

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

DELEGATED EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION REPORT

Report to: Executive Member for Environmental and Regulatory Services
Date: May 2021
Report for: Decision
Report of: Corporate Director for Place

Report Title

Active Travel Fund (ATF) Tranche 2 - Oxford Road, Altrincham

Summary

The Council recently undertook a fact-finding exercise with frontages in and around Oxford Road, Altrincham, in relation to proposals to introduce a modal filter restricting through traffic, along with changes to access and parking. Following analysis of representations received, it has become apparent that the majority of respondents to the engagement exercise are not in support of the proposed changes. This report therefore seeks approval to authorise the abandonment of the Oxford Road scheme as presented under ATF Tranche 2, in line with residents' preferences. In addition, approval is also sought to divert the remaining funds allocated to Oxford Road for use on the A56 cycle lane corridor scheme, another project which supports the ATF vision.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that the Executive Member:

1. Approves that the Oxford Road scheme as proposed be abandoned, in line with residents' preferences.
2. Approves that all remaining funds as allocated to the Oxford Road scheme via the ATF fund be reallocated for use as part of the A56 (Manchester Road) cycle lane corridor.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Noel Nhengu
Extension: 0161 694 8971
Background Papers: None

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|--|---|
| Relationship to Corporate Priorities | <p>Health & Wellbeing – Promoting active travel</p> <p>Successful & thriving places – Providing an additional form of transport</p> <p>Children & young people – provided with safe cycle route & facilities</p> <p>Pride in our area – The proposed work will enhance the local area and provide New & safer walking & cycling facilities</p> <p>Green & Connected – Providing sustainable modes of travel.</p> |
| Relationship to GM Policy or Strategy Framework | The projects align with the GM cycling and walking policy and will also sync with the forthcoming initiatives by central government to ‘build back better’ and provide Active Travel Initiatives including increased cycling and walking infrastructure. |
| Financial | The projects referred to within the report will be wholly funded through the Department for Transport’s (DfT) ATF fund as allocated through Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) to local authorities for cycling and walking projects. |
| Legal Implications: | None |
| Equality/Diversity Implications | None |
| Sustainability Implications | The ATF initiative promotes cutting carbon emissions through increased provision of alternative non-polluting and sustainable modes of travel/commuting. |
| Carbon Reduction | Promotes active travel and therefore reducing carbon emissions. |
| Resource Implications e.g. Staffing / ICT / Assets | Staffing for the implementation of the proposed actions will be provided from within existing resources. There are no significant Asset Management implications. |
| Risk Management Implications | Road safety and traffic management arrangements will be under constant review to ensure risks are managed. |
| Health & Wellbeing Implications | Increased cycling and walking have marked health and wellbeing benefits for the community |
| Health and Safety Implications | The proposed actions are aimed at improving safe cycling route & facilities. |

1.0 Background

- 1.1 As part of the Government's reaction to Covid 19, The Department for Transport (DfT) made funding available to assist local Highway Authorities in making meaningful changes to their streets in favour of people's safe movement, health, and wellbeing.
- 1.2 The first round (Tranche 1) of this allocated funding was termed the Emergency Active Travel Fund (EATF), specifically allocated to enable Local Authorities to introduce temporary measures to promote social distancing and enhance walking and cycling in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 1.3 Tranche 2 funding was to facilitate the creation of longer-term projects in line with the promotion of walking and cycling.
- 1.4 Proposals to create a modal filter on Oxford Road, Altrincham, were presented via a consultation exercise in August 2020 as part of EATF Tranche 1. The number and types of comments received initially indicated that there was a level of interest in doing something at the location. In essence, responses received indicated a preference for an alternative layout however there was no clear way forward that would be acceptable to both residents and businesses and still meet the Government's criteria for funding. Due to the timescales involved for the delivery of Tranche 1 schemes this location was forwarded for progression as part of ATF Tranche 2.
- 1.5 A further fact-finding exercise was then carried out in February 2021, where letters detailing changes to access, parking and the introduction of 2 modal filters restricting through motor traffic were presented to frontages on and around Oxford Road. Included in the circulation was a drawing depicting the proposed changes; drawing ref **Prelim-Oxf1** attached identifies these proposals and is attached to this report.
- 1.6 The 2nd exercise was progressed as part of ATF Tranche 2; and primarily gave an opportunity to residents and businesses in the area to air their views, with representations invited from interested parties on whether they supported/objectioned to the proposed changes. As is the norm in Trafford, Ward Councillors along with the Executive Member of the relevant portfolio were engaged prior to the commencement of the engagement exercise. The boundary for consultation is identified on drawing ref **Consultation** attached.

2.0 Tranche 2/ATF Fact Finding Consultation

- 2.1 Residential and Business consultation was undertaken from 26th February 2021, until 19th March 2021
- 2.2 Business consultation was extended from 19th March 2021 until 31st March 2021, following complaints received by the Council, particularly from businesses in the area, who advised that they had not been able to view the said correspondence due to their premises being closed owing to the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions.
- 2.3 The proposed scheme which views were sought for is illustrated on the drawing below and entailed the following elements:
 - a) The temporary closure of Oxford Road between Ashley Road and Peter Street, by the placing of planters, and removable bollards for emergency vehicle access. These

prevent access by motor vehicles, whilst still allowing access for pedestrians and cyclists. The closure would create a pedestrianised environment that would enable local cafés and restaurants to place tables and chairs to encourage people to visit the area.

- b) A loading bay on Ashley Road across the mouth of Oxford Road.
- c) Peter Street to remain open to motor vehicles; the parking bay to be removed and no waiting/no loading introduced on both sides in order to facilitate access for all vehicles.
- d) A small section of parking bay on Oxford Road near Peter Street to become a loading bay.
- e) Oxford Road between Peter Street and Hale Road to remain one-way with no loss of parking bays.

