

Transport and Environment Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 23 May 2024

Review of London Road junction and Picardy Place

Executive/routine
Wards

Executive
11 – City Centre; 12 – Leith Walk; 13 - Leith

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that Committee:
 - 1.1.1 Notes that a review has been ongoing since Tram to Newhaven open for revenue service commenced in June 2023 of the London Road junction and Picardy Place area;
 - 1.1.2 Notes that the implementation of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) is fundamental to both the design of the tram scheme and its operation;
 - 1.1.3 Approves changes to London Road at the junction with Leith Walk following ongoing monitoring of Picardy Place with the use of current Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) in the short term; and
 - 1.1.4 Approves the commencement of the statutory procedures for the TRO necessary to introduce the left hand turn from Leith Walk to London Road.

Paul Lawrence

Executive Director of Place

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2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report seeks approval to implement proposed changes which are designed to improve capacity at Picardy Place and provide an eastwards movement from Leith Walk at the London Road junction using the Trams to Newhaven Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO).
- 2.2 Additionally, the report seeks approval to commence the necessary legal processes to implement these changes permanently through a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO).

3. Background

- 3.1 On 14 March 2019, the Council approved the terms of the Final Business Case for the Trams to Newhaven Project. The project completes the tram line to Newhaven from the temporary terminus at York Place.
- 3.2 In August 2020, the Council approved the TRO to ban the left turn into London Road from Leith Walk and provide a single-phase crossing for pedestrian and cyclists whilst reducing the saturation levels on Leith Walk and London Road for public transport.
- 3.3 Since tram operations to Newhaven went live on 7 June 2023, monitoring on key junctions across the route has continued (working with colleagues externally, including Lothian Buses and Edinburgh Trams). This included concerns on permeability at the south end of Leith Walk from Albert Street to Picardy Place. One of the biggest concerns raised is the lack of left turns and accessibility from Leith Walk heading east which in turn has increased congestion in and around the Picardy Place area causing delays to public transport.
- 3.4 This report sets out the proposed steps to help ease the pressure on public transport whilst continuing to provide a pedestrian and cyclist single-phase crossing.

4. Main report

- 4.1 The design submitted to Policy and Sustainability Committee on 9 July 2020 proposed a two-phase crossing at the junction of London Road and Leith Walk.

Following a review of that junction, it was considered that the two-phase crossing would not optimise pedestrian and cyclist safety. Therefore, the junction design was reviewed, and a single-phase crossing selected.

- 4.2 Traffic modelling undertaken to understand the impact of the single-phase crossing predicted that saturation at the junction would increase from 80% to over 90%. To ensure that the junction saturation remains within acceptable bounds it was proposed that the left-hand turn be banned (reducing saturation to below 80% again).
- 4.3 Traffic counts were also undertaken to understand the volume of vehicles using the left turn from Leith Walk. In the morning peak (08:00-09:00), 52 vehicles turned left from Leith Walk with a further 27 turning from Elm Row. In the evening peak (17:00-18:00), it was 102 plus 32.
- 4.4 The on-going monitoring has shown an increase in congestion around Picardy Place and particularly Leith Street which is having an impact on the public transport network.
- 4.5 Following on from a review of the updated modelling, it is proposed to re-introduce the left hand turn as set out below:
 - 4.5.1 Left turn to be introduced for minimum 10 seconds;
 - 4.5.2 The single-phase pedestrian and cyclist crossing across London Road will remain;
 - 4.5.3 The timing would be to the current standards and slightly longer than the minimum green time of a standard all stop pedestrian stage;
 - 4.5.4 When left turn goes off, the ahead will remain on with the pedestrian phase coming on over London Road; and
 - 4.5.5 The overall time for the two stages would be the same as currently operating for the ahead only and pedestrian stage.
- 4.6 These changes are not anticipated to have any impact on Elm Row bus stops and will also benefit the overall operation of Picardy Place and adjacent streets.
- 4.7 Initially, if approved, these changes will be progressed under the Trams to Newhaven TTRO. Officers will also commence the process required to make these changes permanent using a TRO.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Should Committee approve the recommendations in this report:
 - 5.1.1 Installation of associated works under Trams to Newhaven TTRO will be progressed;
 - 5.1.2 The process for the required TRO will also be progressed.

- 5.2 Further proposed changes to the Trams to Newhaven TRO will be presented to Committee in June 2024.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The costs associated with implementation of the changes highlighted in this report can be funded from the Council's capital budget.

7. Equality and Poverty Impact

- 7.1 Transport was highlighted by the Edinburgh Poverty Commission as a key issue in combatting poverty in the city. Improving access to public transport and journey times therefore benefits all users of public transport, and particularly those experiencing poverty, improving access between housing, leisure and economic opportunities. This includes access to housing developments in response to the declared housing emergency.

8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications

- 8.1 Public transport moves more people around the city than any other mode. It is extremely efficient in terms of its use of road space and fuel and is an essential part of the city's sustainable travel network, connecting people to employment, health care and leisure. If we are to encourage people to travel more sustainably and contribute to reducing carbon emissions and congestion, public transport needs to be fast, affordable, reliable and convenient.

9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact

- 9.1 There are no significant compliance, governance or regulatory implications expected as a result of approving the recommendations in this report.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 [Trams to Newhaven TRO Report August 2021.](#)

11. Appendices

None