
Meeting: Traffic Management Meeting
Date: 31 October 2017
Subject: The Baulk, Biggleswade – Experimental One-way Traffic Order
Report of: Paul Mason, Assistant Director Highways
Summary: This report seeks the approval of the Executive Member for Community Services to restore two-way traffic in The Baulk, Biggleswade.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

- 1. That the existing experimental one-way traffic order on The Baulk, Biggleswade is revoked and two-way traffic be restored.**

Contact Officer: Paul Salmon
Paul.salmon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: Biggleswade North and Biggleswade South
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The proposal will improve road safety, traffic management and the amenity in the affected roads.

Financial:

The works are being funded by section 106 funding associated with Kings Reach development.

Legal:

None from this report

Risk Management:

None from this report

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

None from this report

Equalities/Human Rights:

None from this report

Community Safety:

None from this report

Sustainability:

None from this report

Budget and Delivery:	
Estimated cost: £5,000	Budget: Section 106
Expected delivery: January 2018	

Background and Information

1. A temporary one-way traffic order was introduced in The Baulk on 6 June 2016 to improve traffic management whilst works at the Stratton Street bridge were carried out.
2. A report to the 28 February 2017 Traffic Management meeting recommended revoking the one-way order and that two-way traffic on The Baulk be restored. In response to representations, it was agreed to defer a decision for 6 months.
3. It is permissible for local authorities to introduce restrictions on an experimental basis for a maximum period of eighteen months. It is usual practice to run the trial for six months, during which time interested parties may submit objections and other representations on the experimental orders. At the end of the trial the Council needs to decide whether to make the arrangements permanent, or remove the restrictions. The trial has now run for a period of 17 months.

Representations and Officer Responses

4. The Baulk

13 representations were received about the experimental one-way traffic order, with 6 in support of the one-way arrangement and 4 against.

The main issues raised were as follows:

- a) The one-way working has resulted in longer journey times and delays at the London Road/ Drove Road junction, particularly at school times.
- b) The start of the one-way should be set back further at the Chestnut Avenue end to ease access/egress for vehicles serving schools and other facilities at that end of The Baulk.
- c) There is regular non-compliance, particularly those living in some of the side roads.
- d) There has been an increase in traffic speeds.
- e) Should it revert to two-way, parking should be restricted on one side of the road only.

5. Officer response to the above points:

- a) Traffic that previously turned right from Drove Road into The Baulk when heading towards the town centre is now forced to continue and turn right at the London Road junction. At busy times, such as at the start and end of the school day, there could be some delays for drivers. It is likely that some locals will find alternative routes to avoid this, but this is not ideal since some of the alternatives are through residential streets.
- b) This could lead to potential road safety issues with drivers leaving London Road and Chestnut Avenue and heading East on The Baulk unexpectedly encountering traffic heading towards them. It would lead to a more complex signing arrangement which could be confusing to drivers.
- c) Whilst the one-way is operating on an experimental basis the signage is of a temporary nature, which whilst obvious to drivers, is not ideal. Additional signs and road marking would be installed if the arrangement was made permanent. Significant changes would need to be made to the Drove Road/ The Baulk junction, to make it difficult for drivers to enter at that end. The junction is wide, so would need to be narrowed and a contra-flow cycle facility introduced.
- d) It is possible that there has been a slight increase in speeds, but the layout of parking creates a chicane effect which works well at moderating speeds.
- e) The permit scheme within The Baulk effectively creates a chicane effect which is considered helpful as a speed-reducing measure. The impact of this scheme will be reviewed before deciding whether amendments are needed.

6. Other considerations

Since the doctors' surgery was closed and returned to private housing, the traffic and parking situation in The Baulk has eased.

The one-way system has resulted in traffic issues at the London Road/Drove Road junction, creating delays and additional vehicular conflicts.

Making the one-way arrangements permanent would entail significant and costly highway works at its junction with Drove Road.

