waiting restrictions (81224/2) were hand delivered to all private residences and businesses in Newtown Road (North), Argyle Road, Hampton Road and Derby Road.
- 1.3 The scheme layout drawing outlined the one-way system southbound proposed for Argyle Road and Derby Road by way of accommodation works to the main scheme.
- 1.4 In addition to a number of individual letters objecting to elements of the scheme a petition of objection containing 72 signatures was also submitted to the Council.
- 1.5 The petition received on 30th April 2004 reads:-

We, the undersigned, oppose the proposed environmental improvements because we believe the proposal is ill-considered and does not take into account that.

- Turning Derby Road into a one way street in the opposite direction would lead to “rat running” from Pound Street to St John’s roundabout in the mornings with drivers eager to avoid the traffic lights and speed cushions in Newtown Road (North).
 - This will greatly endanger scores of children walking to St Bartholomew’s, St Nicholas’ and St John’s schools (as well as the elderly living there) and this would appear to be at odds with West Berkshire Council’s “safe routes to schools” scheme, especially as there is no pavement on either side of Hampton Road by the Red House public house.
 - No clear reason has been provided for changing the direction of Derby Road traffic flow. The subsequent costs of modifying St John’s roundabout to make it safe for traffic to enter it from Derby Road are a waste of Council Tax payer’s money and provide no tangible benefit.
 - If the Derby Road and Argyle Road changes are unavoidable for reasons not shared with affected residents and Council Tax payers, we demand proper residents consultation to consider traffic calming measures.
- 1.6 The substantive Newtown Road (north) Environmental Enhancement Scheme forms an integral part of the Council’s Vision for Newbury 2025 and as such is included in the Council’s Capital Programme for 2004/2005.
 - 1.7 The introduction of traffic signals at the Pound Street / Newtown Road junction makes it imperative that Argyle Road be converted to one way southbound to avoid conflict between vehicles entering and exiting at it’s northern end against signal regulated flows.
 - 1.8 Argyle Road is also considered too narrow to safely accommodate two way traffic and on street parking.

- 1.9 It was also proposed that Derby Road be made one way over its entire length to eliminate abuse of the existing short one way section immediately prior to St Johns Roundabout.
- 1.10 Derby Road, like Argyle Road is considered too narrow for safe use by two way traffic and has no turning head for vehicles at the point where the present exit restriction commences.
- 1.11 An individual Portfolio Member decision was taken on the 4th June 2004 to approve:-
- 1) The substantive scheme for the Environmental Improvements in Newtown Road (North), including the making of the one way order to convert Argyle Road to one way South bound be approved.
 - 2) That the implementation of the traffic order proposed for Derby Road be deferred pending further investigation and consultation.
 - 3) That all residents of Rectory Close and other relevant respondees be advised of the decision taken and further consultation to be carried out, including the possibility of the introduction of chicanes in Hampton Close.
- 1.12 The Council is proposing to condition any Planning Approval granted to Sovereign Housing for the old hospital site to ensure dedication of an area of land to enable the construction of turning heads at the junction of Hampton Road and Rectory Close.
- 1.13 To provide traffic calming in Argyle Road, Rectory Close and Derby Road is considered unnecessary.
- 1.14 A traffic count was carried out on 20th July 2004 to monitor traffic flows prior to completion of the scheme. The traffic count reinforces the residents concerns that some rat running exists through the area from south to north. The count also confirms that large pedestrian and cycle movements exist in Hampton Road, Argyle Road and Derby Road.
- 1.15 The informal consultation of local residents affected by the proposals posed three questions. The questionnaire and the tabulated responses are attached for information. The results clearly show that:-
- 57% preferred option B (Provide turning heads at the junction of Hampton Road and Rectory Close. Make Derby Road one way from Argyle Rd to St. John's Roundabout).
 - 33% preferred option A (Do nothing other than make Argyle Road one way southbound and leave Derby Road as existing).
 - 10% preferred option C (Provide traffic calming by priority control/chicane. Make Derby Road one way from Argyle Rd to St Johns Roundabout).
- 1.17 The estimate cost of the preferred option B is £ 40,000.

Recommendation

That the Executive Member for Highways and Transportation resolves to:-

- **Authorise the advertisement of Traffic Orders necessary to close Hampton Road and Rectory Close to all through traffic other than cycles.**
- **Authorise the construction of turning heads at the joining point of Hampton Road and Rectory Close subject to funding.**

- Authorise the advertisement of Traffic Orders to introduce no waiting restrictions in the turning heads created.
- Confirm implementation of the previously advertised Traffic Order enabling Derby Road to be made one way from Argyle Road to St John's Roundabout.

Appendices

Appendix A – Public consultation – options questionnaire.

Appendix B – Results of the consultation.

Implications

Policy:	None arising from this report.
Financial:	There is no budgetary provision within the current 2004/05 Capital Programme. It is proposed that a bid of £ 40,000 be made for inclusion in the Capital Programme 2005/06.
Personnel:	None arising from this report.
Legal:	Support from Legal Services will be required to complete the processing of traffic orders for the turning heads, process additional traffic orders and enter into an agreement with Sovereign Housing for the dedication of land to West Berkshire Council.
Environmental:	None arising from this report.
Equalities:	None arising from this report.
Partnering:	N/A.
Property:	Agreement reached over use of land in West Berkshire's ownership for use as Highway Land.
Risk Management:	N/A.
Community Safety:	Community safety should be improved as a result of closure to the roads to through traffic.

Consultation Responses

Members:

Leader of Council:	Royce Longton – I recommend that the report be accepted subject to the agreement of the portfolio holder and ward member(s)
Select Committee Chairmen:	Brian Bedwell – No comments received
P&L Committee Chairman :	N/A.

Ward Members: Sally Hannon in her capacity as Portfolio Member for Highways and Transportation.
Comments from Emma Webster:-
Confirms recommendation in view of further consultation that has taken place.

Opposition Spokesperson: Brian Bedwell – comments as above.

Advisory Members: N/A.

Local Stakeholders: Local residents and businesses have been consulted over the proposed closure of Hampton Road and Rectory Close as part of the informal consultation. Local Stakeholders have been advised of the outcome of the Informal consultation. Statutory consultation will take place when the traffic orders are published.

Officers Consulted: John Ashworth, Mark Edwards, Charles Stickler.

Trade Union: N/A.