



**OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE
(MOLE VALLEY)**

**HIGH STREET AND CHURCH STREET LEATHERHEAD
EXPERIMENTAL TRAFFIC SCHEME
(ANNEXE B)
18 JUNE 2010**

KEY ISSUE

To consider and approve, for formal advertisement, an experimental traffic scheme for High Street and part of Church Street, Leatherhead.

SUMMARY

Informal discussions have been held to consider the future of High Street / Church Street, Leatherhead, in light of there being development related contributions available. This money is available for environmental measures that will be enjoyed by users and therefore will draw visitors and in turn stimulate trade. An experimental scheme that simplifies the management of the street, reduces conflict and provides opportunities to enhance the physical environment is believed to have support locally. The details of the scheme and the necessary Experimental Traffic Order, that would change the allowable access to the High Street and part of Church Street, are contained within this report. Members are asked to consider approving the suggested changes for a temporary period of time with a view to making the arrangement permanent if it is deemed appropriate in the longer term.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Committee (Mole Valley) is asked to agree:

- (i) That the Experimental Traffic Order, as detailed in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.8 to amend the access restrictions on High Street and part of Church Street be advertised and implemented on site, subject to informal consultation being satisfactory.

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The County Councillor for Leatherhead and Fetcham East has held informal meetings with local stakeholders to discuss the commercial centre of Leatherhead and there is support to have a vision for the area. Section 106 money has been identified for use in Leatherhead and it has been suggested that there is a need to tackle individual elements of the High Street environment in conjunction with looking at the management of the street. The 'pedestrianised' areas, in their attempt to satisfy all users, are confusing and tend not to operate particularly well for any of the user groups. It is felt that the access arrangements for vehicles are in need of revision, which in turn could assist in various environmental improvements reaching fruition.
- 1.2 The current arrangement causes problems for pedestrians in the evenings when traffic is allowed in to High Street and part of Church Street. Pedestrians are often forced to walk in the running lane of traffic due to parked cars. The haphazard parking makes access very difficult at times to alleyways, restaurants and shops and this is particularly so for those in electric buggies or wheelchairs. There is a keenness for restaurants to have outdoor facilities for alfresco dining and for the street scene to be enhanced by using street furniture. Different access controls would help manage the use of High Street and part of Church Street and would reduce air pollution from vehicle emissions.
- 1.3 The first measure that needs to be considered for change, so that other measures can follow on, is the existing Traffic Regulation Order. Given that there are many issues to consider as part of the access arrangements, not least the deliveries to premises within the High Street and part of Church Street, the legal advice given is that a consultation exercise should be carried out prior to any changes to the Order being advertised. In addition, so that officers and members can see how the Order will work, it is suggested that the Order is implemented on an experimental basis initially. The experiment would generally run for 12 to 18 months, with the first 6 months being the period of statutory consultation. If the experiment is successful, a permanent scheme may be considered.

2 ANALYSIS

- 2.1 In order to implement an Experimental Traffic Order in High Street and part of Church Street it would be advisable to try and 'match' the new loading times with that which the affected shops in Leatherhead actually require. The Traffic Order Procedures Regulations 1996 allow an Authority to change (restrict) deliveries between 7am and 10am and between 4pm and 7pm without there eventually being a trigger to have a Public Inquiry, which could be very costly. There is a desire to limit loading and unloading to between the hours of 6.30am and 11am and

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if the businesses affected are in agreement with this, then it would be easier to defend the decision taken when responding to the likely objections that would be forthcoming from the Road Haulage Association and the Freight Transport Association. This would be at the stage when considering the success of the Experimental Traffic Order. In the event of objections being forthcoming it would be necessary to hold a Public Inquiry to allow an Inspector to consider whether the grounds for doing the work are justified on safety grounds or for serious environmental reasons. It is important that Businesses are written to before the experiment starts and if opposition is forthcoming a further report would be presented to this Committee, hopefully in September. Currently, some properties that are within the lengths of roads that would be subject to the new Order, are serviced from the High Street only and have no other means of receiving deliveries. If agreement is not gained from all the frontager's then a route that could be considered is to go straight to advertising a permanent Traffic Regulation Order. This would then trigger a Public Inquiry anyway.

- 2.2 Previous amendments to the High Street / Church Street Traffic Regulation Orders have had the effect of opening up the High Street more to traffic. The reasoning behind this was to make it easier to enforce for the Police, to encourage less misuse of the restriction as it was intended that the access would be physically controlled, for it to be less confusing to users, for there to be less conflict during 'closed' hours and to improve the vitality and viability of the Town Centre. During 'closed' hours it was anticipated there would be a reduction in noise and air pollution and that soiling of materials would be limited. However, it was acknowledged that during the 'accessible' times this may well have increased. The new Experimental Traffic Order would recognise that it has not been possible make all of the improvements that were originally hoped for and that many shoppers now expect a safe pedestrianised area for shopping.
- 2.3 The location of the start point of the Experimental Traffic Order would need to be different to the current situation. This will help with the vehicular access situation alongside number 8 Church Street. The length of roads where the new restrictions would apply are shown on **Annexe A**. The knock on effect of changing the start point of the Traffic Order is that a section of road in Church Street would need to be two way. During the experimental period, and possibly if the scheme were made permanent, there would not be a barrier in place to assist with controlling access. The enforcement of the prohibition of vehicles would be carried out by Surrey Police. For the experiment to take place, signs would probably be placed in barrels. Details of a permanent scheme, if approved, would need to be worked up in time for making the Order permanent.

