

# CABINET

## Lancaster Square Routes 29 May 2012

### Report of Head of Regeneration and Policy

PURPOSE OF REPORT			
To propose changes required to better manage access to and traffic within the city centre pedestrian zone, to suggest how to progress these and to update more generally on associated progress with the Square Routes initiative.			
Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Non-Key Decision	Referral from Cabinet Member
Date Included in Forward Plan	26 April 2012		
Project Appraisal Undertaken	N/A		
This report is public			

#### RECOMMENDATIONS OF COUNCILLOR HANSON

- (1) That the city council request of the county council as highway authority that as soon as possible it make one experimental traffic regulation order for the whole traffic restricted area (pedestrian zone) as per Option 2, including for the following changes:
- core hours of 10.00am to 17.00pm.  
removal of the exemption for postal deliveries and parcel packets within core hours
  - introduction of a revised permit system, with withdrawal of permit A and further adjusted providing for: essential maintenance (suggest Permit E); the dismantling of market stalls within set times (suggest Permit M) and temporary access for events and specific other activities (suggest Permit T)
  - removal of the parking spaces dedicated for use by disabled people in Market Square and to the rear of the Old Town Hall
- (2) That subject to the making of such an order Cabinet authorises the Chief Executive to make the following consequential changes to the council's services and operations:
- re-designating existing car parking spaces within city council off street car parks and including St Nicholas Arcades to provide new dedicated spaces for disabled people
  - adjustment of the Charter Market Rules

- re-programming council refuse collection in the zone to outside of the new core hours
- (3) That the Head of Regeneration and Planning lead for the council in working with the highway authority to:
- support the making of such an order, subsequent consultations, monitoring and review.
  - where appropriate provide additional on street parking bays dedicated for use by disabled people.

and report to the Planning and Highways Regulatory Committee as required concerning any necessary further approvals required.

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Previous reporting to Cabinet has provided full context and briefing on the Lancaster Square Routes initiative. The last was October 2011 (Minute 50).
- 1.2 Beyond physical improvements to the public realm (streets and spaces), it was highlighted that future reporting would consider a range of supporting management changes for the city centre. These include for potential changes to the charter market, the greater potential for street cafes and events and revisions to the way traffic is managed in the pedestrian zone.
- 1.3 This report updates on progress but focuses primarily on issues relating to traffic management in the city centre. The report sets out a comprehensive proposal for Cabinet to consider.

## **2.0 Proposal Details**

- 2.1 Lancaster Square Routes is about physical improvements for a purpose. It aims to improve streets and spaces within the historic centre for the public to enjoy and thereby support trading. Part of the focus therefore is how streets and spaces are currently used and how they might better be used.

### Market Square works

- 2.2 The vision for Market Square is to make it the civic heart of the city - to open up the square and make it a place better to spend time in, a more flexible space better for existing and new uses including as a venue for the charter market, for street cafes and events.
- 2.3 During winter 2011/12 a first phase of physical works was carried out which included the following:
- The removal of the fountain with a temporary surface establishing the footprint of the 'platform' – a new feature proposed for the square that

primarily provides informal seating but also acts as a stage and as a piece of public art. The existing benches have been relocated here temporarily.

- The resurfacing of the central part of the square in natural stone
- Improvements to street lighting carried out in partnership with Lancashire County Council. This included new lighting in Market Square and along the full length of Market Street down to Horseshoe Corner, along Penny Street to Frances Passage and up Gage Street.
- New architectural lighting to the Old Town Hall (City Museum)
- Removal of a BT phone box to the north of the square.

- 2.4 The Council has budgeted for a second phase of works in 2012/13 for works to provide the intended platform seating / stage area, additional surfacing and – street furniture including benches. Implementation is still subject to confirmation of adequate capital receipts being in place, however.
- 2.5 An additional element of work is an option for phase two. This is to gate Chancery Lane and so close it off as a place prone to anti social activities. This will be further considered with the Police and surrounding businesses and reported to the portfolio holder.

