

Brighton & Hove City Council

Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee

Agenda Item 93

Subject: Trafalgar Street Traffic Regulation Order (TRO)

Date of meeting: 14 March 2023

Report of: Executive Director, Environment, Economy & Culture

Contact Officer: Name: Colin Harwood
Email: colin.harwood@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Ward(s) affected: St Peter's & North Laine

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 The council provides an annual allocation within its Local Transport Plan to implement measures which aim to reduce road traffic collisions at locations with the highest number of recorded incidents. The junction with Blackman Street and Trafalgar Street is one such location. To address the causes of collisions, it is proposed to close Blackman Street at the junction.
- 1.2 In addition, it is proposed to make changes to the layout of the junction of Trafalgar Street and Whitecross Street. This includes extending the current one-way (except cycles) restriction on Trafalgar Street from Sydney Street to Whitecross Street to simplify the layout and reduce instances of vehicles travelling the wrong way.
- 1.3 This report provides details of the response to stakeholder engagement held between November and December 2022 and the subsequent statutory Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) consultation between January and February 2023.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee, having taken account of all comments on the TRO-1b-2023, approves the closure of Blackman Street at its junction with Trafalgar Street.
- 2.2 That the Committee, having taken account of all comments on TRO-1a-2023, approves changes to the junction of Trafalgar Street and Whitecross Street, including extension of the one-way restriction.

3. Context and background information

Blackman Street

- 3.1 Priority sites are identified based on the number and severity of collisions recorded by the police over a three-year period. The process for identifying these sites and recommending design solutions is outlined in full within

[Appendix 6](#) to the Safer, Better Streets Report agreed by this Committee in January 2023.

- 3.2 The identification of the Blackman Street and Trafalgar Street junction is based on the most recent analysis period where sites were identified by officers for 2022-23. The analysis will be updated and repeated to identify sites for 2023-24, subject to the agreement of funding allocations. Further recommended priority locations based on collision history will be reported to a future meeting of this Committee. This will be presented alongside the Safer, Better Streets assessment for other locations where safety measures have been requested. The first report is expected in June 2023.
- 3.3 The junction of Blackman Street and Trafalgar Street had six recorded collisions in a three year period between 1 March 2019 and 28 February 2022. A common cause of collisions is vehicles exiting or entering Blackman Street and hitting other vehicles, pedestrians or cyclists. The narrow width and poor visibility from Blackman Street has been identified as a contributing factor. This means that a change to the junction design would be expected to reduce the number of collisions.
- 3.4 In response to the number and cause of collisions, officers are proposing to close Blackman Street at its junction with Trafalgar Street. Cyclists will continue to be able to travel between Blackman Street and Trafalgar Street, as is the case with the existing closure at Station Street. A map summarising the changes is provided in Appendix 1 with a more detailed plan provided in Appendix 2.
- 3.5 Traffic would still be able to use Blackman Street in both directions between Cheapside and the car park. Cars accessing the car park from Trafalgar Street would turn left at Whitecross Street instead of Blackman Street.
- 3.6 It can be expected that some traffic using Blackman Street will instead use other roads to access the North Laine. The most likely route for displaced traffic would be Whitecross Street. Surveys¹ indicate that around 2,500 vehicles use Blackman Street per day. This includes approximately 1,500 that exit towards Queens Road and 800 that enter from this direction. This includes taxis travelling from the rear of Brighton Station.
- 3.7 A route via Whitecross Street would require a limited increase to journey lengths (approximately 130m), although it is possible the change will deter some traffic using the North Laine as a through route. In recognition of the likely displacement of traffic to Whitecross Street, improvements are also proposed at its junction with Trafalgar Street. These are detailed below.
- Whitecross Street Junction Improvement / Trafalgar Street One-Way*
- 3.8 The proposed junction redesign will complement the proposals at Blackman Street and would be funded through developer contributions specifically for pedestrian facilities in the area. The proposal includes narrowing and raising the junction to make it easier for pedestrians to cross.

¹ Traffic counts undertaken 7am-7pm on Wednesday 16 November and Saturday 19 November 2022.

