

Lead Cabinet Member Briefing

Cheltenham Transport Plan Phase 4 - Amendments

Date	December 2018
Purpose of Report	Overview of CTP Phase 4 to date and recommendations for extending the trial.

Recommendations

Officers are recommending that Cheltenham Borough Council agree to extending the Phase 4 experimental trial for a further 6 to 8 months to allow for the following:

- for the trial, to be further monitored and evaluated so as to take into account the impact of traffic from Gold Cup Week.
- And for mitigation measures to be introduced to address the key consultation feedback and traffic monitoring analysis concerns;

That the Lead Cabinet Member, with the agreement of Cheltenham Borough Council, authorises the changes to the trial to be implemented.

Executive Summary

Phase 4 of the Cheltenham Transport Plan (CTP), the trial restriction of Clarence Street “Boots Corner” began on 28th June 2018. The trial is being undertaken by Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders (ETROs). Feedback received and analysis of traffic monitoring data since the commencement of the trial has highlighted four key transport themes:

1. Concerns / comments on traffic increases on other routes around the town and increases in journey time. Streets mentioned include St. George’s Street and Rodney Road;
2. Signage comments were primarily recorded in the initial month, but these have decreased following the additional traffic management introduced in early August;
3. Access for businesses on Clarence Parade and the western end of Clarence Street; and
4. Blue Badge Holder access to Pittville Street.

Correspondence with the local businesses has been ongoing since early in the trial to understand and resolve their concerns.

The data collected during the trial to date has shown a small number of traffic hotspots and has raised a number of other challenges, as set out above. It is considered that the challenges can be addressed through changes to the ETROs as well as introducing other traffic calming or signage features.

The revised concept would require changes to the bus gate restrictions resulting in a 24-hour bus gate in Clarence Street between Post Office Lane and Imperial Circus only. This limits the northbound traffic progressing along Clarence Street to buses and taxis. No restrictions for service vehicles would be required through the bus gate, as service access to all properties is possible either via Pittville Street or via Clarence Parade / Street. This would make the operation of the bus gate more straight forward and clearer for delivery drivers.

This approach removes Clarence Parade / western end of Clarence Street from the experimental area and directly addresses the concerns raised by the businesses in this area. This will require the implementation of two-way movement on one or both streets. Scheme design for this element is currently ongoing, at the request of CBC.

The Pittville St – North St corridor be covered by 24-hour Prohibition of Driving, with exemptions for buses, taxis and service access 6pm-10am.

Additional blue badge bays, beyond those implemented prior to the trial will be placed in Winchcombe Street, immediately north of the High Street, and a no-waiting at any time restriction put on Post Office Lane in order to further address the concerns of disabled users for access to the town centre.

The recommended revision to the experimental orders will require physical changes to the highway and changes to the current experimental legal orders. Initial discussions with the design team suggest that the earliest the changes could be made is Spring. This is subject to confirmation. Additional budget will be required to deliver the changes.

Revised Trial Timeline

Introducing these changes results in the need to further extend the consultation period for six months after the mitigation measures are introduced. The resulting timeline for the revised trial is as follows:

January	Mitigation measures outlined
January	CBC Council meeting considers the scheme and decides whether it wishes GCC to proceed on this basis.
February	TRO Committee updated on changes to the experimental order
Spring	Mitigation measures introduced
Mid 2019	Further consultation period
Late 2019	TRO Committee considers consultation feedback and data analysis
December 2019	Potential decision

Background

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the feedback received on CTP Phase 4 over the first five months following the commencement of the experimental traffic orders.

Cheltenham Borough Council requested that the County Council introduce new traffic regulation orders in the town centre of Cheltenham, in order to alter current traffic patterns in the centre and deliver critical elements of the Cheltenham Transport Plan. This proposal intends to help to improve road safety and air quality issues around the town centre. It also would enable a vision for urban public realm improvements at Boots Corner, potentially creating an enhanced environment for pedestrians and improve connectivity on the high street.

The Cheltenham Transport Plan and the Traffic Regulation Orders required to deliver elements of the plan have been widely consulted on since summer 2013. This included an informal pre-consultation exercise and two statutory consultations which meet or exceeded legal requirements.