- 2.4 Currently the market is not mentioned in the Order and so market traders' vehicles are not exempted. Market traders will need to be issued with a voucher or permit issued by MVDC. The traders would then display a valid permit for use between certain hours. This is suggested as being a 6.30am start time until 11am. This would allow setting up of the stalls. The traders would then require an afternoon period of time to dismantle and take away the stalls. This is suggested as being 3pm to 6pm. The permit would be mentioned in the Experimental Traffic Order. It will not be possible to charge for the issue of the permits. This is due to Counsel's previous advice that it is not possible to charge for access to the highway for anyone requiring such access for normal activities associated with such access (e.g., access to premises) under a Prohibition of Traffic Order.
- 2.5 There are a number of exemptions to the terms of the Order that will be required. These are Bullion deliveries, the market (as mentioned above), Statutory Undertakers, works vehicles, disabled buggies, emergency vehicles and anyone who has permission (in writing) of the Local Authority.
- 2.6 Bikes are considered to be a vehicle. Cyclists will therefore have to dismount and so there will be a requirement to exempt those pushing a bike and to install 'cyclist dismount' signs.
- 2.7 Blue badge holders would be subject to the normal terms of the Traffic Order and not be exempt. Vehicles displaying these badges are often those of the driver of the Blue Badge Holder and not the Blue Badge Holder themselves. There are such a large amount of blue badges issued that if they were exempt, the High Street could be crowded with parked cars and the accessibility and safety problems experienced by pedestrians, wheelchair users and disabled buggy users would still be apparent. Over recent years the Swan Centre Car Park has been vastly improved for the disabled with the increase of the number of disabled parking spaces. There are also on street disabled spaces on all roads surrounding High Street. There is also shop mobility in the Swan Centre to assist disabled shoppers.
- 2.8 Skateboards, scooters and rollerblades, would be exempt from the terms of the Experimental Traffic Order. These would be restricted under a bylaw and not this Order and would require special GOSE authorisation for the required signs. It is therefore suggested that this issue is left during the experiment and if it proves to be a problem perhaps it can be followed up at a later date.

3 CONSULTATIONS

- 3.1 All Emergency Services will be consulted as part of an informal consultation process prior to implementing the experiment. They will also be consulted under the Statutory Consultation that legislation requires.

3.2 It is the intention that all frontagers will be consulted prior to commencing the Experimental Traffic Order. If there are many adverse comments (particularly to the proposal to restrict the loading/unloading of vehicles within the proposed Zone), consideration would be given to recommending to a future meeting of the Committee that a permanent Traffic Regulation Order is progressed in the first instance. Formal objections to the proposals would then trigger a Public Inquiry where those objections could then be considered by an independent Inspector in detail.

3.3 There is a statutory consultation that coincides with the first 6 months of the Experimental Traffic Order. Any objections received would be presented to this Committee.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND VALUE FOR MONEY

4.1 The total cost of the works including advertising is likely to be in the region of £10000 and will be funded from S106 monies.

5 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The removal of the haphazard nature of the parking will improve access for pedestrians and disabled users, some of whom have visual impairment. However, there will be fewer facilities for Blue Badge Holders to park. Environmental improvements could improve facilities for a wide range of users.

6 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Experimental Traffic Order would enable some anti- social driving habits to be tackled, for example thoughtless parking. In addition, whilst there is not a high incidence in Leatherhead, the new Traffic Order, if made permanent would facilitate street furniture to be installed that could help in being a preventative measure of ram-raiding. Stricter controls would also help limit damage caused to the surface materials.

7 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Members are asked to consider the issues outlines in this report and to approve publishing of the intention to make an Experimental Order.

8 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Officers do not have delegated powers to advertise the intention to make an Experimental Traffic Order. It is considered that the proposal will bring long-standing benefits if implemented.

9 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 9.1 The proposal will be consulted upon informally before advertising and installing the Experimental Traffic Order. If this informal consultation proves that the proposal will be well received, the Experimental Traffic Order will be made.
- 9.2 A statutory consultation period will run for 6 months from the start of the Experiment and objections will be presented to a future meeting of this Committee.
- 9.3 If the informal consultation shows that frontagers are against the proposals, the matter would need to be reconsidered.

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