- 3.9 The existing one-way restriction on Trafalgar Street would also be extended a short distance from the junction with Sydney Street to the junction with Whitecross Street as shown on the map in Appendix 1 and plan in Appendix 3. Access to Sydney Street is already restricted during daytime hours and the extension of the one-way is intended to simplify the road layout. Currently, traffic travelling east (down) Trafalgar Street can pass Whitecross Street but reach a dead-end when Sydney Street is closed. If traffic were to then continue, it would be travelling the wrong way down the one-way section of Trafalgar Street. By extending the one-way, it will be clearer that traffic needs to turn left into Whitecross Street.
- 3.10 Any drivers wishing to access Sydney Street when it is open would need to travel via Pelham Street or York Place / St George's Place. This would affect a relatively small number of vehicles with surveys² indicating approximately 200 vehicles travel this way between 7am and 10am (when Sydney Street is open). This figure includes cars, motorcycles and goods vehicles. A similar number travelled this way when Sydney Street was closed (10am-7pm) and would have therefore either continued the wrong way or needed to turn around.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 Options that would not require the full closure of Blackman Street at its junction with Trafalgar Street were considered. This included allowing traffic to continue to enter from Trafalgar Street. However, it is not considered that this would fully address the safety issues at the junction.
- 4.2 Other locations in the city have been considered for improvements based on their safety record. However, this junction has one of the worst collision records amongst locations which could be addressed through relatively small-scale and low-cost design changes or where there are not already plans to do this as part of other projects.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 Information packs were sent to 557 addresses in Blackman Street, Trafalgar Street, Whitecross Street and Sydney Street in November 2022. These were also emailed to the North Laine Community Association, Business Representatives, Ward Members and the Active & Inclusive Travel Forum, including its taxi trade representative. It was also reported by Brighton & Hove News and The Argus.
- 5.2 Information packs provided an opportunity for residents to comment on the proposals. In total, 43 responses were received with 13 were in support, including two Ward Members and the North Laine Community Association. 11 objections and 19 further comments or enquiries were also received. A summary of the comments received and the officer response to this is provided in Table 1.

² Traffic counts undertaken 7am-7pm on Wednesday 16 November and Saturday 19 November 2022.

Table 1: Summary of response to initial community engagement

Summary of comment	Officer response
Concern over journey time increases	The purpose of the change is to address safety issues which is a priority. However, access to the North Laine would continue to be possible with a relatively short diversion via Whitecross Street.
Concern over where traffic would be displaced to / pollution	It is most likely traffic would be displaced to Whitecross Street or Pelham Street. However, as outlined in Section 3, the volume of traffic using Blackman Street is relatively low. It is also unlikely all of this traffic would be displaced to these streets with some traffic diverted on to busier roads such as Fleet Street as a result of the cut through becoming less attractive.
Change Blackman Street to one-way	Alternative options have been considered as noted in Section 4 of this report; however, this is not deemed practical or likely to address safety issues in full.
Request for a tree to be planted at the closure of Blackman Street	This has been discussed with the council's Arboriculture team and will be incorporated into the plans subject to ground investigations.
Concern over traffic queuing for car park entrance	Taking account of expected levels of diverted traffic and reduction in traffic travelling through the North Laine area unnecessarily, the planned changes would not be expected to significantly worsen congestion.
Concern over timing with other developments in the area such as City College	Although Pelham Street is currently closed, this is a temporary restriction and alternative access points would be retained.

5.3 TROs were subsequently advertised on 20 January 2023 with the period for comments closing on 10 February. The TRO was advertised in accordance with the usual process with notices in the local press and on-street and emails to stakeholder groups, including emergency services, bus operators, taxi trade and active travel representatives.

5.4 In total, 35 responses were received. These can be summarised as follows:

- For those who responded specifically on the Blackman Street proposal (TRO-1a-2023), 21 supported and none objected.
- For those who responded specifically to the one way restriction on Trafalgar Street (TRO-1b-2023), one supported and two objected.
- Some responded jointly to both elements. Of these, 10 supported and one objected.

- 5.5 The North Laine Community Association were amongst those supporting the proposed Traffic Regulation Orders. The three objections were received from individuals and were not stated as being on behalf of organisations or trade representatives.
- 5.6 Although the number of objections is less than would typically be considered by this Committee, this report has been brought for consideration given the level of interest at the initial engagement stage.
- 5.7 Table 2 summarises the comments received.

