

STOCKPORT COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE REPORT – SUMMARY SHEET

Subject: Market and Underbanks Active Travel Fund Consultation

Report to: (a) Central Stockport Area Committee **Date:** 2nd December 2021
(b) Cabinet Member (Economy & Regeneration) **Date:**

Report of: (b) Corporate Director for Place Management & Regeneration

Key Decision: (c) **NO / YES** (Please circle)

Forward Plan ☐ General Exception ☐ Special Urgency ☐ (Tick box)

Summary:

This report gives results of a consultation on the Market and Underbanks Active Travel Fund scheme and seeks a recommendation that the Cabinet Member (Economy and Regeneration) approves the scheme and its implementation by way of an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order.

Recommendation(s):

The Area Committee is asked to comment on this report and recommend that the Cabinet Member (Economy & Regeneration) approves the:

- proposals including hours of restriction for the Market and Underbanks scheme;
- advertisement and making of Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders needed to implement the scheme; and
- submission of the Delivery Plan to seek funding approval from TfGM to construct the scheme.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee (if decision called in): (d)
Communities & Housing Scrutiny Committee

Background Papers (if report for publication): (e)

There are none.

Contact person for accessing
background papers and discussing the report
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‘Urgent Business’: (f) **YES / NO** (please circle)

Certification (if applicable)

This report should be considered as ‘urgent business’ and the decision exempted from ‘call-in’ for the following reason(s):

The written consent of Councillor _____ and the Chief Executive/Monitoring Officer/Borough Treasurer for the decision to be treated as ‘urgent business’ was obtained on _____ /will be obtained before the decision is implemented.

Market and Underbanks Active Travel Fund Consultation

Report of the Corporate Director for Place Management & Regeneration

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report gives results of a consultation on the Market and Underbanks Access Plan proposals to enhance the Market Place and Underbanks area by further limiting vehicular access to the area at certain times of day. The proposals build on the changes currently underway, which are seeing greater numbers of residents and businesses in the Market and Underbanks area. The proposals have been developed to provide an improved environment for walking and cycling and for those wanting to spend more time in the Market Place and Underbanks Area.

As well as extending the duration of restrictions to vehicular access to the Market and Underbanks, the proposals will also address the current road safety issue of vehicles contravening existing Traffic Regulation Orders and accessing the area at times when vehicular access is prohibited.

This report seeks a recommendation for approval to implement the scheme, supported by Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders.

2. BACKGROUND

The Market and Underbanks Area is already subject to Traffic Regulation Orders that limit vehicular access during the daytime hours, in particular on Market days. A summary of the existing Traffic Regulation Orders in place in the area is provided at **Appendix A**. Given the lack of physical measures to prevent access, vehicles can frequently be seen to be contravening the existing orders and entering the area when vehicular access is not permitted. The Market and Underbanks continues to grow in popularity as a place for visitors, businesses and residents, increasing the footfall in the area.

As a result of this, the Council bid for funding via Transport for Greater Manchester's Active Travel fund, to develop a package of measures to enhance the Market and Underbanks Area by further limiting access to vehicular traffic.

The proposed closure times mirror, as far as possible, those already in place at Redrock, to create a consistent approach to vehicular access across the town centre.

The proposals were developed to seek to balance the needs of the area's visitors, businesses and residents. A key element in developing the proposals was to seek the views of the local community with an interest in or who would be affected by the proposals. To that end, consultation was undertaken for a three-week period, closing on 24th October 2021.

This report presents the consultation methodology applied by the Council and the response to the feedback, including updates to the proposals.

The purpose of the consultation was specifically to inform the public, local residents, businesses and interest groups of the proposals and capture their comments. This feedback has been reviewed and used to inform the development of the scheme to address the comments received.

In recognition of the various access requirements of businesses in the area, the Council has sought to engage with affected parties to understand the detail of their access needs. The proposals seek to enhance the area through further limiting traffic, whilst still accommodating the requirements to access the area for servicing, deliveries and access for mobility impaired people.

It is proposed that the measures are implemented by way of an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order. This allows for consultation while the measures are in place and provides the opportunity for changes to be made should issues be identified prior to the order being made permanent.

3. PROPOSALS

The timing of the closures have been developed to provide vehicular access to properties at appropriate times of day so servicing can continue to take place. The closures will be enforced through a combination of fixed and automatic bollards. Fixed bollards are in place at all times. Automatic bollards lower to permit vehicular access at times of the day when the road closure is not in place. Access to the area during the closures can be arranged in special circumstances by speaking to the Council.

Arrangements will be put in place to ensure that existing activities taking place in the Market Place can continue to operate. As is the case with automatic bollards elsewhere in Stockport, emergency services would be provided with fobs to permit them access at all times of day.

The package of proposals presented for consultation comprised:

Closure of Churchgate/Millgate

- The full-time (24 hours a day / 7 days a week) closure of Churchgate/ Millgate to through traffic between property number 7 Millgate to immediately north of the Market Place/ Churchgate junction to provide improved connectivity between St Mary's church and the Market Place.
- Pedestrian and cycle access through the closed section of Churchgate will be maintained.
- A turning head on Churchgate, requiring the loss of two car parking spaces at the Churchgate car park.
- The proposals also included a pocket park on the closed section of Churchgate.

Closure of Market Place

- The installation of automatic bollards to limit access to the Market area between 10.30 am and midnight Mon - Sun. On Friday and Saturday, the

restrictions would begin at 7am. The full time closure of the Market Place in front of the Produce Hall will remain in place.

Closure of Park Street and Vernon Street alongside the introduction of a walking and cycling path

- Closure of Park Street and Vernon Street between 10.30am and midnight, Monday to Sunday and 7am to midnight on Friday and Saturday, enforced via automatic bollards located along Park Street, adjacent to its junction with Turner Street / Shawcross Fold and fixed bollards located at the junction of Vernon Street / Turner Street.