3.0 Consultation responses

3.1 Frontages in and around Oxford Road were direct recipients of the consultation documentation as detailed on 2.1 – 2.3; as it was envisaged that they would be most affected. A drawing showing the consultation boundary is attached to this report.

3.2 A total of 61 representations were received by the Council. A full break down of respondents by individual street is detailed on table 1 below.

Table 1 – Consultation responses by street

| Road | Support | Object | Street total | No. of addresses for which no response was received | Total street addresses (incl. no response) |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|---|--|
| Oxford Road | 20 | 22 | 42 | 44 | 86 |
| Ashley Road | 2 | 8 | 10 | 16 | 26 |
| Peter Street | 0 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Hale Road | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Lloyd Street | 0 | 0 | 0 | 49 | 49 |
| *Tipping Street | 0 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Total | 24 | 37 | 61 | 113 | 174 |

**Tipping Street outside of letter circulation boundary*

Table 2 – Response rate summary

| | |
|--|--------|
| Response rate | 35.06% |
| % No response | 64.94% |
| % Against (of responses received) | 60.65% |
| % In Favour (of responses received) | 39.34% |

- 3.3 From the responses received, 24 (39.34%) were in support of the scheme, with 37 (60.65%) in objection therefore, the general consensus from the responses received are that the proposals are not supported.
- 3.4 From the 37 objectors, 25 were businesses, with 12 representations being that of residents.
- 3.5 It should be noted that a small number of the 20 Oxford Road residents in support of the scheme also made comments regarding the removal of the previously proposed traffic calming measures, with others suggesting additional measures for inclusion, and some opposed the provision of outside seating for businesses.
- 3.6 The most prevalent concerns raised as reasons for objecting to the scheme by the 61% respondents are listed below:
- a) The adverse impact of the scheme on parking in the locality due to the removal of some parking bays.
 - b) Concerns of traffic building up on Ashley Road on approach to the roundabout due to vehicles not being able to use Oxford Road to connect to Hale Road.
 - c) Increased likelihood of littering, noise and anti-social behaviour problems on Oxford Road in the event of tables and chairs being positioned on the public highway.
 - d) Concerns of using Peter Street as the only access point as it is deemed inadequate due to its narrowness, raising concerns for deliveries by larger vehicles and access for refuse collection vehicles and emergency services.
 - e) Adverse impact on businesses due to relocation of loading bay and reduced parking provision.
- 3.6 Numerous complaints were also received pertaining the current state of the road surface on Oxford Road and Peter Street. The Council can confirm that sections of these roads are programmed for resurfacing as part of the 2021/22 Highway works programme.
- 3.7 A Legal Challenge was also submitted on behalf of the businesses in Oxford Rd, this is currently being responded to.

4.0 Recommendations

- 4.1 One of the conditions of funding for Tranche 2 of the Active Travel Fund as stipulated by the DfT is that; “Local Authorities must consult local stakeholders on their proposed plans before construction starts. Effective engagement with communities is key to achieving a scheme that is accepted and should form part of the scheme development process from the start. As well as giving communities the opportunity to help shape proposed changes, it allows Local Authorities to understand people’s needs and concerns. This means potential problems can be identified and dealt with before they become substantial obstacles.”
- 4.2 Before scheme construction commences, Local Authorities must formally notify the DfT that they have consulted all key local stakeholders and obtained broad support for their schemes and made any changes to take account of local feedback.
- 4.3 This proposal was a fact-finding exercise to gauge the level of support for a scheme in the locality, should one be taken forward in the future. Although numerous views, suggestions and comments were received, this report does not delve into the

miniscule detail but considers the overall sentiments as relayed by the respondents. In essence, the purpose of the exercise was to ascertain the numbers in terms of whether locals are in support or object to the proposals.

- 4.4 As per the results on table 1, it is clear that the majority of respondents are not in support of the changes presented to them i.e. There is no broad support for the scheme.
- 4.5 As a result, it is recommended that the Oxford Road proposals are abandoned, and this scheme is not implemented.
- 4.6 It is further recommended that all remaining funds previously dedicated to the Oxford Road changes are re-allocated to the progression and implementation of the A56 (Manchester Road) cycle corridor.

5.0 Other Options

The Council is limited in terms of traffic management measures that can be introduced on Oxford Road. Whilst the reversal of the existing 'One Way' was considered, this could result in access issues due to regular traffic congestion emanating from the Ashley Road roundabout nearby. In addition, introducing chicanes and speed humps has not been recommended as this would result in the loss of parking bays. Furthermore, experience from several locations in the borough has seen complaints raised by residents due to building vibrations and concerns of how this affects the structural integrity of properties over time.

6.0 Consultation

Fact finding exercises carried out as part of the scheme proposals in August 2020 and February 2021 respectively.

7.0 Reasons for Recommendation

The reasons for this recommendation are based on the lack of support for the scheme as presented, along with the limited options available for amending to suit the preferences of locals. It is also envisaged that the remaining funds would be better utilised on another project that seeks to enhance the movement of traffic in Trafford.

Key Decision: No

Finance Officer Clearance
Legal Officer Clearance

MCJH
TR

[CORPORATE] DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE



To confirm that the Financial and Legal Implications have been considered and the Corporate Director has cleared the report prior to issuing to the Executive Member for decision.

Appendices

Prelim-Oxf1: Drawing detailing proposals as presented to the locality

Consultation: Drawing showing boundary of frontages directly consulted via letter