Table 2: Summary of TRO comments

Summary of comment	Officer response
<i>Closure of Blackman Street (TRO-1a-2023)</i>	
Support because of poor visibility and high numbers of pedestrians.	
Support because of the narrow width of the junction, road danger and/or large vehicles becoming stuck / causing damage to properties.	
Support because the proposal will improve conditions for active travel.	
Request to keep junction open to cyclists.	Blackman Street will remain open in both directions for cyclists, as with the existing closure at Station Street.
Request for greening of the road closure.	A tree will be added to the plans in response to resident requests. This will be subject to ground investigations.
Request relocation of cycle parking.	Cycle parking will be provided alongside the above tree. This will be confirmed as part of the detailed design.
<i>Extension to Trafalgar Street One Way (TRO-1b-2023)</i>	
Objection as the proposal removes the option of cars exiting the car park and train station to reach North Road. Instead funnels all traffic up Trafalgar Street and Frederick Place. This will increase pressure on the junction with Queens Road, lengthen journeys and increase emissions.	The length of diversion for essential access is limited. The change may help to deter traffic travelling through the North Laine area unnecessarily and instead direct this to strategic roads, although, as noted in Section 3, the number of vehicles that would be affected by this change is low.

Summary of comment	Officer response
Objection that closing Trafalgar Street would be bad for business.	The proposal is not to close Trafalgar Street but to extend the existing one way. As noted above, the short section affected is used by a relatively small number of vehicles, while access to businesses and the North Laine area generally will be retained.
Objection that road markings at the revised junction at Whitecross Street could be confusing and cause doubts of priority, for example, a cyclist heading down Trafalgar Street into the contraflow. However, objector supports closure of Blackman Street in principle.	The proposal has been subject to a Road Safety Audit and the alignment is designed to encourage cyclists to slow and turn into the contra-flow rather than heading straight on.
Support as proposals will improve conditions for active travel.	

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 Noting the high number of collisions at the junction of Blackman Street and Trafalgar Street, it is recommended that the proposed changes are implemented.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 The costs associated with the recommendations of this report will be contained within existing approved capital budgets. The capital budget of this project will be funded from a combination of Local Transport Plan funding for high risk sites and developer contributions that have been allocated for sustainable transport measures in the North Laine area. Any significant variations to budget will be reported as part of the council's monthly budget monitoring process.

Name of finance officer consulted: John Lack Date consulted: 09/02/2022

8. Legal implications

- 8.1 The Council regulates traffic by means of orders made under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The procedure for advertising a proposed TRO is contained in the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 which require public notice of orders to be given and allow any person to object to the making of an order. Any unresolved objections to an order must be considered by the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee before it can be made.

Name of lawyer consulted: Katie Kam Date consulted: 08/02/2022

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed. Adverse impacts on individuals with protected characteristics have not been identified. Access will continue to be possible whilst all users will benefit from improved safety and pedestrian route enhancements.

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 Whilst the focus of the proposals is to improve safety, the changes will also help to improve conditions for walking and cycling in the North Laine area.
- 10.2 It is possible some traffic will be diverted as a result of the proposals. However, the extra length of journeys for vehicles accessing the North Laine is limited. It is possible some drivers who choose not to use North Laine as a cut through as a result of the proposals will travel further. However, it is deemed this is outweighed by the benefits of encouraging traffic to use strategic routes, including for the North Laine area and the safety benefits the scheme will provide.

11. Social value and procurement implications

- 12.1 Work will be procured via the council's Highways Services framework contract.

12. Crime & disorder implications

- 13.1 None identified.

13. Public health implications

- 14.1 The main purpose of the scheme is to reduce the number of road traffic collisions in this location. In the three year period assessed, the six recorded road traffic collisions resulted in nine casualties. Of these, two received serious injuries and seven slight injuries.
- 14.2 The proposed changes may have an additional benefit of improving conditions for walking and cycling. It is expected the impact of diverted traffic will be limited for the reasons provided in Section 3 of this report.

Supporting Documentation

1. Appendices

1. Map summarising the proposed changes and changes to traffic routing
2. Traffic Regulation Order plans – Blackman Street
3. Traffic Regulation Order plans – Trafalgar Street and Whitecross Street

2. Background documents

1. Process for identification of High Risk Sites ([Appendix 6](#) of Safer, Better Streets report, January 2023)