Closure of Meal House Brow

- The closure of Mealhouse Brow to traffic at all times. Cycle and pedestrian access will be maintained.

Closure of Little Underbank, Bridge Street and Great Underbank

- The closure of Bridge Street, Great Underbank and Little Underbank west of Royal Oak Yard to Great Underbank from 10.30am to midnight Mon - Sun;
- The introduction of automatic bollards to enforce the existing restriction of Little Underbank east of Royal Oak Yard from 10.30am and to 4pm Mon – Sun. East of Royal Oak Yard, Little Underbank will become two-way for vehicles between 4pm and midnight.
- The introduction of a 20mph speed limit on Little Underbank, Great Underbank, Mealhouse Brow, Lower Hillgate and High Street.

St Petersgate closure to through traffic and improved cycle provision

- The closure of St Petersgate to through traffic at the St Petersgate Bridge over Little Underbank, with a through route for pedestrians and cyclists maintained. A pocket park is proposed on the closed section of St Petersgate. South of the closure, there will be no changes to restriction introduced to vehicle movements on Petersgate/ St Petersgate, with access to the Merseyway Car Park being unaffected by the proposals.
- The provision of a marked out cycle lane to allow cyclists to travel in the opposite direction to general traffic, making St Petersgate two-way for cycling. St Petersgate to remain one-way for vehicles. Changes to parking, taxi and loading bays are also proposed on St Petersgate.

Introduction of a traffic light controlled junction with controlled pedestrian and cycle crossings at Piccadilly / Petersgate

- The introduction of a traffic light controlled junction at the Piccadilly/ St Petersgate junction to improve walking and cycling access at the junction.

The drawings of the proposals presented for public consultation are provided at **Appendix B.**

Changes made to the proposals in response to the consultation feedback include:

- The location of the Park Street bollards has been repositioned to provide an additional opportunity for loading and access for businesses in the Market Place.
- The extent of the closure on Churchgate/ Millgate has been amended to provide:
 - Additional opportunities for disabled parking and drop off for mobility impaired people.
 - Additional opportunities for loading.
 - Sufficient space for St Mary's Church's vehicular access requirements.
 - No loss of parking within the Churchgate car park
 - Relocated turning area for large vehicles which are making deliveries or taken a wrong turn
 - The two parking spaces at the northern end of the Millgate / Marketplace closure has have been removed to address concerns regarding potential conflict between cyclists passing between the two spaces and car doors opening into them.
- The extent of the proposed closure has been significantly reduced to create a better balance between the operational requirements of the immediate area, while still providing a pedestrian link between the Marketplace and St Mary's Church, as well as a quieter highway environment.
- Additional benches are to be included in the scheme to provide rest stops particularly for mobility impaired people.
- Amendments to the extent of the closures on St Petergate and Churchgate/ Millgate to ensure that Greater Manchester Fire Service has the required access for fire tenders to adjacent buildings and to water hydrants.
- The provision of additional signage to direct visitors to businesses in the Market and Underbanks.
- Amendments to the location of bollards on Vernon Street to accommodate access to the private parking at the Boar's Head.
- Changes to the contra flow cycle lane proposals on St Petergate.

Consultation Methodology

The proposals subject to public consultation were issued to a wide range of stakeholders, as detailed in the Consultation Report, provided at **Appendix C**. A variety of methods were used to advertise the consultation and capture the views of consultees including the Council's website, social media, email, leaflet, letter and road signage. Further details of the consultation methodology are provided in the Consultation Report at **Appendix C**. Through emails, in person and online one to one meetings, drop in sessions and briefings, the Council has sought to engage with affected parties and understand their comments and concerns to inform the development of the proposals.

4. LEGAL POSITION/IMPLICATIONS

The Traffic Management Orders would be made under Section 1 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

5. CONSULTATION FEEDBACK AND DESIGNER'S RESPONSE TO COMMENTS

The response to each distinct scheme and the designer's response to the feedback received is presented in the following sections.

The consultation drawings can be found at **Appendix B**. The drawings showing the proposed updated scheme following the consultation can be found at **Appendix D**. The proposed Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders are provided at **Appendix E**.

General Feedback

The consultation sought to understand the extent to which respondents considered whether the proposals would improve the area for various different purposes. The feedback shows that with the exception of access for business purposes/ deliveries, more respondents agree than disagree that the proposals will improve the area for various uses. Further detail of the feedback is as follows:

- The majority of respondents agreed that the Market Scheme will improve the Market and Underbanks for **businesses** in the area. Of the 496 respondents to answer this question 50% strongly agreed or agreed and 38% strongly disagreed or disagreed.
- The majority of respondents agreed that the Market scheme will improve the Market and Underbanks for **residents** in the area. Of the 481 respondents to answer this question 47% strongly agreed or agreed and 23% strongly disagreed or disagreed.
- The majority of respondents agreed that the Market scheme will improve the Market and Underbanks for **visitors** in the area. Of the 489 respondents to answer this question 53% strongly agreed or agreed 32% strongly disagreed or disagreed.
- The majority of respondents agreed that the Market scheme will improve the Market and Underbanks for people **walking** to/through the area. Of the 489 respondents to answer this question 58% strongly agreed or agreed and 24% strongly disagreed or disagreed.
- The majority of respondents agreed that the Market scheme will improve the Market and Underbanks for people **cycling** to/through the area. Of the 487 respondents to answer this question 57% strongly agreed or agreed and 21% strongly disagreed or disagreed.
- The majority of respondents disagreed that the Market scheme will improve the Market and Underbanks for people **accessing the area for business purposes/deliveries**. Of the 492 respondents to answer this question 33% strongly agreed or agreed and 42% strongly disagreed or disagreed.

