

Bow Liveable Streets

Appendix E – Alternatives Considered

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Alternatives considered

At each stage of the engagement process we have taken on board the feedback and views of residents and businesses. Throughout the eight-month engagement process we have received and responded to over 250 emails from community members. The council has developed and amended the proposals at every stage to represent the feedback and views of residents.

This report considers the most common suggestions, recommendations and alternative proposals received during public consultation.

Scheme 1 – Roman Road Junction

There was overall strong support for scheme 1. Responses from those with addresses in the consultation area showed that 67% were supportive and 26% unsupportive. Taking business owner responses only, 42% were supportive and 53% not supportive. There were a number of alternative ideas and concepts put forward during the consultation which have been reviewed below.

Bus Gateway Exemptions

Blue Badge Holders

It was proposed in the consultation that the bus gateway would operate with exemptions for buses, cyclists and emergency service vehicles only. Approximately 300 comments were received about how this would restrict access for residents. Overwhelmingly, the most common theme raised in these comments was that the bus gateway would restrict access for disabled or mobility impaired residents who rely on their vehicles to get around, and in some cases are physically unable to walk, cycle or use public transport. Many of these responses cited that it would cause local access issues for disabled or mobility impaired residents getting to the local shops, doctors' surgery or hospital. Concerns were also raised regarding those with severe mobility issues that need to access Ability Bow above St Paul Old Ford Church, which is immediately north of St Stephen's Road/ Roman Road junction.

It is therefore recommended that a further exemption is made for residents of Bow with blue badge holders at the bus gateway to mitigate journey restrictions for those who are disabled or mobility impaired. This, along with the pedestrian environment improvements proposed in this and other schemes will result in a significant improvement for disabled and mobility impaired residents, providing the capability for those who are able to navigate the pedestrian environment safely, without restricting those who are less able.

Residents

Exemptions for local residents were also a common theme in the feedback received from the 26% that were unsupportive of the measures, with requests for local exemption permits enforced via ANPR cameras. Requests for taxi exemptions were also received.

A key objective of the project is to reduce short motor vehicle journeys that could be made by alternative active travel modes. Across the borough a third of trips are shorter than 1.2 miles. By allowing resident access this would further encourage short trips to be made by motor vehicle. Many of these trips, covering short distances for the school run or to go to the local shops are considered to be switchable trips, and

in conjunction with other complimentary measures such as cycle education and travel planning, are the key to creating lasting behaviour change in the community.

In addition, although vehicles numbers will be reduced, vehicle numbers will be high enough to present a barrier to those that would switch to an active travel choice. Removing these sorts of trips from the network also has the benefit in reducing local congestion for those that must still drive for work or mobility reasons.

Consequently, it is recommended that local residents are not given an exemption to the Roman Road bus gateway.

Bus Gateway Operating Times

Overall response

During the consultation, three options were given on the times that the bus gateway could operate. Of those with addresses within the consultation area, 53% indicated a preference for 24/7 restrictions, 22% indicated a preference for 7am-7pm Monday to Friday, and 25% indicated a preference for 7am-10am and 2:30pm-7pm Monday to Friday.

There is a clear majority of support for 24/7 bus gateway restrictions, with some of the common themes in the free text comments saying that it will improve air quality, help reduce rat-running in the area, and improve the junction safety.

Businesses

Business owners were overall unsupportive of the bus gateway (52% unsupportive). The main concerns being an increased difficulty for their deliveries and for customers that travel to the area by car being discouraged.

Residents

Many respondents raised concerns about congestion during weekends and the desire to have a pedestrian friendly environment outside of the shops. In addition to this, there were also 23 comments raised about anti-social driving and traffic noise during early morning and at night. This is also supported by the traffic data, with traffic volumes only dipping below 200 vehicles/hour during the hours of 1am-6am on a weekday and 3:30am-6:30am during the weekend.

Recommendation

In consideration to:

- The concerns raised by businesses in the area
- Overall support for 24 hours and 7 days a week
- Concerns over noise especially during the early hours of the morning
- The objective to reduce short motor vehicle trips especially during school drop off and pick up

It is recommended that the hours of operation should be 6:30am to 9:30am and 2:30pm to 7pm Monday to Friday.

Cycle Parking

Requests were received for more cycle parking on Roman Road. This can be investigated further at the detailed design stage and further cycle parking installed where there is sufficient room to do so.

