

Transport and Environment Committee

10.00am, Tuesday 30 August 2016

Objections to Traffic Regulation Order TRO/16/31 – Young Street

Item number	8.8
Report number	
Executive/routine	Routine
Wards	11 – City Centre

Executive Summary

A Delegated Powers report, authorised by Executive Director of Place dated 14 April 2016, titled 'Young Street Experimental Traffic Regulation Order – evaluation and future implementation' (Appendix 1), noted the success of the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) trial in Young Street, originally approved by Transport and Environment Committee on 26 August 2014, and approved the subsequent recommendation to commence a permanent Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for this narrow side street in the city's West End.

The proposed TRO seeks to make permanent the successful temporary one way traffic management arrangements currently in operation, in order to secure their continuity and permanency. To achieve a seamless transition between the current ETRO and the proposed TRO, and avoid the temporary reversal of current arrangements, the Delegated Powers report highlighted the aspiration for the full report to be presented to the 30 August 2016 Transport and Environment Committee in order to meet ETRO timescale deadlines.

This report details the results of the statutory consultations for the order.

Links

Coalition Pledges	P47
Council Priorities	CP8, CP11
Single Outcome Agreement	SO4

Objections to Traffic Regulation Order TRO16/31 - Young Street

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
 - 1.1.1 notes the objection received to the advertised Traffic Regulation Order and the Council's responses to these in order to address them; and
 - 1.1.2 sets aside the objections received to the Traffic Regulation Order and approve the making of the Order, with regards to making permanent the current one way traffic management arrangements in Young Street, originally approved in August 2014.

2. Background

- 2.1 Traffic management issues arose in Young Street in 2014, partly linked to the year-long trials undertaken in George Street. Those trials, underpinned by a distinct ETRO which finished in September 2015, were required to fully examine potential changes to the operation of George Street and any impacts arising from these. Initially, buses, taxis and cycles that could no longer turn right from Charlotte Square were, instead, using Young Street, a narrow, one way street unsuited to higher volumes of traffic or heavier vehicles.
- 2.2 Prior to the George Street trials, Young Street had also experienced increased levels of vehicle traffic, linked to tram related traffic management changes. Traffic counts demonstrated that Young Street offered a 'rat run' for drivers wanting to get from Charlotte Square to Queen Street and then onto Queensferry Street. The reopening of Hope Street to two way traffic in August 2014 allowed heavy traffic to reach Queensferry Street more directly.

- 2.3 Research and data collection was arranged as a result of complaints received from local stakeholders in Young Street during the early stages of the George Street trials. This related to the increased volumes of traffic using the street and how the nature of the traffic had altered (including more tour buses and HGVs). This was widely acknowledged to be an issue and was corroborated at the time by the placement of temporary traffic counters in Young, Hill, and Thistle Streets. The quantitative data provided by the counters was complemented by qualitative information provided by researchers tasked with tracking data such as vehicle type, speed and exit patterns. In summary, the results from the combined research showed that there was an issue with the number of vehicles and the pattern of travel in Young Street.
- 2.4 Subsequently, a report to Committee in January 2015 proposed an ETRO that reversed the one way system in operation at the time from eastbound to westbound direction thus restricting vehicular access to Young Street from North Charlotte Street. The ETRO commenced on 23 March 2015. The report provided an earlier advisory end date of December 2015 for the trial, if required, but the latest legal end date remains at 18 months after the ETRO came into force, on 22 September 2016. As the trial has operated well in Young Street it will remain in force until the legal end date.