Churchgate/Millgate Closure

Consultation Feedback

There was a range of opinions to the location of the closure with 47% strongly disagreeing or disagreeing on the location of the closure and 50% strongly agreeing or agreeing. With regards to the timing of the closure, 49% strongly disagreed or disagreed and 48% strongly agreed or agreed.

Of the 500 respondents to respond to the question seeking their opinion of changes to on street parking as a result of the proposals, 40% strongly disagreed or disagreed and 50% strongly agreed or agreed.

There were 264 comments which specifically related to the proposals for the full-time closure of Churchgate to immediately north of the Market Place/Churchgate junction and parking provision. Recurring comments included:

- References to traffic problems with 88 comments believing that the proposals will worsen the existing highway network and cause further congestion. This was most notable along St Mary's Way, Hall Street, New Zealand Road and New Bridge Lane;
- Mixed opinions towards the impact of the closure for businesses. Ten comments discussed the potential for businesses to flourish with the open space however, 52 comments believed the closure would have a negative impact on businesses and traders, in regard to access, footfall and revenue;
- Queries relating to inclusivity (45 comments) with references to the elderly, the disabled and the visually impaired. Concerns were mainly raised regarding pick-up/drop-off points for these groups, blue badge parking and exclusion from the area if these were not provided;
- References to parking (37 comments), with mixed opinions towards the parking provision – 12 comments discussed the need for parking in order to ensure businesses, visitor and residents' access, however six comments discussed the vast availability of parking and priority to pedestrians with the scheme. Few (nine comments) also expressed the need to support disabled parking and affordability of any parking to be provided (one comment). The addition of two parking spaces received negative feedback, with comments regarding the safety and conflict these would have with pedestrians, cyclists and HGV traffic whilst reversing to Shawcross Fold;
- Mixed opinions relating to safety (44 comments) with 21 respondents believing that the proposals will improve safety while a further 19 respondents believe that parts of the scheme will be hazardous – which mainly related to the increase in traffic along other routes;
- Overall negativity towards the proposals (181 comments) with a focus on the increased traffic on the existing network (88 comments) and impact it will have on businesses (52 comments) and several respondents stating that the improvements aren't needed (15 comments);

- Support for the scheme as it will improve safety (21 comments), benefit pedestrians and cyclists (ten comments), and improve general attractiveness of the area (seven comments);
- Alternative suggestions are provided (35 comments) which mainly centre on the introduction of a pedestrian crossing located along Churchgate to access Market Hall (22 comments). Other alternatives included the temporary closure of Churchgate/Millgate during market days as opposed to fulltime closure (six comments) as well as the reduction of vehicular speeds (six comments); and
- References to the visibility of businesses, with seven comments emphasising the impact closure may have on their exposure.

There were a number of specific requests and queries, including:

- A question as to how the emergency services will access the roads and properties along the route;
- A question regarding disabled and blue badge parking provision;
- The installation of a right turn filter on traffic lights from New Bridge Lane;
- Access for businesses during market days; and
- Ensuring access for existing residents.

The Churchgate/Millgate closure was referred to in 10 emails from individuals with comments including:

- Additional disabled parking (minimum of 4-6 spaces) to be provided in the vicinity of Churchgate car park;
- Emergency access to be provided;
- A lack of support related to the potential impact of traffic in Offerton, St Mary's Way and New Bridge Lane;
- A lack of street furniture proposed to help those with limited mobility;
- The impact the closure will have upon residents and business access and their visibility;
- An alternative pedestrian crossing or zebra crossing to be provided instead of the closure; and
- The unnecessary need to close Churchgate/Millgate, as there is not enough footfall for the scheme to be deemed beneficial or appropriate.

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service were informed of the proposals and consultation. Two responses were received on the 4th and 22nd October in which there was an expression of support, however, specific aspects of the closure would need to be altered in order to ensure access was available. It was noted in the reply that the closure of Churchgate/Millgate would impact the access to the two main risks in the area - St Marys Church and Staircase house. Hydrants are located

within in restricted zones, and alternatives to these would impact firefighting options considerably.

One email was received from St Mary's Church who requested clarification regarding vehicular access to the entrance of the church during services/events such as a funeral or wedding.

One email was received by Walk Ride Stockport who requested that on-street parking bays are unnecessary in the area, given that a car park is located nearby and the fact that they may conflict with cyclists. It also requested that the road removed all speed cushions, as these would no longer be necessary with the closure and may cause issues with those who travel on adapted cycles/trikes.

Businesses within the area also emailed regarding the Churchgate/Millgate closure. These included:

- Concerns regarding visibility of venue, disruption to couriers, and reduced business as a result of the closure;
- Concern regarding access to the location before and after the fair, as well as during the event for vintage, classic and military vehicles. Also worry regarding the lack of disabled car parking for individuals who visit the market.

Closure of Market Place

Consultation Feedback

The majority of respondents agreed with the location of Market Place closure proposals to through motor vehicles. Of the 503 respondents to answer this question 55% strongly agreed or agreed and 38% strongly disagreed or disagreed.

With regards to the timing of the closures, 50% strongly agreed or agreed and 42% strongly disagreed or disagreed.

There were 188 comments which specifically related to the proposals for Market Place. Of those, 59 comments supported the scheme whilst 93 comments did not, the remaining were not relevant to this section, or queries regarding the closure. Recurring comments included:

- Concerns expressed that the closures will cause congestion here (24 comments), especially at St Mary's Way (13 comments);
- Mixed views on whether the timing of the closure is suitable for the Market Place (33 comments). Many took into consideration the need for businesses and residents to access the area for market days and therefore a range of times were proposed by numerous individuals. Some considered shorter closure periods to allow residents and businesses to complete their daily duties, whilst others wanted the closure timings extended to ensure pedestrian safety whilst leaving venues in the evening. Alternative proposals (8 comments), discussed the closure to be temporary with many considering a closure on weekend/event days only.