In July 2015, Gloucestershire County Council Cabinet resolved to: -

1. Accept the recommendations from the Traffic Regulation Committee made on 15 January 2015 relating to the inner-ring road changes, with the exception of the Boots Corner proposed trial;
 - (a) Make those elements of the traffic regulation orders relating to the Cheltenham Transport Plan, as detailed on the Traffic Regulation Order Proposed Restriction Changes Schedule at Appendix B of the decision report; and
 - (b) Defer a decision on the elements of the traffic regulation orders relating to Boots Corner.
2. Authorise the Commissioning Director: Communities and Infrastructure to implement the scheme through the following phased approach:
 - (a) Albion Street – October 2015 to February 2016
 - (b) Imperial Square and Oriel Road – April to July 2016
 - (c) Royal Well – Summer 2016
 - (d) Contingent on the successful implementation of the other schemes, a Boot's Corner experimental order and trial- scheme – Spring 2017

The delivery of the scheme has progressed broadly in line with the cabinet resolution, albeit with longer timescales than initially envisioned. Phase 1 was delivered in July 2016, Phase 2 in March 2017 and Royal Well Road in February 2018. The changes to the timescales of the phases were discussed and agreed with the relevant lead cabinet member at the time.

Current Phase 4 ETROs

The overall objective of the ETROs is to trial the restriction of the Clarence Street corridor (“Boots Corner”) to through traffic, whilst allowing servicing access and enabling civil enforcement.

The restriction is composed of four distinct orders;

- a Bus Gate ETRO;
- a Prohibition of Driving (PoD) ETRO;
- Waiting and loading ETRO; and
- One-way ETRO.

Clarence Street north of Imperial Circus and North Street are covered by the ETRO Bus Gate. This is operational between 10am and 6pm daily, with a small number of exemptions for access. Civil enforcement of the bus gate order commenced in early August via Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) camera.

Clarence Parade, the western end of Clarence Street, Pittville Street, the Promenade and Imperial Circus is covered by a 24-hour Prohibition of Driving (PoD) ETRO, with exemptions for servicing and access between 6pm and 10am.

The waiting and loading ETRO and one-way ETRO have been used to amend the local highway network to work with the bus gate and PoD in place.

Public Feedback to Date

The Cheltenham Transport Plan is a CBC sponsored project, which is being enabled in part by GCC as the highway authority and CBC partner. The GCC portal website has been used to provide a consistent, single point of contact for the project. The key objective of the use of the portal is to simplify the communication channel to improve the service for the public. Rather than contact one of the two organisations only to be told to contact the other, the portal website provides the public with a single contact point. Consequently, the portal is used for general enquiries, and to submit formal representations.

At the time of writing (December 2018), there were 798 entries to consultation portal website:

- 422 general enquiries; and
- 376 formal representations.

The bulk of the feedback questions the overall concept of the CTP, rather than any specific issue.

The key transport themes from the entries are:

1. Concerns / comments on traffic increases on other routes around the town and increases in journey time. Streets mentioned include St. George’s Street and Rodney Road;
2. Signage comments were primarily recorded in the initial month, but these have decreased following the additional traffic management introduced in early August;
3. Access for businesses on Clarence Parade and the western end of Clarence Street; and
4. Blue Badge Holder access to Pittville Street.

Correspondence with the local businesses has been ongoing since early in the trial to understand and resolve their concerns around access for deliveries and customers.

Network Traffic Effects

Pre-CTP traffic data collection

A baseline assessment of the pre-CTP traffic flows on a range of roads across Cheltenham was collected in November 2015 for two weeks, using GCC’s in-situ fixed Automatic Traffic Counters (ATCs) and additional traffic volume / speed surveys to cover other residential routes which may experience displacement effects.

The fixed Automatic Traffic Counters sites used:

- A4019 Poole Way south of Swindon Road;
- A46 St. Johns Ave north of Albion Street;
- A435 High Street east of St. James Street;
- A435 London Road west of Keynsham Road;
- A46 St Georges Road east of Royal Well Road;

- A46 Imperial Square at junction with Rodney Road;
- Ambrose Street north of Knapp Road;
- Rodney Road north of Imperial Square;
- A46 Albion Street west of St. Johns Road;
- Gloucester Place;
- Winchcombe Street;
- A46 North Place;
- Wellington Street;
- Bath Street;
- Clarence Street;
- St George Place; and
- A46 Royal Well Road.

The additional traffic volume / speed surveys were carried out for period of two weeks in early November 2015. The location of the residential additional survey sites:

- Monson Avenue;
- Clarence Square;
- All Saints Road;
- Fairview Road;
- Bayshill Road;
- College Road;
- St. George's Street;
- High Street;
- St. James' Square;
- Imperial Square (southern side); and
- Montpellier Spa Road.

The combined survey sites provide comprehensive coverage over the town, enabling a wide-ranging picture of existing flow volumes to be built up.

Since the 2015 baseline survey, decommissioning of two fixed ATC sites within the county has provided equipment to be re-allocated to establish a permanent ATC site in Clarence Square and an additional site on Winchcombe Street, South of Albion Street, to monitor traffic flow on the High Street - Rodney Road corridor.

September 2018 Traffic Data

A two-week data collection exercise was undertaken in Mid-September following the commencement of the new school year. This provides the first data set of the trial in neutral traffic conditions.

