

CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT – 24 MARCH 2011

KIDLINGTON, HIGH STREET - PEDESTRIANISATION AGENCY AGREEMENT

Report by Deputy Director of Environment & Economy – Highways & Transport

Introduction

1. This report considers Cherwell District Council's request for an agency agreement to advertise a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to enhance the existing semi-pedestrianised section of the High Street in Kidlington.

Background

2. In 1979 part of the High Street was semi-pedestrianised by means of a Prohibition of Driving TRO. At that time, it was recognized that some premises that fronted onto the High Street had no alternative means of access and so the TRO which was introduced contained a specific exemption to allow vehicles to access any private parking spaces, adjacent to the High Street, but clear of the highway. The TRO also allowed the usual exceptions such as the loading and unloading of goods, building operations and parking by blue badge holders for up to 3 hours. Since then, the general level of activity, both by vehicles and pedestrians, has significantly increased in the High Street resulting in greater conflict between motorists and pedestrians.
3. In 2009, the Kidlington Village Centre Management Board asked Cherwell District Council to investigate options to reduce through traffic, restrict vehicle movements or prevent unauthorized parking. To achieve these aspirations would require a fundamental rewording of the TRO, with the removal of some of the exemptions. To investigate this further, a project working group was formed, including representatives from Kidlington Parish Council, Cherwell District Council and Thames Valley Police. Oxfordshire County Council was represented by an officer from the Northern Area Highway Office and Councillor Michael Gibbard.
4. In order to make progress with this scheme the District Council formally requested an agency agreement to revoke the current TRO and promote a new order to enhance the pedestrianisation. Officers have considered the request and asked Cherwell District Council to first undertake extensive informal consultation, particularly with local interested parties, before commencing the legal process to introduce a new TRO.

Consultation

5. Following meetings of the project working group to assess options to be included in any new TRO, an informal consultation exercise was undertaken between September and November 2010. The plan at Annex 1 illustrates the proposals which were the subject of this consultation.

6. The District Council has provided a summary of the consultation exercise at Annex 2. The results provided clear positive feedback to enable the project working group to recommend that formal consultation on a new TRO be undertaken, subject to ratification by the District Council's Executive and the County Council's Cabinet Member for Transport.
7. District officers are now preparing the legal wording of the proposed TRO, subject to final approval by the County Council's Legal Services Unit. It is anticipated that formal advertisement of the TRO will be undertaken in July 2011, with the objection period finishing prior to the start of the school holidays. If objections are received to the TRO, and it transpires that these cannot be ameliorated by minor amendments, it may be necessary to hold a public inquiry. This is only necessary for certain types of objection, although a recent similar TRO proposal at Parsons Street in Banbury did result in such an inquiry being held.

How the Project supports LTP2 Objectives

8. The proposed enhanced pedestrianisation of the High Street would improve the street environment and accessibility for pedestrians and could lead to better air quality.

