

Urgent Item

Report of Cabinet Member for Environment & Transportation

Cabinet – 14 April 2015

REPORT ON PROPOSED EXPERIMENTAL CHANGES TO KINGSWAY

Purpose:	To consider a proposal to review the operation of the bus lane [eastbound] on the Kingsway and the implications of re-routing bus services and other vehicles that are currently permitted to use this bus lane.
Policy Framework:	None.
Reason for Decision:	To provide officers with instructions to proceed.
Consultation:	Local Ward Members, Legal & Finance, Access to Services.
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that Cabinet: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Authorise officers to monitor the implementation of temporary barriers along the central reservation of the Kingsway,• Authorise officers to implement an Experimental Traffic Order and take any consequential steps to bring this into effect

1.0 Background:

- 1.1 The Authority has been considering plans to alter the road layout on The Kingsway as part of the City Centre Strategic Review. Further, as a result of public concerns regarding accidents along the Kingsway, involving public service vehicles and pedestrians, it is appropriate to bring forward proposals to consider the road layout and whether any changes should be made. In particular, the Authority wishes to carry out a full review of all options including the cumulative effect of any changes on other parts of the city and pedestrian / road user safety.
- 1.2 Any option, for The Kingsway, must take into account of the fact that the future form and function of The Kingsway is key in order to support the aspirations for the city centre and to enable it to be fit for purpose in the future. These are elements which are currently being refined by the City Centre Strategic Review, part of which has included a public consultation phase.
- 1.3 The Coroner has issued a Regulation 28 report prior to the inquest being held investigating the death of Mr Foss, on the Kingsway approximately 18 months ago. The Authority has to respond to this report by the 2nd of June 2015

1.4 As with all highway / transportation infrastructure projects, the performance of these schemes is periodically reviewed. The Metro scheme, which encompasses Orchard Street, Kingsway, West Way and Oystermouth Road is no exception.

2.0 **Proposals**

2.1 As part of the phased implementation of measures identified through evaluation of the Metro scheme, it was considered that pedestrian barriers along the central reserve of The Kingsway would assist in directing pedestrians to existing signal controlled pedestrian crossings. It is considered prudent to trial the effectiveness of this proposal through the use of temporary pedestrian barriers. These barriers were installed on Sunday 12th April 2015 and these will be monitored for effectiveness over the coming weeks.

2.2 The City Centre Strategic Review included an origin and destination survey being commissioned, to survey all vehicles entering the city centre and travelling along The Kingsway.

2.3 Analysis of the survey results has revealed that the majority of motorists are using The Kingsway to travel onwards, not to visit the city centre, and due to the current road network layout, The Kingsway is considered the most convenient route.

2.4 The City Centre Strategic review has considered current land use functions and if the aspirations for the city centre are best served by The Kingsway accommodating four lanes of traffic, or would a future Business District along The Kingsway be best served by reducing the extent of the highway, releasing valuable areas to enhance the public space and environment to encourage greater amounts of city centre living.

2.5 In order to release road space, officers have been assessing the feasibility of diverting the eastbound Metro route and a percentage of private vehicle traffic away from The Kingsway, and accommodating these flows on alternative routes.

2.6 Whilst traffic modelling will provide accurate predictions of traffic flow under near perfect conditions, it is imperative that the implications of any proposed amendments to the current highway network are fully understood. A number of discrete trials would greatly assist in developing robust proposals and facilitate a comprehensive public engagement exercise.

2.7 In order to facilitate these trials, it will be necessary to introduce Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders on a number of routes throughout the city centre, this would include consideration of prohibiting the use of the eastbound section of The Kingsway Metro Track, to prohibit parking and loading activities along sections of High Street and Mansel Street, to ensure diverted bus services are not unduly delayed and to ensure road safety is not compromised.

- 2.8 An Experimental Traffic Regulation Order can be made, followed by the implementation of associated lines and signs together with any necessary physical changes e.g. kerblines amendments. The Council then has up to 18 months to monitor the impact of the measures, permitting affected parties to comment, prior to sealing a permanent traffic order at the end of the experimental period, or deciding not to proceed with the original proposal, having had the benefit of monitoring the impact of the experiment over the maximum 18 month period. Any final Traffic Regulation Order can be amended to take account of comments received during the experimental period.
- 2.9 Subject to successful feasibility assessments and trials the proposed re-routed services would be as follows:
- Services X11, X12, X13 - Discussions have already taken place with First Cymru, the main operator of services along The Kingsway (eastbound bus lane), with regard to safety measures and the re-routing of services, via Kingsway, Christina Street, Mansel Street, De la Beche Street and Alexandra Road. This will allow the service to re-join the current route on High Street
 - The Metro service - The Morriston bound Metro service would need to be re-routed from the point of the platform island stop on Westway. Morriston bound (northbound) services would need to be re-routed from Westway through bus station concourse south along Westway to the junction of Oystermouth Road then left along Oystermouth Road to Princess Way, Caer Street, Castle Bailey Street/Castle Street/High Street (or to avoid High Street route via College Street, Bellevue Way and Alexandra Road to re-join current route at High Street

3.0 Implications

- 3.1 The implications of re-routing the eastbound bus services to either along High Street and /or Mansel Street will be as follows:
- Bus Services will be delayed by general traffic particularly during peak periods. This will lead to reduced reliability and hence there will be an impact on the frequency of services.
 - Removal of some on-street parking and loading provision along High Street and Mansel Street.
 - Increased bus service frequency along both routes may potentially impact on air quality issues.
 - The hoardings outside the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery are not due to be removed until early 2016 and this would constrict traffic movement, further exacerbated by additional bus services along the route.
 - Emergency Service vehicles would be unable to use the eastbound Metro Track which may impact on emergency response times.

- Metro customers using the High Street bus shelters instead of the outbound Metro stop, opposite the Dragon Hotel
- There are safety implications of converting the existing two way Metro bus lane into a one way metro bus lane. There is likely to be an increase in overtaking movements and increased speed of traffic. The road will become a dual carriageway with the left lane (nearside lane) being the main bus lane with the right lane (offside lane) be used as an overtaking lane for taxis and permitted vehicles. Therefore, it is recommended that the offside lane be closed to all traffic.

4.0 Financial Implications:

There are financial implications to this report and further information with regard to detailed costs of changes will be provided in due course.

The current cost of installing barriers and the costs associated with the experimental traffic order will be met from the current Revenue and Capital contingency funds. Any more substantial costs associated with future traffic changes will have to be subject to a separate report to Cabinet for potential inclusion in the future Capital programme.

5.0 Legal Implication:

- 5.1 The proposed Experimental Traffic Regulation Order must be made in accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 and associated statutory guidance

6.0 Equality and Engagement Implications

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment screening will be undertaken in the immediate term indicating those characteristics which may be affected by the proposal.

Consultation and Engagement will be undertaken with representatives of those groups during the period of operation.

An EIA Report, if required, will be maintained throughout the period of the experimental order detailing any identified impacts..

Background Papers: None.

Appendices: None.