

Town Centre Transport Improvements Consultation

Dear Stakeholder,

Earlier this year the Council made a number of temporary changes to the road layout in the town centre as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These schemes were funded through the government's Emergency Active Travel Fund [EATF] and are designed to remove through traffic and encourage more people to walk and cycle. The schemes are fully consistent with the policies in the Council's fourth [Local Transport Plan](#).

The plan shows some of the 'through routes' which were routinely used by motorists to cut through the town centre, resulting in an increase in traffic volumes and speed, as well as the environmental impacts of noise and vehicle emissions. This makes the streets within the town centre much less attractive for people who live and work here and mean they are not user friendly for pedestrians, cyclists and those with disabilities.

Current situation

From their initial implementation as emergency measures in June 2020, the different elements have been monitored and some changes made. The current measures in place are as follows:

- A left-turn ban except for cyclists at the junction of Winmarleigh St and Sankey St;
- Access-only restrictions at the junction of Sankey St and Bold St;
- The reversal of the one-way system along Bold St (between Wilson Patten Street and St Austins Lane) with the introduction of a contra-flow cycle lane;
- No exit from Barbould St onto Wilson Patten St;
- A shorter pedestrian / cycle crossing on Wilson Pattern St at Bridgefoot Island;
- The prohibition of westbound traffic between Academy Way and Bridge Street; and
- Installation of additional cycle parking at various locations around the town centre.

These measures, which aim to reduce the impact of traffic in the town centre are also entirely consistent with two important documents recently published by the council:

- Town Centre Masterplan
- Central 6 Masterplan



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Town Centre Masterplan

<https://www.warrington.gov.uk/town-centre-masterplan> sets out a vision to create a town centre that's distinctive, safe, vibrant, green and colourful – a great place to live, work, do business and enjoy.

The plans include improving streetscapes within the town centre to support greater levels of town centre living and creating a less car dominated environment.



Central 6 Masterplan

<https://www.warrington.gov.uk/central6>

The Central 6 Masterplan project developed a long-term masterplan for the whole of Warrington's central area, fully informed and led by the community and residents' experiences and ideas about what would improve the area and the opportunities for those who live there.

A number of key themes set out in the masterplan are relevant to the town centre, specifically:

- Theme 1 - Inclusive, Safer, Greener Streets; and
- Theme 3 - Well Connected and Affordable Movement.

The first 2 stages of consultation also showed strong community support for the following:

- Better connected dedicated cycle routes both locally and connected to long distance routes;
- Modal shift (reducing the number of trips by car) for the final mile into the town centre;
- Traffic calming and enforcement in residential areas;
- More segregated cycle paths; and
- Measures to reduce reliance on the car.



Example from the town of Qualicum Beach, Vancouver Island, Canada
(Source: qualicumbeach.com)



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Making the changes permanent

After monitoring the effects of the schemes for a period of months, it is proposed that a number of the schemes are formalised and made permanent. The schemes will be funded using a second tranche of the [Active Travel Fund](#), recently awarded by the government. The schemes which are proposed to be retained have been successful at reducing through movements and promoting active travel within the town centre, and meet the objectives of both Warrington's Local Transport Plan and the government's EATF guidance.

Making the measures permanent would involve making permanent Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) for the restrictions and replacing the temporary cones, barriers and signage with permanent changes using physical measures such as build-outs, refuges, signs and lining installed on a permanent basis.

The installation of permanent physical measures will allow the measures to be more readily understood by drivers, pedestrians and cyclists and will provide an enhancement to the streetscape in these areas.



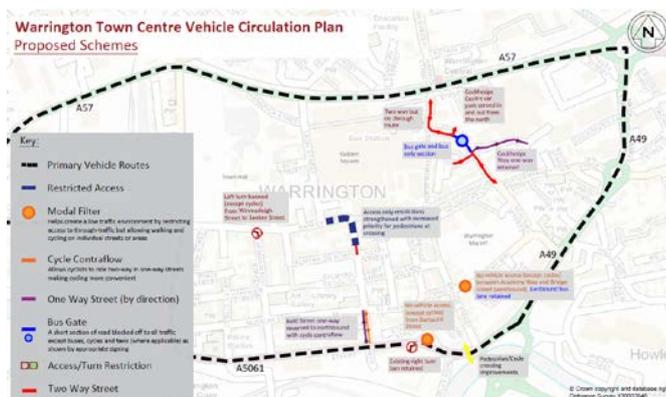
At the same time as making the schemes permanent, it is proposed to make some changes to the current measures on Scotland Road:

It is proposed to remove the restriction near the bus interchange on Winwick Street and instead, install a bus gate along Scotland Road between the junctions with Cockhedge Way and the Cockhedge Retail Park car park. The bus gate would allow access for buses, taxis and cyclists in both directions, but prohibit access for other vehicles. To support these proposals, the existing bus lane would be removed northbound, and modifications made to the junctions surrounding the bus gate:

- Access into and out of Cockhedge Retail Park car park would be via Winwick Street and Scotland Road from the north;
- Access into Cockhedge Way would be via Scotland Road from the south;

The bus gate will provide cycling and pedestrian facilities to increase the permeability of the town centre and encourage travel by these modes.

