



Northern Area Planning Committee

Dorchester Transport and Environment Plan
(DTEP), Proposed Victoria Road 20mph Zone

Date of Meeting: 21 August 2019

Lead Member: Councillor Ray Bryan – Lead Member for Highways, Travel and Environment

Lead Officer: Matthew Piles

Service Director for Environment, Infrastructure and Economy

Executive Summary:

In 2003 Dorset County Council agreed with Dorchester Town Council and West Dorset District Council to prepare a plan to enhance the public realm and reduce the negative impacts of traffic. As the plan was developed maintenance and improvement works at various locations in Dorchester were put on hold. In late 2013 public consultation was held on a scheme proposal, which would provide one-way traffic flow in the High Street, but this was not found to be publicly acceptable.

In September 2014, Dorset County Council Cabinet resolved that elements of DTEP that include deferred maintenance and improvement works, plus some environmental enhancements, but exclude one-way traffic in the High Street, be progressed. This included replacement of the existing obsolete signal equipment at Great Western Cross and improvement of the junction to provide for controlled pedestrian crossing facilities on all major arms. A Local Member Led Project Working Group was set up to oversee development of the project with representation from County, District and Town Councils.

In order to provide the pedestrian crossing facilities at Great Western Cross without adversely affecting the traffic capacity of the junction it was necessary to prohibit certain traffic movements, but these could have led to increased traffic in Victoria Road as drivers sought to find an easy alternative to the banned turns. For this reason a ban on right turns from Damers Road into Victoria Road was included. Following advertising of the prohibition of turns, objections and representations were received. Most of the objections were from residents of Victoria Road who were concerned at the potential increase in traffic and/or opposed to the right-turn ban as a means of controlling traffic.

Given the concerns expressed by residents, it was agreed to progress an 'access only' order for Victoria Road, Westover Road, Albert Road (west of Cornwall Road) and St Helen's Road and to revoke the ban on right turns into Victoria Road. This

order came into force in July 2017 but subsequent monitoring has shown that it has not been totally effective in deterring through traffic. As a result, the Member Led group decided that a 20mph zone should be created covering Victoria Road, Westover Road, St Helens Road and a section of Albert Road.

Following advertising of the proposed order, 3 objections 1 comment and 7 expressions of support have been received. This report considers those responses and whether the proposed 20 mph zone should be implemented as advertised.

Equalities Impact Assessment:

An equalities impact assessment was carried out in August 2018. This concluded that there would be no discriminatory or negative consequences for any sector of the community on the grounds of race, gender, disability, faith, sexuality or age and the proposals would benefit the young, elderly, infirm and disabled.

Budget:

The overall budget for DTEP was £3.632 million including contributions from West Dorset District Council, Dorchester Town Council and developer payments relating to the Poundbury and Brewery Square developments. The estimated cost of the Works is approximately £90,000, including design and preparation costs, which will be met from the DTEP budget.

Risk Assessment:

Having considered the risks associated with this decision using the County Council's approved risk management methodology, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: LOW

Residual Risk: LOW

Other Implications:

None

Recommendation:

That having considered the objections received, Cabinet be recommended to implement the order as advertised, with the exception of the road hump at the junction of Victoria Road and Albert Road.

Reason for Recommendation:

The proposals should further deter inappropriate use of a quiet residential street by unsuitable through traffic.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Consultation Plan Showing Extent of Proposed Zone

Background Papers:

1. The responses to the Order Public Advertisement as outlined in Paragraph 4.4 are available to view in the Members Room.
2. Primary consultation responses from the District and Town Councils, Dorset Police and the local County Councillors are held on file in the Environment and the Economy Directorate.

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1 Background

- 1.1 In 2003 Dorset County Council agreed with Dorchester Town Council and West Dorset District Council to prepare a plan to enhance the public realm and reduce the negative impacts of traffic in Dorchester. As the plan was developed maintenance and improvement works at various locations in the town were put on hold. In late 2013 public consultation was held on a scheme proposal, which would provide one-way traffic flow in the High Street, but this was not found to be publicly acceptable.
- 1.2 In September 2014, Dorset County Council Cabinet resolved that elements of DTEP that include deferred maintenance and improvement works, plus some environmental enhancements, but exclude one-way traffic in the High Street be progressed. This included replacement of the existing obsolete signal equipment at Great Western Cross and improvement of the junction to provide for controlled pedestrian crossing facilities on all major arms. The design would also make allowance for the Poundbury link in the Dorchester Local Cycle Network to be easily accommodated when it is completed.
- 1.3 A Local Member Led Project Working Group comprising members and officers of the County, District and Town Councils was set up to oversee development of the project.
- 1.4 Following a decision by West Dorset District Council in December 2015 to defer support for a link road affecting Fairfield car park, in February 2016 Dorset County Council Cabinet again resolved to progress design and construction of improvements at the various locations identified in the revised DTEP project.