Figure 1 and Figure 2 below provide comparisons of the average 24-hour traffic flow at each site since the following the completion of each phase to date.

Figure 1 – Summary of 24 hour traffic flows recorded at CTP temporary survey sites 2015 – September 2018

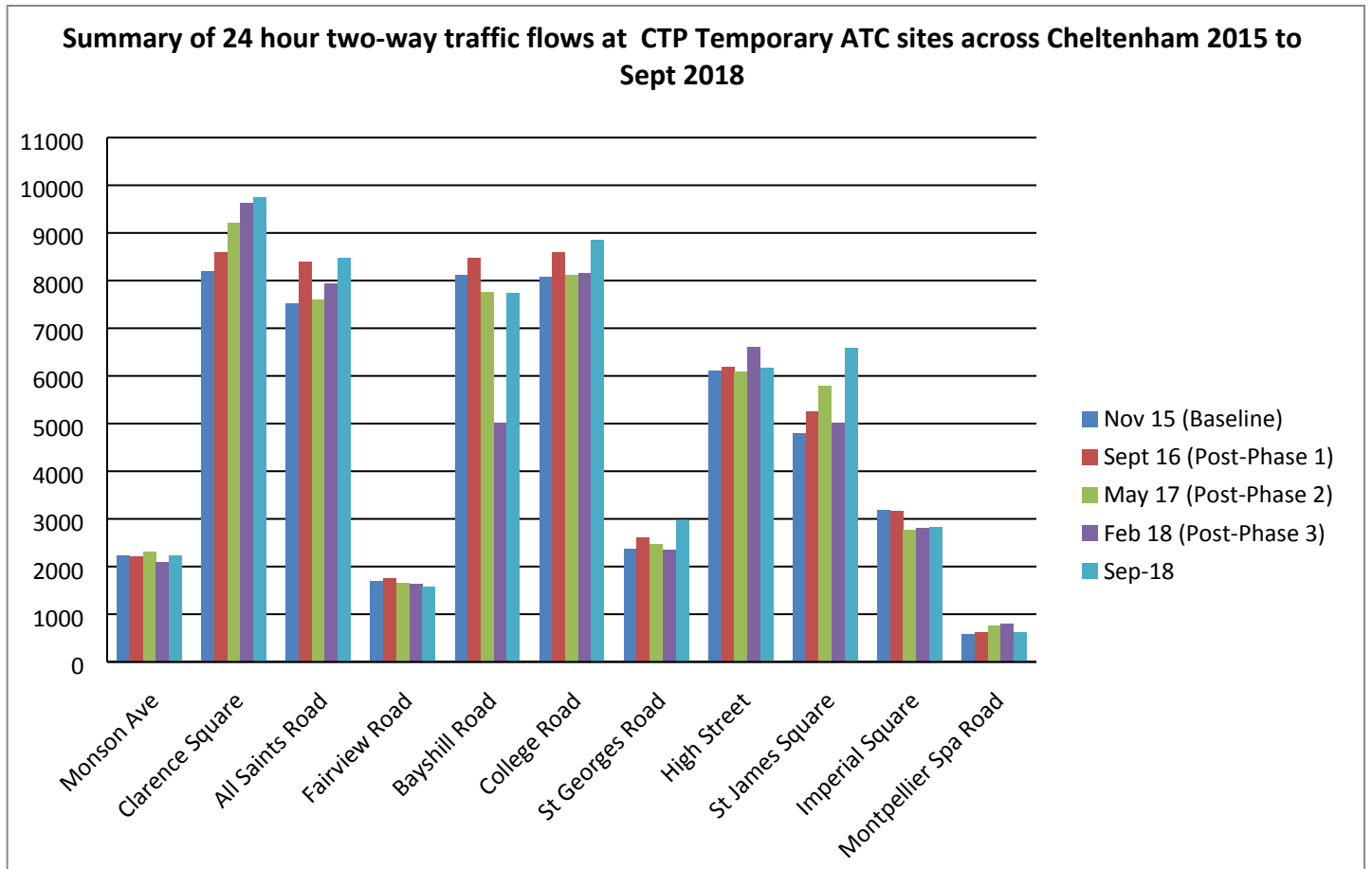
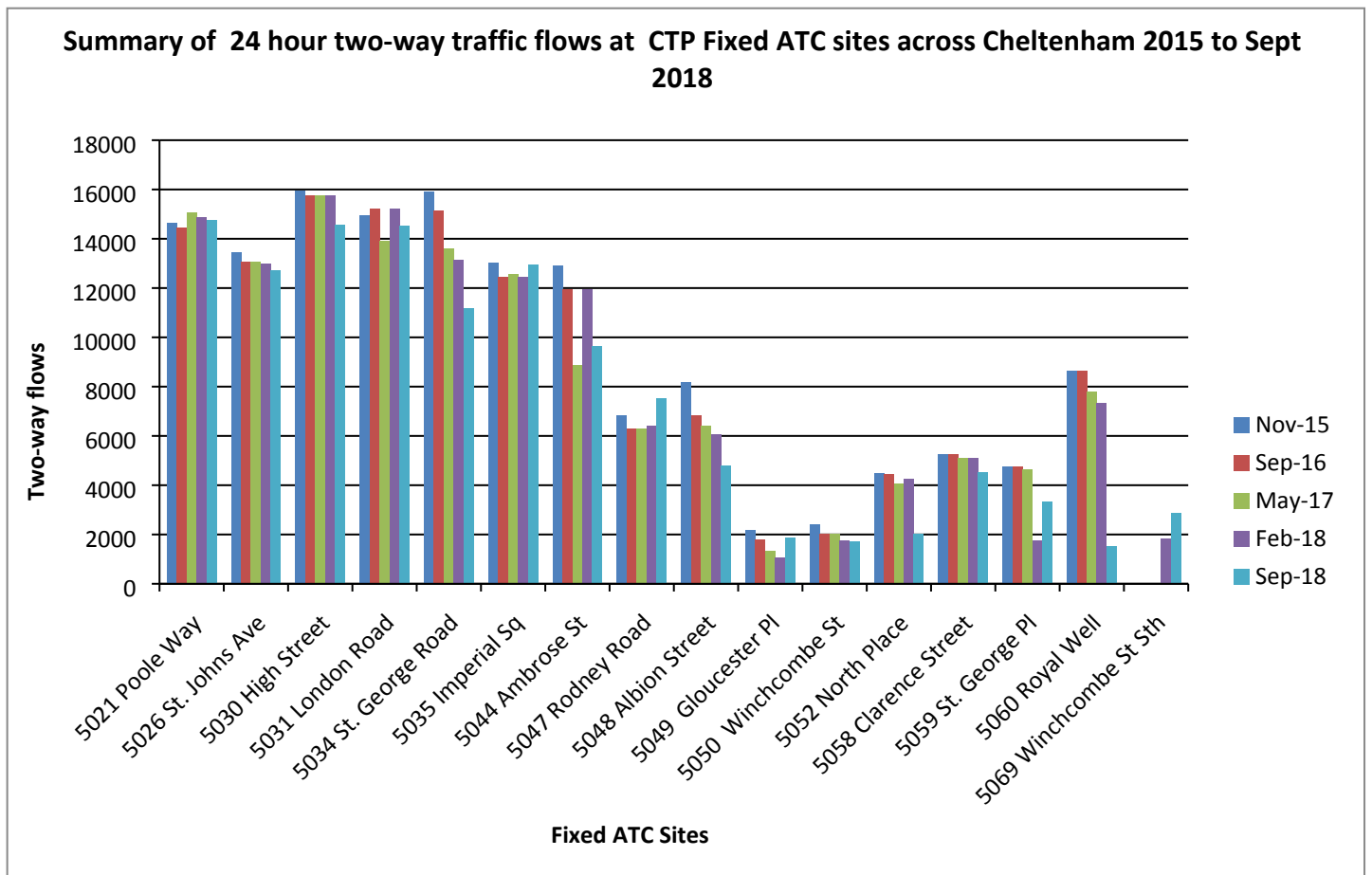


