

ANGUS COUNCIL

INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE

1 JUNE 2010

FORFAR TOWN CENTRE – TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT REVIEW

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

ABSTRACT

This report details the outcome of the public consultation undertaken in Forfar on the proposal to make Castle Street, Forfar one way south-bound over a limited length.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 It is recommended that the Committee:-

- i) notes the findings of the public consultation and the outcome of the public meeting held in the Meffan Museum on 21 April 2010;
- ii) considers the introduction of a modified option to promote a Traffic Regulation Order to make Castle Street one-way southwards from Canmore Street to Myre Road as an outcome of the comments received during the consultation which has been undertaken;
- iii) agrees to the promotion of a Traffic Regulation Order to effect these changes;
- iv) subject to committee agreement to proceed as proposed, note that a traffic survey will be conducted in Castle Street and adjacent roads (Canmore Street, Queen Street, Manor Street, Myre Road) before the introduction of a one-way system, to allow a comparison with traffic movements after a period of twelve months following the proposed change;
- v) notes that a further report on the effects of the changes proposed be brought back to Committee prior to any further physical alterations being implemented in Castle Street.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 As part of an environmental and traffic review of Forfar town centre, a proposal to make Castle Street one way northwards was previously investigated in 2003/04. However after extensive consultation the proposals were reviewed and reported back to Committee in October 2004 (Report No. 1212/04) recommending no significant change to the traffic management arrangements at that time. Environmental works around the Cross progressed in 2009 and required the introduction of a temporary one way south-bound system in Castle Street during the works. This traffic system proved successful and the Community Council and others considered that such a traffic system could have advantages on a permanent basis.

2.2 In March 2010 a report (Report No 195/10) was considered following a study of the traffic management arrangements in Forfar and this committee approved in principle authorising the Director of Infrastructure Services to undertake public consultation on the proposal to make Castle Street one way southwards between Victoria Street and Myre Road and submit a further report to Committee following completion of the consultation. This report summarises the outcome of that consultation.

3 DETAILS

3.1 Extent of Consultation

Consultation letters together with a plan of the proposal and a questionnaire were mailed to all the selected groups listed in the traffic management report, (Appendix A), on 22 March 2010 requesting a response by Friday 23 April 2010. A further 268 consultation letters were hand delivered to residents and frontagers in Castle Street, Canmore Street, Manor Street, and Queen Street (Castle Street to Canmore Street). In addition to indicating their support of the proposal or not, comment(s) were requested in support of their views. The consultation letter also offered an invitation to attend the public meeting held in the Meffan Museum on the evening of Wednesday 21 April 2010.

During the consultation period display boards were erected in the Access Office in Castle Street and the Forfar Library in West High Street. Large scale plans, with information regarding the proposal, were displayed and questionnaires (similar to those issued to frontagers) were available. Return boxes were also provided at both locations.

3.2 Consultation – Overall results of the questionnaire return

In total 298 consultation letters were issued and a further 40 questionnaires were uplifted from the displays. 84 responses have been returned of which 66 responders are in favour of the proposal and 17 responders are opposed to the proposal (one responder was neither for nor against the proposal but provided comment). A plan is attached indicating the extents of frontager consultation (Appendix B).

3.3 Consultation – Response Details

3.3.1 Responses from selected groups

30 consultation letters were mailed to selected groups (Appendix A). In total 11 responses were received with ten responders in favour of the proposal and one responder against the proposal.

Details:

a) Taxi Operators

18 taxi operators were contacted. Responses were received from four. Two of the operators requested that the extent of the one-way proposal be restricted from Canmore Street to Myre Road. The Forfar and Kirriemuir Taxi Operators Association replied on behalf of members and although they opposed the full length of one-way proposal from Victoria Street to Myre Road they would be in favour of a one way south-bound traffic system between Canmore Street and Myre Road. One of the operators expressed a desire for the town centre (including Castle Street) to be pedestrianised.

b) Emergency Services

The Scottish Ambulance Service considered the one-way system that was temporarily introduced in 2009 had worked well and were in favour of the proposal. Tayside Fire Brigade indicated the proposal would have no adverse effect on their operations. Tayside Police considered the proposal would reduce congestion, improve road safety, would allow future provision of on street parking in Castle Street and were in favour of the proposal. They did however also give comment that traffic speeds could possibly increase in Castle Street and that north-bound traffic would be displaced to adjacent streets.

c) Community Groups

Three responses were returned by local community groups, all in favour of the one-way proposal. Comments included a request for more provisions for the disabled by way of dropped kerbs, more disabled parking bays and footway widening. The Community Council supported a one-way system south-bound, but between Canmore Street and Myre Road only.

