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Introduction by the Steering Group Chair

At the last meeting of the Steering Group on 20th August, I undertook to collect members’ comments on the proposals for the ATZ and the Bus Gate circulated shortly before the meeting, together with the Council officers’ responses to those comments. This was on the basis, confirmed at the meeting, that the next meeting of the Group on 21st October would be too late for further decisions on those aspects of the Scheme.

This paper seeks to discharge this remit as well as providing further information about the planned implementation of the Scheme. The main part of the paper describes for the Steering Group’s information the Council’s intended actions in relation to the specific elements within each of the two aspects of the Scheme currently in focus: the ATZ and the Bus Gate. Separate annexes deal respectively with the key future decision points (Annex A), a log of detailed comments and responses (Annex B), a new map of the proposals (Annex C), and the method of introducing the proposals which incidentally makes clear the scope of the Traffic Regulation Orders (Annex D).

I am very grateful to those members of the Steering Group who have sent in comments on the proposals. In considering the Council’s responses, it needs to be borne in mind that this is a trial with a significant number of ‘unknowns’ and that we may well be back into some of these issues at a later stage. So this first run over the ground with local input could well prove to have been a useful exercise as well as registering the views of members of the Steering Group at this point. My suggestion is that we now begin to focus on the arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the trial as well as ensuring that the public has the necessary information about the implementation of the Scheme. This, together with the KPIs, will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

In the meantime, this report will be published on the Council’s website in advance of the Traffic Regulation Order consultation.

Officer report on Steering Group comments received in response to PSG2 papers

Summary

The elements taken forward within the bus gate trial and the accompanying ATZ have been carefully considered with regards to their public acceptance and technical validity and attempted to strike a balance to meet the needs of the project. There will never be unanimous support to all elements of the scheme. Doing nothing was not considered the best approach for the project, however with the project being a trial, elements of the project can be amended, added or removed after the initial trial period, with Steering Group comments kept in mind.

Annexes

Annex A outlines the upcoming key decision points

Annex B is a log of comments received by PSG2 members with responses from SCC

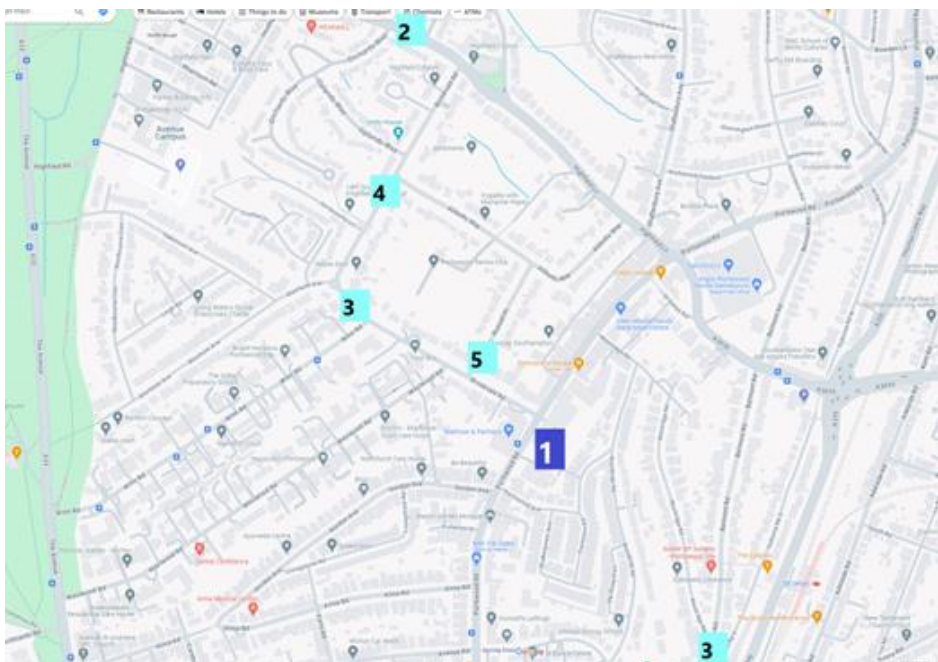
Annex C is an overview map of proposals for the Broadway and ATZ

Annex D explains the legal method of introduction for each element of the project

Active Travel Zone (ATZ) and bus gate proposals

ATZ

The Council proposes to proceed as follows. Note example images provided are indicative only and are not exact replicas of measures to be delivered in Portswood. Draft designs will be published alongside the TRO in October.