Traffic Calming

Requests for speed humps on Roman Road were received in order to calm traffic speeds. With reduced levels of traffic on Roman Road, it will be important to ensure slower speeds by design along the road. The conversion of eight of the loading bays (which are often empty or only used for short times) to parklets and short stay parking will help ensure slower speeds through narrowing of the carriageway and horizontal deflection, similar to a chicane.

Speed humps are not appropriate for this section of road given that it is a bus route. Therefore, it is recommended that additional traffic calming is not installed to this section of Roman Road.

Scheme 2 – Roman Road East

There was overall support for scheme 2. Responses from those with addresses in the consultation area showed that 78% were supportive and 17% unsupportive. Taking business owner responses only, 54% were supportive and 42% unsupportive.

There were a number of alternative ideas and concepts put forward during the consultation which have been reviewed below.

Pedestrianisation Timed Operation

Design

During the consultation there were requests to pedestrianise the market at all times. However, the full pedestrianisation of the market could result in more difficulty for delivery vehicles, given that there are limited side roads that could be utilised. Pedestrianisation during certain hours would help mitigate this impact by allowing deliveries outside of closure hours.

It was also suggested that no timed vehicle access is implemented, and the road be designed to provide pedestrian priority through road design. This was considered during the concept stage, however given the narrow characteristics of the carriageway and footway, significant parking removal/ restriction would be required to achieve this. It is also desirable to discourage this part of the road from being used as a local through route.

Therefore, a timed pedestrianisation, consistent with the operational hours of the market day restrictions is considered to be the preferred option as presented in the consultation.

Blue Badge

There were also requests for blue badge exemptions during the pedestrianised hours and a request for additional blue badge parking.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the proposed hours are implemented, with further engagement undertaken with local businesses, market traders and residents on the detailed design of this section of Roman Road. The further engagement will address some of these concerns regarding delivery, market stall locations and ensure the design is suitable to maximise positive benefits for businesses.

It is further recommended that implementing more disabled parking bays on side streets is investigated, as well as whether a short section of Roman Road (perhaps between Parnell Road and Cardigan Road) to have blue badge exemption from any closure restrictions.

Cycle Access

There were two requests to allow two-way cycling along Roman Road. Two-way cycle access along Roman Road will be able to be accommodated during pedestrianisation hours.

Scheme 3 – Old Ford Road

There was overall support for scheme 3. Responses from those with addresses in the consultation area showed that 70% were supportive and 22% unsupportive. However, there were a number of alternative ideas and concepts put forward during the consultation which have been reviewed below.

Skew Bridge

There was majority support for the proposed closure at Skew Bridge on Old Ford Road, with 67% of respondents from within the consultation area supportive, and 25% not supportive.

There were 582 free text comments about existing safety concerns along Old Ford Road with many comments stating how much safer respondents felt on Skew Bridge when the temporary social distancing closure was implemented. Similarly, there were 348 comments about air quality and 84 about noise with many commenting about how the air quality and noise pollution improved when the temporary closure was implemented.

Some of the comments received noted an increase in congestion on immediately surrounding roads such as Roman Road and St Stephen's Road. As the Skew Bridge closure was implemented on a localised level, it left the diversion route through Roman Road as a convenient alternative, increasing congestion on this road. The benefit of implementing the Skew Bridge closure in conjunction with the bus gateway on Roman Road and closure at Coborn Road is that it will help to mitigate this issue on a network level, by discouraging short trips and actively encouraging walking and cycling.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Skew Bridge proposal is implemented, however this needs to be in conjunction with the proposals in scheme 1 and 4 to mitigate impacts seen during the temporary closure of Skew Bridge.

As the proposals are recommended to be timed closures further measures to increase capacity at the junction of Roman Road and St Stephens Road are required during non-operational times. It is recommended that this includes the relocation of four parking spaces from Roman Road and St Stephen's Road and a left turn only when exiting Roman Road east.

Contra-flow Cycling

There were 15 requests to implement contraflow cycle lane on Old Ford Road east of Parnell Road to provide a cycle route along the cycle desire line. This was investigated during design. Given the narrow width of the road and presence of Santander Cycle Hire station, it is not possible to implement this safely without the removal of parking spaces along the northern kerbline (approx. 11 spaces).

There were also 10 requests for cycle lanes along the length of Old Ford Road between Skew Bridge and Parnell Road. With the introduction of a closure at Skew Bridge, it is expected that there will be a large reduction in vehicle traffic (supported by the observations during the temporary closure) on Old Ford Road. In order to provide cycle lanes, there would need to be significant loss of parking given the available width of the road.

