
Meeting: Traffic Management Meeting

Date: 4 June 2013

Subject: Petition – Reversal of One Way Traffic – Hitchin Street Biggleswade

Report of: Jane Moakes, Jane Moakes, Assistant Director Environmental Services

Summary: The purpose of this report is to re-consider a petition submitted by traders in Hitchin Street Biggleswade seeking reversal of the existing one way traffic order between Market Square and Mill Lane

Contact Officer: Nick Chapman
nick.chapman@amey.co.uk

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: Biggleswade North, Biggleswade South

Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

To improve highway safety, facilitate the free flow of traffic and improve the amenity of streets.

Financial:

This work is not currently funded

Legal:

Central Bedfordshire Council is the highway and traffic authority for the road network in Central Bedfordshire. An important function of the authority is to manage the local road network in a safe, efficient and equitable manner. To be legally enforceable, any proposed traffic management measures need to be implemented under a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO).

Risk Management:

Failure to deliver an efficient, effective and enforceable road network would be detrimental to the safe and expeditious use of the road network and could be damaging to the local community as well as economic growth.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

None as a result of this report.

Equalities/Human Rights:

Public authorities have a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Creating a safe, attractive and accessible public realm has a part to play in getting people out and about. One objective of implementing traffic management measures is to ensure that the most vulnerable members of the community have fair access to the public realm and are not disadvantaged by traffic conditions.

An efficiently managed traffic system is therefore crucial for allowing equality of opportunity.

Community Safety:

The inclusion of reversal of traffic flow in Hitchin Street is likely to have an overall negative effect on the free movement of traffic and also on road safety.

Sustainability:

None as a result of this report

RECOMMENDATION(S):

- (a) **The petition and the recommendation of the Town Council be noted.**
- (b) **That the request is not implemented at this time, but that it will be reconsidered in the wider context of the Biggleswade Master Plan as and when proposals for redevelopment are brought forward.**
- (c) **To inform the lead petitioner of the outcome of the meeting.**

Background to the petition

1. A petition was received by Central Bedfordshire Council signed by 12 people representing businesses in Hitchin Street. The petition requests that Hitchin Street be made one way between Mill Lane and Market Place, a reversal of the current flow
2. At the time that the petition was presented to the Traffic Management Meeting it was recommended that the petition request not be agreed for the substantive reasons below that were contained within that report.

Additional information from previous report

3. At the time of the preparation and consultation on the Biggleswade Master Plan a number of options were considered by the working group including the changes suggested in the petition.
4. The surveys and consultations carried out at that time (in 2012) by officers preparing the Masterplan, did not support the reversal of flow in Hitchin Street. However, they did support major improvements in the streetscape and public realm within the town centre area. This led to the recently implemented paving scheme delivered through the Local Area Transport Plan.
5. The Masterplan is an agreed document with stakeholder support that sets out a number of actions and aspirations for the longer term regeneration of Biggleswade to sustain it's commercial future
6. The scheme recently carried out contributes to that.
7. The Masterplan itself comments as below on the Hitchin Street area:-

'6.7.5 Longer term there is an opportunity to create an improved road link from Hitchin Street through to Bonds Lane and Station Road thus facilitating potential improvements to traffic management in this area. Any such link would need to be linked to a major redevelopment of this area in order to be financially viable.

6.7.6 At the same time there is an opportunity to explore the introduction of two way traffic flow on Hitchin Street south of Mill Lane to improve access to the proposed development at the Bonds Lane and Foundry Lane areas.

Also 6.8.5 (bullet point 5): Any comprehensive development proposals should consider the option of creating an improved link road from Hitchin Street to Station Road thus helping to facilitate wider traffic management improvements in the town centre'.

8. From a traffic management point of view this proposal would also feed additional traffic into the Market Place which is already congested and would do little to improve trade as parking in the Market Square is already at a premium.

Outcome of Meeting

9. At the time of the original meeting in February 2013 the subject matter of the petition had not been discussed by the Biggleswade Town Council.
10. The Executive member considered that until this had taken place and further subsequent discussions had been held with CBC members for Biggleswade that a decision on the petition would be premature and a decision was therefore deferred to a future meeting.
11. The matter was discussed at the Town Council meeting of 26th February and the Town Council recommended that the reversal of the one way in Hitchin Street be approved in principle as shown below.

c) HITCHIN STREET

Members received an update on Hitchin Street improvement scheme & considered a petition from traders in Hitchin Street asking for the reversal of traffic in Hitchin Street.

*It was **RECOMMENDED** that Town Council support in principle the reversal of traffic flow in Hitchin Street, subject to cost and other issues that need to be considered.*

12. A further meeting with the Central Bedfordshire elected members for Biggleswade confirmed that whilst this may be a longer term aspiration any changes should be brought forward only as part of any wider development of the masterplan and not as an isolated action.
13. It was therefore considered that the petition and the recommendation of the Town Council be noted and that this matter be considered in the wider context of the Biggleswade Masterplan at the appropriate time.
14. It is therefore recommended that the petition not be agreed at the present time subject to the considerations stated.

Appendix 1: Petition in support of reversal of One-Way street, Hitchin Street Biggleswade.