3. Main report

- 3.1 Following the coming into force of the ETRO in March 2015, ongoing dialogue with a number of residents showed that, after some initial confusion with the switchover of the one way system, traffic volumes had reduced considerably. Immediately after implementing the ETRO, the Council received some notification of vehicles entering Young Street the wrong way, however, once the ETRO was well established, no further complaints were received; by way of contrast, a number of compliments for the change were received by the Council.
- 3.2 Ongoing engagement with a range of stakeholders (including local businesses, individual residents, Community Councils and the Council's local Roads team for the area) indicates that the new traffic direction has ensured more suitable traffic uses on Young Street. Discussion with the Local Roads team and Tram team also indicate that the reversal, in fact, supports a wider approach to traffic management in the West End.
- 3.3 Wider area traffic counts were undertaken to monitor traffic volumes during the height of the summer season, in late July and early August 2015, once the ETRO was well established. These counts, as part of a package of assessments commissioned for the George Street ETRO, do not show any intolerable traffic increases or impacts, with any displacement contained on wider streets.

- 3.4 The trial one-way westerly traffic direction, which is now widely understood and adhered to, has been shown to benefit the ambient quality of Young Street and local area. It contributes positively to the wider city centre traffic management arrangements and appears to be valued by local stakeholders.
- 3.5 The most desirable outcome for Young Street is to continue the current ETRO traffic direction and make this permanent by making a TRO for the street. This can be implemented prior to the expiry date of the current ETRO, and thereby ensure a seamless and unbroken transition between Orders. This would avoid the need to reverse the arrangements in the street back to the extant TRO. It is not considered good practice to change traffic management arrangements back and forth. In this case, altering the direction of one way traffic in a narrow lane for a short period of time may risk vehicles entering the street in the wrong direction requires the need to have to reverse back into live traffic, as was the case at the start of the current ETRO, and this kind of change can take several months to be accepted.
- 3.6 It is usually the case that the TRO process cannot be completed in time for the ETRO expiry date and requires the trial arrangements revert back to the extant TRO when the 18 month legal end date is reached. This occurs because ETROs are mostly used to test major change with multiple impacts. In such cases, a full year's monitoring of impacts is needed before a review and assessment of any future options can be undertaken and this leaves insufficient time to run the TRO process.
- 3.7 The Young Street's ETRO is a small and discrete trial with overall positive impacts and, given the level of positive feedback received so far from local stakeholders, there is an opportunity to complete the TRO in time.
- 3.8 To progress to making Young Street's current east to west traffic direction permanent, the full TRO process commenced following a Delegated Powers report, authorised by the Executive Director of Place, dated 14 April 2016 and titled 'Young Street Experimental Traffic Regulation Order – evaluation and future implementation'. Formal consultations commenced shortly thereafter and the draft order was formally advertised on 16 May 2016.
- 3.9 No objections were received during the initial consultation period which ran from 19 April to 10 May 2016 and involved statutory bodies such as emergency services, Community Council, transport groups and public transport operators.
- 3.10 The draft Order was publicly advertised on 16 May 2016. At this time, those who had previously objected or provided comments during the consultation carried out for the original ETRO in 2014 were contacted again to highlight the advertising of the 2016 draft Order. Those who submitted objections to the original ETRO were informed that these would automatically be carried forward for consideration unless withdrawn in writing. Only three objections were received during the 2014 consultation including one from SPOKES which was later withdrawn. Those original objections not withdrawn are considered below. SPOKES did not object or provide comment during the consultation period for the current proposed order.

