

Cabinet – 27 April 2016

Caldmore Road Congestion and Parking Improvement Scheme

Portfolio: Councillor Andrew, Economy, Infrastructure and Development

Related portfolios: N/A

Service: Planning, Engineering and Transportation

Wards: All

Key decision Yes

Forward plan No

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report explains the background to the development of the Caldmore Road Congestion and Parking Improvement Scheme and advises on current progress of implementation of the necessary works.
- 1.2 The scheme has been designed to address the current traffic congestion, road safety and parking concerns along Caldmore Road consisting principally with the introduction of a one way road system along Caldmore Road and changes to adjacent roads.
- 1.3 Corporate and Public Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 14 April resolved to receive a report on the scheme as soon as practicable following the completion of the project.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet note the progress of the Caldmore Road Congestion and Parking Improvement Scheme.
- 2.2 That Cabinet reaffirm its commitment to the scheme and welcome a future report following Scrutiny consideration

3. Overview

- 3.1 Concerns over congestion and safety for all road users, within and around Caldmore Road, have been a cause for concern over several years. Previously community engagement workshops were held to consider options to address these concerns. During 2010 a temporary one way scheme was introduced during water mains works and this worked quite well.
- 3.2 Walsall South Area Partnership considered matters on several occasions but there were opposing views and therefore no consensus could be achieved.

- 3.3 The Council has a responsibility under the Statutory Network Management Duty element of the Traffic Management Act 2004 to endeavour to manage all traffic in an appropriate and safe manner.
- 3.4 Funding for this scheme was allocated as part of the 2014/15 Local Transport Plan settlement and further revisions to the 2014/15 Capital programme approved by Cabinet 19 March 2014 and 17 December 2014 when a reallocation of funding to the scheme was considered and approved.
- 3.5 The proposed project will remove opposing traffic flow and eliminate driving on the footways leading to improved driver and pedestrian safety. It will significantly increase on-street parking capacity in the area, thus attracting shoppers to the area and promoting regeneration. Removal of opposing traffic flows will decrease journey times through area, and the proposal can significantly relieve parking pressures on adjacent residential streets. The design can discourage use of west–east rat-running along Mount Street and Little Caldmore/Newhall Street/Lysways Street, and can also improve overall traffic flows at Dudley Street/Mountrath Street gyratory.
- 3.6 Council in July 2015 considered a petition against the one way proposal but this was not upheld.
- 3.7 All Ward councillors were advised of the intentions to proceed with local consultation events I and these were held 15 and 16 September 2015, where there were on street notices. Letters were sent to and officers visited businesses/residents along Caldmore Road advising of consultation events.
- 3.8 The main benefits of the scheme also include: addressing road safety problems; increase in on-street car parking availability to assist residents and businesses alike; provision of parking adjacent to business that previously had no parking; dedicated loading bays; and improved crossing facilities for pedestrians
- 3.9 The four Traffic Regulation Orders were advertised in November 2016 with on street notices and notices in the Express & Star:
 - 3.9.1 The Walsall Metropolitan Borough (Consolidated) (Waiting, Loading, Stopping, Disabled, Parking and Residents parking) Amendment Order No. 21, October 2015 – One objection was received and in accordance with delegations the Head of Service authorised the Order
 - 3.9.2 The WMBC (Upper Hall lane, Walsall) (Prohibition of Turning Movement) Order 2015 – Two objections were considered but overruled by the Head of Service
 - 3.9.3 The WMBC (Bus lanes, Bus Gates, and Bus Only Streets) Order 2015 – No objections were received and the Head authorised the Order
 - 3.9.4 The WMBC (Caldmore Road and Caldmore Green, Walsall) (One Way Traffic) Order 2015 – 29 objections were received and considered and overruled by the Executive Director for Economy and Environment in consultation with the portfolio Holder as delegated.

- 3.10 The Orders were sealed on 8 January 2016 following which 890 letters were sent to both residents and businesses advising of scheme implementation.
- 3.11 Necessary highways maintenance works have been coordinated with these works such that the resulting area will be enhanced for the benefit of all road users, residents, businesses, commuters and the like.
- 3.12 The scheme commenced on 14 February 2016 with an anticipated completion by the end of May. The Council has already committed to review and assess the success and refine any of the scheme following the settling down of traffic and pedestrian pattern. Should a safety concern be raised in the interim immediate action will be taken.
- 3.13 We believe that the implementation of the scheme is progressing well with some £300k of the £500k project being expended to date.
- 3.14 During the construction phase there will inevitably be some adverse impact in the area but the overall benefits should far outweigh these limited impacts in the long term.