Figure 2 - Summary of 24 hour traffic flows recorded at CTP fixed ATC survey sites 2015 – September 2018



The figures show that in comparison to the pre-CTP 2015 flows, CTP Phase 4 has had a limited effect on the overall network to date. Most of the survey sites show increases broadly in line with expected levels of background traffic growth (circa 5-10%) or reductions in traffic since 2015. Three sites show larger (>20%) increases in traffic;

- St. George's Street;
- St. James' Square; and
- Winchcombe Street South

November 2018 Traffic Data

A two-week data collection exercise was undertaken in November to provide a direct comparison with the November 2015 baseline data. Due to roadworks in the vicinity of Ambrose Street / High Street, the data collection was pushed back to the second half of November. Whilst November is a DfT defined neutral period, there is a possibility of increases in traffic associated with Christmas shopping in the second half of the month.

Figure 3 and Figure 4 below provide comparisons of the average 24-hour traffic flow at each site since the following the completion of each phase to date.

Figure 3 – Summary of 24-hour traffic flows recorded at CTP temporary survey sites 2015 - Nov 2018

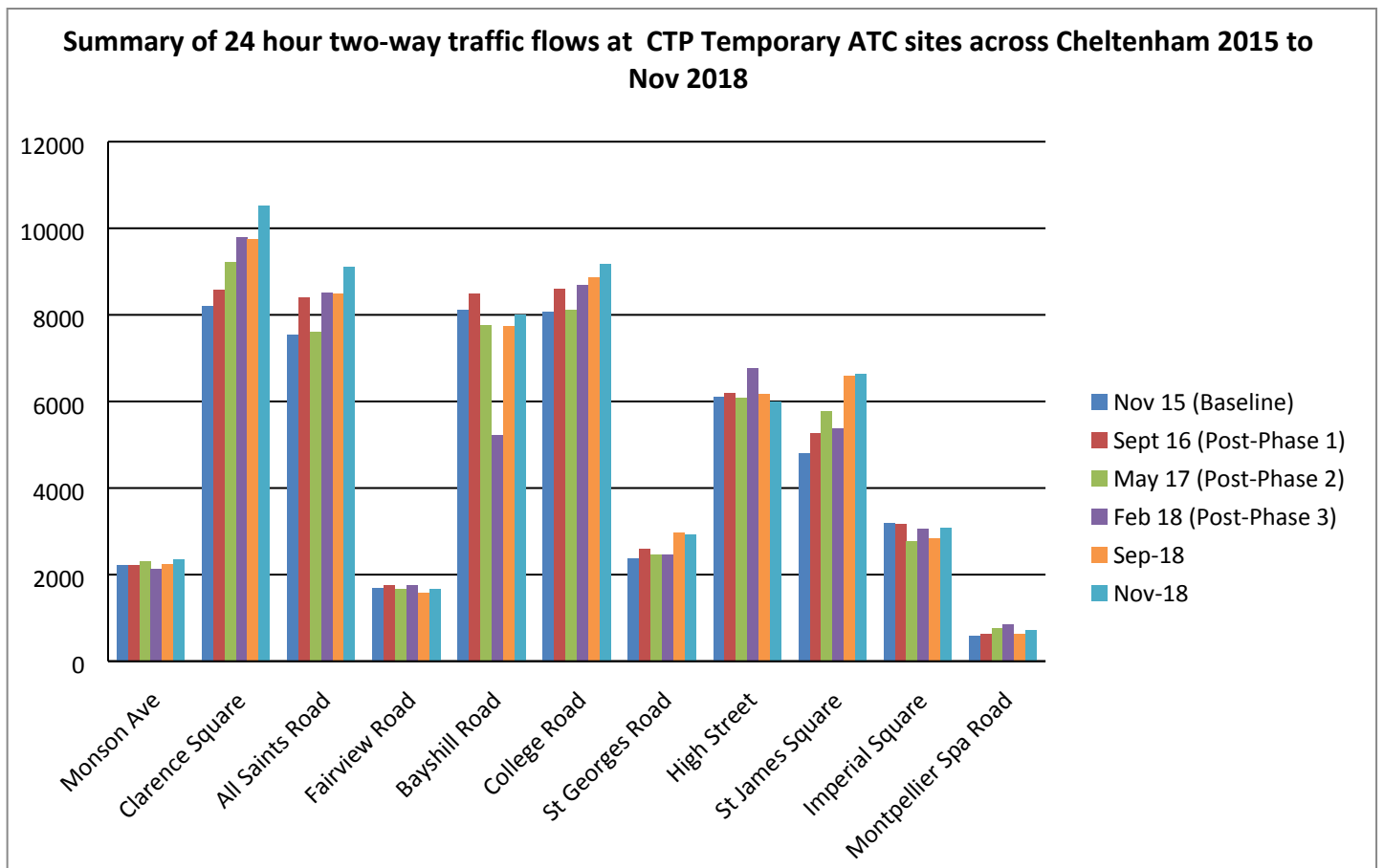
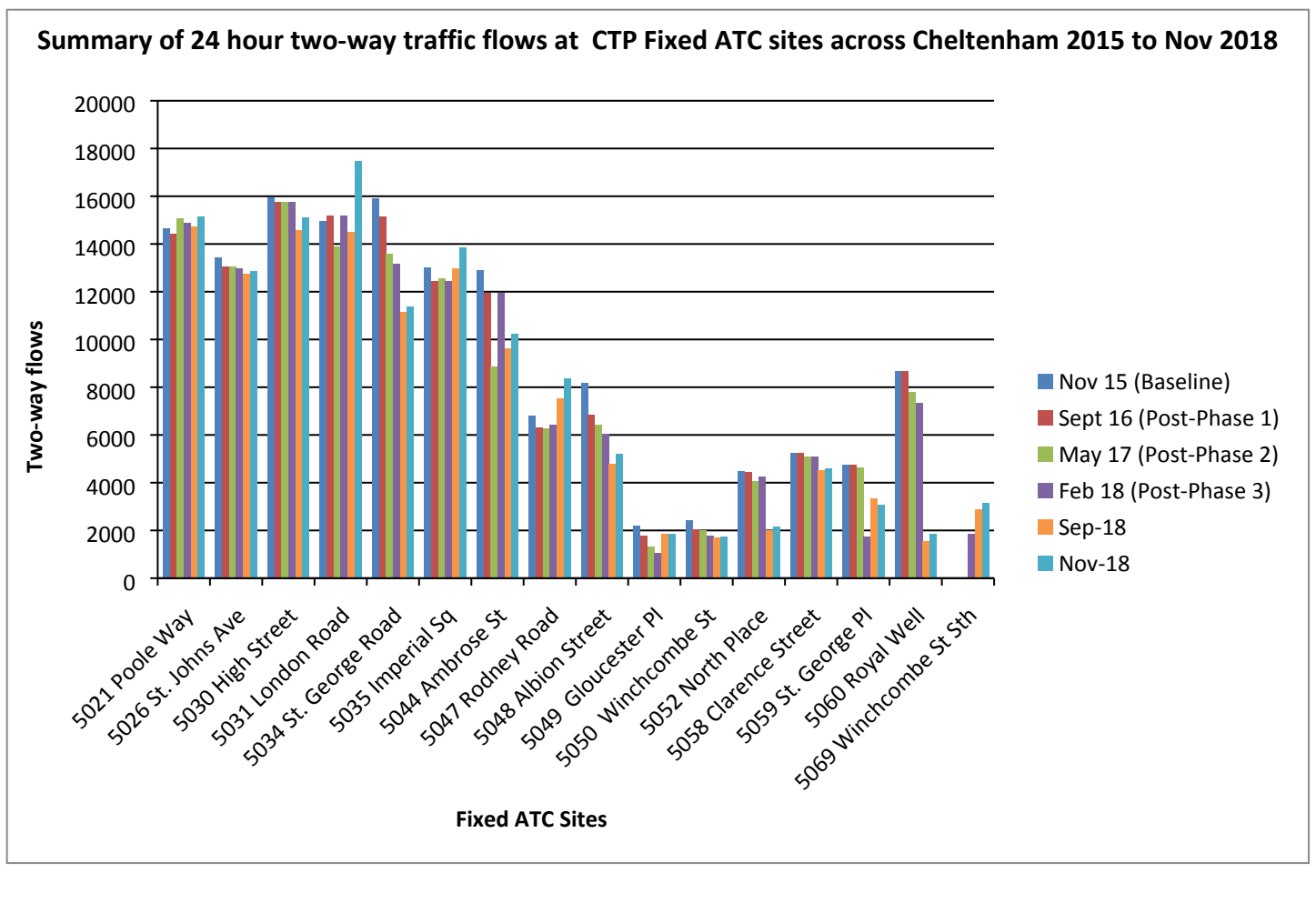