#### Ffrances Passage works

- 2.6 Works along the passage way have included new drainage, re-surfacing in natural stone and street lighting. Works to provide additional amenity lighting in the covered section of the passageway are underway.
- 2.7 Together these improvements enhance this important route and encourage movement between Dalton Square and the car parks to the east of the city with Penny Street and the surrounding shopping streets.

#### Penny Street / Horseshoe Corner works

- 2.8 Officers are continuing to engage with County Highways regarding planned maintenance works they propose to undertake to rectify surfacing material failures resulting from past wrong specifications. Cabinet in October 2011 reserved the use of any balance of 2011/12 Square Routes investment funds to enhance the quality and scope of the works that the County can otherwise achieve here, subject to further reporting to the portfolio holder; given timing this now also dependent upon the closure of accounts. This would enable a finish on these streets that is complementary with the quality sought through the Square Routes initiative and in an efficient and relatively low cost way.
- 2.9 The underspent 2011/12 capital expenditure is likely to be in the region of £40,000 - subject to being finalised during the current closedown process. This funding would meet additional costs associated with re-surfacing, the reduction of street clutter, improvements to street furniture and greater interpretation. These improvements would ease pedestrian movements across this important intersection and give it greater cultural identity.

- 2.10 The County Council is likely to undertake these maintenance works later in 2012/13 i.e after works to install new gas pipes by United Utilities complete. The closure of accounts would be completed by then, and the City Council's overall capital financing position should be clearer.

### City Park

- 2.8 The concept proposal for a 'City Park' was founded in the initial consultation stages of Square Routes and focuses on the area of land known locally as Vicarage Fields and Quay Meadow. It was identified as an invaluable yet underused resource integral to ambitions for better connectivity between the city centre and historic quayside.
- 2.9 Further to the initial consultation, Cabinet decided that a more community-led approach would suit this project and asked for further work and consultations.
- 2.10 Officers from Lancashire County Council's Environmental Team recently approached the council and offered to lead on a feasibility project, working with the City Council, to move the project on. To date a number of stakeholder workshops have already taken place to consider the future of this space and the portfolio holder will be kept informed.

### Street Cafes

- 2.11 A planning application has been submitted (12/00239/CU) to establish in principle planning support for street café use on the public highway within the pedestrian zone where this is linked to an establishment with A3 (Restaurant and Café) use. A Committee decision is anticipated on 28 May. If approved this permission will remove the need for businesses to seek both planning permission and a highways licence where the concerns and conditions are mostly duplicated.
- 2.12 The Square Routes team have worked with the Council's Licensing team to ensure that the standard street café highways licence is robust and can achieve all of the controls previously addressed through individual planning applications. Consequently, the Licensing Regulatory Committee recently agreed to revise their conditions for street café licenses (29 March - Minute 88). These conditions take into consideration matters such as pedestrian access, hours of operation, noise and alcohol restrictions, the design and appearance of the street cafe itself including barriers and all other furniture. It also includes an existing condition to limit the groupings of cafes in one street.
- 2.13 If the planning application is approved, the Square Routes team will lead on the production of new street café guidance for businesses, working with relevant members of the wider project team.

### Charter Market

- 2.14 Officers are continuing to work with the Market Office and the wider Property Services team on a revised layout for the charter market, street concessions,

charity pitch and events.

- 2.15 It is also proposed that in Market Square the restriction on uses other than food is removed. This is because half of the square is in direct sunlight for much of the day, reducing the number of perishable items that can reasonably be displayed there and therefore the number of stalls that can locate in the square. This will help ensure greater use of the square as envisaged through Square Routes.
- 2.16 Proposals regarding layouts will be reported to the relevant portfolio holder(s) for consideration as soon as possible.
- 2.17 Any wider operational changes are at an early stage of consideration. Other management changes could be for a transparent hierarchy of fees for stalls based on pitch location, as well as pitch size, on a linear rate.
- 2.18 The needs of the Charter Market have played a significant role in shaping the proposed traffic management changes, but if implemented, the charter market rules would need to be amended in order to be consistent. These changes focus on the hours of operation and associated vehicle access for setting up and dismantling stalls and are detailed in the following section.

