

**CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT
12 OCTOBER 2017**

Queen Street Experimental Traffic Regulation Order

Report by Director for Planning and Place.

Introduction

1. Cabinet Member approval is sought to defer a decision on the exclusion of buses from Queen Street pending further monitoring once the new Westgate centre opens, but to implement immediately restrictions to exclude taxis and private hire vehicles from Queen Street.
2. Following a public consultation, in July 2017 Cabinet resolved to: “approve the proposal for an experimental TRO restricting bus, taxi and private hire access to Queen Street as advertised, subject to approval by the Secretary of State for Transport”.
3. The intention was to introduce the experimental traffic regulation order (TRO) that would exclude buses, taxis and private hire vehicles from Queen Street from 22nd October, prior to the opening of the new Westgate Centre.
4. The proposal to remove buses, taxis and private hire vehicles was supported by (amongst others) the Westgate Centre and Oxford City Council, but opposed by (amongst others) Oxford Bus Company and Stagecoach.

Secretary of State Referral

5. As a result of the objections from two bus operators, there was a legal requirement to refer the proposal for the exclusion of buses (not taxis and private hire) to the Secretary of State for Transport for approval. The County Council was expecting the Secretary of State to make a decision by the end of September. The Department of Transport has informed the Council that this decision is not likely to be made until mid-October at the earliest. This means that buses will still be operating in Queen Street when the new Westgate centre opens.
6. Pending the formal decision by the Secretary of State, the Department for Transport’s recommendation is that that monitoring must be undertaken with the new Westgate open and with buses and pedestrians present, prior to any potential closure being considered.
7. The proposed exclusion of taxis and private hire vehicles from Queen Street can still proceed, as this does not require approval by the Department for Transport and was approved by Cabinet in July 2017 following consultation.

Next steps

8. Subject to the Cabinet Member's approval of the recommendations below, it is intended to implement the experimental TRO with regard to taxis and private hire vehicles on 23rd October, prior to the new Westgate centre opening on Tuesday 24th October.
9. Meanwhile, the bus companies have agreed to significantly reduce the number of buses using Queen Street, and the bus stop in Bonn Square will be removed.
10. The new Westgate centre is due to open on 24th October, and the County Council and bus companies will be monitoring Queen Street closely from the outset. After an appropriate period of monitoring officers will report to Cabinet seeking a decision on future bus access arrangements in Queen Street.

Financial and Staff Implications

11. None

Equalities Implications

12. None

Call-In Period

13. In order that there be no delay in the implementation of the TRO and so that proper notice can be given the Chairman of the Council, Councillor Zoe Patrick has agreed that in this instance there be no right of 'call in' due to the urgent nature of the decision to be taken.

RECOMMENDATION

14. **The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to:**
 - (a) **pending the decision of the SoS, defer a decision on the part of the experimental TRO reported to Cabinet in July 2017 excluding buses from Queen Street until further monitoring has been undertaken with the Westgate centre open; and**
 - (b) **approve the implementation of the part of the experimental TRO to exclude taxis and private hire vehicles from Queen Street.**

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Director for Planning and Place

Background papers: none

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