- 1.5 In order to provide pedestrian crossing facilities at Great Western Cross without adversely affecting the traffic capacity of the junction it was necessary to prohibit certain traffic movements, but these could have led to increased traffic in Victoria Road as drivers sought to find an easy alternative to the banned turns. For this reason a ban on right turns from Damers Road into Victoria Road was included.
- 1.6 Following advertising of the prohibition of turns, objections and representations were received. Most of the objections were from residents of Victoria Road who were concerned at the potential increase in traffic and/or opposed to the right-turn ban as a means of controlling traffic.
- 1.7 Given the concerns expressed by residents, it was agreed to progress an 'access only' order for Victoria Road, Westover Road, Albert Road (west of Cornwall Road) and St Helen's Road and to revoke the ban on right turns into Victoria Road. This order was advertised in February 2017 and following a decision by Dorset County Council Cabinet came into force in July 2017.
- 1.8 The works at Great Western Cross were constructed between January and April 2017.
- 1.9 'Before and after' traffic surveys were undertaken in Victoria Road in early November 2016 and mid-January 2018. These indicated a 17% increase in average daily northbound flow (12% increase in two-way flow). Continued expressions of concern from residents led to the Member working group agreeing to progress introduction of a 20mph zone, which should be 'self-enforcing'.
- 1.10 The proposed 20mph zone was advertised for public consultation on 24 January 2019 and the objection period closed on 15 February 2019. During that period, 3 objections, 1 comment and 7 expressions of support were received. This report considers those responses and whether the proposed 20mph zone should be implemented as advertised.

2 Information

- 2.1 Work to replace the traffic signal equipment at Great Western Cross commenced on 15 January 2017 and the turning ban order was made on 20 January 2017.
- 2.2 A survey was undertaken to record traffic using Victoria Road between 27 October and 9 November 2016 inclusive. This was repeated in November 2017, but the results were thought to be affected by roadworks elsewhere in the town. A further survey was undertaken between 15 and 21 January 2018 after the roadworks had been completed.
- 2.3 The surveys indicated an overall increase in average daily flow (two-way) of 12% (from 370 to 415 vehicles) and an increase in northbound traffic of 17% (from 194 to 227 vehicles). Speed of traffic was little altered, with 85% of traffic travelling at less than 25 mph.

- 2.4 With regard to enforcement of the prohibition of through traffic ('access only' order), the police response to the primary consultation noted that "police enforcement of the proposal would be as standard and obviously prioritised with general policing duties". Orders prohibiting through traffic are known to be difficult for the police to enforce.
- 2.5 Creation of the 20mph zone with introduction of road humps is intended to deter disregard of the existing 'access only' order and curtail the speed of those vehicles travelling in excess of the 85th percentile speed.

3 Law

- 3.1 Sections 1 and 2 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 allow the Council to make an Order prohibiting, restricting or regulating the use of a road, where it appears to the Council that it would be expedient. The circumstances where an Order may be made include:

For avoiding danger to persons or other traffic using the road or for preventing the likelihood of any such danger arising;

For preventing the use of the roads by vehicular traffic in a manner which is unsuitable having regard to the existing character of the roads or adjoining property;

For preserving or improving the amenities of the area through which the roads run.

4 Consultation

- 4.1 In July 2018, households with an access onto any of the roads affected by the 20mph zone proposal were consulted about it. 132 consultation letters were sent out. 36% of households responded, of which 75% were in favour of the proposal and 25% were not.
- 4.2 The consultation results were considered by the Local Member Led Project Working Group, which decided to proceed to a traffic regulation order.
- 4.3 Under Dorset County Council's procedure, primary consultation was carried out on the proposed Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) and it was supported by the Local Members for Dorchester; West Dorset District Council; Dorchester Town Council; the Police; the Ambulance Service; the Fire and Rescue Service; and by Dorset Waste Partnership.
- 4.4 The proposed 20mph zone was advertised for public consultation on 24 January 2019 and the objection period closed on 15 February 2019.
- 4.5 Within the objection period, there have been 11 responses to the public consultation process, which are summarised below.