- 3.11 The two objections from 2014 came from two residents of a property in a street located 0.75 miles from Young Street. These identical objections noted that the key traffic management problem needing to be addressed was providing better access to Queensferry Street from Charlotte Square. The re-opening of access to Queensferry Street via Charlotte Square and Hope Street, it is reported, has helped address this matter. The other principal suggestion offered by these objectors included banning all bus, coach, tour bus, and heavy goods vehicles from Young Street instead of altering the direction of the one way system. Even though such a measure could be considered at some stage in the future, it is less straightforward to implement and enforce than simply altering the direction of the one way system. In addition, it would not address the matter that vehicles have been perceived to speed on Young Street as they seek to cut through the adjacent lanes to Frederick Street. The proposed TRO recommends a layout that ensures Young Street, Hill Street, and Thistle Street all run in contrary directions. Given the patterns of movement that the Council's research identified in tests in July 2014, it is believed that the current traffic management arrangements discourage speeding and discourage through traffic from using these narrow lanes. For these reasons, the objections are recommended to be set aside.
- 3.12 The majority of correspondence (12 representations in total) received during the original formal consultation period was complementary and heavily in favour of the proposals. During the recently completed consultation, which ended on 6 June 2016, a resident of Young Street sent in another letter of support in favour of making the existing arrangements permanent.
- 3.13 A single objection was received during the most recent consultation. The objector, who provided an address in Great King Street, made three suggestions as alternative options to making the current one way system in operation permanent. The first of these suggestions repeated the one made in 2014 to ban buses and heavier goods vehicles from Young Street. The response remains similar to that provided in 2014, outlined in 3.11, in that it is less straightforward to implement and enforce constantly and does not address the safety issue of speeding vehicles. In addition, it also creates access problems for services such as refuse collection vehicles. The second suggestion asked that the banned left turn from North Charlotte Street into St Colme Street be removed in order to make it easier for vehicle drivers to get onto Queensferry Street. The ability for drivers to make this manoeuvre existed temporarily for a period during the tram works but, more recently, access to Queensferry Street via Charlotte Square and Hope Street, along with the changed direction of one way Young Street traffic has improved matters for west and northbound traffic. The final point raised suggested the removal of any current or proposed restrictions to traffic on the north carriageway of George Street between Charlotte Square and Castle Street. The local area Roads team anticipate that this would result in traffic congestion on George Street as an unwanted consequence of eastbound vehicles using the street as a 'rat run' to try to get ahead of traffic using Queen Street where there are a number of signalised junctions to control traffic movement as opposed to George Street where there are

only roundabouts and traffic flow is less formally controlled. For these reasons, the objection is recommended to be set aside.

4. Measures of success

- 4.1 Sustained reduction in through traffic on Young Street and the surrounding narrow setted streets.

5. Financial impact

- 5.1 Costs associated with progressing the TRO for Young Street are contained within Place Directorate's City Centre Programme budget.

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 To minimise the risk of poor practice and confusion created as a result of changing traffic direction backwards and forwards on a narrow one way street, the Young Street TRO has been timed to enable the making of a permanent order before the expiry of the successful ETRO trial, which has received positive feedback, to allow seamless transition between the two.
- 6.2 If the order cannot be made before the expiry of the ETRO (for example if the objection is not set aside) the benefits of the current ETRO would be lost. There would be a reputational risk to the Council and additional costs associated with reverting to the extant TRO for Young Street including the production and installation of signage.

7. Equalities impact

- 7.1 The Equalities and Rights Impact Assessment (ERIA) carried out for, and during, the Young Street trial has been renewed. There are no known detrimental impacts arising from the recommendations contained in the TRO.

8. Sustainability impact

- 8.1 The trial one way westerly traffic direction, which is now widely understood and adhered to, has been shown to benefit the ambient quality of Young Street, with traffic usage and levels more suited to the narrow setted street.

- 8.2 Overall, lower numbers of vehicles using side streets as ‘rat runs’, including larger types such as HGVs and tour buses, has been achieved in the west end, through complementary traffic management changes to Hope Street. The reassignment of this traffic to more appropriate signed routes reduces the interaction of these vehicles with pedestrians and cyclists in narrower side streets such as Young Street, and enhances personal wellbeing and feelings of safety.

9. Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 Throughout the ETRO period in Young Street, engagement and dialogue with a range of local stakeholders has been maintained. The promotion of the full TRO requires the Council, as Roads Authority, to carry out a statutory consultation process, the outcomes of which are detailed in this report.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 [Building a Vision for the City Centre, Transport and Environment Committee, 19 March 2013](#)
- 10.2 [Building a Vision for the City Centre – Consultation Outcome, Transport and Environment Committee 29 October 2013](#)
- 10.3 [Young Street Experimental Traffic Order, Transport and Environment Committee, 13 January 2015](#)