7. Conclusion

Officers remain of the view that two-way working should be restored in The Baulk.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Public notice for St Johns Street area

Appendix B – Written representations on The Baulk

PUBLIC NOTICE



Central
Bedfordshire

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL (ST JOHN'S STREET, ROSE LANE, SUN STREET, THE BAULK AND BACK STREET, BIGGLESWADE) (ONE WAY TRAFFIC) EXPERIMENTAL ORDER 2016 and CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL (BEDFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (DISTRICT OF MID BEDFORDSHIRE) (CIVIL ENFORCEMENT AREA AND SPECIAL ENFORCEMENT AREA) (WAITING RESTRICTIONS AND STREET PARKING PLACES) (CONSOLIDATION) ORDER 2008) (EXPERIMENTAL VARIATION NO.1) ORDER 2016

Notice is hereby given that on 23 May 2016 Central Bedfordshire Council made Experimental Orders under Section 9 and 10 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 as follows:-

Effect of the Experimental Orders:-

To introduce One Way Traffic in the direction described on the following lengths of road in Biggleswade:-

1. St John's Street, from Sun Street to Rose Lane;
2. Rose Lane, from St John's Street to Sun Street;
3. Sun Street, from Rose Lane to St John's Street;
4. The Baulk, from Chestnut Avenue to Drove Road;
5. Back Street, from London Road to Station Road.

To introduce No Waiting at any time on the following lengths of road in Biggleswade:-

1. St John's Street, on three lengths as described in the order, between Sun Street and Rose Lane;
2. Rose Lane, on three lengths as described in the order, between St John's Street and Sun Street;
3. Brunswick Gardens, on two lengths as described in the order, near Rose Lane;
4. Sun Street, on five lengths as described in the order, between Rose Lane and St John's Street.

Reason for Experimental Orders: The proposal is for the purposes of carrying out an experimental scheme of traffic control. The roads have been subject to one-way working and, in the case of St John's Street, Rose Lane and Sun Street, additional waiting restrictions, for the duration of the Stratton Street bridge reconstruction to aid traffic flows on alternative routes. The Council wishes to assess how the arrangements operate when the bridge re-opens and traffic patterns return to normal. Implementing these as Experimental Orders will enable the Council to monitor the scheme and modify or remove it at any time should the need arise.

It is proposed that the Experimental Orders will be in operation for up to 18 months. Central Bedfordshire Council will be considering in due course whether the provisions of these Orders should be continued in force indefinitely. Within a period of 6 months beginning with the day on which the Orders came into force any person may object to the making of Orders to make their effects permanent.

Date of Operation: The Experimental Orders will come into operation on the 6 June 2016.

Further Details may be examined during normal office hours at the address shown below, viewed online at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/publicstatutorynotices or tel. 0300 300 5003.

Comments The Experimental Orders can remain in operation for up to 18 months. Before their effects can be continued in operation by permanent Orders all objections lodged during the trial of the Experimental Orders will have to be considered. Any comments should be sent in writing to the Traffic Management team at the address below or e-mail traffic.consultation@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk by 5 December 2016. Any objections must be in writing and state the grounds on which they are made.

High Court Challenge: Any person who wishes to question the validity of the Orders or of any provision contained therein on the ground that it is not within the powers of the relevant Section of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 or on the ground that any requirement of that Section had not been complied with in relation to the Orders may, within 6 weeks of the 23 May 2016 make application for the purpose to the High Court.

Central Bedfordshire Council
Priory House
Chicksands
Shefford SG17 5TQ

Marcel Coiffait
Director of Community Services

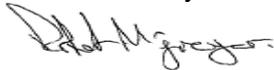
27 May 2016

Appendix B

The Town Council were told at the Biggleswade Joint Committee, by the Chair Cllr M Jones, they could comment on the review of the one-way systems in Biggleswade. The Town Council would like to make the following observations;

The Baulk Should remain as a one-way system, Council do not agree with Paul Salmon's comments that traffic driving the wrong way is a reason to revert, this is a police matter. If the TMC are minded to revert for that reason, the Baulk should have parking one side only with the introduction of yellow lines.

Yours sincerely



Rob McGregor
Town Clerk

WHEN OH WHEN will The Baulk in Biggleswade become a 2 way road again. My petrol consumption has gone up since having to go up to London Road junction, also have you been there when cars are trying to get to Stratton School, and the traffic going up to the new A1 retail park. The corner there has always been a hazard at the best of times, but now it is chaos. So when can we expect to go both ways up and down The Baulk, after all the situation with the parking for the Ivel Clinic doctors is no longer there since they moved 12 months ago.

When the Ivel Clinic medical centre was in The Baulk yes it was awkward to park, but now those premises have been turned into houses again, things are so different.

The parked cars aren't constantly pulling in and out now making it so much more safer to drive both ways.

If locals have to continue having to go up Drove road, they will carry on to the A1 retail park and the Biggleswade market square shops will loose their trades and will close one by one making Biggleswade a ghost town. The bus station will become redundant as people won't be shopping in the Square any more. Biggleswade will be a lonely place.

Not everyone has cars, just bicycles or they walk, they won't be able to shop if there aren't any shops in town.