Overview map [Map data © 2024 Google]

1. *20mph limit for the area, with Vehicle Activated Signage*

20mph limit for the area, including Portswood Rd and Highfield Lane section from Portswood Rd junction to Glebe Court. Four pairs vehicle activated speed signs (VAS) for 6 months, relocated monthly.



Vehicle Activated Signage example (Woolston)

There was strong support among the Steering Group for a 20mph limit. Some members of the SG requested for the 20mph area to be extended. Whilst those requests are reasonable, the 20mph area as proposed is being implemented directly linked to the bus gate trial, and is being fully justified as a mitigation measure linked to the bus gate trial.

An extension of the area would lead to greater costs, and is likely to attract more feedback and objections. Council experience suggests that there can be controversy around extensive introduction of 20mph limits on A-roads, and if the area is extended further could jeopardise the overall implementation.

Extension of the 20mph area could be considered at a future date as part of the city-wide 20mph roll out.

2. Gateway on Highfield Lane

Gateway treatment on Highfield Lane outside Glebe Court (at the most southerly existing buildout/north of the disused bus stop). Including new buildout (opposite existing), 20mph signage, coloured surfacing, and painted speed limit roundels. See example at Gover Road, Old Redbridge.

The gateway received broad support, but concerns were raised by members about cycle safety around buildouts. At this location, the new buildout is no wider than the existing parking bays and so does not push cyclists out into the main carriageway. A cycle bypass (as suggested by some members) will not be included here; it would reduce the gateway effect and conflict with existing parking. The gateway is a visual cue to drivers to slow in advance of the existing zebra crossing, which is the key concern raised at co-design about drivers not always giving way to pedestrians. Reduced speeds in this location will benefit cycle safety.



Gateway example (Old Redbridge)

3. Buildouts with wooden planters on Belmont Rd (north of Osborne Rd South junction) and on Brookvale Rd (north of Winn Rd junction)

Buildouts on both sides of the road to narrow the carriageway sufficiently that only one car can pass in each direction at a time. Wooden planters on the new buildouts.

The design has been modified to include explicit priority to one direction using signage as requested by the Steering Group.

Some members expressed a preference for “stronger” measures, particularly more traffic filters (instead of buildouts/traffic calming). Opinions on traffic filters at co-design were divided. The same can be said for individual Steering Group members. Regarding a multiple traffic filter approach, generally people

feel either strongly in favour or strongly against, with little middle ground. The proposals per doc. 2.2.4 including a single traffic filter attempted to strike a balance to meet the needs of the project:

- feasible within design guidelines, budget and trial timeline
- overall a good level of support at co-design
- calm or discourage traffic, reduce rat running and prioritise people walking, wheeling and cycling
- maintain motor vehicle access for those who live there.

4. *Traffic calming on Brookvale Rd, between Highfield Lane and Oakmount Triangle*

Amend the existing buildouts into alternating give-ways with space for one car to pass through at a time by adding a bolt-down cycle lane separator with a cycle bypass behind.



Buildout and island with cycle bypass example (Woolston)

At Steering Group meeting 2 various options for this location were discussed (per doc 2.2.4) and a rough design was not yet available. There was not clear support for echelon parking, and this is not currently being progressed.

Concerns were raised by members about cycle safety around buildouts. Cycle bypasses have since been included in the design, as well as explicit priority to one direction using signage as requested by the Steering Group. All proposals will be subject to an independent Road Safety Audit (RSA) and if any issues are raised the designer will need to demonstrate how these are mitigated.

5. Trial traffic filter on Russell Place at its junction with Abbotts Way

Trial traffic filter using planters and signage (in the planter) on Russell Place at its junction with Abbotts Way.



