

CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 20 th November 2018
Report Subject	Review of Pedestrianisation Order – Holywell High Street
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside
Report Author	Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Holywell Town Centre benefits from a pedestrianised zone on the High Street, which provides a safe and unobstructed shopping experience for pedestrians. For many years there has been much debate locally about the impact the Traffic Order has had on trade within the town, with some businesses claiming the traffic restriction has a limiting effect on High Street businesses, as shoppers cannot stop and quickly visit or easily collect items of shopping.

In July 2017, the Council received a petition containing over 500 names supporting the removal of the Pedestrianisation Order and requesting the reopening of the High Street to allow traffic to have continual access along the road. It was also suggested that this would then provide the opportunity to provide some on-street, short stay free car parking on the High Street to facilitate short stay visits to the town.

Holywell Town Council formally requested a trial period, during which the traffic restriction on High Street would be removed to allow a measured and objective assessment of the long term benefit of removing the order to be undertaken.

The 6 month trial period commenced in May 2018 and will continue until after Christmas however, a 6 month review of the impact of the trial has been undertaken and concluded that there is both local benefit and support to removing the Order permanently. The Town Council have also now formally confirmed their support to remove the Pedestrianisation Order.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1.	That Cabinet supports the proposal to remove the Pedestrianisation Order from High St, Holywell and commit to a long term aim of reconstructing the highway layout to safely and permanently facilitate traffic movements, once external funding sources can be found for the scheme.
2.	That Cabinet requests officers to work with the Town Council to explore all options to provide the necessary funding to construct the permanent scheme.

3.	That Cabinet confirm the existing pilot arrangements are to be removed at the end of the trial period and that the Pedestrianisation Order is to be reinstated until the revised layout can be funded and constructed.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSALS
1.01	In 2015 Flintshire County Council adopted a countywide Car Parking Strategy which resulted in the introduction of minimal car parking charges in town centres where the number of available spaces exceeded 50. The Strategy was introduced to ensure the availability of parking and therefore maintain the vibrancy and vitality of the town centres.
1.02	A 'Pedestrian only' zone is in operation on Holywell High Street and has been established since 1992 to provide a safe and unobstructed shopping experience in the town centre.
1.03	The Council's Car Parking Strategy states that every opportunity to provide some free, on-street short stay parking options should be considered in every town however, the Pedestrianisation Order restricts these options and consequently there are limited short stay parking provisions in the town centre.
1.04	The Council received a petition, signed by over 500 residents and businesses in Holywell requesting that the Pedestrianisation Order should be removed, allowing traffic to freely access the town centre and facilitate the provision of some free, short stay, on-street parking in the town.
1.05	In July 2017, Cabinet considered the matter and asked Holywell Town Council (HTC) to express an opinion on the matter before any scheme could be progressed to the design stage, which would then allow funding opportunities to be explored. HTC formally requested a trial period, during which the Order would be removed, thus allowing a measured and objective assessment of the long term benefit of removing the Order to be undertaken.
1.06	The Town Council also suggested that on completion of the trial, they would hold a Community Poll of all residents within the four Holywell County Council Wards, with the outcome of the poll then representing the final position of the Town Council on the future of the Pedestrianisation Order however, they failed to achieve the necessary support for a Community Poll.
1.07	<p>Before the scheme progressed, there were two agreed methods of evaluating the success of the scheme.</p> <p>1. Road and pedestrian safety. The scheme proposals would be audited before commencement and again once the system was established. If any concerns were raised, the scheme could not progress and the existing arrangements would be reinstated. The impact on local traffic movements were closely monitored by Traffic Engineers during the period of the trial to allow a final objective view on the impact of the scheme to be reported at the end of the trial.</p>

	<p>Outcome – The assessment did not highlight any reason why the Pedestrianisation Order should not be removed.</p> <p>2. Impact on Town centre trade and vitality. The Town Council worked with local businesses to produce an objective evaluation process which allowed the impact of the new traffic arrangements to be assessed. The mechanism for the review process was agreed by staff from the Council’s Enterprise and Regeneration team before the pilot scheme commenced.</p> <p>Outcome – The evidence gathered from local businesses during the pilot supported the removal of the Pedestrianisation Order.</p>
1.08	On the basis of the above information, HTC have now formally notified the County Council of their support to remove the Pedestrianisation Order permanently.
1.09	There are currently no funds available to make the necessary permanent changes to the streetscape to accommodate the new traffic arrangements and the cost of the permanent work will be significant. (Estimated at £800k). This position has been made clear to the Town Council and local businesses who recognise that work to obtain grant funding for the scheme will be challenging. Following approval from Cabinet, staff from the Council’s Enterprise and Regeneration team will work with the Town Council and local businesses to identify potential funding sources for the final scheme.
1.10	Following completion of the pilot in January 2019, the temporary pilot scheme will be removed and the original Pedestrianisation Order will then be reinstated. It will not be possible to maintain the existing arrangements beyond the period of the pilot as the existing construction of the road is not suited to the long term effect of traffic.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Cost of the changes to temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO’s) and the pilot arrangements on site have been found from internal budgets.
2.02	The costs of the final scheme will be the subject of funding bids to Welsh Government.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	With Cabinet Member.
3.02	With Elected Members in effected wards.
3.03	With local Town Council.
3.04	With residents and businesses.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	It has been made clear to both businesses and residents that funding is not available for the final scheme and that the current arrangements will be reinstated at the end of the 6 months pilot period, whilst potential funding arrangements can be explored.
5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.
6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Contact Officer: Stephen Jones Telephone: 01352 704700 E-mail: Stephen.o.jones@flintshire.gov.uk
7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	HTC – Holywell Town Council.