Figure 4 - Summary of 24 hour traffic flows recorded at CTP fixed ATC survey sites 2015 – Nov 2018



In comparison to the baseline November 2015 traffic flows, a total of seven sites show increases in traffic over 20%.

- Clarence Square;
- All Saint's Road;
- St. George's Street;
- St. James' Square;
- Montpellier Spa Road;
- Rodney Road; and
- Winchcombe Street South

CTP Phase 4 – Current Position

The November 2018 traffic data shows increased traffic flows on the two northbound routes immediately adjacent to Clarence Street (St. James Sq. – Ambrose St – St. George' St.) and east (Rodney Road – High Street – Winchcombe Street S). This corroborates with feedback received from the public via the GCC portal site.

Whilst proportionally high, the increased traffic volume on Montpellier Spa Road is of very limited impact and no mitigation is proposed at this time. This will be kept under review throughout the trial period.

Clarence Square and All Saints Road are located on the northern periphery of the town centre. Both sites showed lower levels of traffic in the September 2018 survey data. The trial restriction has been in place for five months and sudden increases in flow at both sites at this point in the trial are considered to be unusual as traffic patterns are likely to have re-established within the initial two months. A more detailed review of the traffic data shows that the volumes at Clarence Street have increased uniformly in both directions across the day, suggesting a general uplift in traffic volume along the route, potentially due to Christmas traffic increases. The detailed review of All Saints Road shows that the changes are due to an increase in southbound traffic. The trial restriction area is to the southwest of All Saints' Road, and it is considered unlikely that this is having a material effect on southbound traffic flow along the All Saints' Corridor.

As the detailed data does not definitively show a single factor which has resulted in the increased traffic volumes, it is considered that volumes at the site are kept under review and mitigation investigated if the traffic volumes remain at their current levels in Spring 2019.