Traffic filter example (St Denys)

A comment was made that the Council states in doc 2.2.2 opinions on traffic filters at co-design were divided yet one has been included in the design. Individual Steering Group members are also divided in opinion on traffic filters. Regarding a multiple traffic filter approach, generally people feel either strongly in favour or strongly against, with little middle ground. The proposals per doc. 2.2.4 including a single traffic filter attempted to strike a balance to meet the needs of the project:

- feasible within design guidelines, budget and trial timeline
- overall a good level of support at co-design
- calm or discourage traffic, reduce rat running and prioritise people walking, wheeling and cycling
- maintain motor vehicle access for those who live there.

The impact of all proposed measures under the Portswood Project cannot be fully known in advance, so delivering the scheme initially as a trial allows this to be tested. Depending on the results, measures could be removed, amended or added later.

Alternatives considered and rejected

While consideration was of course given to the level of support for each measure, all ideas and suggestions – not just those with a high “approval rate” – received during the workshops were reviewed by Council officers. The proposals per doc. 2.2.4 attempted to strike a balance to meet the needs of the project:

- feasible within design guidelines, budget and trial timeline
- overall a good level of support at co-design

- calm or discourage traffic, reduce rat running and prioritise people walking, wheeling and cycling
- maintain motor vehicle access for those who live there.

There were a total 24 different measures - with varying degrees of support - suggested at co-design workshops. Examples of those not included in these proposals include speed cushions, one-way, traffic filters using Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR), new crossing points, new Resident Parking Zones or doing nothing.

ANPR filters for the ATZ areas are not feasible to be set up in time for the trial period, and this was made clear to all attendees at the outset in every co-design workshop.

Legislation asserts that enforcement e.g. via ANPR cameras should only be considered for a scheme where engineering and education have already failed. In addition, the trial budget is unlikely to be sufficient to cover extensive camera coverage across the area and the background work required to manage exemptions.

Implementing ATZ measures in the streets neighbouring the Broadway is considered to be a better approach than doing nothing in order to limit any potential negative impacts of the bus gate on surrounding roads, which was raised as a concern by residents in previous consultation.

Bus gate

The Council proposes to proceed as follows:

1. *Broadway design*

Implement the changes as shown in doc 2.3, except where noted below:

Opposition was noted to the change of restrictions at St Denys Road spur, with the suggestion to move the bus gate start north to the main junction. There are valid technical arguments for and against changes to restrictions at the spur road, but the Cabinet decision was taken in January to undertake the trial in accordance with what was agreed, including reducing the length of the bus/taxi/cycle only section of road to be from Westridge Road to St Denys Road spur.

HGVs delivering to businesses south of the bus gate would cause traffic problems and potential safety issues turning into Westridge Road or attempting a multi-point turn trying to avoid the bus gate. In order to mitigate this, northbound HGVs (vehicles over 7.5 tonnes) are permitted through the bus gate. Loading within the bus gate is not encouraged as this could impact bus journey times and as such there is no dedicated loading facility on the Broadway. The spur road loading area provides a loading facility which can be accessed by HGVs 24/7 from both directions. Allowing southbound HGVs access to enter the bus gate would mean more vehicles entering the restricted zone which could impact bus journey times and encourages loading whilst the bus gate is operational.

Concern was raised about the risk of “left-hooks” for cycles continuing south on Portswood Road through Highfield Lane junction, as well as past the spur road. Cycle symbols will be added across the junction to increase driver awareness of cycles continuing straight and encourage people on bikes to take “primary position.”



Bus gate example (Portland Terrace)

2. Signage design (doc 2.4)

Implement the changes as prescribed in doc 2.4

In general, comments were made that the signage is confusing, not clear, or appears to direct road users away from the preferred route. These are valid concerns, however the Council is limited by national guidance set out by the Department for Transport, to which this signage plan is designed.

On top of the mandatory signage some optional signage has been included to make sure routes/restrictions are clear, however it is desirable to avoid excessive additional signage and in particular new pavement clutter.