Therefore, it is not recommended that cycle lanes are implemented, and instead that importance is placed on creating a low traffic and low speed environment to improve cycle amenity.

Scheme 4 – Antill and Coborn Road

There was overall support for scheme 4. Responses from those with addresses in the consultation area showed that 78% were supportive and 17% unsupportive. However, there were a number of alternative ideas and concepts put forward during the consultation which have been reviewed below.

Antill Road Closure

There were requests to move the closure on Antill Road to the junction with Medway Road. However, it would not be suitable to move the closure on Antill Road to the junction with Medway Road, given that vehicles could use Lyal Road to bypass it. Requests for a closure on Lyal Road were made given concerns that this could be used as a cut through route from Roman Road. It is very unlikely that this road will become a rat-run with the proposed configuration. The closure on Antill Road/Selwyn Road as proposed is considered to be the most suitable option.

It is recommended that traffic volumes are monitored across the scheme, specifically in Lyal Road and the review is no longer than 18 months after full implementation of the scheme.

Pocket Park on Litchfield Road

A petition to install a pocket park at Litchfield Road was received by the residents with the removal of 2-3 parking spaces.

It is recommended that this is progressed, with further investigation and potential engagement with local residents.

Coborn Road Closure Exemptions

There was overall support for the proposed road closure on Coborn Road with 58% of respondents supportive. It was proposed in the consultation that the closure would operate with exemptions for buses, cyclists and emergency service vehicles only.

276 comments were received about how this would restrict access for residents. Overwhelmingly, the most common theme raised in these comments was that the timed closure would restrict access for disabled or mobility impaired residents who rely on their vehicles to get around, and in some cases are physically unable to walk, cycle or use public transport. Many of these responses cited that it would cause local access issues for disabled or mobility impaired residents getting to the local shops, doctors' surgery or hospital.

It is recommended that the proposed design proceeds to detailed design and implementation. However, it is recommended that an exemption for blue badge holders be implemented to ensure access for those who are physically unable to walk, cycle or use public transport

Residents

Exemptions for local residents were also a common theme in the feedback received from the 24% that were unsupportive of the measures, with requests for local exemption permits enforced via ANPR cameras. Requests for taxi exemptions were also received.

A key objective of the project is to reduce short motor vehicle journeys that could be made by alternative active travel modes. Across the borough a third of trips are

shorter than 1.2miles By allowing resident access this would further encourage short trips to be made by motor vehicle. Many of these trips, covering short distances for the school run or to go to the local shops are considered to be switchable trips, and in conjunction with other complimentary measures such as cycle education and travel planning, are the key to creating lasting behaviour change in the community.

In addition, although vehicles numbers will be reduced, vehicle numbers will be high enough to present a barrier to those that would switch to an active travel choice. Removing these sorts of trips from the network also has the benefit in reducing local congestion for those that must still drive for work or mobility impairment reasons.

Consequently, it is recommended that local residents are not given an exemption to the Coborn Road closure.

Coborn Road Timed Operation

During the consultation, three options were given on the times that the timed closure could operate. Of those with addresses within the consultation area, 51% indicated a preference for 24/7 restrictions, 22% indicated a preference for 7am-7pm Monday to Friday, and 27% indicated a preference for 7am-10am and 2:30pm-7pm Monday to Friday.

Additionally, there were 321 comments about safety in the area. A large number of respondents want to see measures that make it safer for walking and cycling, including reducing, calming and managing traffic at all times, as most said there was through traffic in the weekends and evenings as well.

The consultation results show a clear majority in support of 24/7 operation. Whilst there were a number of comments supporting the inclusion of weekends in the restrictions (with 1 suggestion of a 7am-7pm Mon-Sun option), there were also a number of comments (22) from residents that mention traffic noise and anti-social driving during the morning and evenings.

Concerns have been raised over safety at night with a reduction in traffic through the area.

In consideration to the concerns raised as mentioned above plus the timing of the recommended bus gateway on Roman Road it is recommended that a timed closure from 6:30am to 7pm closure is installed.

Public Realm Improvements

The public realm improvements including improved lighting and street artwork under the bridge and more greenery were supported by 77% of respondents. Therefore, it is recommended that this proceed to detailed design and implementation.

Scheme 5 – Bow Walking Routes

There was overall support for scheme 5. Responses from those with addresses in the consultation area showed that 79% were supportive and 10% unsupportive. However, there were a number of alternative ideas and concepts put forward during the consultation which have been reviewed below.

Localised Pavement Improvements

The proposed pavement improvements were highly supported with 80% of respondents supportive of the proposals and 11% unsupportive. Therefore, it is recommended that all proposals proceed to detailed design and implementation.

However, there were a number of alternative solutions proposed, including implementing contraflow cycling on Antill Road, additional continuous crossing on Bow Road and the removal of parking on Tredegar Road to allow for footway widening.

Contraflow cycling on Antill Road would require significant removal of parking to safely implement, therefore this is not recommended. Litchfield Road provides a quiet and safe alternative.

Given that many of the side roads along Bow Road are already raised, and given budget constraints, continuous crossings along Bow Road are not recommended.

In order to widen footways on Tredegar Road, removal of parking will be required, therefore this is not recommended.

Tom Thumb's Arch Improvements

The proposed improvements to Tom Thumb's Arch were highly supported with 78% of respondents supportive of the scheme and 9% unsupportive. Therefore, it is recommended that all proposals proceed to detailed design and implementation.

Scheme 6 – Fairfield Road

There was overall support for scheme 6. Responses from those with addresses in the consultation area showed that 73% were supportive and 14% unsupportive. However, there were a number of alternative ideas and concepts put forward during the consultation which have been reviewed below.

One-way Priority Working at Rail Bridge

Concerns were raised about Fairfield Road being used as an alternative cut through route to the A12. It is not considered likely that this would occur during the morning peak, as southbound traffic is not permitted to turn right onto Bow Road. A suggestion for one-way priority at the narrow rail bridge may help to discourage this during the evening peak (giving priority to those coming in a southbound direction).

It is recommended that this is included in the detailed design and implemented.

Pocket Park on Wrexham Road

There was request from residents and a resident association to improve the walking route at the end of Wrexham Road to the side of the A12. This would improve the entry point to the residential area. It is recommended that this is progressed, with further investigation and potential engagement with local residents.

More Traffic Calming

Requests for additional traffic calming and cycle lanes on Tredegar Road were also received. It is not possible to implement further raised tables than already proposed given the driveway locations. Further narrowing (other than the one-way priority as proposed above) would also not be suitable given that buses are required to route along this road. Cycle lanes would require significant removal of parking given the width of the road. Therefore, further traffic calming and cycle lanes are not recommended.

Junction Design

Signalisation of the Fairfield Road/Tredegar Road junction is not considered to be the best solution given the proximity to the A12/Wick Lane signals. The feasibility of including a right turn box would need to be investigated once topographical surveys are received. Given the proximity of Duoro Street, the geometry and with the sightlines available, a zebra crossing is not recommended across the Fairfield Road arm.

Scheme 7 – School Streets

There was overall support for scheme 7. Responses from those with addresses in the consultation area showed that 71% were supportive and 12% unsupportive. However, there were a number of alternative ideas and concepts put forward during the consultation which have been reviewed below.

Chisenhale Primary School Street

72% of respondents were supportive of the proposed school street. There were also 8 requests to include Kenilworth Road, Driffield Road and Ellesmere Road as part of the Chisenhale Primary School Street. This is not recommended as it would restrict local access significantly.

There were also requests for additional cycle parking. This will be investigated where footway widening is proposed on Chisenhale Road.

Olga Primary School Street

71% of respondents were supportive of the proposed school street. There were 24 requests to include Medway Road as part of the Olga Primary School Street. It is recommended that Medway Road be included as part of the school street.

Old Ford Primary School Street

71% of respondents were supportive of the proposed school street. However, it was noted that access to parking spaces outside of Ability Bow should be maintained. The loading bay on Wright's Road will remain, which can be used as a drop off for those going to Ability Bow outside of school street hours. During school street hours, the single yellow line restriction on St Stephen's Road allows for drop offs to occur. Therefore, it is recommended that the school street proceeds as proposed.

Malmesbury Primary School

71% of respondents were supportive of the proposed school street. There were no alternative proposals. This school street is being progressed as part of the School Street programme.

Phoenix Upper School Street

There were some requests for a school street improvement outside of Phoenix Upper School. This includes a wider footway and reduced parking to allow for the school buses to turn around. It is recommended that improvements are made outside the school and the detailed design should be in discussion and agreed with school representatives and local residents.