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11. Links

Coalition Pledges	P47 Set up a city-wide Transport Forum of experts and citizens to consider our modern transport needs
Council Priorities	CP8 – A vibrant, sustainable local economy CP11 – An accessible, connected city
Single Outcome Agreement	SO4 – Edinburgh’s communities are safer and have improved physical and social fabric
Appendices	Appendix 1 – Report authorised by Executive Director of Place under Delegated Powers, 14 April 2016

Appendix 1

Report authorised by Executive Director of Place under Delegated Powers

14 April 2016

Young Street Experimental Traffic Regulation Order - evaluation and future implementation

Item number

Report number

Wards

11 – City Centre

Links

Coalition pledges

P47.

Council Priorities

CP8, CP11

Council outcomes

CO7, CO19.

Single Outcome Agreement

SO4.

Executive Summary

Young Street Experimental Traffic Regulation Order - evaluation and future implementation

Summary

1. To make permanent the current one way traffic management arrangements in Young Street, originally implemented under the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO), by commencing the process to make a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO).

Recommendations

1. To note the success of the ETRO trial in Young Street, which will continue until the expiry date of 22 September 2016
2. To commence the making of the TRO urgently in order to ensure continuity of successful existing arrangements and achieve a seamless transition between the current ETRO and proposed TRO.

Measures of success

Sustained reduction in through-traffic on Young Street and surrounding similar narrow setted residential streets

Financial impact

Costs associated with the progressing of a TRO for Young Street are contained within Place Directorate's City Centre Programme budget

Equalities impact

The Equalities and Rights Impact Assessment carried out for, and during, the Young Street trial has been renewed. There are no known detrimental impacts arising from the recommendation to continue a full TRO process

Sustainability impact

Lower numbers of vehicles, including HGVs and tour buses, using minor roads as rat runs has already been achieved through changes to Hope Street.

Consultation and engagement

Throughout the ETRO period in Young Street, engagement and dialogue with a range of local stakeholders has been maintained. The promotion of a full TRO for Young Street requires the Council, as the Roads Authority, to carry out a statutory consultation process and the outcomes arising from this will be reported following the completion of this process.

Background reading/external references

- [Post Tram City Centre Review report, Transport and Environment Committee August 2014](#)
- [Young Street Experimental Traffic Regulation Order report, Transport and Environment Committee January 2015](#)

Young Street Experimental Traffic Regulation Order - evaluation and future implementation

1. Background

- 1.1 Traffic management issues arose in Young Street, partly linked to 18 month trials undertaken in George Street. Those trials, underpinned by a distinct ETRO which finished in September 2015, were required to fully examine potential changes to the operation of George Street and any impacts arising from these. Initially, buses, taxis and cycles could no longer turn right from Charlotte Square were, instead, using Young Street, a narrow, one way street unsuited to higher volumes of traffic of heavier vehicles.
- 1.2 Prior to the George Street trials, Young Street had experienced increased levels of vehicle traffic linked to tram related traffic management changes. Traffic counts demonstrated that Young Street offered a “rat run” for drivers wishing to get from Charlotte Square to Queen Street and then west onto Queensferry Road. The reopening of Hope Street to two way traffic in August 2014 allowed heavy traffic to reach Queensferry Road from the West.End more directly. In tandem with Hope Street, the Young Street change, therefore, reinforces the overall improvement in traffic management in the area.
- 1.3 A [report](#) to Transport and Environment Committee in January 2015 proposed an ETRO that reversed the one way system on Young Street. The ETRO commenced on 23 March 2015. The report provided an earlier advisory end date of December 2015 for the trial if required but the latest end date remains as 18 months after the ETRO came into operation on 22 September 2016. As the trial has operated well in Young Street it will remain in force until then.