It is not proposed to make any further changes to the east end of Sankey Street and the north end of Bold Street at this time. The existing permanent Access Only order and temporary removal of parking bays on Sankey Street will be retained, subject to review at a future point.



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Summary

The proposed permanent measures are intended to:

- Retain vehicular access for residents, visitors and business into the town centre areas;
- Reduce the volume of through traffic which increases traffic flow and speed, creating a more attractive environment for all;
- Create road conditions for pedestrians and cyclists which are more attractive and will support the long term aims to promote greater levels of walking and cycling.

In the longer term, the objective is to use these measures as the first step towards a more comprehensive environmental enhancement scheme for the town centre, similar to the improvements seen in other towns and cities such as Frodsham Street in Chester or Fishergate in Preston.

As mentioned above, the intention is not to restrict access to the town centre for those people who live, work or visit. It is to remove unnecessary through traffic. To illustrate this, the plan shows how following the implementation of these measures, traffic will be able to circulate within the town centre.

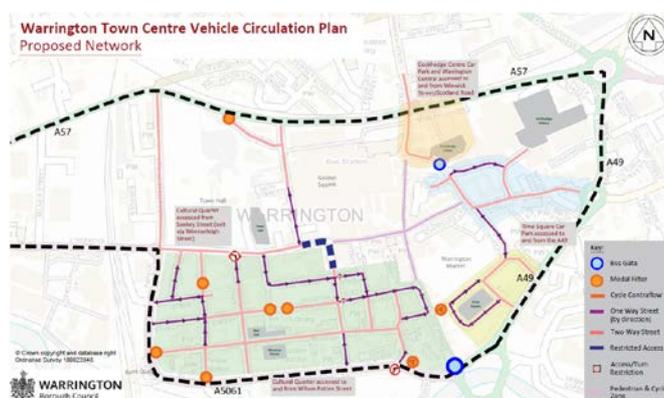
In summary the proposed measures for permanent changes are as follows:

- A. Scotland Road Bus Gate, permitting access by bus, taxi and cycle
- B. Reversal of one way system on Bold Street, with cycle flow permitted in the opposite direction
- C. No vehicle access (except for cyclists) from Barbauld Street onto Wilson Patten Street
- D. Left turn not permitted (except for cyclists) from Winmarleigh Street to Sankey Street
- E. Restrictions on Academy Way to remove westbound through traffic, except cycles and creation of loading bay on Moulders Lane

Timescales

The schemes which are currently provided on a temporary basis will remain in place until the infrastructure is provided on a permanent basis. The delivery of the schemes is subject to approval of the relevant Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs), which will be informed by the statutory consultation process outlined below.

Subject to completion of the design and procurement processes and successful progression of the TROs, it is proposed to make the schemes permanent by March 2021.



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Further Information

If you would like further information regarding the proposals, please email eatf@warrington.gov.uk

If you would like to request a phone call with one of the Council Officers, please email eatf@warrington.gov.uk providing your contact details and nature of your enquiry.

Have Your Say

We are keen to know your views on these proposals and invite you to respond in either or both of two ways:

Option 1 – Feedback for a Consultation Report

If you have general comments you would like to make on the proposals please email us at eatf@warrington.gov.uk and we will be collating the feedback and documenting the various themes of people's responses, both positive and negative.

Your contact details will not be included in the consultation report which will be prepared after the consultation has ended.

The consultation report will be used to provide background context to Traffic Committee on people's views about the proposals.

If you ask us a specific question we will aim to respond within 5 working days during the consultation period.

Option 2 – Formal Response to Traffic Regulation Order consultation

If you want to formally support or object to the legal orders out for consultation, you should do so via the Traffic Regulation Orders webpage. <https://www.warrington.gov.uk/permanent-traffic-regulation-orders>

You will find the details under the three relevant orders, which are:

- Town Centre – various Revocations & Moving Restrictions – Order
- Scotland Road – Bus Gate – Order
- Traffic Management – Amendment No.35 - Order

Here you will find the detailed order schedules along with plans showing the extent of the proposed restrictions and associated signage. You will also find instructions on how to make your formal representations to Legal Services either in writing by post or via email.

The consultation period is from Thursday 26th November until Thursday 24th December 2020.

We look forward to your feedback



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