4. Council priorities

- 4.1 These proposals contribute to the following priorities:
- Supporting business to thrive and supporting local people into work
 - Improving Health and well being, including independence for older people and the protection of vulnerable people
 - Creating safe, sustainable and inclusive communities

5. Risk management

- 5.1 The project is aimed to address the concerns raised and to benefit the whole community.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 The scheme is in the cabinet approved capital programme with an estimated total cost for the scheme is some £500k with some £300k having been expended to date.

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 The necessary Traffic Regulation Orders have been signed sealed in accordance with statutory procedures.
- 7.2 Any changes will require preparing and advertising new TROs

8. Property implications

- 8.1 None as a direct result of this Report.

9. Health and wellbeing implications

9.1 Minimising road safety risks will improve the health and wellbeing of those potentially affected.

10. Staffing implications

10.1 None

11. Equality implications

11.1 Improved facilities should enhance the area and improve accessibility for all sectors of the community.

12. Consultation

12.1 Consultation has been completed as part of the Council's Cabinet process, and specific community information and consultation events held in September 2015.

Background papers

Previous Cabinet Reports and Council papers

Letters to Businesses and Residents relating to Information Events attached

Author

Steve Pretty
Head of Service
Planning, Engineering and Transportation Service
Economy & Environment Directorate
☎ 01922 654696
✉ Steve.Pretty@walsall.gov.uk



.....
Simon Neilson
Executive Director

20 April 2016



.....
Councillor Adrian Andrew
Portfolio Holder

20 April 2016

Report Background

Overview

1. Caldmore Road is an unclassified, generally two-way single carriageway arterial road leading from Walsall town centre towards West Bromwich. It forms part of the strategic highway network as a local distributor. It passes through the Caldmore district which is a mix of residential and retail use. Part of Caldmore Road is designated as a two-way bus/cycle facility between Mountrath Street and Dudley Street whilst the section between Bradford Street and Mountrath Street is currently a contraflow bus lane.
1. Caldmore Road is mainly used by light vehicles given that it lies within the inner Walsall 7.5 tonne environmental weight limit zone. Heavy commercial vehicles are however permitted to travel along Caldmore Road in order to undertake loading and unloading activities at premises within the zone. It is also a busy bus route. However, the popular 404 service to West Bromwich/Oldbury/Blackheath and the 401E to Yew Tree use the road in a southbound direction only; the return route for this service is via Corporation Street and Wednesbury Road for the section of the journey between Caldmore Green and the service terminus at Bradford Place.
2. Waiting is widely restricted on Caldmore Road due to width restrictions and two-way traffic flow levels. For the most part, waiting is prohibited on a 24-hour basis on both sides of the road. A section between Dudley Street and Glebe Street is set aside for residents' permit parking whilst another section between Mount Street and Brace Street is allocated to 2-hour limited waiting (no return within 2 hours). A number of free, council-managed off-street parking facilities lie nearby on Mount Street, St Michael Street and Hart Street. These facilities are used to varying levels and are generally used by shoppers, employees, residents, taxi / private hire drivers and worshippers at the local mosques and temples.

Recent History

3. As part of previous proposals to improve the Route 404 (Walsall to West Bromwich) Bus Showcase scheme, consultation events were held within the community in 2007 and 2008. In October 2007 workshops were held with stakeholders, including traders, bus operators and Walsall Housing Group, to determine the priorities those within the community had with regard to parking bays, loading bays, disabled parking, bus stops etc. These workshops produced three different options which were taken to a wider community consultation in January 2008. The preferred option amongst respondents was to put double yellow lines along the entire length of Caldmore Road to prevent obstructions to the two way traffic flow. This option was also complemented by other measures including loading bays and improvements to car parks. However, there was opposition to the implementation of the preferred option by Traders in the area.
4. In August 2008 National Express West Midlands began to operate the 404 bus service using Caldmore Road in one direction only. This one way operation eased the issues that buses previously faced when travelling along the route. All bus

operators now operate a one way route along Caldmore Road, with services only serving Caldmore Road on the outbound journey. Inbound buses travel along Corporation Street.

5. In 2010, area-wide water main maintenance works led to the introduction of one-way working (southbound) along Caldmore Road between Dudley Street and Caldmore Green as a temporary traffic measure for a number of weeks. The measure transpired to be an effective traffic management procedure which resulted in minimal congestion and inconvenience to motorists, traders and residents.

The Issues

6. There are frequent and significant safety and congestion issues on Caldmore Road, especially in the vicinity of the shopping area between Mount Street and Brace Street. The carriageway is little more than 6 metres in width throughout this section of road; consequently there is only sufficient space to allow a single-file flow of traffic to pass a line of parked vehicles. However, the moderate opposing flows of through traffic frequently results in some vehicles using the adjacent footway to pass each other whilst stand-offs and driver disputes are also common between oncoming motorists. The Council regularly receives complaints relating to the safety of pedestrians using Caldmore Road as a result of the routine driving and parking on pavements.
7. The Walsall South Area Partnership in 2012 requested that the Traffic Management team considers alternative measures and techniques to resolve these frequent problems, thus making Caldmore a more safe and attractive location for commuters, residents and shoppers. Options considered Do-Nothing, retain two-way flow on Caldmore Road, remove all on-street parking facilities and introduce one-way working (southbound) on Caldmore Road, increase in on-street parking facilities by 149%
8. The proposals were considered at the Walsall South Area Partnership in February and March 2012 but no agreement or consensus could be reached as to most appropriate way forward. Given the impasse, the matter was again raised and subsequently considered in 2013/14 but again no consensus could be reached.
9. As a result of the urgent need to address the ongoing and significant road safety and traffic management issues, whilst also complying with the delivery of the Council's Statutory Network Management Duty, officers developed and refined an option to address these matters. This option retained the previously proposed one way system and included measures to control any increase in speed that otherwise may occur as a result of the introduction of a one way system.
10. The delivery of this type of scheme required the implementation of new and amendment to existing Traffic Regulation Orders. The statutory procedures covering this process include the requirement for the Council to formally publish the proposals and consider/determine any objections should they be received prior to making a final decision on their implementation.
11. Both Economy and Business and Neighbourhood Scrutiny Panels in February 2015 during consideration of proposals related to Lucknow Road Car Park and St Michaels raised concerns related to Caldmore Road.

12. The Traffic Management Act 2004 imposes a duty on the Council to appoint an officer to the statutory post of Traffic Manager. This post is delegated to the Head of Engineering and Transportation who is responsible for discharging the Council's Statutory Network Management Duty. This requires the Council to manage its road network to ensure the safe and efficient movement of pedestrians and vehicles. Failure to adequately discharge that duty will result in a Traffic Director being imposed on the Council to ensure the duty is appropriately discharged.
13. The one way scheme proposed for Caldmore Road, has been developed and progressed as part of the delivery of the Council's Statutory Network Management Duty as part of the annual capital programme.
14. As detailed within the main body of this Report following the conclusion of information events, statutory procedures the scheme's implementation commenced in February 2016 with an anticipated completion by end May/early June 2016.



Walsall Council

Economy & Environment

Our Ref: CR/CI Sep15
Date: 10/9/2015
Ask for: Paul Leighton
Direct Line: 01922654695

Dear Sir / Madam

Re: Caldmore Road one way scheme - community information events

As a local resident or business operator you will be aware of the ongoing concerns with road safety, on street parking and the level of traffic congestion in Caldmore Road. The Council has to address the current risk to pedestrians and other road users but in doing so will maintain and enhance where possible the environment and vitality of the local community surrounding Caldmore Road.

To address the current problems the Council is proposing the introduction of a one way scheme for Caldmore Road. This scheme would provide a number of benefits:

- Improve the safety of pedestrians by removing the need for vehicles to drive on the pavement
- Increase the number of parking spaces on Caldmore Road
- Improve loading facilities on Caldmore Road
- Reduced air pollution as traffic is allowed to flow more freely
- Improve journey time reliability for all vehicles

The proposed one way scheme would involve some minor changes to the existing kerb lines and as part of this work there would be a need to resurface sections of the footpath. Resurfacing of the entire footpath in Caldmore Road would be the most appropriate treatment and the Council would review its resurfacing programme to achieve this as part of the delivery of the one way scheme.

To assist with understanding the proposals, the Council is holding two community information events. These will be your opportunity to discuss the details of the proposal and feed back any concerns that you may have. The events will be an informal drop in style where Council officers will be available to discuss the scheme.

Time and Date:

Tuesday 15 September 14:00 – 19:00

Wednesday 16 September 11:00 – 19:00

Venue:

Aaina Community Hub
Bath Road
Caldmore
Walsall
WS1 3BS

I look forward to seeing you there and please cascade as you feel appropriate.

