

Report to:

**TOURISM, ECONOMY AND COMMUNITIES
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Relevant Officer:

John Greenbank, Senior Democratic Governance Adviser

Date of Meeting:

8 February 2022

ST JOHN'S SQUARE EXPERIMENTAL TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To inform the Committee of the work undertaken at the St John's Square Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) Scrutiny Panel meeting.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To note the outcome of the meeting and consider any areas for further scrutiny as appropriate.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure that the Committee has an ongoing oversight of scrutiny review panel work.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council?

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget?

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 None.

5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant Council priority is

- "The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool"
- "Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience"

6.0 Background information

- 6.1 On the 15 December 2022 Members of the Tourism, Economy and Communities (TEC) Scrutiny Committee held a Panel meeting to consider the potential introduction of an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) in St John's Square to regulate vehicular access to the area.
- 6.2 The meeting was chaired by Councillor Gerard Walsh, with the following members of the TEC Scrutiny Committee in attendance:
- 6.3
- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Councillor Paula Burdess | Councillor Paul Galley |
| Councillor Adrian Hutton | Councillor Fred Jackson |
| Councillor Martin Mitchell | Councillor Rick Scott |
| Councillor Paul Wilshaw | |
- 6.4 Councillor Paula Burdess and Councillor Paul Galley declared personal interests in the item under consideration at the meeting as Non-Executive Directors of Blackpool Transport Ltd (BTS). It was noted that the changes to access to St John's Square outlined at the meeting would have an impact on BTS.
- 6.5 Councillor Neal Brookes, Cabinet Member for Public Protection, Mr John Blackledge, Director of Community and Environment Services, Ms Clare Nolan-Barnes, Head of Coastal and Environmental Partnerships, Mr John-Paul Lovie, Head of Waste Policy and Partnerships and Mr Scott Butterfield, Strategy and Climate Lead, were also in attendance.
- 6.6 The review panel was informed that the Council was seeking to implement an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) in St John's Square to regulate vehicular access to the area. Members heard that under existing arrangements there were no restrictions on access to the Square by vehicles
- 6.7 This unregulated access and use of the Square had led to a number of negative comments from local businesses and members of the public, the Council was therefore seeking to implement an ETRO to regulate access as follows;
- 6.8
- To limit access and vehicle type to the St Johns Square area, the use of the through route (Abingdon Street through to Church Street and Church Street through to Abingdon Street) to buses and taxis only;
 - Delivery access and servicing, servicing would be permitted between 6.00pm to 10:30am only, to match other adjacent areas of the town centre;
 - Control of static parking in the area by implementing a parking control zone, the area indicated on the plan would be the area of the zone.

- 6.9 Once implemented a formal consultation would be undertaken over a six-month period for the public to comment on the ETRO operation. Following this it was planned that a permanent Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) would be developed based on the outcome of the consultation.
- 6.10 The panel discussed the operation of the ETRO and how it would be enforced, with Officers explaining that new signage and cameras would be utilised. These would be similar to those in operation on Market Street, where similar vehicular restrictions were in place, and had been considered to be a success.
- 6.11 Members noted that a reduction in traffic through the Square would enable the consideration of more varied use of the public space, its proximity to the new Winter Gardens Conference Centre added to this consideration.
- 6.12 The environmental benefit of reduced traffic was also highlighted, with the proposals linked to the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy and the promotion of public transport being recognised. Although the exact benefit could not be quantified the introduction of an ETRO would allow for the gathering of data to better inform the development of a TRO to ensure environmental benefit going forward.
- 6.13 The review panel welcomed the proposals outlined in the report and asked that their views be noted.
- 6.14 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 None.

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 Limiting traffic and the speed of traffic will yield some benefits in relation to air quality and this change supports the use of public transport. Both these issues fall under the work undertaken by the Committee in relation to the Climate Emergency.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 None.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.