The traffic flow data does not show any significant increases on northbound routes further away of the town centre, e.g. College Road. This suggests that users are making decisions to alter their routes close to the restricted area or that their journey origin / destinations are close to the restricted area.

The key challenge raised by the trial to date is the timed access to Clarence Parade / western end of Clarence Street and the associated changes for the businesses in the area. Ongoing correspondence with the businesses has identified a number of amendments which would alleviate the majority of the issues raised. However, a number of the changes will require amendments to the ETROs to implement.

The statutory 6-month formal representation period for the ETROs finished on the 28th December. The recommendation from the TRO committee to provide feedback 10 months into the trial means that the trial will continue through Gold Cup Week through to April.

A number of concerns have been raised about the inability to provide any formal representation during the Cheltenham Gold Cup Week. The current formal representation period from the start of the trial will be kept open to include Gold Cup week.

As shown above, the data collected during the trial has shown a small number of traffic hotspots and has raised a number of other challenges. It is considered that the challenges can be addressed through changes to the ETROs, and it is recommended that revisions to the ETROs are progressed.

A revision to the ETROs would start a further 6-month formal representation period.

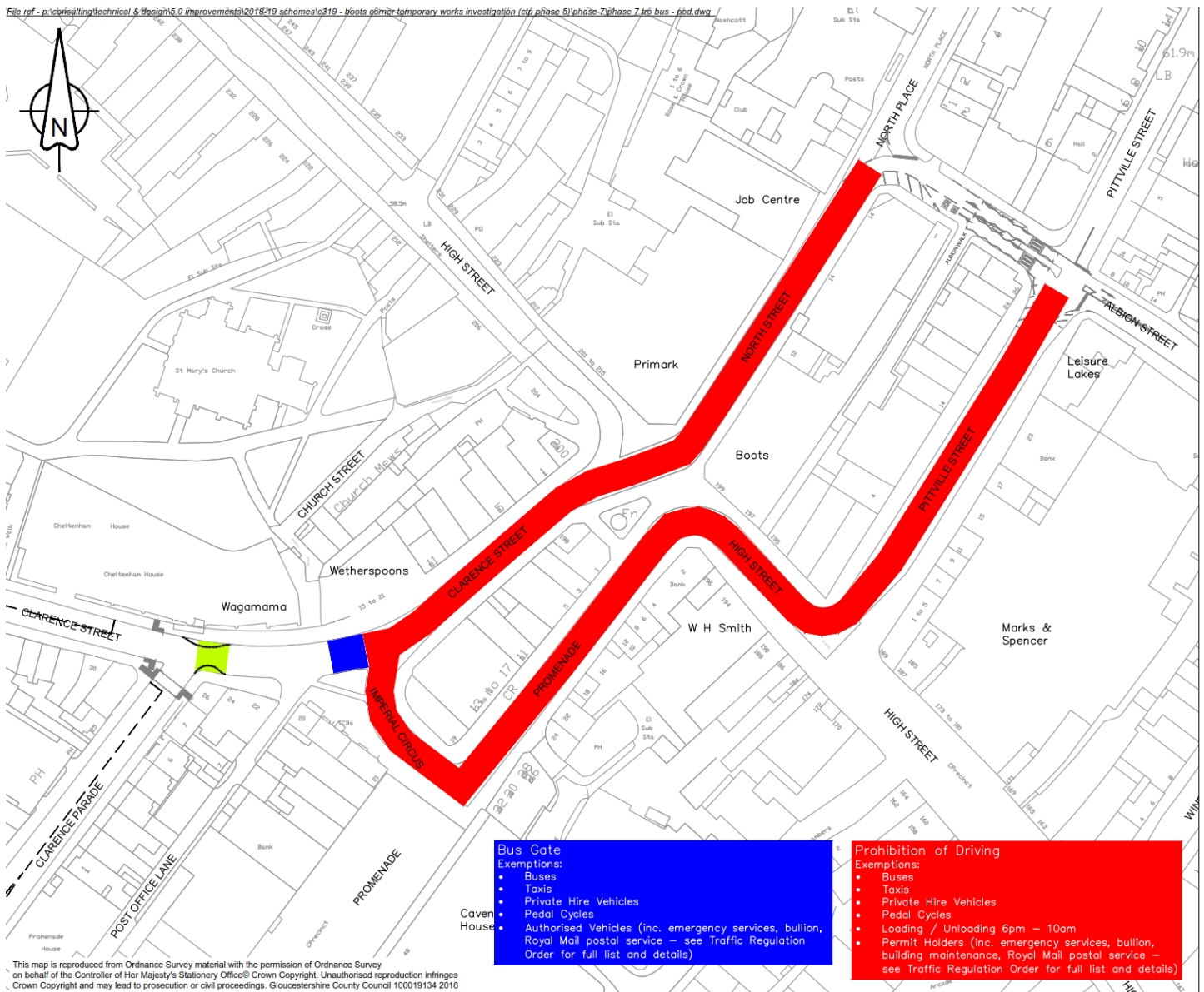
Recommended Revisions

Objectives of Revisions

1. Maintain overall scheme objective – reduction in traffic on Clarence Street “Boots Corner”
2. Remove Clarence Parade & western end of Clarence Street from trial
3. Simplify the scheme