- Resident, business and trader access was also commented on 43 times. This relates to the above point regarding whether these individuals will be able to access the Market Place during closures and what alternatives are in place to ensure they can still carry out day-to-day tasks.
- Queries regarding how businesses, traders and residents will access the area, if a taxi rank is located nearby and how the waste collection will be collected (9 comments);
- Discussions surrounding unnecessary nature of the scheme along Market Place as comments suggest it is a quiet road which cyclists do not use (25 comments);
- The impact the closure would have on safety. Ten comments believed the scheme would have a positive effect on safety, due to the removal of vehicles and narrow pavements. However, four believed the scheme would have a negative impact, due to the increase in traffic along other major roads; and
- The effect the closure would have on footfall to the area. Opinion on this subject were mixed with six comments believing the scheme would help increase footfall, whilst eight comments believed the scheme would prevent and decrease footfall to the area.

Nine emails included a reference to the Market Place, comments included:

- The need to support traffic restrictions in and around the market;
- Concerns relating to the impact of businesses, if the closure timings are to come in place;
- The potential to replace the closure proposals with a crossing at Market Hall; and
- Concerns that footfall will decrease surrounding the market due to limited access.

A number of traders from one business commented upon the proposals via email. Comments were as follows:

- The scheme will prevent access and deliveries for traders;
- The scheme will impact the already struggling businesses to gain revenue, after a difficult period due to Covid-19; and
- Concerns regarding the decrease in footfall if the closure was to proceed.

An email response was received from the Royal National Institute of Blind People which related to the proposals of Market Place. Comments included:

- The need for the council to be aware of those who are registered blind/visually impaired within the area in a register, in order for accessible materials and information to be received;
- A drop-off/pick-up point located nearby the Market, towards the church to ensure access is still available;

- Potential to expand the mobility offer within the town centre, to create 'stations' within car parks. This would help to alleviate the pick-up/drop-off issue;
- The need to avoid tapered steps in layout design as these are hazardous;
- A preference for bollards to be black with a white contrasting strip (not silver); and
- Space to be provided between the bollards so that a mobility scooter can access.

Designer's Response to Feedback on Churchgate and Market Place

The Council has previously explored the feasibility of introducing a pedestrian crossing on Churchgate to provide an improved link between the Market Place and St Mary's Church. However, due to the lack of visibility / bend in the road, it was not feasible to provide a crossing.

As part of the Town Centre Access Plan works, St Mary's Way has been subject to capacity improvements, with intention of taking traffic out of town centre routes. The closure of Churchgate is a continuation of this strategy, facilitated by the St Mary's Way improvements.

It is recognised that there are various demands for access to the Churchgate and Market Place area. In particular, following feedback and site visits with members of Stockport Transport and Access Forum, including representatives of the RNIB, Disability Stockport and Shop Mobility, the need for amendments to the scheme to accommodate drop off and minimise the loss of on-street parking closer to the Market. To that end, the extent of the closure of Churchgate has been reduced to retain on-street parking bays at the northern end of the closure and allow drop off at the St Mary's Church end of the closure. In addition, benches will be provided as part of the scheme to provide more rest opportunities in the area.

The changes to the extent of the closure also address feedback from the Greater Manchester Fire Service regarding the requirement to access their fire hydrants and permit fire tender access in close proximity to the market.

As a result of the change to the extent of the closure, there is no longer the need to utilise existing parking spaces at the Churchgate car park to provide a turning head, further reducing the impact of the proposals on parking provision in the area.

Further consultation with St Mary's Church has taken place to confirm that the revised proposals provide the required vehicular access whilst still improving pedestrian connectivity between the Market Place and Church.

The appearance and positioning of any street furniture will be designed such that it meets the needs of disabled people.

The two parking spaces at the northern end of the Churchgate closure has been removed to address concerns from conflict between cyclists passing between the two spaces and car doors.

The proposals are intended to create a safer and more attractive environment for pedestrians and thereby increase footfall in the area. Additional signage will be provided to better direct town centre users to the Market and Underbanks Area.

Closure of Park Street and Vernon Street alongside the introduction of a walking and cycling path

Consultation Feedback

Closure of Park Street

The majority of respondents agreed with the chosen location for the closure of Park Street and Vernon Street. Of the 497 respondents to answer this question 32% strongly disagree or agreed and 53% strongly agreed or agreed.

The majority of respondents agree with the chosen time period of the closure on Park Street and Vernon Street. Of the 492 respondents, 50% strongly agreed or agreed with the timings proposed. A total of 34% strongly disagreed or disagreed with the timings.

There were 105 comments which specifically related to the Park Street and Vernon Street closure proposals. Of these, 25 comments were in support of the scheme whilst 62 comments were not. Recurring comments included:

- Objections to the closure, with specific reference to businesses being unable to access the area for deliveries (15 comments);
- Objections to the timing of the closure (12 comments) with 4 comments suggesting the alternative to close the road only on the weekend to prevent disruption to businesses;
- Mixed opinions towards the impact the closure would have on footfall. Two comments noted that the closure will enable pedestrians to walk freely around the area, and ensure the space is attractive for café culture, whilst nine comments believed the closure would decrease footfall to the area;
- Comments regarding the impact the closure would have on the surrounding network. Congestion was discussed in 14 comments, most notably regarding the belief that St Mary's Way would experience increased amounts of congestion as a result of the closure. Safety was also a concern (three comments), with respondents considering the increase in traffic would lead to more conflicts and collisions. However two comments discussed the improvement the scheme would have on pedestrian safety;
- The need for disabled access to the area in order to prevent groups from being excluded from the area (seven comments); and
- General negativity towards the closure, due to the lack of vehicles within this area currently. A total of 15 comments considered the closure to be unnecessary, as traffic flow is already at a minimum.

