

CALL IN RESPONSE

Plymouth Rail Station to Central Park Walking and Cycling Improvements December 2015



1.0 INTRODUCTION

This note represents an initial response to the call-in made by Cllr Steven Ricketts; Cllr Richard Ball; and Cllr Vivien Pengelly for the following decision: The City of Plymouth (TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDERS Traffic Regulation Orders) (Amendment No. 2014.1636344 – Central Park Avenue) Order 2014 and the City of Plymouth (Moving Traffic Regulation Orders) (Amendment No.. 2014.1636344 – Sutherland Road, Restormel Road) Order 2014.

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The background paper accompanying the delegation report refers to the Plymouth Rail Station to Central Park walking and cycling improvements consultation report, which is available at this location:

http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/plymouth_rail_station_to_central_park_consultation_report.pdf

3.0 RESPONSE TO INDIVIDUAL POINTS MADE IN CALL IN REQUEST

“The decision maker failed to consider alternative courses of action; the action should be no action.”

The proposed walking and cycling improvements are part of two successful bids, by Plymouth City Council, to the Department for Transport, which secured £885,000 from central government.¹ Council match funding totalled £559,000.

Schemes delivered with the funding include improvements at North Cross underpass; Plymouth Station forecourt improvements; and the Saltash Road footway and cycleway improvements. This scheme is a continuation of this work which under the terms of the original Access to Stations bid, submitted in February 2012, we are now expected to deliver.

The delivery of this scheme contributes directly towards the following Plymouth Plan policies:

- Policy 2 Delivering a city of sustainable linked neighbourhoods
- Policy 3: Delivering a green city
- Policy 5: Unlocking Plymouth's regional growth potential
- Policy 13: Supporting healthy lifestyles
- Policy 15: Delivering strong and safe communities and quality neighbourhoods
- Policy 16: Delivering a safe and health enabling transport system
- Policy 25: Using transport investment to drive growth
- Policy 28: Reducing carbon emissions and adapting to climate change
- Policy 33: Safeguarding environmental quality, function and amenity

Specifically with regard to the proposed prohibition of motor vehicle entry into Restormel Road from Sutherland Road, the scheme designers have advised that, on the grounds of safety, they would not be prepared to take forward this scheme as a walking and cycling route without the proposed no entry.

¹ DfT Links to Communities bid, and Access to Stations bid

This would mean that we would fail to meet the criteria of the original Access to Stations bid, and would undermine delivery of the Plymouth Plan objectives set out above.

“This no turn will cause gridlock on the Houndiscombe Road/North Road East traffic lights. The junction is already gridlocked at various points in the day and this will only make it worse. The extra university outlets on the campus have caused extra pressure on the road junction.”

The proposals have been reviewed by the Urban Traffic Control unit who have advised that the Houndiscombe Road/North Road East junction can be expected to cope with the increased level of traffic in the event that all diverted traffic uses that junction. The Head of Highways, Parking and Marine Services, re-confirmed in July 2015 that he is comfortable with the scheme from a network management perspective. Recent developments on the campus have reduced the number of car parking spaces on the campus, and therefore there is no reason to believe that traffic entering or exiting the University is increasing. There are no developments that have taken place or have planning permission that could be expected to invalidate the results of surveys carried out in late September 2014.

“People could also use the back road of Sutherland Road and Restormel Road and this will create many traffic/safety issues.”

This option is slightly longer and less intuitive than the route into Restormel Road. Therefore, it is expected that the majority of the remaining southbound traffic will continue to the traffic lights at the junction of Houndiscombe Road and North Road East. A proportion of the traffic currently turning into Restormel Road is expected to decide to use a different route entirely before reaching this area. The give way markings at the junction between Sutherland Place and Restormel Road will be refreshed to enforce the give way, potentially reducing the attractiveness of this alternative route. It is expected that the disadvantages of this alternative will limit the speeds and numbers of vehicles using this route, and as such the route is not considered unsafe by the scheme designers.

In addition, evidence indicates that with a growing network of safer walking and cycling routes, alongside a programme of measures to enable and encourage walking, cycling and public transport, a proportion of the journeys by car can be expected to transfer to a sustainable mode. DfT figures indicate that cycling has increased by 45% in Plymouth in the past 5 years alone.

“There is confusion as to whether this is an approval of the overall proposed cycle scheme in relation to the East Park Avenue and the “give way” system on Central Park Avenue near Holdsworth Street.”

This decision notice is part of the statutory procedure for Traffic Regulation Orders and covers the introduction of:

1. ‘No entry except cycles’ on Restormel Road.
2. ‘No Waiting at Any Time’ restrictions on a length of Central Park Avenue of approximately 27 m.
3. Three new road humps on Central Park Avenue outside house numbers 22 and 23; 10 and 11; and at the entrance to the Creative Court depot.

This statutory decision is a necessary part of the legal process by which the scheme can be implemented, but does not in itself represent the final decision on if and when the scheme will go forward to construction. This final decision would normally be made by the responsible Cabinet Member.