

26 June 2024

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Sent via e-mail to:

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Our Ref: NHTR/KB/24195

Dear Jack,

Thank you for hosting the meeting last Friday and we hope you found it useful. We committed to providing you with a written response to your previously submitted letter of the 16th May 2024. Our response is as follows:

Buses

We are aware that continued levels of traffic growth on the road and more complete road closures throughout the day, not only in Bradford, but other towns too, are creating timetable drag where buses are requiring more time to operate a realistic timetable. There are also issues with on street parking in many areas across the County that slows and delays traffic and this already adds time to the existing bus schedules. A careful balance must be achieved in meeting the needs of residents who do not have off street parking whilst keeping the roads clear for uninterrupted vehicular movement. This is particularly the case where the on-street parking is acting as a control measure on vehicle speed and route attractiveness.

Bus timetables can be adjusted but adding more time to these timetables will at some point require additional vehicles in the system or a reduction in the length of the route. Either of these will cost significant additional money.

It is also worth noting that First Bus have been asked to supply a formal response to the scheme proposals but have not yet responded.

Bus Gate Operation

Wiltshire have had a mixed experience from bus gate installation and longevity. The physical mechanical mechanisms such as at Bumpers Farm estate bollard have not proved reliable and I think now with the more affordable use of ANPR then this may be a better option. An example of a current bus gate with ANPR is found at Keepers Road, Devizes. There is also a bus gate installed at Semington near to Wiltshire Police and this is also being upgraded to an ANPR system. However as explained at the meeting the proposal for Silver Street is not a bus gate but a length of road controlled by shuttle working traffic signals with an accompanying restriction allowing only entry to buses travelling up Silver Street. As further explained whilst this system works in modelling terms further work is required to determine if this will work in practise.

Trial

As discussed, there are certain elements of the proposed options that could be trialed, the priority working at the top of Market Street was put forward as an example, but these would be in isolation and so a true picture of the overall impact would not be forthcoming. It would not be possible to trial the shuttle working signals on Silver Street as the operation could not be replicated with temporary equipment. Costs of a trial would also be substantive. The Covid social distancing scheme cost in the order of £50k to £60K to install and maintain. A further large-scale trial is likely to be in the same order of cost with additional budget required for monitoring and analysis.

Traffic Volume

Managing traffic growth, particularly single occupancy car trips, county wide falls under strategic planning. The Local Plan seeks to reduce the need to travel when assessing housing and employment allocations.

The Local Transport Plan provides a strategic direction on specific transport themes. LTP4 is currently being developed with an underlying principle of:

- AVOID – do not make a trip e.g. by using online services, flexible working etc.
- SHIFT – if a trip is necessary, change mode to a more sustainable one by promoting walking, cycling, and passenger transport.
- IMPROVE – if a car trip is necessary then improve the vehicle to reduce the negative impacts of pollution.

Managing transport at a regional level is steered by the [Western Gateway Sub-National Transport Body](#) who have developed a [Strategic Transport Plan 2024 to 2025](#).

We discussed the longer term plans likely to come from the National Highways study looking at connectivity between the M4 and the Dorset South Coast. Any changes to the network resulting from this are not likely to be delivered in the short or medium terms and will require central government support to progress.

It is unrealistic to expect a reduction in traffic volume should any of the modelled options come through to delivery. Rather as stated the aim would be to facilitate slow but steady traffic movements without encouraging additional traffic to the town.

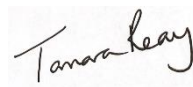
Option choice

We would reiterate that all 3 options go some way to achieving the goals set by the Town Council. We are content to move forward with any option the Town Council favours and would be willing to consider other options if required. Clearly the key factor is that the Town Council needs to demonstrate an overall level of support at a local level before any further work can be undertaken.

Yours sincerely,



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