The closure of Park Street/Vernon Street was mentioned in five emails:

- A business emailed to discuss the impact this closure would have on the existing road network. It was also stated that the closure would impact access to the area for businesses which would cause issues for day-to-day working;
- Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service discussed an alternative of automatic bollards being located at the junction of Park Street/Market Place due to hydrant access, as opposed to Park Street/Shawcross Fold;
- Concern over the lack of loading bays available to a business, and the potential to implement a loading bay if bollards were relocated further towards Park Street; and
- Various discussions surrounding the timing of the closure and HGV/loading bay access along Park Street. The demand for a loading bay will lead to congestion along this road, and due to its narrow nature, it may become a safety hazard for pedestrians.

Designer's Response to Feedback on Closure of Park Street and Vernon Street alongside the introduction of a walking and cycling path

The above response to comments on the Churchgate and Market Street closure is also pertinent to this question.

In addition, following concerns raised regarding the need for servicing access to the area throughout the day, the bollards on Park Street are proposed to be relocated to the Market Place end of Park Street to provide an additional opportunity servicing at all times of day to the various businesses in this area.

Amendments to the location of bollards on Vernon Street are proposed to accommodate access to the private parking at the Boar's Head.

Walking and cycling path

The majority of respondents (53%) strongly agree or agree with the proposal to convert Vernon Street with the introduction of a shared use walking and cycle path and the provision of a cycling link from the Market to Warren Street. Of the 497 respondents who answered, 28% strongly disagreed or disagreed with the conversion of Vernon Street to a shared use path.

There were 141 comments which specifically related to the introduction of a shared walking and cycling path on Vernon Street. Of these, 58 comments supported the walking and cycling path whilst 72 comments did not. The rest of comments were irrelevant or question relating to this. Recurring comments included

- Mixed opinions regarding safety. Whilst some comments discussed the improvement this scheme element would have on safety for pedestrians and cyclists from vehicles, others were keen to mention their concern, given that cyclists and pedestrians are sharing this space together;
- Similarly, 25 comments raised concern regarding the conflict between cyclists and pedestrians due to the shared use path;

- A desire for safer design, with a request to alter the shared use path to segregated walking and cycle lane (18 comments). This was a common request that was often with the view that shared spaces can result in danger;
- Concerns regarding the gradient of the road (16 comments) with eight comments also referencing the impact this would have on the speed of cyclists travelling. Respondents who commented on this also commented on the safety of cyclists and pedestrians;
- The need to connect the cycle lane with existing cycle infrastructure to provide a network (ten comments). One comments discussed how their access to Asda via bicycle would be possible via this scheme and therefore highlighted the importance of connecting the cycle lane to key destination/existing links;
- The need for vehicles to access the area, given that not all individuals can walk or cycle. Eleven comments believed that vehicles were needed with discussion regarding inclusivity and accessibility of the scheme; and
- A lack of support for the introduction of the scheme due to the belief that it is unnecessary (21 comments). The reasoning for this varied, with some stating that the route would not be used by cyclists, others noting its inappropriate location (with reference to the gradient) and few mentioning that the route is already used by cyclists anyway.

Walk Ride Stockport and Trans Pennine Trail commented on the introduction of a cycle lane along Vernon Street. Concern was raised over the gradient of some sections along this routes, and questions regarding the measures that would be implemented to resolve this. Safety was also raised where the cycle route would connect to Warren Street and Market Place, with a worry that conflict may occur with vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians.

Designer's Response to Feedback

Benches will be provided on Vernon Street to create a chicane effect to slow down cyclists travelling down hill.

Closure on Meal House Brow

Consultation Feedback

The majority of respondents agreed with the proposals to closure Meal House Brow to traffic, enforced by the introduction of fixed and lockable bollards at the northern and southern end of Meal House Brow. Of the 496 respondents to answer this question 56% strongly agreed or agreed and 30% strongly disagreed or disagreed.

There were 109 comments which specifically related to proposals to close Meal House Brow to traffic. Recurring comments included:

- Agreement with this scheme element, noting that it will make the area more attractive and encourage footfall to the area (5 comments), with two comments also pleased to see the removal of a rat-run;

- Mixed opinions on safety. Whilst the majority of comments were in favour of the scheme element as it would improve pedestrian and cyclist safety (13 comments), others disagreed and noted that the increase in congestion would lead to an increase in collisions (six comments);
- Questions were raised regarding the gradient of Meal House Brow and how appropriate it would be to close (five comments), with reference made to disabled access and limited mobility (three comments);
- Questions regarding the waste collection and how this will be accessed with the closure (two comments);
- Worries regarding access to the area for businesses, market traders and residents (22 comments). Many agreed to this scheme element on the condition that access would still be viable for the Market to open;
- Concerns regarding delivery access to the area for residents and businesses (13 comments);
- Concerns regarding general traffic-related problems (15 comments) and especially the increase of traffic to the existing highway network;
- Disagreement with this scheme element, noting that it is unnecessary and will not be used (12 comments);
- The provision of taxi services, with four comments emphasising the need for a pick-up/drop off area; and
- Suggestions of alternative closure, with a preference to closure temporarily on the weekends for markets or events (two comments). Others mentioned the potential to use signage in order to mark the closure as opposed to using bollards (three comments).
 - Six emails were received in regard to the closure of Mealhouse Brow:
 - Signage needed to reflect the gradient of the area, with cyclists urges to travel in a low gear;
 - The impact the closure would have on access for businesses, with specific reference to the Bull's Head and impact this would have on possible refurbishment work; and
 - Issues that may arise with waste collection for businesses in the area.

Designer's Response to Feedback to Comments on the Mealhouse Brow Closure

Opportunities for loading are provided at the Market Place and Little Underbank ends of the Meal House Brow closure.

The proposals accommodate service and waste collection vehicle movements during the hours that vehicles are permitted in the area.

