

Meeting:	Town Centre Project Panel
Date:	14 July 2005
Subject:	Clarendon Road Restricted Zone
Responsible Officer:	Andrew Trehern, Director of Area Services (Urban Living)
Contact Officer:	Steve Swain, Transportation Manager
Portfolio Holder:	Keith Burchell, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development and Housing Phil O'Dell, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Part 1

Section 1: Summary

Decision Required

That the panel:

- recommend to Cabinet that Officers be authorised to take all necessary steps under Section 6 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act to extend the time of the loading restrictions in Clarendon Road to “No Loading at Any Time” in the area between the south east corner of St George’s Shopping Centre and the adjacent disabled person’s parking spaces and to modify the traffic orders to allow the relocation of the motorcycle bays as shown in Appendix 1, the details of which be delegated to officers and subject to consideration of any formal objections to the traffic orders;
- agree to officers seeking special authorisation from the Department for Transport for the creation of a restricted zone, with uniform waiting and loading restrictions that permit less intrusive signing and road markings, in Clarendon Road.

Reason for report

The Panel previously recommended that significant public realm improvements and improvements to pedestrian amenity in Clarendon Road should go ahead. The additional proposals here will enhance those improvements.

Benefits

The proposals will maximise improvements aimed at easing pedestrian flow and ensure that the traffic management and streetscene improvements are fully coordinated with the distinctive public realm improvements that have been developed for Clarendon Road.

Cost of Proposals

The additional costs for making the traffic order to change the loading restrictions and staff costs associated with seeking special authorisation from the Department for Transport (DfT) can be met from a grant of £450,000 provided by Transport for London (TfL) in 2005/06 for traffic management and streetscene improvements in the Town Centre.

Risks

Regular enforcement visits are likely to be necessary to ensure that the low key signing and marking measures are respected.

Implications if recommendations rejected

The use of double yellow lines and loading markings on the shared surface will detract from the distinctive public realm ambitions for Clarendon Road.

Section 2: Report

2.1 Brief History

Previous Panel reports have set out proposed improvements for Clarendon Road aimed at meeting two key objectives.

There was a need to address the poor environment of this important pedestrian route and it was agreed that a pilot project should be undertaken to introduce distinctive public realm improvements. The Hanging Gardens concept put forward by Alsop has now been developed in detail and the Development Control Committee granted planning permission on 15 June 2005.

The second objective was to deal with the poor pedestrian amenity resulting from inadequate and unsightly footways, poor and unattractive lighting and vehicle priority. Measures were developed to create a shared surface for pedestrians and vehicles, with the footway area maximised and the track for

vehicles reduced to an absolute minimum, to allow pedestrian activity to dominate. Distinctive lighting improvements have also been developed and the loading restrictions on the main, through-section of the road extended to reduce goods vehicle activity to a minimum.

2.2 Options considered

It was recognised at an early stage that the appearance of the shared surface would need to coordinate with the innovative public realm improvements that were emerging from the public realm strategy developed by Alsop. A key issue identified was the need to avoid intrusive road signs and markings and methods by which the double yellow lines and kerb markings for the waiting and loading restrictions could be omitted were explored. Guidance in the Traffic Signs Manual advised that this could only be achieved, and then only in certain circumstances, with the introduction of a pedestrianised area. Further investigation showed that the creation of a pedestrianised area was permissible only if there were also vehicle access restrictions during the period of main pedestrian activity. Such an arrangement was not practicable on Clarendon Road as it served as entrance and exit to a main town centre car park. It was therefore concluded that road markings could not be avoided.

More recently as the design of both the public realm and shared surfaced works has neared completion it has become yet more clear that yellow road marking will detract from the overall appearance of the well coordinated proposals that have been put together and further research has been carried out to find a mechanism by which they can be avoided.

As a result of this research a special procedure has been found that was developed to minimise visual intrusion of this sort in areas of significant historic interest. The procedure requires special authorisation from the DfT. Whilst Clarendon Road would not at first glance appear to be an appropriate location for this sort of approach, preliminary dialogue with the DfT suggests they may be willing to extend its use to other areas. Detailed discussions and a detailed submission for special authorisation will be needed to take such a proposal further. Whilst there is no guarantee that Clarendon Road will be accepted, it is worth pursuing because of the potential improvements it can bring to the overall streetscene.

The special procedure will create a 'restricted zone' similar in concept to a controlled parking zone where a consistent set of restrictions applies within clearly defined boundaries. A key requirement that must be met before markings indicating waiting and loading restrictions can be omitted is that the restrictions are uniform throughout the area. Road signs informing of the restrictions will still be needed but these can be discreetly positioned to minimise intrusion. It is permissible within a restricted zone to have separately signed and defined areas to allow certain activities. It will therefore still be possible to retain defined parking for disabled persons and motorcycles.

Whilst for most of Clarendon Road the waiting and loading restrictions are, or have recently been modified, to be a uniform “no waiting or loading at any time” there is a small area between the southeast corner of St George’s shopping centre and the adjacent disabled persons parking spaces where Monday to Saturday, 8.30am to 6.30pm loading restrictions apply. The loading restrictions here need to be extended to “At any time” to provide consistency and allow a practicable restricted zone to be created extending from the entry off Kymberley Road to St Ann’s car park, east then north along the full, trafficable length of Clarendon Road and terminating at the junction with Kymberley Road adjacent to the north west corner of Kings House (see sketch in Appendix A). This extension of loading restrictions should have no practical effect on adjacent premises as they all benefit from separate rear servicing or have private service yards. An added benefit is a further improvement in pedestrian amenity as the additional restrictions will reduce goods vehicle activity in Clarendon Road to the minimum that can be achieved in keeping with allowing access to private service yards.

The purpose of this report is to request that the Panel recommend to Cabinet that Officers be authorised to modify the traffic orders to facilitate the creation of a restricted zone.

The detailed design of the hanging gardens proposal has necessitated the relocation of the motorcycle bays (see sketch in Appendix A). The modification of the traffic orders needed to allow this will be pursued alongside the modifications to the loading restrictions.

Agreement is also sought from the Panel to allow Officers to seek special authorisation from the DfT for a restricted zone in Clarendon Road.

2.3 Consultation

Consultation will be carried out as part of the traffic order making process.

2.4 Financial Implications

The funding arrangements for the design and construction of the proposals on Clarendon Road were included in earlier reports to the Panel. The funding implications of this report are restricted to additional order making costs and the staff costs associated with seeking special authorisation from the DfT for a restricted zone. These costs can be met from a grant of £450,000 provided by Transport for London in 2005/06 for traffic management and streetscene improvements in the Town Centre.

2.5 Legal Implications

Changes to the traffic orders can be made under Section 6 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

Formal approval for the non-standard signing/road marking layout that will be used for the controlled zone will be sought via the special authorisation procedures of the Department for Transport.

2.6 Equalities Impact

Not applicable

Section 3: Supporting Information/Background Documents

Appendix A: Plan showing proposed amendments to traffic orders and the extent of the restricted zone.