Comments on current consultation:

We believe the Baulk system should only be maintained, if at all, one way from beyond the exits from Clare Court and Copelands access... or maybe the schools' access points particularly if that area is being converted to provide further parking. This is to allow the frequent traffic, and particularly emergency vehicles swifter access in both directions; it will also save emissions in this highly polluted cross roads area to be reduced... otherwise the many delivery and regular transport vehicles have to make an additional 1/3 mile trip round the Baulk/Drove Road/London Road triangle instead of 1-200 yards, ¾ junctions, starts and stops instead of one. If this proposal cannot be modified, we are against maintaining this as one way, despite its value where the road is more constricted.

I'm less sure of the one-way system in The Baulk simply because the alternative to get into town is to turn right on to London Road at the end of Drove Road. While the bridge was out the turn was not too bad as the road was relatively quiet. If The Baulk one-way system remains then is there maybe a case for the London Road Junction to be made into a mini- roundabout?

Have you modelled the scenario of reversing the flow along both or either The Baulk and Back Street?

I am emailing you regarding the current temporary one-way system around Biggleswade regarding the Back Street and The Baulk. I am a commuter and regularly walk along The Baulk and Back Street to access the train station. At least 3/5 mornings in the week I experience hazardous manoeuvres by drivers and cyclists.

The Baulk:

Regularly cyclists cycle in the opposite direction on the Baulk. This is because it is too far to cycle round Drove Road and the London Road to access the High Street! They have no regard to the one way system. Also, There are a number of access points onto the Baulk from private roads, schools and houses, for example The Avenue, and because the drivers think the road is quiet they therefore again access the London Road by going up the Baulk disregarding the one way system. this causes many very near misses! Several of which I have experienced. The ambulance service from Crab Lane use this road regularly and surely safety of these vehicles should be considered! Please return the Baulk back to a two way system in order to provide a safer walk to work to school and improved road safety for all vehicles to Prevent further accidents and altercations! It continues to remain dangerous as it is.

I hope you will consider the points as a matter of urgency and consider all road users safety.

I have been a resident of The Baulk for 41yrs.

I do not agree with The Baulk, Biggleswade becoming one-way.

It already has 7.5 ton weight limit restriction on The Baulk.

We still have people driving up the wrong way in cars, HGV & motorbikes ignoring the signs.

I await your reply on this matter.

The system in Back Street is excellent as is The Baulk however this also tends to accentuate speeding.

I have been a resident of The Baulk since November 2006 and it became clear to me shortly after moving in that some sort of traffic flow restriction was desperately needed on this road which has been used as a 'rat run' and a race track in both directions for all the years that I have lived here. I have seen no end of near misses involving speeding vehicles, using the on-street parking areas as chicanes, and it is nothing short of a miracle that no serious injury has been caused to the many pedestrians (including numerous school children) that pass through the road on a daily basis.

Due to the increasing volume of traffic accessing Biggleswade as the population has increased over the years, The Baulk has become unfit for purpose as a two-way road and the one way restriction needs to become permanent.

The dangerous way in which many speeding drivers have used the road prior to the restriction plus the sheer volume of traffic experienced has created an overwhelming need for a permanent solution to reduce that flow and by extension the level of danger and noise pollution on the road. The Baulk is a road in which many families with young children now live and of course large numbers of pedestrians utilise.

It is also important to note that no fewer than THREE schools are accessible from The Baulk (Ivel Valley, The Lawns pre-school, Lawnside Lower) and significant numbers of young children walk along the road to access them every day as well.

There is no question that the introduction of the one way scheme has achieved this desperately needed improvement: the amount of vehicles using the road has massively reduced and the feeling of safety has increased commensurate to that reduction. As has the general road noise level which has improved the general quality of life for residents as well.

I have also seen no indication of any adverse effect on traffic flow on surrounding roads as a result of this restriction being introduced.

I would strongly urge the council to make the one-way scheme permanent on our road as it has been such a significant and positive benefit for residents. I very much hope that my comments are taken into account when the decision as to whether to make the restriction permanent is made.

There is only one common sense solution here and that is for the one-way system on The Baulk to become permanent.

I would like to comment as follows:-

1. I agree that the one-way system in The Baulk is a good idea and ideally should stay. I do think that some sort of traffic calming should be in place as some people speed up The Baulk far too fast.
2. There needs to be proper signage, as at the moment the flimsy metal signs that are held in place by sandbags are not adequate. Several times they have been either knocked down or turned completely round the wrong way. At one point they were even all piled up outside the library. This is dangerous. Also the signs that show "no right turn" need to be more prominent as I have seen several cars on many occasions take a right turn which is again dangerous.

I live at no. xx the Baulk, Biggleswade and would like to report that the volume of traffic in the road has decreased by at least 50%, previous to the bridge works, due to the narrow nature of the road cars have driven down the road at speeds far in excess of the speed limit simply to beat the oncoming Traffic so they did not have to give way .

The front door of my house is very close to the road as the pavement is narrow, I have to be very careful leaving the house as cars often mount the pavement to pass one another on the street, in fact a 7.5t truck damaged my wall on one occasion causing extensive damage whilst driving on the pavement to pass other cars who failed to give way to the driver.

Since the one way system has been in place the traffic has been light as befits a narrow side street, Many Mothers and Children use the street to access the High street which is now much safer since the one way system, the road is no longer used as a Rat Run by cars and lorries using the Bulk to access the High street from Potton and visa versa, in previous times articulated lorries were a common site in the Baulk.

The one way system is a positive for myself, my wife and my neighbours at xx the Baulk who have 2 x children 3 and 5 years old, I am fully in favour of keeping the one-way system in place.

Although not a resident in The Baulk Biggleswade I do very frequently visit my daughter at number 84. The temporary introduction of the one way system has transformed what was dangerous 'Rat Run' into a quiet 'Back Water'.

'On Street Parking' has eased making the road much safer and in addition the 'One Way System, has vastly improved entry and exit form The Baulk.

With less vehicles using the road, pollution and noise is considerably reduced.

I will gladly support residents to make 'The Baulk' a permanent one way street.

One of the householders has just given me your letter re the one way system remaining in place.

Would it be possible to move the start of the one way system on the Baulk from Chestnut Avenue to the entrance to Ivel Valley Primary Site, The Lawns, Maythorn, Ivel Valley Hub & the Mental Health clinic. It would be a lot easier for everybody to manoeuvre during school hours and for the people attending the mental health clinic as they don't seem to pay much attention to the one way system!

I've personally been unsure why this road was made one way and my experience over the last twelve months has shown that it has created more issues with traffic flow than it has solved. Namely;

1. traffic driving to the town centre from the east side of the town (Spring Close, Drove Road, Hitchmead Road, Stratton Way areas) plus any through traffic is now limited to either using Rose Lane/ Crab Lane gyratory (adding to regular traffic) or use the Drove Road/ London Road junction. This latter junction is a real congestion point even at quiet times of day as it is exceptionally difficult to turn right to the town centre as a large proportion of traffic coming along London Road from the south, turns into Drove Road, therefore blocking the ability for exiting traffic to turn towards the town. The congestion at this junction is also compounded as it is the main access to Stratton Upper School via Eagle Farm Road, which also joins at this junction. This junction as a whole would benefit from a review, either traffic lights or a roundabout

2. Local traffic has been using the residential streets as a rat runs to avoid these two routes. Namely, the Lawrence, Havelock and Edward Roads. These roads are narrow and with many parked cars, but my main concern is that these roads are pedestrian and vehicle access to Lawnside Lower School and as such these roads have become very dangerous for young children walking to school. Residents have even put up a handmade sign asking drivers to reduce their speed

3. Since the Stratton Street bridge closed, the Ivel Medical Centre has moved from its premises on The Baulk to a new surgery with parking facilities on Chestnut Avenue. The former surgery in The Baulk has now been converted back into houses. Therefore this has reduced the strain on on-street parking and deliveries on The Baulk as staff and patients no longer use it

4. Recently it has been announced locally by the town council, that a piece of land on The Baulk near Copelands Residential Home and The Lawns Nursery School, will be available for off street parking, again reducing on-street parking

5. Unlike the other roads in the temporary road system, I have frequently observed vehicles driving the wrong way along this road. It is also often reported on the local social media group 'We Love Biggleswade' on Facebook that other residents of the town have the same experience. Unfortunately, this is a a accident waiting to happen either for pedestrians not looking both ways before crossing or a head on collision

6. This road is wide enough for two way traffic, and has been able to for all the time that I've lived in the town. Converting back to two way will ease congestion at Drove Road/ London Road junction

In summary, as a daily user of the roads in Biggleswade, I find that Back Street and the Sun/ St John Streets systems work very well, and with minor adjustments will be a vast improvement to traffic flow if they are made permanent. However, I would very much like to see the reinstatement of The Balk to two way traffic which will ease congestion at nearby junctions and also be safer for both drivers and pedestrians.