Closure of Bridge Street, Great Underbank and Little Underbank from 10:30am to midnight, Monday to Sunday alongside the introduction of a proposed 20mph speed limit on Little Underbank, Great Underbank, Meal House Brow, Lower Hillgate and High Street

Consultation Feedback

The majority of respondents agreed with the proposals to close Bridge Street, Great Underbank and Little Underbank to traffic from 10:30am to midnight, Monday to Sunday. Of the 497 respondents to answer this question 57% strongly agreed or agreed and 29% strongly disagreed or disagreed.

The majority of respondents agreed with the timings of the Bridge Street, Greater Underbank and Little Underbank Closure proposals. Of the 486 respondents to answer this question 53% strongly agreed or agreed and 30% strongly disagreed or disagreed.

The majority of respondents agreed with the proposals to limit vehicle speed restrictions to 20mph along Little Underbank, Great Underbank, Meal House Brow, Lower Hillgate and High street. Of the 492 respondents to answer this question 69% strongly agreed or agreed and 16% either strongly disagreed or disagreed.

There were 131 comments which specifically related to the closure of Little Underbank, Bridge Street and Great Underbank proposals. Recurring comments included:

- References to parking (6 comments) with many respondents concerned about the lack of disabled parking and access (8 comments);
- References to deliveries for both businesses and houses (10 comments);
- References to safety (10 comments) with some emphasising the improvement the scheme element will have for cyclists and pedestrians whilst others believing it is likely to cause further conflict between vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians;
- Mixed views regarding speed restrictions (36 comments) whilst many agreed and welcomed the reduction of 20mph, others were surprised that this was not the existing speed limit, given the narrow nature of the road (six comments). There was numerous requests for further reduction of speeds to as little as 5 mph, with many comments referencing the need to slow down vehicles along this route;
- The thought that this road was already pedestrianised (two comments);
- The impact the closure would have on businesses (29 comments). Concerns included the lack of customers due to the closure, visibility of the business and failure to carry out daily tasks which could lead to the closure of the business. Alternatives were presented by many, with 15 comments referencing the timing of closure and possibility to implement closures only on market days/weekends;

- The impact the closure would have on footfall to the area, with three comments considering the closure to have a negative impact on footfall whilst the remaining 12 comments emphasising the positive impact the closure would have on footfall;
- Eleven comments specifically stated that they do not want the closure with six referencing the unnecessary nature of this scheme element. Reasons for this varied and included the lack of demand for this, and the current arrangements of the roads working well; and
- Issues relating to enforcement of the 20mph (five comments) and how illegal parking would also be prevented were also raised.
 - A total of ten emails were received regarding Little Underbank, Greater Underbank and Bridge Street:
 - Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service had no objections to the scheme elements, on the request that access would match in the same way as Red Rock bollards;
 - Closure of Great Underbank would limit delivery services and collections to the bank located here. For security purposes, access to the bank must be staggered to reduce the risk of crime;
 - One business was keen to comment on the introduction of two way traffic from Royal Oak Yard on Little Underbank. When access it permitted, the business believed that traffic would increase along this road more so than usual, which would cause further issues along the narrow road. Another businesses was also keen to discuss the problems this two-way road would have, and considered it to be problematic in regard to safety, the number of HGVs within the area and no turning point provided for delivery vehicles;
 - Many emails discussed the impact this proposal would have on residential and business access. Deliveries could not always be guaranteed for businesses within the permitted time and therefore this would create issues. Reference was particularly made to customers who are disabled or have limited mobility – as these individuals would struggle to access essential services and businesses with the restrictions in place (e.g. Opticians); and
 - Few emails discussed the speed restriction proposal on Little Underbank with many agreeing with the reductions and some even requesting a further reduction in speed to 10-15mph in order to ensure the safety of pedestrians.

Designer's Response to Feedback to Comments on the Closure of Bridge Street, Great Underbank and Little Underbank from 10:30am to midnight, Monday to Sunday alongside the introduction of a proposed 20mph speed limit on Little

Underbank, Great Underbank, Meal House Brow, Lower Hillgate and High Street

The proposals are an extension of the restrictions currently in operation in the area, which are often seen to be contravened due to the lack of physical measures to restrict access. The revised timing of the closure has been developed to be consistent with that currently in operation in Redrock (Prince's Street and Bridgefield Street).

There is a requirement to maintain access to the Royal Oak Yard Car Park during currently permissible hours, resulting in timing of the vehicular access restrictions of the section of Little Underbank east of Royal Oak Yard remaining as existing.

As noted previously, emergency service access to the area will be permitted at all times of day.

St Petersgate

Contra-flow cycle lane and changes to taxi and loading bays

Consultation Feedback

The majority of respondents agreed with the proposals for a marked out contra-flow cycle lane and changes to taxi and loading bays on Petersgate. Of the 493 respondents to answer this question 53% strongly agreed and 29% strongly disagreed or disagreed.

There were 110 comments which specifically related to the Contra-flow cycle lane and changes to taxi and loading bays.

Recurring comments included:

- Specific reference to the two-way cycle lane. A total of 22 comments related to the safety of a cycle lane along this road, of which 13 were not in favour of this scheme element;
- A total of 23 comments related to the need to physically segregate the cycle lane from any pedestrians or vehicles. Further to this, 20 comments also mentioned the need for this segregation to be protected through the use of a kerb or planters, as many did not believe paint would prevent vehicles or pedestrians encroaching on to the cycle lane;
- Whether a cycle lane is needed, with 16 comments discussing the unnecessary nature of it. This was either due to the lack of cyclists along this route or interconnectivity with other cycle lanes in the area (three comments). A further three comments did not want a cycle lane due to the stereotypical behaviour of cyclists and their 'ignorance' to other users of the road such as pedestrians or vehicles;
- Questions regarding the width of the road and whether a cycle lane could be introduced here, due to the narrow nature of the location (five comments);
- One comment references their worry regarding the loading bays and safety of those passing the area; and

- Disagreement on parking arrangements for the area (7 comments) with five comments specifically relating to the lack of disabled parking.