2. Main report

- 2.1.1 During the early stages of the George Street trials, a number of concerns were received by the Council. These highlighted residents' concerns about the increased volume of traffic in Young Street (and associated traffic in Hill Street) and the nature of the traffic having changed (including more HGVs and tour buses). This was widely acknowledged to be an issue, and was corroborated at the time by the placement of temporary traffic counters in Young, Hill and Thistle Streets. As the increase related in the main to the George Street trial, a secondary, linked ETRO was promoted and came into force in March 2015. Ongoing dialogue with a number of residents showed that after initial confusion

with the switch, traffic volumes reduced considerably. Immediately after implementing the ETRO, Council received notification of some confusion with vehicles entering Young Street the wrong way, however once the ETRO was well established, the Council received no further complaints. A number of compliments were received.

- 2.1.2 Ongoing engagement with a range of stakeholders (including local businesses, individual residents, Community Councils and the Council's local roads team for the area), indicate that the new layout has ensured more suitable traffic uses on Young Street. Discussion with the Council's local roads team and tram team also indicate that the Young Street reversal in fact supports a wider approach to traffic management in the West End.
- 2.1.3 Wider traffic counts were undertaken to monitor traffic volumes during the height of the summer season, in late July and early August 2015, once the Young Street ETRO was in operation and well established. These counts, included in the report "George Street Experimental Traffic Regulation Order, Concluding Report and Design Principles" to Transport and Environment Committee meeting of 7 June 2016, form part of a package of assessments commissioned for the George Street ETRO. The data, taken from key locations identified by local stakeholders, does not show any intolerable traffic increases or impacts, with any displacement contained on wider streets from displacement from George Street.
- 2.1.4 The trial 'westerly' traffic direction, which is now widely understood and adhered to, has been shown to benefit the ambient quality of Young Street and the local area and contribute positively to the wider city centre traffic management arrangements. The arrangements are valued by local stakeholders.

Way forward for Young Street

- 2.1.5 The most desirable outcome for Young Street is to continue the current ETRO traffic direction, by introducing a new TRO being made for the street. Whilst the timescales are ambitious, efforts are being made to progress a TRO prior to the expiry date of the current ETRO, thus avoiding the need to reverse the arrangements in the street back to the extant (original) TRO. It is not considered good practice to change traffic management arrangements back and forth. In this case, altering the direction of one-way traffic in a narrow lane for a short period of time may risk vehicles entering in the wrong direction then reversing into live traffic; as was the case at the start of the Young Street ETRO, this kind of change can take several months to be widely accepted.
- 2.1.6 It is usually the case that the TRO process cannot be completed in time for the ETRO expiry date, thus the trial arrangements revert to the extant TRO when the 18 month legal end date is reached. This occurs because ETROs are mostly used to test a major change with multiple impacts. In such a case, a full year's monitoring of impacts is needed before a review and assessment of any future

options can be undertaken. This leaves insufficient time to run the TRO process.

- 2.1.7 The timescales for carrying out a TRO can vary, depending largely upon external factors including the number and nature of objections received, and the required correspondence with objectors prior to reporting to a Committee
- 2.1.8 Young Street's ETRO, however, is a small and discrete trial with overall positive impacts. Given the level of positive feedback received so far from stakeholders, there is a chance that the TRO process can be completed in time.
- 2.1.9 To progress to making Young Street's east to west traffic direction permanent, it is proposed to commence the first stages of a full TRO process in April 2016 with the formal consultation process due to be undertaken in May 2016 and the Order advertised in mid-June 2016. Subject to the nature and volume of objections received, the aspiration is for a report to be presented to the 30 August 2016 Transport and Environment Committee.

3. Recommendations

- 3 To note the success of the ETRO trial in Young Street which will continue until the expiry date of 22 September 2016
- 3.1 To commence the making of the TRO urgently in order to ensure continuity of successful existing arrangements and achieve a seamless transition between the current ETRO and proposed TRO.

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Links

Coalition pledges	P47 – Set up a city-wide Transport Forum of experts and citizens to consider our modern transport needs
Council priorities	CP8 - A vibrant, sustainable local economy CP11 – An accessible, connected city
Single Outcome Agreement	SO4 - Edinburgh's communities are safer and have improved physical and social fabric.