

Report of the Head of Highways & Transportation

Development Cabinet Advisory Committee

15 June 2016

PEDESTRIANISATION OF WIND STREET

Purpose: To provide an update on the methods to achieve the pedestrianisation of Wind Street.

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FOR INFORMATION

1. Background

- 1.1 The Authority has been approached by members of Swansea Business Improvement District (BID), to consider the pedestrianisation of Wind Street, in order to form a catalyst with which to transform Wind Street from a mainly nocturnal adult bar / pub environment to a more family friendly restaurant offer, throughout the day and into the evening. Thereby, improving the offer and reputation of Wind Street to a broader range of clientele and visitors.
- 1.2 The Cabinet Advisory Committee requested that officers attend the previous meeting to agree a scope of the report, which would focus on how to deliver a pedestrianised Wind Street, the consequential effect on the highway network, access arrangements and to provide examples of successful pedestrianised streets in other cities.

2. Preliminary Proposal

- 2.1 BID representatives have suggested that there would be a desire to see traffic excluded from Wind Street to allow lunchtime alfresco dining and for this to continue into the night time economy period, thereby effectively denying all but emergency services vehicular access from say 11am through to 6am, the next morning.
- 2.2 The question remains whether it would be feasible to accommodate normal traffic flow southwards along Wind Street until 11 am and then to close Wind Street, with business operators then having to occupy the vacated carriageway with chairs and tables. Alternatively, following

the road closure, the footways could effectively become part of the operating premises with pedestrians directed to use the carriageway as the main thoroughfare to travel along Wind Street.

- 2.3 Either solution would undoubtedly lead to a significant level of resource from each venue and may detract from a quality ambience of the street.
- 2.4 Due to traffic flows along Wind Street being modest, flows which could easily be accommodated by the neighbouring highway network, members may wish to consider adopting a more permanent street layout, with access to vehicles being limited to a reduced area of the carriageway and to accommodate loading / access requirements only, during a period of say 6am – 11am.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Weather - An aspiration amongst BID is to create an alfresco dining experience utilising either the footway or part of the existing carriageway to place chairs and tables. There is an acceptance that due to the uncertainty of the weather of Swansea, some form of canopy would have to be provided over certain areas of the street.
- 3.2 Planning - There are Grade 2 listed buildings in Wind Street and therefore, detailed consultation with Planning would be required, prior to a planning application being considered, for the canopies.
- 3.3 Funding – at present there is no specified budget to pedestrianise Wind Street. There are rising bollards at either end, of Wind Street, which already form an entry control system to the street during the night time economy period, however, these could be used to prevent vehicular access during the approved period of road closure. However, the existing street profile and materials would remain, (tarmac road, kerb upstands and existing footway materials) at least until additional funding could be sought. It is anticipated that the individual retailers would fund any necessary canopies and street furniture.
- 3.4 Access – at present access is available for deliveries and customers during the day and only restricted during busy periods of the night time economy (6pm – 6am). Consultation would be required to ensure that, within reason, access and loading / unloading activities are not compromised. In addition, detailed consideration needs to be given to disabled access and for partially sighted / blind pedestrians.
- 3.5 Consultation – consultation is necessary in order that the pedestrianisation is delivered efficiently as possible with the minimal of objections and the avoidance of legal challenge. There are a range of options of how to progress more stringent vehicle access control via a Traffic Regulation Order. It is usual practise to undertake a significant level of consultation prior to advertising a legal notice, to reduce the

risk of objections and the need to amend proposals and re-advertise, which is a costly and time consuming process

- 3.5.1 The normal procedure is to advertise a legal notice informing of the Authority's intentions to adopt more stringent vehicle access arrangements, for a period of three weeks. However, due to the fact that loading / access arrangements are being denied for the majority of the day, then in accordance with The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996, a public enquiry shall be held, if an objection is made to the TRO, which is not considered frivolous or irrelevant. This could lead to a significant delay to the implementation date and expend significant officer time which has an associated cost. Having worked through any objections and a public enquiry, the TRO could then be sealed (involving another legal advert) before being able to implement the scheme.
- 3.5.2 Through consultation with Cardiff council, who have successfully delivered the pedestrianisation of St Mary's Street, it became apparent that perhaps the most appropriate way to progress such a scheme would be on a phased approach, as an experiment. This by no means suggests that interested parties shouldn't be consulted prior to commencement of the experiment, however, the process allows for a trial period of up to 18 months, within which comments and suggestions are gathered, recorded and then considered, prior to formally finalising the scheme (sealing) with the arrangement becoming permanent.
- 3.5.3 The benefits of an Experimental Traffic Order are that:
- Potential objectors have an opportunity to judge the actual impact of the proposals as opposed to lodging an objection to some expected problem that may not arise or impacts far less significantly than originally considered.
 - The timings of the road closure may need to be varied following an initial period to accommodate an unforeseen circumstance
 - Set up costs are less, due to the requirement of only two legal notices, no requirement to re advertise amendments, and the absence of risk of a public enquiry
 - A period of only seven days needs to be considered between advertisement of the legal Experimental TRO and implementation of the scheme. however, details of the Order have to be available at designated locations throughout the experimental period.
 - If the experiment isn't a success then the Experimental TRO lapses and no expensive revocation of TRO's is necessary.
 - The traders have an opportunity to tailor their operation and occupation of the street to meet the customer demands, which at present are only speculative.

4. Equality and Engagement Implications

- 4.1 Detailed assessments will be required to ensure disabled access requirements are maintained, that pedestrians with sight or hearing impairment are accommodated. As no firm proposals have yet to be established, then this work has not yet been undertaken.
- 4.2 The requirements for consultation have already been outlined within section 3.5 above.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 If the proposals were to proceed then in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, it will be necessary to advertise a public notice in the local press as well as displaying a copy of the notice on site, giving details of the changes to the highway

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 Other than Legal and officer time costs, there are no ongoing, additional revenue costs to the proposals of an experimental traffic order. However, a more permanent pedestrianisation solution will need to consider Revenue and Capital Financial Implications.

FOR INFORMATION

Background papers: *none.*

Appendices: none