A blog post by Peaks and Puddles commented on the mixed feelings they had in response to the contra-flow cycle lane proposed on St Petersgate. Although a general support for cycle infrastructure was implied, questions related to the level of detail the drawings had in relation to it. It was requested that any cycle infrastructure would be segregated from vehicles or pedestrians with the form of physical protection (kerbs, wand) as opposed to paint. Questions also arose regarding the limited space of St Petersgate and ability to fit parking bays, a traffic lane and a cycle lane altogether. It was requested whether the parking bays could be removed from proposals, given the vast availability of parking already in the area.

An email was received by Walk Ride Stockport on the proposals of a contraflow cycle lane. The proposals were welcomed subject to the following:

- The cycle lane must be mandatory as opposed to advised;
- The cycle lane must be a minimum of 2 metres;
- Relocation of charging and loading bays to a side street, given the limited space available; and
- Inclusive cycle parking nearby.

Traffic light controlled junction with pedestrian and cycle facilities Consultation Feedback

The majority of respondents agreed with the proposals for a traffic light controlled junction with controlled pedestrian and cycle crossing at Piccadilly/Petersgate. Of the 497 respondents to answer this question 62% strongly agreed or agreed and 19% strongly disagreed or disagreed.

Recurring comments made in respect of the junction included:

- Concerns regarding congestion (7 comments) and the impact a crossing would have on journey times for vehicles (9 comments); and
- Comments upon pollution and how waiting times would increase vehicle emissions (2 comments).

Pedestrian crossing specific comments

- Seven comments discussed whom the crossing would give priority to. Four comments disagreed on the idea of a crossing due to the fact that vehicles would have priority rather than pedestrians and reflected on the pedestrian priority that is already present at the existing zebra crossing. However, three comments stated that as long as signals were set to pedestrian priority, they would be in favour;
- A total of 29 comments stated that the crossing is not needed for various reasons. These included lack of demand and the existing zebra crossing which already facilitates pedestrians crossing the road; and

- Of the sixteen comments raised about safety, fourteen were in favour of the crossing, due to the improvement it would have. Those who were not in favour highlighted the impact a new crossing would have on congestion which may further increase accidents on the road.

Cyclist crossing – specific comments

- Nine comments discussed whom the crossing would give priority to. Five comments disagreed on the idea of a crossing due to the fact that vehicles would have priority rather than pedestrians and reflected on the pedestrian priority that is already present at the existing zebra crossing. One comment also discussed the potential conflict between pedestrians and cyclists on this crossing;
- A total of sixteen comments stated that the crossing is not needed for various reasons. These included lack of demand, lack of cycle routes linking to the area and the existing zebra crossing which already facilitates pedestrians crossing the road;
- Of the eleven comments raised about safety, seven were in favour of the crossing, due to the improvement it would have for cyclists and pedestrians. Those who were not in favour highlighted the impact a new crossing would have on congestion which may further increase accidents on the road. In addition to this, it was also noted that cyclists should not have an equal priority to pedestrians and instead should be forced to dismount for safety reasons;
- Five comments referenced the existing zebra crossing, with four of these believing a tiger crossing would be more suitable in this location as opposed to a signalised crossing; and
- Three comments referenced the lack of connectivity a new crossing would have for cyclists, stating that this would not be a main route for their destinations.

Mixed opinions were received via email, regarding the introduction of a crossing.

The RNIB welcomed the implementation of a crossing for pedestrians given that the existing zebra crossing can be a risk if vehicles do not stop. However, it was raised that if this crossing is used by both cyclists and pedestrians, this may create further conflict.

Walk Ride Stockport discussed the potential to introduce a parallel zebra crossing (tiger crossing) in replacement of the signalised crossing point which would allow priority for both pedestrians and cyclists.

The Peaks and Puddles Blog post welcomed the introduction of a signalised crossing point here for pedestrians and cyclists as it would ensure a connected route is available for cyclists.

Designer's Response to Feedback on St Petersgate Contra Flow Cycle Lane and St Petersgate/ Piccadilly Junction.

The junction proposals will be subject to further development work, with the timings of the signals developed to best balance the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and pedestrians at the junction.

With regards to the contra-flow cycle lane on St Petersgate, the comments and concerns about safety have been reviewed with design panel experts at TfGM and internally at the Council, and giving regard to similar examples already in place elsewhere. Based on the advice received, the attached updated design provided at **Appendix D** has been developed.

Key points to note are:

- The closure of St Petersgate to traffic will stop it from being a through route to access the Market, thereby reducing traffic flows along St Petergate;
- A defined contra-flow cycle lane is provided by on the section of St Petergate between Piccadilly and High Bank Side/ Tatton Street, with the taxi rank removed from this section of St Petersgate to provide the necessary width. This section of St Petersgate will be the busier section as it provides access to the Mersey Way Car Park via the Tatton Street end of High Bank Side;
- Between High Bank Side/ Tatton Street and High Street, a section of St Petergate that will predominantly be used for taxis/ access only, it is proposed that contra flow cycling is permitted by way of exempting cyclists from the no-entry signage and providing on carriageway cycle symbols to highlight the presence of cyclists. The provision of a defined contra flow cycle lane on St Petersgate as vehicles turn in from Piccadilly will also highlight their presence.

St Petersgate Bridge

Consultation Feedback

The majority of respondents agreed with the proposals for a full-time closure of St Petersgate to through traffic along St Petersgate Bridge. Of the 496 respondents to answer this question 54% strongly agreed or agreed and 25% strongly disagreed or disagreed.