3.3.2 Responses from Traders

72 consultation letters were delivered to traders in Castle Street. 23 responses were received, of which 17 are in favour of the proposal and 6 are opposed to the proposal.

The main comments given in support of the proposal are:

- Congestion caused by parking/servicing will be reduced (in nine responses).
- It will allow future provision of on street parking (in four responses).
- It will improve safety (in three responses).

The main comments given in opposition to of the proposal are:

- Passing trade would be reduced (in three responses).
- Traffic speeds on Castle Street will increase (in two responses).
- Difficulties would be caused for HGV's accessing/servicing premises (in two responses).

In addition to the above, three respondents requested that if a one-way system is introduced, that the restriction be from Canmore Street to Myre Road, two respondents requested better enforcement of the waiting restrictions in Castle Street and two respondents requested some short stay parking be introduced in Myre Car Park.

3.3.3 Responses from Residents

196 consultation letters were delivered to residents in Castle Street, Canmore Street, Manor Street and Queen Street (between Castle Street and Canmore Street). 38 responses have been received of which 31 are in favour of the proposal and 6 are opposed to the proposal (one response being neutral).

The main comments given in support of the proposal are:

- Congestion caused by parking/servicing will be reduced (in 18 responses).
- It will improve safety (in 12 responses).
- It will allow future footway widening (in two responses).
- It will make exiting from Manor Street on to Castle Street easier (in two responses).

The main comments given in opposition to the proposal are:

- Better enforcement of the existing yellow lines would make the one-way restriction unnecessary (in three responses).
- The alternative route is too long/inconvenient (in three responses).
- Traffic volumes on Manor Street will increase (in three responses).
- Traffic speeds on Castle Street will increase (in two responses).

In addition to the above, three respondents requested that if a one-way south-bound traffic system is introduced, that the limits of the system should be from Canmore Street to Myre Road. Three respondents suggested that Castle Street should be pedestrianised.

3.3.4 Other responses received

12 other responses have been received of which eight are in favour of the proposal and four are opposed to the proposal.

The main comments given in support of the proposal are:

- Congestion caused by parking/servicing will be reduced (in three responses).
- It will improve safety (in three responses).
- It will allow future provision of on-street parking (in one response).

The only comment against the proposal was that it did not cater for cyclists travelling in a northerly direction.

In addition, three respondents requested that if a one-way system is introduced, the restriction be from Canmore Street to Myre Road. One respondent requested that Castle Street be pedestrianised or a contra-flow cycle lane introduced.

3.4 Response of Public Meeting

The meeting was attended by 11 people including a local elected member, representation from Forfar Community Council, CTC cycling group, a taxi operator, two retailers in Castle Street and some local residents.

- 3.4.1 The retailers were concerned about the possible reduction in passing trade if a one-way traffic system was introduced in Castle Street, especially those shops retailing fresh food products or newspapers. One retailer stated that they had experienced a 10-15% reduction in footfall during the temporary one-way traffic system in 2009. There was also concern from a retailer that, since completion of the environmental improvements, traffic queuing at the east side of the Town and County Hall, or traffic turning from the west side into this area, can be held back at times of service delivery outside the shops on the east side, and this would cause difficulties with further queuing if there was a one-way south-bound traffic system in operation. Although there would be no further changes proposed to the present parking/servicing arrangements, or possible footway widening, for 12 months after the introduction of a one-way system, the retailers felt this was a long time if business was directly affected by the change in traffic movement.
- 3.4.2 Some felt that there would be reduced traffic hindrance under the existing two-way system if parking on the existing waiting restrictions was enforced more strictly and the taxi rank on the west side moved over to the east side of Castle Street.
- 3.4.3 There was a suggestion that part of Myre Car Park could be changed to short stay parking to give higher turn-over for the shops and this should help resolve the on-street parking demand. There could be a higher turn-over of parking with more on-street parking should the one-way system be introduced and waiting restrictions reviewed. There was comment that there would be delay exiting from Myre Road onto Craig O' Loch Road.
- 3.4.4 Some were concerned about increased traffic speeds on Castle Street during an interim trial period before footway widening or parking review. There was also a concern from a resident that speeding may increase in Manor Street which was noticeable during the previous temporary one-way system, especially by taxis.
- 3.4.5 There was some support for a curtailed length of one-way between Canmore Street and Myre Road and comment that future footway widening would be welcomed especially by wheelchair users.