## **Traffic Management**

### **Background**

- 2.19 Lancaster's was one of the first pedestrian zones in the country and covers Cheapside, Penny Street, Market Street, New Street and Church Street. **Appendix 1** illustrates this.
- 2.20 Traffic use of the zone is governed by two traffic regulation orders (TROs) administered by Lancashire County Council as the Highways Authority - the Lancaster Pedestrian Zone (1991) and the Church Street Order (1998).
- 2.21 Management provisions that regulate or affect vehicular activity within the zone are:
  - The two TROs – administered by County Highways and subject to enforcement by Lancashire Parking Services and their on-the-ground contractors, NSL Services Ltd for parking offences and Lancashire Police for moving traffic offences.
  - The permit system, forming part of the TROs but administered by Lancaster City Council and subject to the same enforcement as above
  - The City Council's Charter Market rules (in terms of access for setting up and dismantling stalls)
- 2.22 As a managed town centre environment it is obviously important to monitor and periodically review use of the zone.

- 2.23 During 2003/4 the County Council consulted on and reviewed operation of the zone. This identified several concerns about traffic and its effects and resulted in an options paper. However, subsequently nothing was actioned. The history of this and reasons for inaction is described in **Appendix 2**.
- 2.24 Since this time vehicular access and parking in the zone is perceived to have increased quite significantly and conditions for pedestrians worsened further.
- 2.25 The improvements now being brought forward via Lancaster Square Routes make for a further change in circumstances. These present opportunities for improved public use and enjoyment of streets and spaces, particularly Market Square but it is officers' opinion that these physical works must be supported by wider management changes to achieve the established vision.
- 2.26 At the request of members, in December 2011, the Chief Executive instructed the Square Routes team to review traffic management in the zone.

### Issues

- 2.27 The pedestrian zone as it is known is technically a traffic restricted area. The restrictions regulate vehicle access so that highways can best meet the needs of pedestrians. There is much concern though that permitted vehicle circulation and parking in the zone has risen over recent years and is now commonly at levels counter to the purposes of the pedestrian zone. The main concerns are:
- Very many goods and other vehicles now access and park in the zone to service premises and for other purposes, before the start of the core period (10.30am) and after its end (4.30pm).
  - Very many vehicles access the zone before and during the core period to make parcel deliveries
  - Very many vehicles driven by disabled people access the zone and circulate and park in it.
  - The practice of market stall holders in accessing the zone by vehicle within the existing core period to dismantle stalls (October – April market rules invite stall holders to dismantle from 3.30pm).
- 2.28 Traffic in the zone is now at levels that significantly impair the experience of pedestrians, are to the detriment of public amenity and have safety implications. In turn this is unhelpful to trading. Further, such levels of vehicle access constrain what might be done to make more and better use of streets and spaces, particularly Market Square.
- 2.29 In February 2012, Management Team authorised officers to initiate informal stakeholder consultation on proposals to revise the current system of traffic management in the city centre.
- 2.30 Since this time, officers have consulted with the following:
- Lancashire County Council Highways Service
  - Lancashire Police

- Lancashire Parking Services
- Lancaster District Chamber of Trade
- Marketgate Shopping Centre
- St. Nicholas Arcade Shopping Centre
- County Councillor Sam Riches (Lancaster East division)
- City Councillors Janice Hanson (Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration) and Dave Brookes (Ward councillor)
- Lancaster City Council officers - Market Office, Parking and Administration Manager and the Access Officer.

2.31 Management of activity in a complex environment such as the pedestrianised zone is quite challenging. These consultations have incorporated discussions regarding many issues. Any proposal must be well considered and consistent in all elements. The proposal now put forward is broadly supported or acceptable by the group.

2.32 **Appendix 3** provides details of the current system and sets out that proposed. In summary, the proposal is an experimental one that seeks to:

- Establish one experimental traffic regulation order for the whole pedestrian zone.

This experimental order may last for a period of up to eighteen months, with extensions available in certain circumstances. Under normal practice, this experimental phase is monitored by a small working group and a decision must be made to implement the order permanently before the end of this period or alternative arrangements put in place including reverting to the regulations preceding the experiment or alternatively revising these further. This is perceived by officers to be a far preferable solution to seeking a permanent order from the outset that may not be readily revised.

- extend core hours to 10.00am to 5.00pm

By extending core hours by 30 minutes at either end of the day this will enable a more pleasant and safe environment for people better fitting to main trading hours.

It should be noted that the first officer proposal was to extend core hours to 9.30am – 5.00pm but the stakeholder consultation with the business community raised a concern that the implication for morning deliveries would be too onerous.

- reduce traffic in the pedestrian zone through a reduction of general exemptions, tightening of administration and changes to the permit system during core hours (detailed below)
- a width restriction on goods vehicles entering the zone to prohibit the largest vehicles that can over crowd streets and damage highway surfaces
- assist transparency in enforcement via a clearer permit system, signage and highway markings.

2.33 The key changes proposed to achieve the above are detailed as follows:

- **The withdrawal of Permit A (available to blue badge holders over 65 or eligible for vehicle tax exemption) and the removal of nine disabled parking spaces in the pedestrian zone (6 in Market Square and 3 in New Street Square) and the designation of a minimum of nine additional disabled parking bays around the perimeter of the pedestrian zone, including on and off street provisions.**

Justification:

The Council has a responsibility under the Equality Act 2010 to make areas open to all and not exclude those with significant mobility impairments from the economic heart of the city. The proposal reads as radical in this context but officers consider it reasonable for the following reasons -

There are now some 725 holders of Permit A, many more than previously and at present all these are entitled to enter the zone at any time to park in designated bays and anywhere else, provided they are not causing an obstruction. In addition, at present holders of blue badges (but not a permit) may access the zone outside of the core period to park in designated bays.

Present levels of vehicle access by permit holders is contributing to high levels of vehicular circulation and reversing movements greatly to the detriment of pedestrian amenity and perceptions of safety. In addition, at many times Market Square takes on the character of a car park.

It is also understood that many blue badge holders believe the badge to be a 'permit' and are entering and parking in the zone at all times. Confusion and the lack of transparency mean there are many difficulties in enforcing vehicle restrictions, so exacerbating problems.

The proposal will benefit all persons who are either registered disabled or otherwise have limited mobility. This is because it will improve conditions across the zone for all pedestrians at all times of day - in keeping with the purposes of the zone.

There are reasonable alternative places to park that give access to all parts of the zone and these can be improved on. Awareness of alternatives must however be increased.

There is already considerable parking provision for disabled blue badge holders immediately on the edge of the zone and across the city centre, the standard of which is now much improved on that of a few years ago.

Blue badge holders displaying the badge can park for free in any of the on street pay and display bays around the periphery and also use the fully accessible St Nicholas Arcade car park or any other city council car parks elsewhere in the centre in the same manner. The Marketgate shopping centre car park, whilst payable, provides a fully accessible car park with close proximity (via lift access) to the heart of the zone during the daytime. Marketgate currently offers five designated disabled spaces. The 'Pay on Foot' system employed by this car park offers customers greater flexibility in their length of stay but unfortunately officers are advised that the machinery involved does not permit for a cost exemption for disabled drivers.



Additional provision can help the Council meet its existing commitment to achieve the Department for Transport's recommendation for 6% of parking capacity to be made available for disabled users where demand is proven. By redesignating a number of existing bays around the periphery of the zone, the proposal is to provide additional spaces for disabled people and greater opportunity to access different parts of the centre.

Additional spaces would be available at all times, whereas those proposed to be removed in Market Square are generally unavailable on market days.

In cases where cars have parked in the Square on a market day, occasionally stalls have been unable to set up and have lost a day's trading so the avoidance of this would be a further benefit.

**Appendix 4** provides a table detailing the parking facilities in the centre and a map illustrating the location of city centre car parks.

The practice and effect of this change would be monitored as part of the experiment and the results would inform review decisions.

- **The removal of the exemption for postal deliveries and parcel packets within core hours.**

Justification: The present exemption for security and parcel deliveries dates from the period of the Royal Mail monopoly and is no longer appropriate as the now free market for parcel deliveries gives rise to many more vehicles and movements entering the zone throughout the day. It is suggested, with the support of St Nicholas Arcade local management, that a dedicated parking bay be provided in the St Nicholas servicing area accessed from Gage Street. A request was made to the Marketgate Shopping Centre management to provide a similar facility but unfortunately this is not possible due to security arrangements.

- **The introduction of a revised permit system available for essential maintenance (suggest Permit 'E'), the dismantling of market stalls within set times of core hours (suggest Permit M) and temporary access for events etc (suggest Permit T).**

Justification:

There are times when vehicles have a genuine need to access the zone. During core hours general exemptions are proposed to be available to emergency vehicles required in the case of an emergency and bullion carrying vehicles only. Outside of core hours this exemption also applies to goods vehicles when loading. Aside from this, a clear, transparent permit system should help everyone understand who should and shouldn't be in the zone at any time and therefore assist with enforcement.

It should be noted that anecdotal evidence suggests there is much confusion over access to the zone with many people of the belief that outside of core hours access to and parking within the zone is available for everyone. There is therefore an essential need for information and education but a clear permit system will give enforcement officers sufficient clarity to uphold the proposed system.

- **Adjustment to the Charter Market rules, in terms of hours of operation and layout.**

Justification:

Integral to the Square Routes initiative is enhancing the Charter Market in a variety of ways and the needs of the market have played a significant role in shaping the proposed traffic management changes. But there are implications for the market operation and current rules.

The current rules request that stalls are set up and manned by 9.00am. Associated vehicles are currently allowed to be in the zone until 9.30am but it is proposed that this be brought forward to 9.00am - with likely minimal impact on stall holders. The benefit however is that the market will be up and running and all associated vehicles clear of the zone when many of the businesses are likely to be receiving deliveries, thus reducing opportunities for congestion.

During winter months (April – October), current market rules allow market stalls to be dismantled from 3.30pm which if involving the use of vehicles is in direct contravention of the existing TRO. This sets a poor example.

The historic reason for the time variation was a health and safety consideration to avoid stalls being dismantled in the dark. It is felt that the new street lighting should significantly improve the conditions for dismantling stalls but the concern is appreciated.

The proposal therefore represents a compromise to permit stall holders with a valid permit M to vacate from 4.00pm. The further advantage of this is the potential to reduce congestion at 5.00pm.

2.34 Supporting these changes, it is important that the following is achieved:

- An audit of the current pedestrian zone is undertaken by County Highways to determine how current signage and markings meet with regulations as it is known that some areas of the zone are currently not enforced due to irregularities with either signage or markings.
- Partnership working between the City Council, County Council and the Police to re-educate all users of the changes, particularly disabled drivers, and improve awareness of the wider facilities and restrictions
- A pragmatic approach taken by Lancashire Parking Services and the Police to the Charter Market for early dismantling as an exceptional measure in times of inclement weather - following prior notification by the Market Manager.
- The City Council leading by example and re-programming refuse collections outside of core hours.

2.35 Potential issues that may arise as a result of these proposals:

- Concern from access groups / disabled drivers regarding the changes.
- Concern from businesses regarding the reduction in servicing times, the width limit and the potential to create additional traffic in the pedestrian zone / gyratory system at peak times.

- Disappointment from cyclists that no additional provision has been made to enable greater permeability across the city centre. Whilst this was considered it was felt that many pedestrians and retailers would oppose cycling through the city centre from a safety perspective. The County and City Council are keen to encourage cycling as a sustainable form of transport however and would consider alternative means of assisting cyclists as part of the experiment.

2.36 The 'experimental' nature of the order provides the opportunity to monitor and review the impact of the changes and amend or revoke if deemed necessary. A presumption has been made however to try to get the 'experiment' right first time and avoid unnecessary confusion or significant adverse impacts.

