

# Compliance with S122 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984

This annex sets out how the county council has complied with the requirements of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 in giving consideration to proposed experimental and permanent transport changes in Oxford city centre. Note that for proposed orders the statements of reasons identify relevant grounds under Section 1 of the Act.

## A. Experimental closure of Queen Street

The proposal for an experimental closure of Queen Street to buses, taxis and private hire vehicles is being promoted primarily to secure safe and convenient pedestrian use of Queen Street.

Officers have had regard to the following so far as practicable in making recommendations to Cabinet:

### **The desirability of securing and maintaining reasonable access to premises**

- Access to Queen Street will remain unchanged for deliveries; only buses taxis and private hire vehicles are to be prohibited
- New bus stops are being created to allow access for bus passengers to this part of the city to be maintained. A detailed assessment of the effects on accessibility for bus passengers is at Annex 3.
- A new taxi rank is being created in Cornmarket, very close to the current Queen Street rank, to maintain access for taxi passengers
- Private hire services will continue to have access to nearby streets, including New Road.
- The proposal is experimental and the effects on access will be considered during the experimental period

### **The effect on the amenities of any locality affected and (without prejudice to the generality of this paragraph) the importance of regulating and restricting the use of roads by heavy commercial vehicles, so as to preserve or improve the amenities of the areas through which the roads run**

- The amenity of Queen Street and the streets affected by its closure have been considered and are discussed in the main report and in the annexes.
- The environment in Queen Street will be improved by the removal of motor traffic for the busiest hours of the day
- The permanent improvements will help prevent any negative impacts in surrounding streets and in many cases will deliver improvements over the existing situation
- The proposal is experimental and the effects on amenity will be considered during the experimental period

### **The strategy prepared under section 80 of the Environment Act 1995 (national air quality strategy)**

- Air quality in Queen Street will be improved through the removal of motor traffic
- Air quality in surrounding streets may be negatively affected by increased bus flows and stops, but may also be positively affected by some of the other permanent changes proposed
- The proposal is experimental and the effects on air quality will be monitored during the experimental period

### **The importance of facilitating the passage of public service vehicles and of securing the safety and convenience of persons using or desiring to use such vehicles**

- New bus stops are being created to allow access for bus passengers to this part of the city to be maintained and to reduce pressure on existing bus stops. A detailed assessment of the effects on accessibility for bus passengers is at Annex 3.
- It is acknowledged that bus mileage, and the risk of delays to buses, is increased by prohibiting buses from Queen Street. However the permanent improvements will help prevent negative impacts and in some cases will deliver improvements over the existing situation.
- The proposal is experimental and the effects on public service vehicles and their passengers will be considered during the experimental period

### **Any other matters appearing to the local authority to be relevant**

- Officers consider that the ability to advance the long-running debate about the future of Queen Street is a relevant matter, and consider that the experimental order will provide valuable data and experience to inform this debate
- The economic success of Oxford city centre as a whole will be supported by connecting the Westgate Centre well with the rest of the city. Queen Street clearly has a vital role to play in this and the amenity of Queen Street will be enhanced through the removal of motor traffic during the busiest times of day.

The proposed experimental order was subject to public and stakeholder consultation, and responses to individual consultation comments, in many cases relevant to the various matters above, are in Annex 2.

## **B. Permanent changes**

The proposals for amendments to traffic regulation orders, bus stop clearways and provision of new zebra crossings are being promoted to secure expeditious, safe and convenient vehicular, cycle and pedestrian movement, whilst providing suitable facilities for loading and waiting.

Officers have had regard to the following so far as practicable in making recommendations to Cabinet:

### **The desirability of securing and maintaining reasonable access to premises**

- The proposals for changes to loading arrangements in St Aldate's and High Street were developed using evidence from a survey of frontagers' requirements, as well as video surveys of loading activity.
- The proposals allow additional time for loading in the morning peak (07:30 to 09:30) when bus dwell times are lower, and when delivery and servicing requirements at their peak. The new loading restriction (12:00 to 20:00) is designed to prevent blockages when pressure on bus stops and footways is greatest, and when loading requirements are reduced.
- The proposals for bus stop clearways and pedestrian crossings will reduce the ability to load in some areas but the remaining kerb space is considered to be sufficient given the patterns of loading activity observed in the video surveys

### **The effect on the amenities of any locality affected and (without prejudice to the generality of this paragraph) the importance of regulating and restricting the use of roads by heavy commercial vehicles, so as to preserve or improve the amenities of the areas through which the roads run;**

- The improvements help reduce queuing and congestion in the areas affected, which will improve the general environmental amenity of the streets affected

### **The strategy prepared under section 80 of the Environment Act 1995 (national air quality strategy)**

- The improvements help reduce queuing and congestion in the areas affected, which will help to improve the air quality of the streets affected

The importance of facilitating the passage of public service vehicles and of securing the safety and convenience of persons using or desiring to use such vehicle

- The improvements will reduce bus journey times and provide for future growth in bus patronage through the improvements to junctions, improved loading restrictions, additional bus stops, additional bus layover points, and improved pedestrian crossings which will benefit passengers.

### **Any other matters appearing to the local authority to be relevant**

- The improvements will help to integrate the expanding "West End" area of the city centre (including the new Westgate Centre) with the rest of the city, helping to maximise the economic benefits.

The proposed experimental order was subject to public and stakeholder consultation, and responses to individual consultation comments, in many cases relevant to the various matters above, are in Annex 2.