3.5 Main Outcomes Overall

- 3.5.1 The majority of respondents were in favour of a one-way south-bound traffic system. However a significant number of respondents expressed a desire for its extents to be from Canmore Street to Myre Road only.
- 3.5.2 A warehouse facility for five shops exists in the northern section of Castle Street and vehicles servicing take access from Castle Street to the north of Canmore Street. The proposal to introduce a one-way south-bound traffic system from Victoria Street to Myre Road would result in a number of heavy goods vehicles travelling unnecessarily through the town centre. Altering the extents of the one-way restriction to Canmore Street and Myre Road would negate this requirement.
- 3.5.3 The newsagent at 121 Castle Street relies on passing trade. Presently north-bound traffic may, before 8.30am and after 5.30pm, park on single yellow lines near to the shop. The proposed one-way system will remove north-bound traffic and could affect potential custom before 8.30am and after 5.30pm.
- 3.5.4 Should a one-way restriction be introduced in Castle Street, traffic surveys will require to be carried out in Castle Street and adjacent streets to monitor the local effect on traffic movement and to allow an assessment of the scheme prior to any modification to footways or parking arrangements.
- 3.5.5 Should Committee agree to the recommendations contained in this report, the proposal to introduce a one-way traffic system in Castle Street will require a Traffic Regulation Order. As part of the legal process in making such an order, formal consultation would be undertaken, and any objections would require to be brought back to Committee for consideration prior to final determination. It should be noted that as a consequence of the proposed one-way south-bound Traffic Regulation Order, vehicles will not be permitted to turn left from Manor Street into Castle Street. This prohibited turn would not require a separate Traffic Regulations Order. The order process is likely to take a period of six – nine months and accordingly the physical alterations are not likely to be implemented until financial year 2011/12.
- 3.5.6 The implementation of the proposed one-way traffic system would give opportunity for the future provision of increased footway widths for the benefit of shoppers. Short stay on-street parking in Castle Street can also be introduced to allow parking turnover for the benefit of retailers and businesses. These provisions would be considered separately after a 12 month trial period of the proposed one-way traffic system and would be the subject of a further report to Committee.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The estimated cost of introducing the one way south-bound traffic system in Castle Street would be approximately £12,000 which would allow for signage, road markings, and minor works. This expenditure would be contained within resources available to the Roads division probably in 2011/2012.

5 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no human rights implications arising from the proposals in this report.

6 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The issues dealt with in this report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective (as required by legislation). An equalities impact assessment is required.

7 SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT

7.1 This report contributes to the following outcome contained within the Single Outcome Agreement for Angus.

- The importance and benefits to society of the environment is recognised.
- Communities in Angus are safe, secure and vibrant.

8 CONSULTATION

8.1 The Chief Executive, Chief Constable, Director of Corporate Services, Director of Neighbourhood Services, Head of Law and Administration and Head of Finance, were consulted in the preparation of this report.

9 CONCLUSIONS

9.1 The results of the public consultation favours the introduction of a one-way south-bound traffic system and there is support for the length of the proposed scheme to be between Canmore Street and Myre Road.

9.2 It is recommended that the relevant Traffic Regulation Order now be promoted.

9.3 It is recommended that traffic surveys be carried out before and after introduction of a one-way system to allow the effect on adjacent streets to be assessed.

9.4 Further consideration to additional alterations to footway widths and on-street parking provision within the affected length can be given following a trial operating period under the proposed regime of 12 months.

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DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES**

NOTE:

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

Selected groups consulted

Royal Burgh of Forfar Community Council
Forfar Area Partnership
Forfar Business Initiative
Tayside Police
Scottish Ambulance Service
Tayside Fire Brigade
Angus Access Panel
The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association
Stagecoach Buses
JP Mini Coaches
Tayside Public Transport Co. Ltd.
Fishers Tours
All Forfar based Taxi Operators (18 of)