Financial and Staff Implications

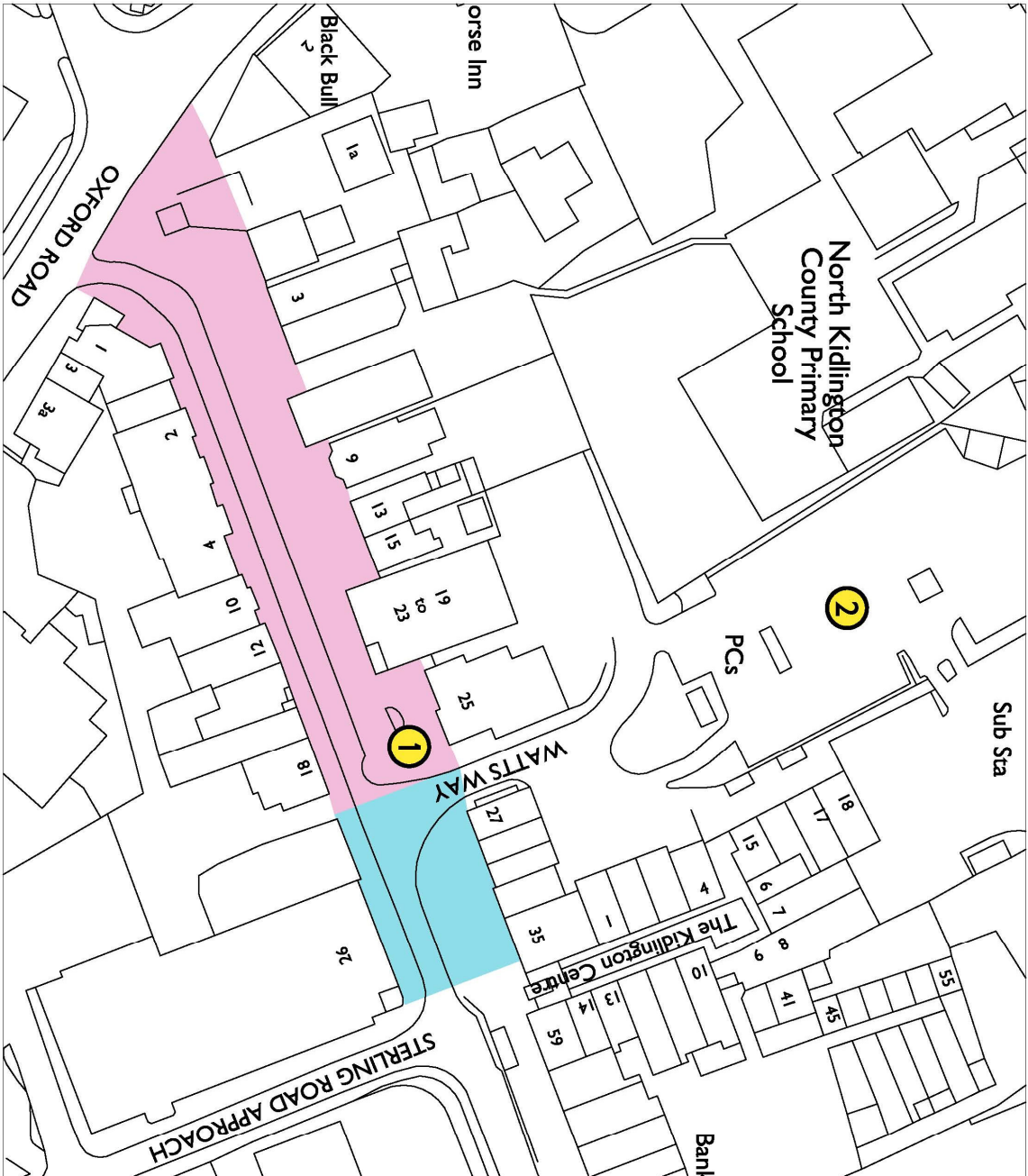
9. The District Council has committed capital funds and resources to manage the TRO process on behalf of the County Council. This would also include the legal work necessary to hold a public inquiry, although the County Council would need to provide an officer as an expert witness at the inquiry. The District Council has also committed resources to fund the necessary changes to the traffic signs and road markings to support the new TRO. However, it has asked the County Council to supervise the works. The financial and staff implications for the county are therefore limited to checking the wording of the new TRO document and agency agreement (including the recharge costs from the Legal Services Unit), attendance at any public inquiry and works supervision and it is anticipated that these can be met from the staff revenue budget 2011/12.

RECOMMENDATION

10. **The Cabinet Member for Transport is RECOMMENDED to approve the request from Cherwell District Council for an Agency Agreement to enable them to revoke the current prohibition of driving traffic regulation order in High Street, Kidlington and promote a new order to enhance the existing semi-pedestrianisation section as necessary.**

STEVE HOWELL
Deputy Director of Environment & Economy

Background papers: None.
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March 2011



**Revised Kidlington High Street
Traffic Regulation Order:
Options to Consider.**

**Plan 1: Vehicle and Pedestrian
Management.**

KEY.

- Proposed pedestrianised area: 10 am-4:30pm (no public parking). Permit holders only (permits for access will be granted to business and residential occupiers). No blue badge parking. Drivers before 10 am and after 4:30 pm.
- No Parking area.
- Propose cycle parking (location unknown).
- Proposed 'Blue badge' parking in Car Park Plus Car Park.

