

Consultation Summary and Response

11 responses were received from businesses or organisations. 3 were in favour and 8 were against.

19 responses were received from individuals. 1 of these was in favour and 18 were against.

The objections were on the following grounds:

- The effect on Little East Street businesses / ambiance (mentioned 20 times)
- Safety (17)
- The effect on business deliveries (6)
- Level of consultation (4)
- Congestion (2)
- Impact on East Street pedestrians (1)
- Lack of 2-way cycling (1)

The effect on Little East Street businesses / ambiance

A majority of the objections mentioned the effect of the scheme on Little East Street businesses- in particular Northern Lights Bar and, to a lesser extent, Dr Brighton's pub. These objections focussed on the impact of increased traffic on customers sitting outside businesses.

The proposal will result in increased traffic on Little East street, estimated at 58 vehicles per hour during the hours of closure. Although it is understood that businesses will not welcome any increase in traffic an increase of 1 vehicle a minute will not result in Little East Street becoming a busy road and people will still be able to enjoy sitting outside in the area. Loading provision has been significantly increased to ensure that extra traffic will pass through the street without forming congestion. It should also be noted that the restrictions will end at 7pm every day and after this time it is not forecast that there will be an increase in traffic levels.

The Public Inquiry report highlighted the need to consider the effect of the scheme on the licensed area of Northern Lights. Vehicle track analysis has been carried out and even the largest vehicles will not encroach on the licensed area. The scheme will not require a reduction in Northern Lights or Dr Brighton's tables and chairs area.

Safety

Road safety was mentioned by several of the objectors and was also an issue raised at the Public Inquiry. Since the Inquiry additional road safety data has been collected, intervisibility analysis carried out and an internal and an external safety audit produced. The independent safety audit has concluded that all elements of the proposed scheme are low risk.

The inquiry report recommended further analysis of the safety risks associated with the disabled exit to Dr Brighton's. Following the Inquiry an independent safety audit was commissioned which, as part of the audit, looked specifically at the Dr Brighton's exit. The audit used intervisibility calculations, speed data and site observations to analyse the risk and concluded that the risk to disabled (or able-bodied) people using this exit was low. This finding accords with the views of the council's Road Safety team.

Swept path analysis has been carried out in the area and has shown that all vehicles can manoeuvre along the street. For the largest vehicles it is necessary to overrun the footway in places. The independent safety auditor has assessed this and concluded it is low risk- due primarily to the very low speeds in the area. Due to the narrow streets throughout the Old Town there are several locations with similar vehicle flows as forecast for Little East Street where footway overrun currently occurs. These locations are classified as low risk (and years of evidence concurs with this classification) due to the low speeds of vehicles (12.2mph at the northern end and 5 mph at the southern end).

A number of safety features will be implemented as part of the scheme to improve safety further. These will be guard railing at the car park exit, a speed hump, and creation of passing points.

Effect on business deliveries

Most loading currently occurs on the side of the carriageway on Little East Street without disruption to traffic flow. Under the new scheme this arrangement will be improved further by the creation of enhanced passing points near Dr Brighton's and Northern Lights to ensure traffic can flow freely during weekly dray lorry deliveries. No increased congestion is forecast as a result of this proposal.

In addition a new loading bay is proposed at the junction of Bartholomews with Little East Street. This will provide further loading provision for local businesses and a place for larger vehicles to load from to prevent congestion.

The largest delivery vehicles to Little East Street are the weekly dray lorry deliveries of beer to the two bars. As outlined above, an agreement to create passing points to assist with these deliveries has been made with the businesses.

Into You tattoo shop has regular clinical waste collections that require the collection vehicle to park near their premises. These collections currently occur without disrupting passing traffic and this arrangement will remain under the proposed scheme.

Level of Consultation

Several objectors questioned the sufficiency of consultation.

For these Orders extensive consultation has been carried out with local businesses and has gone beyond the standard level of TRO consultation. Local people and businesses have been informed of the Orders, had the opportunity to meet with Officers to discuss the plans, and amendments to the plan have been made as a result of discussions with local businesses (see Para 5.13 of main report).

In addition the advertising of the Orders was the culmination of a significant amount of consultation over several years involving hundreds of consultees and a 3 day Public Inquiry (see Appendix 6).

Congestion

The independent safety audit said the following regarding traffic volumes:

“While the increase is substantial in percentage terms, it still remains that traffic volumes along Little East Street are still low in absolute terms; indeed it has been estimated that the peak hourly traffic flow along Little East Street will be in the region of 85 vehicles per hour – this can be classified as very low flow.”

Modelling forecasts have indicated an estimated additional 57 vehicles per hour will use Little East Street under the new scheme (current average is 15 vehicles per hour). Although this will be an increase on current levels of an additional vehicle a minute this will not lead to congestion as vehicles will travel through Little East Street and exit at the seafront.

Each of the bars (Northern Lights and Dr Brighton’s) receives one beer delivery a week that arrives on a large dray lorry. Officers have discussed with both establishments the possibilities for minimising the effect of these deliveries and a relocation of bollards has been agreed to provide space for loading to occur and traffic to pass.

Impact on East Street pedestrians

One objection was on the grounds that pedestrians would not be able to access East Street during the hours of closure.

East Street is one of the busiest pedestrian routes in the city and yet its road space is dominated by vehicles forcing pedestrians onto the narrow footways. By closing East Street, pedestrians will be able to use the street much more comfortably. The Inspector considered this point, and many others, relating to the closure of East Street and concluded that it would benefit pedestrians and businesses on the street to proceed with the timed closure.

Lack of 2-way cycling

One objection focussed on the absence of 2-way cycling in the scheme. This was examined in the early stages of the project, however due to the traditional kerb layout of East Street there is not space to safely allow 2-way cycling during

the hours it is open to traffic. Allowing 2-way cycling during the hours of closure was considered but it was felt this could cause confusion and result in 2-way cycling outside permitted hours.