

DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, STREETSCENE AND BROADBAND – COUNCILLOR JOHN THOMSON

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SERVICE

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REFERENCE: HSB-21-14

**BRADFORD ON AVON HISTORIC CORE ZONE,
REPORT ON CONSULTATION ON RESTRICTED PARKING ZONE**

Purpose of Report

1. To:
 - (i) Set out the responses received following the recent advertisement of the traffic order for the Restricted Parking Zone in Bradford on Avon as part of the overall Historic Core Zone project.
 - (ii) Recommend the making of the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) as advertised.
 - (iii) Respond to the receipt of two petitions.
 - (iv) Respond to comments received on the wider Historic Core Zone proposal.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. The proposed TRO meets two key priorities of the Council's Business Plan. Those priorities being:
 - Outcome 2 – People in Wiltshire work together to solve problems locally and participate in decisions that affect them; and
 - Outcome 5 – People in Wiltshire have healthy, active and high quality lives.
3. Outcome 2 has been met through development of the Historic Core Zone (HCZ) and Restricted Parking Zone (RPZ) proposals in conjunction with the Historic Core Zone working group.

Background

4. The Bradford on Avon HCZ is based on the same principles as the four HCZ schemes that were introduced in Halifax, Lincoln, Shrewsbury and Bury St. Edmunds in the early 1990s. The HCZ looks at how traffic management schemes can be designed to suit areas of special historic character. The common premise of these schemes was the creation of a clearly identifiable zone in the town that reduced the dominance and intimidation of traffic, enhanced the appearance of the town and improved accessibility for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users.
5. One aspect of the overall HCZ is the introduction of a RPZ. An RPZ allows for the removal of many marked parking restrictions and assists in a reduction in street clutter.

Summary of Proposals

6. The RPZ TRO was formally advertised for comment on 14 March 2014. The Council's closing date for receipt of objections or other representations, together with the grounds on which they were made, was 7 April 2014.
7. A plan showing the extent of the proposed RPZ is attached as **Appendix 1**.

Summary of Responses

8. Many of the comments received refer to the wider HCZ proposals and do not just contain comment to the advertised TRO's. Whilst the TRO process can only consider objections and support to the RPZ proposals, it also provides the opportunity to give consideration to any other comments made on the wider concept of the HCZ. Therefore, all comments made, whether in direct relation to the advertised RPZ or the wider HCZ, have been considered.
9. A full summary of the responses received together with officer responses, where considered appropriate, is included in the attached Report on Consultation that can be found at **Appendix 2**.

Main Considerations for the Council

10. The Council needs to consider the comments received and make a decision on the way forward.

Restricted Parking Zone (RPZ)

11. For the reasons set out in the Report on Consultation the objections received to the RPZ are not considered to be sufficient to withdraw or change the proposal. Whilst it is accepted that a period of time will be required for motorists to become used to the new form of restrictions there is no reason to consider that overall compliance will not be achieved as familiarity grows. It is worth noting that although promoted as part of the overall HCZ the RPZ is a standalone proposal that could be installed with or without the HCZ.

Historic Core Zone and Petitions

12. Although not required as an outcome of the RPZ consultation, it is felt that the level of response received in respect of the HCZ proposal should not pass unremarked. Despite the original local mandate there continue to be substantive areas of opposition to the HCZ as demonstrated by the level of comment received both in the form of individual representation and through petition.
13. The nature of these representations makes it difficult to précis; the only and obvious conclusion is that there is nothing approaching a clear consensus at a local level.

Safeguarding Considerations

14. There is no risk to the Council as a result of these proposals.

Public Health Implications

15. There are none in relation to the RPZ.

Environmental Impact of the Proposal

16. See Report on Consultation.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

17. See Report on Consultation.

Risk Assessment

18. There is no risk to the Council in relation to the RPZ.

Financial Implications

19. Funding for the RPZ (and indeed for the wider HCZ scheme) is sourced through the Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP) Integrated Transport budget provided as a direct grant by the DfT. Wiltshire's settlement for 2014/15 is £3.752 million. The DfT has indicated that from April 2015, LTP funding is subject to change and this is likely to result in a significant reduction in the amount made available in future years.

Legal Implications

20. This scheme requires the processing of a TRO. The process of introducing a TRO is governed by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and associated procedural regulations. Failure to adhere to the statutory processes could result in the restrictions being successfully challenged in the High Court.

Options Considered

Restricted Parking Zone

21. To:
- (i) Implement the proposals as advertised.
 - (ii) Abandon the proposals.

Historic Core Zone

22. Although this report does not offer a recommendation that would form part of the Cabinet Member's decision, the consultation responses invite the Council to consider a range of options.
23. In no particular order, they include to:
- (i) Implement the HCZ scheme as currently designed.
 - (ii) Implement the HCZ scheme as currently designed but with the incorporation of a conventional controlled pedestrian crossing.
 - (iii) Abandon the HCZ scheme.
 - (iv) Defer a decision on delivery of the HCZ scheme until a full consultation has been carried out by the Town Council via a local referendum/advisory poll.

There are strengths and weaknesses inherent in every option (and variations therein), the detail of which is not explored here.

Reason for Proposals

Restricted Parking Zone

24. The objections received to the RPZ are not considered to be sufficient to withdraw or change the proposal.

Proposals

25. That:
- (i) The Traffic Regulation Order be implemented as advertised.
 - (ii) The supporters and objectors be informed accordingly.
 - (iii) The Cabinet Member give consideration to the options set out in paragraph 21 above to determine the way forward for the Historic Core Zone.
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The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report:

- Letters of support
- Letters of objection