### 3.0 Details of Consultation

3.1 Informal consultation on the traffic management proposals commenced in February and involved the group listed in 2.29. These stakeholders have attended two lengthy discussion meetings and a smaller group has also met to discuss more technical aspects of the order. It should further be noted that many of those represented were involved in the 2003/4 consultations with the County Council. The proposal now advanced is similar in content in several elements to that then proposed.

3.2 Formal public consultation on the experimental TRO would be a matter for County Highways, informed by the City Council. For the County Council to consider implementing an experimental order, they need to be convinced that it is broadly supported or accepted before, if they consider it appropriate, taking more formal steps to consult with and notify certain stakeholders of the experiment. During the experiment, a formal working group would be established to monitor the impact of the changes and this would be the primary focus for consultation responses.

### 4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	<b>Option 1:</b> Make no changes to the traffic management system.	<b>Option 2:</b> Formally request the County Council to consider the traffic management proposals as per Appendix 3 and undertake to implement the associated changes to City Council management practice on an experimental basis.	<b>Option 3:</b> Formally request the County Council to consider the traffic management proposals as per Appendix 3 and undertake to implement the associated changes to City Council management practice on a permanent basis.
Advantages	None.	This option involving an Experimental Traffic Order utilises a regulatory mechanism that	This option would involve a revision of the TRO on a permanent basis without any

		<p>builds in requirements to monitor and review and if thought necessary then revise or revoke any changes. This flexibility is needed where changes to traffic management are brought in within a complex environment and not all consequential changes can perhaps be known.</p> <p>Advantages otherwise are as set out in full in section 2 of the Report.</p>	<p>experiment. In principle it might enable changes to be brought forward in one tranche</p>
Disadvantages	<p>No attempt is made to try to address the deteriorating conditions for pedestrians in the zone that are impairing peoples' experiences as pedestrians, impacting on the trading environment and giving rise to increasing safety concerns. Further, it precludes the ability to take the opportunities arising out of the Square Routes initiative and improvements to make more of Market Square as a meeting place, for a better outdoor market and as an entertainment venue and with all the benefits that these might bring.</p>	<p>The raft of changes put forward in this proposal is quite complicated but inevitably so. Several elements will have some early workload implications for council officers e.g in revising the permit system and informing the public of the changes. Once in effect however the changes should make for better management of the pedestrian zone and less requirement on various city and county council officers and police officers and PCSOs and to deal with traffic management and related problems pedestrian problems in a reactive manner.</p>	<p>This option is not favoured by the county council's highway officers. It would not be a best practice approach. It would be much less flexible in practice than an experimental order and is without the ability to monitor and consult in operation then review and revise and, potentially terminate any changes. Conversely an experimental order provides for this. This option would likely prove much more challenging and take very much longer, involving the highway authority evidencing the need for and considering changes that would be permanent in effect. This would make for significant delay.</p>

Risks	Continuing increasing use of the zone by traffic and consequential reduction in the quality, perceived safety of the pedestrian environment and in time making for conditions more likely to give rise to safety accidents. Indirect further affects on and deterioration in the city centre as a trading environment.	Any changes to the management of a public environment as complex as this in how it is used risks adverse consequential effects but the consultations undertaken to date with professional highways officers and others should have teased most of these out. Further, the purpose of an experimental order is to build in flexibility and monitoring and review.	That changes via a permanent revision are not attainable within a short / medium term timescale.
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## 5.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

- 5.1 Option 2 involving making the changes as set out in section 2 of the report and summarised in Appendix 2.

## 6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 Officers advise that current arrangements for traffic management within the pedestrian zone are no longer sustainable, not delivering well for economic, social and environmental benefits. Revised arrangements are considered crucial to achieving on corporate and other ambitions for the city centre and as articulated through the Square Routes initiative. Further, it is felt that supporting changes and wider benefits to the pedestrian zone together with the mitigations proposed should outweigh any adverse impacts.

### RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

The 2010-2014 **Corporate Plan** identifies Square Routes under the Economic Regeneration Priority and Lancaster Square Routes is identified as one of the actions under "Visitor Economy".

