

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	3 NOVEMBER 2016	AGENDA ITEM:	7
TITLE:	WATLINGTON STREET / SOUTH STREET INFORMAL CONSULTATION - UPDATE		
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Officers have considered traffic management options to address road safety issues at the junction of South Street and Sidmouth Street, following the recommendations made at the September 2016 meeting of the Sub-Committee.
- 1.2 This report provides a written summary of these options and Officer recommendations.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Sub-Committee notes the report.
- 2.2 That a further informal consultation be conducted for the option in Item 4.7, alongside a proposal for a full closure of South Street, at its junction with Sidmouth Street.
- 2.3 That the results of this informal consultation be reported at a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Improving road safety through the reduction of casualties is a statutory duty of the Council, as highway authority.

4. BACKGROUND AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Abbey Ward Councillors conducted an informal consultation on proposals to close South Street (east-side), at its junction with Sidmouth Street, to remove rat-running traffic that occurs between London Road and Sidmouth Street. The consultation also requested resident views on the installation of traffic calming (speed cushions).
- 4.2 There is a cluster of accidents that have resulted in casualties at the junction of South Street and Sidmouth Street, as well as the perception of speeding, which this proposed closure would address.
- 4.3 The September 2016 report concluded that the consultation had received a relatively low level of mixed responses and that a clear recommendation could not be made.
- 4.4 Many of the concerns and objections related to accessibility difficulties for residents, as those wishing to access this area from the west would have a considerable diversion.
- 4.5 Officers have considered the consultation responses and alternative traffic management methods that could be implemented to achieve a similar outcome, but address the concerns that have been raised against a full closure of South Street. The options are as follow:
- 4.6 One-way restriction on South Street.
 - 4.6.1 This restriction could be implemented in an eastbound direction, between the junction with Sidmouth Street and the junction with The Grove. This restriction could be extended to the junction with Watlington Street.
 - 4.6.2 This proposal would overcome the access issues, as indicated in Item 4.4, by providing access from Sidmouth Street and Watlington Street.
 - 4.6.3 This proposal would remove the rat-run between London Road and Sidmouth Street, which Officers believe will improve road safety at the junction with Sidmouth Street and South Street and improve the perceived speeding issues that residents have raised.
 - 4.6.4 This proposal would not prevent the rat-run between Sidmouth Street and London Road.

4.6.5 There is a risk that the implementation of a one-way restriction could increase vehicle speeds, once the risk of on-coming traffic is removed.

4.7 One-way 'plug' on South Street

4.7.1 This restriction could be implemented on South Street, at its junction with Sidmouth Street, to prevent vehicles from exiting South Street in a westbound direction. An island would be built to across the westbound approach to the junction, which could be designed to allow bicycles to approach in this direction. However, should this facility be incorporated, there could be abuse by motorcyclists.

4.7.2 This proposal would overcome the access issues, as indicated in Item 4.4 by providing access from Sidmouth Street and Watlington Street. This proposal would enhance resident access, relative to the proposal in Item 4.6, by permitting 2-way access along South Street up to the restriction - this would also reduce the number of vehicle movements on The Grove.

4.7.3 This proposal would remove the rat-run between London Road and Sidmouth Street, which Officers believe will improve the road safety at the junction with Sidmouth Street and South Street and improve the perceived speeding issues that residents have raised.

4.7.4 This proposal would not prevent the rat-run between Sidmouth Street and London Road.

4.8 A full closure of South Street will be the only effective solution for preventing both rat-run issues, however, Officers sympathise with the resident access issues that have been raised. Removing the London Street to Sidmouth Street rat-run should positively affect the accident cluster at the junction with South Street, so this must be the priority of any scheme that is developed at this location.

4.9 Officers recommend that the option described in 4.7 is proposed in a further informal consultation, in order to ascertain the views of the affected residents. This could be presented alongside a full closure, which provides Officers preferred option and preferred 'compromise' option for addressing road safety.

4.10 This further consultation can provide the aims of the scheme and how each option will meet these aims. It is hoped that this will generate a higher volume of responses, which can be reported at a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 This proposal contributes to the Council's strategic aims, as set out below:

- Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active.
- Providing infrastructure to support the economy.
- Remaining financially sustainable to deliver these service priorities.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.1 It is recommended that a further informal consultation be conducted, prior to statutory consultation, to obtain resident views on the preferred traffic management option.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Changes to Traffic Regulation Orders will require advertisement and consultation, under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 In addition to the Human Rights Act 1998 the Council is required to comply with the Equalities Act 2010. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:-

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None arising from this report.

9.2 Funding will need to be identified prior to implementation of any scheme.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Watlington Street / South Street - Informal Consultation (Traffic Management Sub-Committee, September 2016).