Yours sincerely

Paul Leighton
Group Manager
Road Traffic Network



Walsall Council

Engineering and Transportation Services

The Occupier

Our ref: SG/DE/SH/Caldmore
Date: 2 February 2016
Please Ask For: Dave Edwards / Simon Hinton
Direct Line: 01922 654647 / 01922 654675
Fax No: 01922 649036
Email: dave.edwards@walsall.gov.uk /
simon.hinton@walsall.gov.uk

Dear Sir / Madam

Caldmore Area - Parking and Congestion Scheme

Over the last few months Walsall Council has undertaken an extensive consultation exercise on a parking and congestion scheme on Caldmore Road / Caldmore Green that includes the following measures:

- A one way operation on Caldmore Road and Caldmore Green in a southerly direction, i.e. away from Walsall town centre.
- Improvements to the traffic signal junctions at Upper Hall Lane / Dudley Street and Dudley Street / Vicarage Place to reduce congestion.
- Removal of the bus lane on Caldmore Road between Bradford Street and Dudley Street, thus opening this section of road to all traffic.
- New and improved pedestrian crossing facilities along the whole route together with lengths of footway widening to improve safety.
- Traffic calming measures to control traffic speed and improve the safety record on the route.
- Additional on-street parking on Caldmore Road and Caldmore Green for the benefit of residents and shoppers together with dedicated 'loading only' areas to aid local shops that have no alternative delivery access.
- The resurfacing of the carriageway and footways to improve the street environment for the benefit of all residents, visitors and shoppers

As part of the consultation exercise various events have been held to bring the proposals to the attention of the local community and for residents and businesses to make comments and suggestions on the proposals. A formal consultation process has also been carried out whereby the public was given the opportunity to comment or formally object to the plans.

In light of the comments received from these various consultation events a number of suggestions have been included in the final design, however the basic principle of the scheme remains unaltered, as shown on the attached plan.

On 14 February work will start on the first phase of the scheme which will be to introduce the one-way on Caldmore Road / Caldmore Green between Bradford Street and Corporation Street; this will initially be by way of temporary signing, cones and barriers. Once this is in place, works on the environmental improvements will take place including the introduction of new kerbing and footways etc.

We appreciate that you may have concerns as to how the construction work may affect you on a day-to-day basis. There will, of course, be some level of disruption during the works, however every effort will be made to minimise the impact on local residents and businesses.

We will be producing regular update letters to keep you informed on any significant changes that will affect you. Please note that on Sunday 14th February work will be required to change the traffic signal equipment at the Caldmore Road junctions with Upper Hall Lane / Mountrath Street and Dudley Street / Vicarage Place. To enable this work to be carried out safely it will be necessary to introduce the following temporary road closures:

- Caldmore Road between Bradford Street and Lower Hall Lane / Mountrath Street – closed on 14th February only, and
- Caldmore Road between Upper Hall Lane / Mountrath Street and Dudley Street / Vicarage Place – closed on 14th February only.

In addition to the scheme plan I also attach a 'frequently asked questions' document which seeks to answer any concerns or questions you may have about the scheme and its introduction.

We would ask for your understanding and co-operation to allow the works to be carried out safely. If you need any scheme related information please do not hesitate to contact our liaison officer for the scheme, Andrew Clayton on 01922 654468.

Yours faithfully



Steve Griffiths
Team Leader
Traffic Management and Coordination

CALDMORE AREA - PARKING AND CONGESTION SCHEME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **Why are we proposing these works?**

For many years complaints have been received regarding congestion, safety and parking problems along the Caldmore Road / Caldmore Green route. There have been regular occurrences of oncoming vehicles encroaching onto the footway in order to avoid one another. This clearly presents a safety hazard to drivers, pedestrians and all road users and can also cause significant damage to the road / footway surface, kerbing and underground services.

- **What is the Council proposing to do?**

New one-way system - We are introducing a one-way along Caldmore Road and Caldmore Green starting from the Bradford Street junction through to the Corporation Street / West Bromwich Street junction. From 14 February all motorists will only be allowed to drive along Caldmore Road and Caldmore Green in a southerly direction; i.e. away from Walsall town centre. Please note that traffic entering Caldmore Road from side road junctions (Mount Street, Brace Street etc.) will be required to turn into the one-way system only and this will be clearly signed.