Proposed Approach

Figure 5 – Overview of Bus Gate and Prohibition of Driving



The revised concept, as outlined in Figure 5, is to put a 24-hour bus gate in Clarence Street between Post Office Lane and Imperial Circus. This limits the northbound traffic progressing along Clarence Street to buses and taxis. No restrictions for service vehicles would be required through the bus gate, as service access to all properties is possible either via Pittville Street or via Clarence Parade / Street.

This approach removes Clarence Parade / western end of Clarence Street from the experimental area. The final design of how this element is delivered is currently being developed. Further detail is set out below.

It is proposed that the Pittville St – North St ‘U’ covered by 24-hour Prohibition of Driving, with exemptions for buses, taxis and service access 6pm-10am on this corridor.

Three additional blue badge bays will be placed in Winchcombe Street, immediately north of the High Street, addressing one of the key themes, and a no-waiting at any time restriction put on Post Office Lane.

Pros:

- Achieves scheme objective of reduction of traffic on Clarence Street “Boots Corner”;
- Straightforward signage and enforcement;
- Unrestricted access to Clarence Parade and Clarence Street;
- Emergency egress via Post Office Lane & Church Street if required; and
- Potentially better for Promenade market access
- Provides additional parking for blue badge users close to town centre

Cons:

- Some increase on current traffic volumes through Boots Corner by circulating traffic on Pittville Street – North Street ‘U’;
- Reliant on Police enforcement of Prohibition of Driving; and
- Potentially more difficult for loading for some properties as access only from the north. This Could be mitigated by allowing increased time for service access e.g. 4pm – 10am
- Slightly reduces loading in Winchcombe Street.

Options for two-way working on Clarence Parade / Clarence Street

A number of concepts are being investigated to enable two-way working on Clarence Parade / Clarence Street. These can be broadly categorised as.

1. Traffic signal controlled operation;
2. Priority controlled (give way) operation; and
3. Physical changes to the carriageway;

Following a request from CBC, investigation into the most suitable option is ongoing.

Additional Elements

The proposed revisions to the ETROs address three of the key themes from the correspondence received to date;

- Signage comments
- Access for businesses on Clarence Parade and the western end of Clarence Street; and
- Blue Badge Holder access

It is proposed to undertake several additional studies, which do not require any amendments to the TROs, to address the fourth key theme from the correspondence; comments / concerns on traffic increases on other routes.

1. Investigation into options for traffic calming on Rodney Road; and
2. Investigation into directional signing;

The traffic calming and directional signing studies will be progressed with a view to implementation as soon as possible.

GCC have also now completed a separate review of the traffic signals on the A4019 corridor and has secured a commitment of up to £1m within the capital programme to make improvements along this corridor. . The A4019 is a strategic route across northern Cheltenham and was already a congestion hot spot before the implementation of the Cheltenham Transportation Plan. The planned growth to the north and west of Cheltenham will likely place additional challenges along this route. The study makes recommendations for upgrading the traffic signals and potentially removing some signals in order to accommodate the current and future volumes.

Timescales and Costs:

The recommended revision to the experimental orders will require physical changes to the highway and changes to the current experimental legal orders.

Initial discussions with the design team suggest that the earliest changes could be made is Spring. This is subject to confirmation of the scheme to enable two-way working on Clarence Parade and Clarence Street. Additional budget is required to facilitate the changes and to continue the trial for a further 6 months once implemented. Initial construction cost estimates for the revisions are set out below:

- Changes to Clarence Parade / Clarence Street = £54,000
- Design fees = £12,000
- Ongoing running costs of trial = £5,000 to £7,000 per month
- **Indicative cost estimate (assume revised trial commences for 6 months from May) = £136,000**

It is proposed that these costs would be covered initially by any remaining funding that has been allocated to the scheme in the current capital programme with remaining costs being covered by surplus from the bus gate enforcement.

Risks

There are a number of external risks which may impact upon the costs and delivery timescales of the revisions.

1. Weather (construction during Winter / Spring)
2. Start of new GCC Highways Contracts on 1st April
3. Lead in times for third parties (e.g. Skanska who supply lighting etc)

Contact officers

Scott Tompkins – Lead Commissioner Highway Authority
01452 328525, scott.tompkins@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Fraser Reid – Project Manager
Fraser.reid@gloucestershire.gov.uk