Respondent and Address	Summary of Response
Resident of St Helens Road, Dorchester	Objects to the proposal. Considers that unless the banned turns into Cornwall Road at Great Western Cross are reinstated through traffic will continue to use Victoria Road despite the speed limit and road humps. Also considers that existing speeds in Westover Road, St Helens Road, and Albert Road are already below 20 mph so that part of the TRO is “irrelevant”.
Resident of St Helens Road, Dorchester	Objects to the proposal. Considers the TRO “will not work”.
Resident of Isambard Court, Dorchester	Objects to the proposal. Considers the works are unnecessary and a waste of public funds. Also, concerned about 24 hr street lighting, noise, safety of two-wheeled vehicles and the legitimacy of the decision to proceed with the scheme.
Resident of Victoria Road, Dorchester	Comments that road humps “encourage excessive braking and acceleration” and that use of mobile speed cameras will be necessary to enforce the speed limit. Would prefer to see a road closure.
Resident of Victoria Road, Dorchester	Supports the proposal. Considers the proposal would address residents’ long-held concerns about speed and volume of traffic without being “overly draconian or unenforceable”.
Resident of Victoria Road, Dorchester	Same surname and address as supporter above and comments identical.
Resident of Victoria Road, Dorchester	Supports the proposal. Comments as supporters above.
Resident of Victoria Road, Dorchester	Supports the proposal. Considers that problems in Victoria Road are the result of the refurbishment works at Great Western Cross and those who ignore the existing ‘access only’ order are mainly taxi drivers, delivery drivers and driving schools.

Resident of Victoria Road, Dorchester	Supports the proposal. Considers that traffic calming is necessary for pedestrian safety, to deal with "fast and aggressive rat running".
Resident of High West Street, Dorchester	Supports the proposal. As a former resident of Victoria Road, hopes the proposal will "stop rat running especially by taxi drivers".
Resident of Victoria Road, Dorchester	Supports the proposal. Considers the proposal provides the additional measures needed to deal with the traffic problems in Victoria Road.

- 4.6 The responses consist of 3 objections 1 comment and 7 expressions of support. All except one respondent live on or have vehicular access onto the roads affected by the order. The one remaining respondent is a former resident of Victoria Road.

5 Officer Comments on Representations

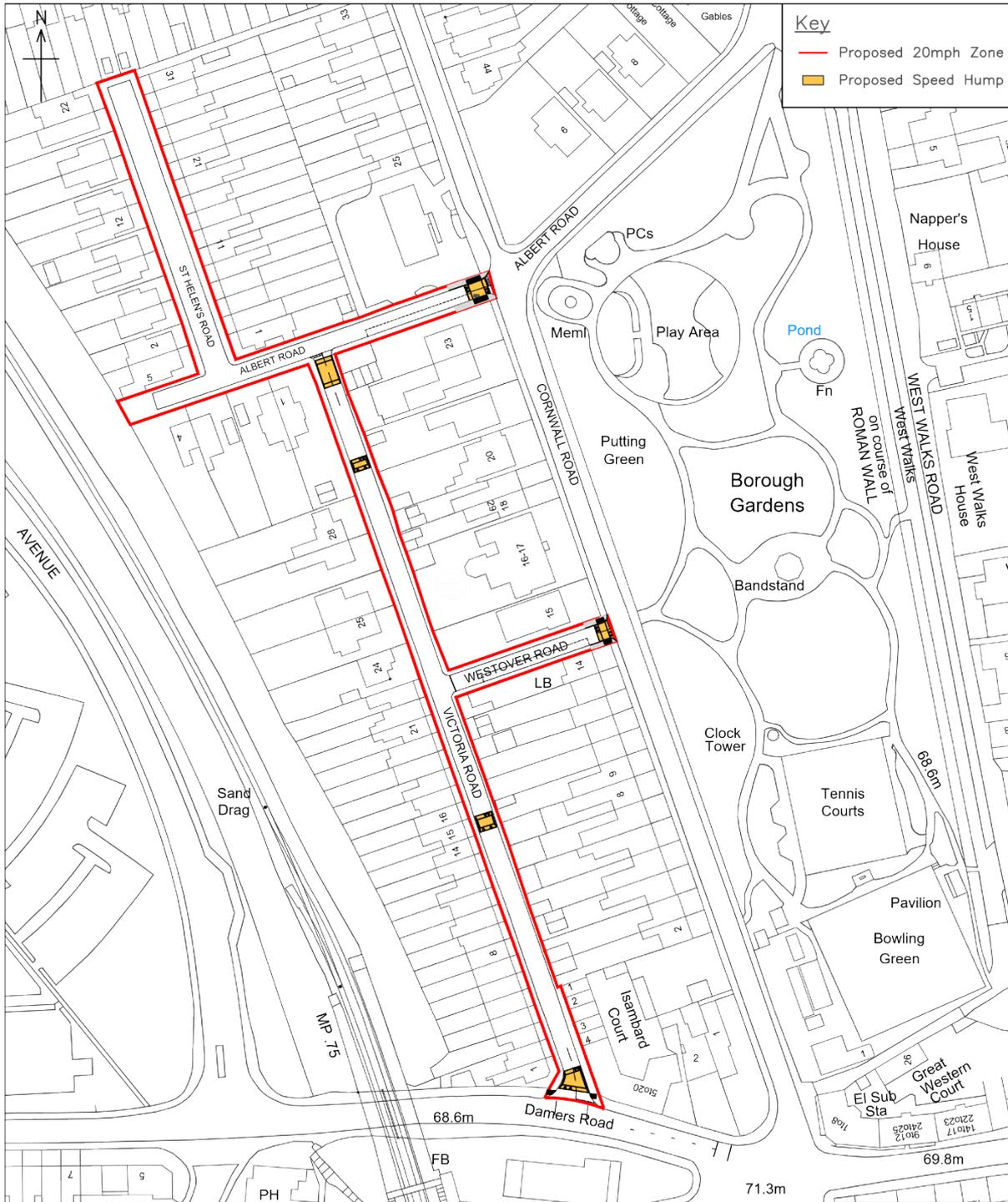
- 5.1 Three of the four non-supporting respondents expressed concern that the proposal would fail to achieve the aim of deterring traffic from using Victoria Road and Albert Road as a through route, in contravention of the 'access only' order. Unfortunately, that order can only be enforced by the police and is "subject to prioritisation with general policing duties". Introduction of the 20mph zone (including road humps) is highly likely to reduce vehicle speeds and would therefore increase the time taken to travel through Victoria Road and Albert Road. Whether this would be sufficient to deter some of the through traffic from using the Victoria Road/Albert Road route is unclear and is likely to be dependent on individual journeys and the alternative routes.
- 5.2 It would not be possible to close the through route, as suggested in the past and in the comment on the current order. Complete road closure was investigated but was considered impracticable due to the lack of space for turning areas and the inconvenience it would pose for some residents. Use of 'No Entry' to prevent through traffic was also investigated, but this would be likely to cause undesirable increase in traffic joining Cornwall Road from Westover Road; would again inconvenience some residents; and may be ignored by some road users.
- 5.3 A further concern common among three of the non-supporting respondents is noise and pollution associated with vehicles accelerating and decelerating between humps and the need for 24 hr lighting of the humps (to meet Council policy). Road humps have been proposed as they are the only traffic calming features suitable for controlling vehicle speeds (given the nature of the roads concerned) without significant loss of on-street parking.