The **Core Strategy (2008)** identifies Central Lancaster as a Regeneration Priority Area of local importance (Policy ER2). Through 'Design-led regeneration', the centre will be strengthened as a major shopping destination, a historic city with major tourism potential and as an important cultural centre. The Square Routes initiative is fully committed to this approach and improving the opportunities in the historic centre to encourage pedestrian footfall in a variety of ways.

#### **Parking Strategy (2008)**

The City Council Parking Strategy 'Improving Access' – Section 14.13 notes the Council's

ambition to seek to meet the needs of all users and types of transport. Specifically it seeks to set aside 6% of the total off-street car parking space for 'Blue Badge' holders in car parks where demand is proven and improve public information. This proposal both supports and seeks to improve on these ambitions by seeking at least 6% in on and off street car parks where it is thought that access to the centre can be improved. The strategy does however lend the City Council's support to the continued provision of vehicular access to the pedestrian zone through the use of a permit system. However, it acknowledges that such access issues are beyond the remit of the Strategy and it is felt that the wider changes would mitigate the removal of this provision.

#### **CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)**

Implementation of the Lancaster Square Routes initiative contributes to diversity objectives by enhancing streets and spaces for multiple uses. It contributes indirectly to positive Human Rights objectives and there are no adverse Human Rights implications. It contributes directly to meeting community safety objectives by providing an improved quality of environment that is more attractive and safer to be in by virtue of streets and spaces such as Market Square being more active and in more beneficial use into the evenings. By adding to the vitality of the city centre it supports sustainable patterns of travel and consumption. There are no rural implications. As noted in the report, the Council has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make areas open to all and not exclude those with significant mobility impairments. As per the assessment of the Parking Strategy policies, it is suggested that the proposal and the wider changes mitigate the removal of the existing provision for disabled access to the zone.

#### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The County Secretary and Solicitors Group have confirmed that as the proposal does not prohibit traffic for more than 8 hours in any 24 hour period there is no requirement to seek approval from the Secretary of State and that the exemption for parcel deliveries and postal packets can be omitted from the traffic regulation order.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

It is not expected that there will be any additional financial implications arising for the City Council from removing the dedicated disabled parking bays from within the pedestrian zone, relocating them within existing on street and off street spaces and from the administration in making the changes to the local permit system.

The cost of removing the associated signage for the disabled bays in New Town Square (rear of the Old Town Hall) is expected to be £200 and can be met from within existing R&M car parking budgets. The removal of these bays would incur no loss of income for the City Council as a charge is not levied for blue badge holders (with or without the existing Permit A) to use these.

The Parking & Administration Manager has advised that re-designation of up to seven off street bays as disabled parking would incur a one-off cost for the City Council of £1,400 which can also be met from existing R&M budgets and carried out as part of the general improvements made in line with the Parking Strategy.

There is a potential risk that the re-designation of the bays as disabled parking could have an impact on parking income but it is felt that this will be minimal given the low percentage of total parking space affected.

Further disabled bays have been recommended in the Marketgate Car park and by re-designating existing On Street Parking bays. This would have no impact on City Council income and would be a matter for Marketgate management and County Council to consider.

Although it is expected that there will be an increased demand for officer time in administering the new permit system, this should be offset by a reduction in officer time spent on addressing traffic issues in the zone, therefore the overall impact of the proposal should be cost neutral in revenue terms and contained within existing resources.

It should be further noted that timescales for implementation will be driven by County but are expected to be within the next 3 to 6 months.

#### **OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

##### **Human Resources:**

Any implications can be met within existing service deliveries.

##### **Information Services:**

None.

##### **Property:**

The adjustments to the management of public spaces will have minimal implications.

##### **Open Spaces:**

The proposals will improve and enhance existing open space resources.

#### **SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The s151 Officer has been consulted and has no comments to add.

#### **MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Cabinet report, 5 October 2011

**Contact Officer:** Julian Inman, Senior Planner (Regeneration)

**Telephone:** 01524 582336

**E-mail:** jinman@lancaster.gov.uk

**Ref:** LSR-03.03