- **Removal of existing bus lanes** - As all local bus services only travel in a southerly direction towards Caldmore the bus lane restrictions currently in place between Bradford Street and Vicarage Place are not used. The new one way system includes the removal of the bus lane, thus enabling all traffic to use this section of road to reach Caldmore.
- **Banned turning movements** - The new one-way system will also allow us to ban traffic from making the right turn movement from Upper Hall Lane into Dudley Street; this will significantly help improve traffic flow and reduce congestion at this traffic signal junction.
- **Road Safety** - Since 1 January 2000 there have been 74 personal injury collisions on Caldmore Road / Caldmore Green that has resulted in 97 casualties. To help improve the safety record traffic calming measures will be introduced incorporating road humps, speed cushions and kerb build-outs. The scheme will also include a number of new and improved pedestrian crossing facilities along with footway widening to improve pedestrian safety i.e. at the pedestrian crossing in Caldmore Green near Brace Street and at the Caldmore Road / Little Caldmore / Mount Street junctions.
- **Environmental Improvements** - To improve the visual appearance of the area and help with its regeneration it is proposed to resurface all of the footways and carriageways along the route.
- **Parking restrictions** - the one-way system has allowed us to increase the amount of on-street parking on Caldmore Road and Caldmore Green for the benefit of residents and shoppers. Dedicated 'loading only' areas will also be introduced to aid local shops that have no alternative delivery access.

- **Has this one-way system been tried and tested?**

In 2010, South Staffordshire Water carried out maintenance works over a period of 6 weeks on Caldmore Road / Caldmore Green. During that time, one-way working was introduced on a temporary basis in order to manage traffic in the area. Monitoring at that time found that the principle of one-way traffic was very effective in relieving the congestion and safety hazards similar to those experienced today.

- **When will this happen?**

The scheme will start with the introduction of the one-way restriction on Sunday 14 February. Initially the one-way will consist of a temporary arrangement with signs, cones and barriers being used to bring the new restrictions to the attention of motorists and the wider community. Please note that it is an offence to ignore or disobey any regulatory signing – temporary or permanent – installed from the first day of these works.

- **How will the works be implemented?**

Once the temporary signs / barriers etc. are installed, we will begin the environmental improvements with new kerbing and resurfacing of the footways and carriageway.

- **Will there be any disruption?**

Some level of day-to-day disruption is inevitable. We will, however, take steps to minimise this by undertaking some works at evenings and weekends when the road network in the area is less busy. Where roads need to be closed or restricted on a temporary basis, diversions will be put in place to ensure drivers can still reach their intended destination – we will keep you informed of these works through regular up-date letters.

As for any construction scheme, some noise may be generated by works vehicles and machinery. Again, steps will be taken to keep this to a minimum wherever possible, however we apologise for any inconvenience that you may experience.

- **Will one-way traffic lead to an increase in traffic speeds?**

There is the potential for traffic speeds to increase when an opposing flow of traffic is removed from a road. To address this, traffic calming measures are being introduced between the Vicarage Place and Corporation Street junctions. These measures have been designed to keep traffic speeds to a level that is reasonable for a busy residential and shopping area and will also provide pedestrians with a number of safer locations to cross the road.

- **What will happen to Walsall-bound traffic?**

The natural route for traffic heading towards Walsall town centre will be Corporation Street and Wednesbury Road / Bradford Street. We will be altering the timings of the traffic signals at the Corporation Street / Wednesbury Road junction in order to allow more traffic approaching from Caldmore to clear the junction on a green-light phase.

- **How will this scheme affect bus services in the area?**

Due to the current traffic problems, bus operators only travel along Caldmore Road / Caldmore Green in a southbound direction. Although the scheme will not effect bus service routes the introduction of the one-way will help reduce delays and should result in improved bus journey times.

No major bus services currently make use of the bus lane on Caldmore Road between Vicarage Place and Bradford Street. Any community / ring-and-ride services will need to divert once the one way restriction comes into effect.

- **Environmental Improvements - Carriageway & footway resurfacing**

Work on the footways will commence on 22 February 2016 and is estimated to continue for approximately 4 months. The duration of this work is of course dependent on favourable weather and site conditions, so there may be some variation in timescale.

The work will be carried out during the daytime from Monday to Friday, but in some instances weekend working may also be necessary. Again every effort will be made to ensure disruption is kept to a minimum, however it is inevitable that some inconvenience will be caused for which we apologise in advance. Upon completion of the footway resurfacing work you will receive a follow up letter confirming the dates and temporary traffic management arrangements for the carriageway resurfacing work.

- **Am I entitled to compensation for inconvenience, lost trade etc. caused by these works?**

There is no legislation in place that creates a legal liability to compensate anyone for loss of trade when a highway authority properly executes highways works under its statutory powers. We will make every effort to ensure that the works are carried out as quickly and as efficiently as possible.

We emphasise that the primary intention of this scheme is to regenerate the Caldmore Road area for residents, businesses and shoppers, making it a more desirable location to visit.

- **When are the works expected to be complete?**

We are expecting the works to be complete by early summer.