- 5.4 The safety of two-wheeled vehicles was also raised by one objector and in particular placement of road humps in close proximity to junctions where they will be turning. A review of the locations of humps shown on the consultation drawing has revealed that the proposed hump in Victoria Road at its junction with Albert Road can be deleted from the scheme. The other humps have been located where convenient and in order to meet the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions.
- 5.5 One objector questioned the legitimacy of the Local Member Led Working Group's decision to proceed with the scheme when "just 36%" of the households affected responded to the public consultation. It was assumed by the working group that the remaining 64% of households were neither strongly in favour nor strongly opposed to the scheme. It was therefore considered reasonable to act on the basis of those whose views were strong enough for them to respond.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 The DTEP scheme was developed as a result of the response to public consultation undertaken in Autumn 2013 and subsequent member led community liaison work in 2014.
- 6.2 The decision to ban all motor vehicles from Victoria Road, Westover Road, Albert Road (west of Cornwall Road) and St Helen's Road except for access was introduced to mitigate the main concerns raised about the Great Western Cross TRO.
- 6.3 Although overall traffic in Victoria Road is lower than in a significant number of other residential streets in Dorchester, it is a narrow road and residents have been concerned for some time about inappropriate use by through traffic.
- 6.4 The current proposal to introduce a 20mph zone was developed to reinforce the 'access only' order and deter illegal through traffic.
- 6.5 Having considered the representations submitted, the concerns raised have been responded to.
- 6.6 The Highway Improvements team considers that the proposed measures (excluding the road hump at the junction of Victoria Road and Albert Road) are necessary in order to deal with concerns raised by residents and to meet assurances given to those residents.
- 6.7 It is recommended that the Committee recommend to Cabinet that the order be implemented as advertised, with the exception of the road hump at the junction of Victoria Road and Albert Road.

Appendix 1 – Consultation Plan Showing Extent of Proposed Zone



 Dorset County Council ENVIRONMENT AND THE ECONOMY DIRECTORATE Mike Harries Director for Environment and the Economy	Project Title DTEP VICTORIA ROAD TRAFFIC CALMING DORCHESTER		Drawing Title PUBLIC CONSULTATION		This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of the Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright 2018. Unauthorised reproduction is prohibited. Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. © Dorset County Council 2018. OS Licence number: 100018730. Aerial photography © UKTopographic.com 2018.
	Scale (A4 Size) Drawn Do Not Scale OGL	Date 08 Jan 2019	A 08Jan19 Orig 19Dec18 Rev Date	Amended Key - Issue / Remarks - Checked -	
DORSET HIGHWAYS Matthew Piles Service Director Environment, Infrastructure and Economy	Drawing Number HI1189/05/01/A		Drawing Status -		