There were 88 comments which specifically related to the full time closure of St Petersgate to through traffic along St Petersgate bridge proposals. Recurring comments included:

- Access to the area (18 comments) with many raising concerns for the businesses located here (12 comments) or house of residence (four comments). Six comments also made references and questioned how deliveries would access the area;
- A concern for disabled and individuals with limited mobility (eight comments). Many stated that these were not regarded within proposals and therefore would be unable to visit the area without access;

- Support for the scheme, with eight comments discussing the positive impact the closure would have on safety for pedestrians;
- Issues regarding congestion and how the existing road network would operate with the increase in vehicles (nine comments);
- The unnecessary nature of the closure due to the perceived lack of demand by pedestrians (eight comments); and
- The improvement the closure would have to the area, with five comments highlighting the impact it would have on public realm and two comments requesting the use of greenery. One comment questioned whether enforcement would be in place to prevent vehicles from parking on the bridge as a drop-off point.

The Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue service commented on the potential issues that would be faced if the closure along St Petersgate Bridge was to go ahead. The closure would mean that distance to the nearest fire appliance would be increased, which would dramatically impact the time it would take to access an emergency. As a result, access would still be needed to St Petersgate, without the concern of the weight restriction of the bridge.

Designer's Response to Feedback the St Petersgate Bridge Closure

The St Petersgate closure will reduce through traffic on St Petersgate, thereby improving the route for pedestrians and cyclists. In addition, it will support the further restriction of vehicle movements in the Market Place area. The proposals for St Petersgate provide an extended taxi rank at the St Petersgate bridge end of the closure, replacing the taxi rank at the Piccadilly end of St Petersgate, to better serve the Market Place.

The extent of the closure and location of bollards has been amended following discussions with Greater Manchester Fire Service to ensure that they have the access they require to adjacent buildings and fire hydrants.

Opportunities for additional planting will be considered as part of the proposals.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The scheme is being funded (subject to the approval of the Delivery Plan by Transport for Greater Manchester) from the Active Travel Fund, with the exception of the Piccadilly/ St Petersgate junction for which approval and funding will be sought as part of the Stockport to Edgeley Mayor's Challenge Fund scheme.

The delivery of the proposed scheme will be integrated into the improvement and maintenance schemes already included in this year's capital programme

Delivery of the proposed traffic signals at the junction of Piccadilly and St Petersgate will be subject to further cycling & walking funding being made available through the Mayor's Challenge Fund.

7. TIMESCALES

If approved the scheme will be subject to further design development. Subject to approval, works are expected to commence on the Market and Underbanks elements in early 2022. Timescales for the construction of the Piccadilly/ St Petersgate junction are subject to business case and funding approval.

8. EQUALITIES/COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Equal Opportunities

- To provide a suitable and safer environment for pedestrians and other road users. The scheme contributes to the Council's vision statement "Promote equal life outcomes for all by tackling known inequalities across the borough of Stockport".

Sustainable Environment

- To develop and sustain a healthy, safe and attractive local environment which contributes to Stockport. Stockport Council understands the responsibility it has to lead by example and help the broader community make a positive contribution to the local environment.

An Equalities Impact Assessment for the updated scheme has been completed.

9. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Area Committee is asked to comment on this report and recommend that the Cabinet Member (Economy & Regeneration) approves the construction and enforcement by way of Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders of the revised proposals detailed in the drawings provided at Appendix D and Traffic Regulation Order Schedule Provided at Appendix E which include:

1. Closure of Churchgate/Millgate

- The full-time (24 hours a day / 7 days a week) closure of Churchgate/ Millgate to through traffic between the Market Place and St Mary's Church to provide improved connectivity between St Mary's church and the Market Place.

2. Closure of Market Place

- The installation of automatic bollards to limit access to the Market area between 10.30 am and midnight Mon - Sun. On Friday and Saturday, the restrictions would begin at 7am. The full time closure of the Market Place in front of the Produce Hall will remain in place.

3. Closure of Park Street and Vernon Street alongside the introduction of a walking and cycling path

- Closure of Park Street and Vernon Street between 10.30am and midnight, Monday to Sunday and 7am to midnight on Friday and Saturday, enforced via automatic bollards located along Park Street, adjacent to its junction with

Market Place and fixed bollards located at the junction of Vernon Street / Turner Street.

4. Closure of Meal House Brow

- The closure of Mealhouse Brow to traffic at all times. Cycle and pedestrian access will be maintained.

5. Closure of Little Underbank, Bridge Street and Great Underbank

- The closure of Bridge Street, Great Underbank and Little Underbank west of Royal Oak Yard to Great Underbank from 10.30am to midnight Mon - Sun;
- The introduction of automatic bollards to enforce the existing restriction of Little Underbank east of Royal Oak Yard from 10.30am and to 4pm Mon – Sun. East of Royal Oak Yard, Little Underbank will become two-way for vehicles between 4pm and midnight.
- The introduction of a 20mph speed limit on Little Underbank, Great Underbank, Mealhouse Brow, Lower Hillgate and High Street.

6. The closure of St Petersgate to through traffic at the St Petergate Bridge

7. The introduction of two-way cycling on St Petergate through the:

- The provision of a defined contra-flow cycle lane on the section of St Petergate between Piccadilly and High Bank Side/ Tatton Street, with the taxi rank removed from this section of St Petersgate to provide the necessary width.
- Exemption of cyclists from no-entry signage between High Bank Side/ Tatton Street and High Street and providing on carriageway cycle symbols to highlight the presence of cyclists.

8. Introduction of a traffic light controlled junction with controlled pedestrian and cycle crossings at Piccadilly / Petersgate

Background Papers

Anyone wishing further information please contact Emma Hughes at emma.hughes@stockport.gov.uk

Appendix A – Existing Traffic Regulation Orders

Appendix B – Consultation Drawings

Appendix C – Consultation Report

Appendix D – Revised Drawings Following Consultation

Appendix E – Proposed Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders