



Policy, Finance and Development Committee	Tuesday, 01 November 2016	Matter for Decision
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Title: **Pedestrianisation of Bell Street, Wigston**

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Following completion of the Bell Street Transformation Project in 2014, Oadby and Wigston Borough Council monitored the operation of the pedestrian zone, which operated between 10:00am and 4:00pm.
- 1.2 It was subsequently agreed to progress with a trial full pedestrianisation scheme in Bell Street, to make it safer for the public. The trial started in December 2015.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that:
 - (i) Members note the report that was considered by the Leicestershire County Council Highways Forum for Oadby and Wigston on 4 October 2016 which supported the experimental order being made permanent (Appendix 1);
 - (ii) Agree to the trial pedestrianisation of Bell Street being made into a permanent pedestrianisation; and
 - (iii) Note the positive effect that the Post Office, Peacocks, Edinburgh Woollen Mill, Ponden Home and Poundland has had on Bell Street since they have opened and the significant improvements to the public realm on Bell Street since the completion of the improvement works and the opening of the pocket park.

3. Background

- 3.1 Following completion of the Bell Street Transformation Project in 2014, Oadby & Wigston Borough Council monitored the operation of the pedestrian zone, which operated between 10:00am and 4:00pm.
- 3.2 Having considered compliance levels and comments received, a 'Have Your Say' consultation exercise was undertaken in the summer of 2015 relating to proposals to fully pedestrianise the lower section of Bell Street.
- 3.3 The recommended outcome was to implement an experimental Order to prohibit motor vehicles from entering the lower section of Bell Street at all times.
- 3.4 An experimental Order was brought into force on the 14 December 2015. The experimental Order allowed for the prohibition to be implemented for between 6 and 18 months and its impacts monitored.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 As part of the statutory consultations, Notices giving details of the proposed experimental Order were posted on site from the 14 December 2015 for a period of six months and adverts were placed in the local press. 27 responses were received to the Notices, 7 of these were objections and 20 were in support.
- 4.2 The main objections related to access to shops for people with disabilities and the use of Bell Street as a cycling route. These objections were not upheld.

5. Impacts

- 5.1 There have been no adverse comments received in relation to any negative impact on trade by businesses within the area covered by the experimental Order. Oadby and Wigston's Town Centre Manager for the area reports only positive comments.
- 5.2 There continues to be no recorded personal injury accidents within the area covered by the experimental order. Therefore, there has not been a negative impact with regards to safety.
- 5.3 Leicestershire County Council's Notice Processing Unit Manager confirms that no tickets have been issued in relation to motorists entering the area covered by the order. Similarly, Leicestershire Police has not reported any issues and the local police have commented "Personally, I have had no issues with the area and members of the public do not tend to ask the question when I'm on patrol anymore. So overall, I believe it has improved since the access has been secured with the barriers and street furniture."
- 5.4 Since the pedestrianisation of Bell Street the Co-operative Department store closed in January 2016, which also led to the Post Office. However, in September 2016 Edinburgh Woollen Mill, Ponden Home, the Post Office, Peacocks and Poundland opened in the vacant units. The significant improvements to the public realm on Bell Street are likely to have been a contributory factor to these stores moving into Wigston and it is anticipated that their presence will allow Bell Street to continue to be a vibrant and busy area with the prospect of an increase in footfall in the future, for which the pedestrianisation scheme will no doubt help.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 There have been few objections to the experimental Order and the majority of comments received support the Order being made permanent. The experimental Order has not had a negative impact on trade, accidents or enforcement.
- 6.2 On this basis it is recommended that the Council should support the experimental Order being made permanent.

Background Documents:-

Report to the Leicestershire County Council Highways Forum for Oadby and Wigston on 4 October 2016 (Appendix 1)

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Implications	
Financial (CR)	There are no financial implications
Legal (AC)	No legal implications affecting the Borough Council, all legal impacts come under Leicestershire County Council's responsibility.

Risk (AT)	There are no risks to the Council that arise from this report
Equalities (AT)	Equality Assessment went to initial screening by Leicestershire County Council, the screening concluded a full assessment was not needed.
	Equality Assessment:-
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initial Screening <input type="checkbox"/> Full Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable