

Subject:	Car Free Day and Access grant funded projects		
Date of Meeting:	21 January 2020		
Report of:	Executive Director, Economy, Environment & Culture		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Matthew Thompson	Tel: 01273 290235
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Ward(s) affected:	All (particularly Queens Park; Regency; St Peters & North Laine; Wish; North Portslade; South Portslade)		

Note: The special circumstances for non-compliance with Council Procedure Rule 7, Access to Information Rule 5 and Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act as amended (items not considered unless the agenda is open to inspection at least five days in advance of the meeting) were that officers have been awaiting receipt of information that will enable Members to make a more informed decision regarding this item.

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 The 26 November 2019 Environment, Transport and Sustainability Committee considered a report about possible options for the council to participate in the annual Car Free Day (22 September) event in 2020.
- 1.2 It agreed that a further report should be prepared and considered at this meeting which included:
 - A list of potential road closures and the possible effects of these on traffic including the feasibility of road closures in areas already identified by some residents via petitions to this council, such as St James's Street and roads on the seafront
 - A detailed analysis of the costs associated with closing a road and/or multiple roads in Brighton and Hove, with consideration given as to how these costs may be provided for in the council's 2020/21 budget plan; and
 - Detail on the nature of community events that could be organised on roads, as well as further analysis on how these can contribute to reducing air pollution and help the city to become carbon-neutral by 2030.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the committee: -

- 2.1 Progress the development of possible school road closures and events for European Mobility Week and Car Free Day 2020 in association with the

extension (Year 4) of the council's Access Fund Project in 2020/21 and a School Streets taster day, subject to confirmation from the Government of the funding for that project, and subject to agreement of the proposed school selection criteria (Appendix 1);

- 2.2 Note the feasibility assessment (Appendix 2) and indicative costs (Appendix 3) associated with various options for potential non-school Car Free Day road closures and to request that officers undertake further consultation with Ward members and other key stakeholders on the option(s) (named in Appendix 2 & 3) preferred by members subject to an additional budget of up to £65,000 being identified;
- 2.3 Request that officers liaise with ward councillors, residents and other stakeholders regarding a potential non-school road closure in Boundary Road that could occur in 2020 for Car Free Day as part of Year 4 of the Access Projects;
- 2.4 Welcome requests for community events or activities in local streets that will contribute to the council's participation in European Mobility Week and Car Free Day 2020.

3. CONTEXT/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Car Free Day (CFD) has been part of the annual European Union's European Mobility Week since 2002. CFD seeks to improve public health and quality of life through promoting clean mobility and sustainable urban transport. The campaign gives people the chance to explore the role of city streets and to experiment with practical solutions to reduce their car use and help tackle urban challenges, such as air pollution.
- 3.2 By 2010, the focus of encouraging active and sustainable travel (walking, cycling and public transport) via Cycling England grant funded projects moved away from CFD events while continuing to focus on Personalised Travel Planning projects (PTP). Annual PTP programmes focused on distinct geographical areas of the city, promoting active and sustainable travel options tailored to suit the needs of individual residents primarily within their local environment.
- 3.3 The council has since bid successfully for Government grant funding of projects via the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, Sustainable Travel Transition Year Fund and most recently the Access Fund for Sustainable Travel. In November 2019, the council was invited to bid for a further (fourth) year of funding to continue its Access Fund project. Officers submitted a bid for a further £0.495m to support a range of projects, which includes activities associated with the promotion of and participation in European Mobility Week and Car Free Day in 2020. The geographical focus proposed was the Portslade area of the city. The result of the bid is still awaiting final confirmation by Ministers, but the Department's initial response to the bid has been extremely positive. It is therefore anticipated that the fourth year of Access Fund Project proposals will be the subject of a report to the 17 March 2020 ETS Committee.

Road closure options

- 3.4. Brighton & Hove City Council ran annual CFD-related events from 1999-2000 until 2007-08 which included the closures of Ship Street, Prince Albert Street and Bartholomews and East Street in the Old Town. Initially these were funded from existing revenue budgets, but latterly some events were part funded by Cycling England 'Cycling Town' grants, which the council had bid for and secured at the time. The size and ambition of the events required a full time officer post, event managers hired as consultants and a significant budget for performances, play areas and stalls.
- 3.5 Since 2008, timed closures of the northern section of Ship Street and weekend closures of East Street south of Bartholomew's have been introduced, although these were not directly linked to the CFD events.
- 3.6 Previous CFD road closures were arranged under the Town Police Clauses Act 1847. The Council's Head of Traffic Management now advises that any sites proposed for temporary closure as part of CFD will require a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO). This means stewarding and traffic management costs will be significantly higher.
- 3.7 A successful one day 'School Streets' closure of Queen's Park Terrace outside St Luke's Primary School was held in March 2019, as part of the Access Fund project. The school has since made a formal request for a permanent timed closure of the road. The model of running a taster day prior to any permanent timed closures is considered to be the most effective way to increase local support by offering direct experience of the associated road closure(s). School Streets closures are consistent with CFD objectives. They also help to improve perceptions of road safety issues around walking or cycling to and from school meaning there is real potential for lasting behaviour change. The Access Year 4 bid has therefore included a commitment to running a further taster day to coincide with European Mobility Week/CFD in 2020. Appendix 4 includes a number of possible events for Car Free Day (and Clean Air Day) in Access Year 4, although these are subject to grant confirmation.
- 3.8 The proposed Access Fund School Streets taster day provides an excellent opportunity to consider road closure options for CFD in 2020. There are several potential sites for School Streets taster days within the proposed Access 4 project area with the potential to lead to a permanent timed closure.
- 3.9 An assessment to identify the most appropriate schools/streets that could be included within the Access Fund Year 4 programme will therefore still need to take place and this will be based on the 'Hackney toolkit'. The preliminary consideration is the support of the Head and the Board of Governors. This must be achieved before scoring against essential or secondary weighted criteria, with further considerations around traffic impacts.

- 3.10 St James's Street is a busy environment with a one-way street and many side roads that are used for local access. The complexity of this area would be likely to involve considerable short-term disruption and significant co-ordination with residents, traders, bus operators etc. It therefore warrants more detailed analysis, especially if it involved closure of some form for a one-day event, and this was reflected in the committee's decision to request a future report in order to provide a greater understanding of the challenges in terms of transport logistics and finance, and what potential option might work best.
- 3.11 A further broad consideration of the effects of possible road closures in a number of other locations has also been undertaken. The approach taken is more fully explained in Section 4 of this report and the implications are summarised in Appendix 2 and 3. This includes seafront roads that could be closed including two separate sections of the A259 seafront road –one between Grand Avenue and Pool Valley, and the other between Middle Street and Pool Valley, incorporating the Old Town area. The assessment also includes Station Road/ Boundary Road in Portslade which has been included within the council's capital programme. The timing of that project is currently being reviewed, and therefore officers could consider the possibility of using a Car Free Day event in 2020 as part of the development of that project. A programme of events could also be linked with Access Year 4 projects in the area. This opportunity can therefore also be explored as part of the revised programme for the development of the project.
- 3.12 In terms of other possible locations that could be considered, Car Free Day can help to further raise public awareness of air pollution, but it should be noted that a single, short-term road closure would have no tangible impact on annual average NO₂ levels. Studies have suggested change would need to be sustained for 250 / 365 days to make a difference to prevailing air quality because the key determinants for impacts on human health are dosage and the number of hours of exposure.
- 3.13 The council's has two, formally declared Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). The 2013 AQMA version is the declaration which currently applies but there are plans to review the area during 2020. In the city centre and much of the AQMAs buses, minibuses, taxis, vans and Lorries are significant contributors to local pollution. Petrol cars have lower NO_x emissions but their use does contribute to CO₂ emissions, and replacing car journeys with active travel where possible delivers significant health benefits.
- 3.14 The main transport corridors with continued roadside NO₂ exceedance (40 µg/m³ or above) are:
- Castle Square-North Street-Western Road to Temple St (western extent to be determined)
 - Beaconsfield Rd-Viaduct Rd and Grand Parade, London Road-Cheapside to Preston Circus
 - New England Road and the East End of Old Shoreham Rd
 - Queens Road and Terminus Road area
 - Lewes Road and Hollingdean Road including Coombe Terrace Vogue Gyratory and Elm Grove approaches
 - Wellington Rd and Trafalgar Road, Portslade

- Rottingdean High Street (currently the subject of a trial traffic management scheme).
- 3.15 The effects of road closures on any of these routes would be significant and require considerable and detailed analysis to estimate the likely effects of these on all traffic. It is therefore not proposed to recommend that any of these streets should be considered for closure as part of CFD in 2020 at this time.

Costs and funding options

- 3.16 In line with the potential non-school closure locations that have been considered in terms of traffic effects within Appendix 2, estimates of the likely costs associated with such a closure have also been calculated. These are set out in Appendix 3.
- 3.17 Loss of parking revenue (in terms of the impact on the council's income forecasts) is considered under feasibility in Appendix 2. Actual Costs detailed in appendix 3 include the cost of one day parking bay suspensions, officer time, TTRO costs, traffic monitoring and management, stewarding, and potential event staging costs. They indicate that the broad cost of a closure in a city centre or busy area could be in excess of £65,000. These costs vary according to specific sites and the type of event, but those for most of the larger sites are roughly equal to the annual cost of a Bike it officer working all year round in up to 10 schools. In 2019, a Defra grant funded Air quality education programme in 8 city schools was carried out for a broadly similar amount.
- 3.18 In terms of staff costs, there is no current officer capacity within the City Transport Division for event organisation outside the Access Project area. Since the start of the Access Programme in 2017, officer posts to support local Active Travel projects have been solely funded by the Access grant. Funding for these posts is therefore currently due to end when Current Access Grant funding comes to an end on 31 March 2020. Until further confirmation is received about the Year 4 bid, there is no absolute guarantee that funding will be available for staffing costs associated with further work, including any CFD proposals.
- 3.19 Therefore, it is expected that an additional SO1/2 grade post at 0.2 FTE would be necessary to facilitate partnership work with external organisations and/or to manage external event contractors for a non-school CFD.
- 3.20 Funding for one 0.2 FTE SO1/2 post in Traffic Management and one 0.4 FTE Transport Projects per additional School Street permanent road closure would be necessary. Indicative costs have also been assumed for an external events contractor which is site dependent.
- 3.21 Current recruitment restrictions may make recruitment to these posts by April 2020 difficult to achieve, and finding suitable candidates to fulfil them on short-term contract at an SO1/2 pay grade and within the timescale available is also likely to prove difficult.
- 3.22 Further information about staff costs are more fully set out in section 7 of this report.

- 3.23 The estimated capital costs for a full 'School Streets' programme, as set out in Appendix 5, are £25,500. This will also require revenue funding for a 0.4FTE post within the Access School Travel Team to ensure delivery can be achieved in addition to Access Fund objectives.
- 3.24 A bid for this amount to the council's Sustainability & Carbon Reduction Investment Fund (SCRIF) has now been considered and will support one permanent, timed road closure at a suitable school site. Officers estimate a successful permanent closure would take 9-10 months to implement. Work on a permanent timed closure will start in April and can be completed by February 2021, providing revenue funding for additional officer time can be found.

Community Events

- 3.25 CFD events can provide a focus for a number of activities related to people's personal health, air pollution, active travel, journeys to work, school and leisure, physical activity etc. These could be promoted by information stands, other activities which focus on the key messages of CFD for people and the environment. Local residents/communities could also propose 'Play Streets' (a simple, effective and low-cost way for children to be able to play out in the streets where they live) or residential street parties that coincide with EUMW or CFD which they co-ordinate and manage themselves. The council would seek to facilitate these in line with its current arrangements for doing so (which are explained on the council's website).

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 As outlined above, the broader consideration of the implications of potential non-school related sites for CFD are set out in Appendices 2 and 3. They include a set of criteria based around likely disruption, immediate impacts and likely costs.
- 4.2 Raising public awareness of air pollution is a key aim of CFD, and all sites considered have been recently monitored because they fall within the AQMA on the basis that residents are more likely to support such initiatives where they perceive there are health impacts from a high volume of traffic emissions.
- 4.3 CFD aims to promote sustainable, urban transport and/or reductions in travel and changes in travel behaviour that will benefit people's health and protect/improve the environment. Major disruption to the bus network is not consistent with this objective, and thorough consideration will need to be given to the potential impact on bus (passenger) journey times in order to ensure that this does not undermine the objective of CFD and its associated events.
- 4.4 Existing traffic count data (where available) are also considered as a means of assessing the likely scale of any impact of Car Free Day events. However, it is difficult to predict how traffic will disperse during a closure, but the impact on surrounding areas, particularly where they are residential, means that some way of predicting likely dispersal is desirable. The report therefore assumes 70% of traffic will avoid the area altogether (due to advanced warning campaigns and signage) while 30% will disperse locally.

- 4.5 Before and after monitoring of traffic levels in an area that includes a closure is desirable to assess the actual effects, there would be an additional cost of installing temporary automatic traffic counters in the surrounding area. This would vary from site to site and would be estimated on the basis of an average cost of £400 per counter installation. Each closure would involve counters on several diversionary routes in the localised network.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 It has not been possible to consult with all stakeholders in the time frame available for preparing this report. Some discussions have been held, but further discussion and consultation will be necessary to explore possible non-school sites (as listed in Appendices 2 & 3).
- 5.2 Officers have approached Brighton & Hove Buses (who have expressed significant concerns about the disruption that a number of the possible options in Appendix 2 would cause for bus routes and therefore passengers), Sussex Police (who have not identified any immediate policing/operational issues), and City Clean (who would need to make operational changes to minimise any disruption to planned bin collection and street cleaning operations).
- 5.3 Ward Councillors and local residents' groups (such as Local Action Teams) will need to be consulted on possible sites and any proposed closures and in order to engage them in considering the type of events they would like to see during the day. This would be subject to a budget of up to £65,000 being identified.
- 5.4 The council's Communities Team have suggested that the council should enable others to organise events in CFD streets by simply providing space and infrastructure. They note that CFD is being raised not just by groups who are concerned about the climate emergency and air pollution, but also by businesses and residents are making representations for pedestrianisation of their local streets. They suggest the Council could offer specific groups the chance work with them to take a space and contribute towards a day that focuses on environmental and health message deliver an event themed around the climate emergency and point out there are clear tie-ins with locally active environment groups who may be largely self-resourcing. The Communities Team say they may be well placed to work with groups in advance of the day and help them develop proposals.
- 5.5 The experience of past CFD events suggests that creating a general festival where people are invited to simply enjoy the space created by a closure may lead some to question the relevance of the event. Care should therefore be taken to ensure that future events on CFD have a direct relevance to CFD objectives, focusing directly on the health benefits of walking & cycling, promotion of public transport and information and discussion on the climate emergency, air pollution and health impacts.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 If funding is confirmed for the Access Year 4 Grant funded projects, these could deliver Car Free Day events in the form of a 'School Streets' taster day, business initiatives and community activities within the Access Year 4 area. If funding for a

fourth year of Access is not forthcoming, a School Streets Capital Programme initially funded by SCRIF with revenue funded posts could deliver both taster days on Car Free Day followed by the first permanent closure of a road outside a school gate later in the year. A successful project could launch a full programme which in future years could lead to lasting behaviour change around active travel.

- 6.2 A non-school Car Free Day event elsewhere in the city could be funded which would potentially have more impact in an area where air pollution from transport is currently high, where car ownership and use are high, where the number of people experiencing CFD can be maximised, and where bus impacts are minimal. Events on CFD itself, Tuesday 22 September 2020, should take account of weekday travel patterns and be of direct and clear relevance to CFD objectives. Such a closure requires more time for exploring and consulting with councillors and stakeholders, and securing an appropriate budget to develop and implement it, before a final recommendation can be made. If members wish to pursue a specific option in addition to School Streets, officers will carry out further consultation and prepare a report for the May committee to authorise the TTRO advertising so that notices can go out in June.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 Additional Revenue funding for 0.6 FTE of an SO1/2 officer post to deliver School Streets will be required. This could be partly funded from Access Funding if this is forthcoming up to 0.2FTE. Additional funding for this post will need to be identified through the budget setting process or scheme of virement (budget transfer) to proceed.
- 7.2 The estimated capital costs for a full 'School Streets' programme, as set out in Appendix 5, are £25,500. This will also require ongoing revenue funding for a 0.4FTE post within the Access School Travel Team to ensure delivery can be achieved in addition to Access Fund objectives. It is anticipated that the capital costs would be funded from the Sustainability & Carbon Reduction Investment Fund (SCRIF) subject to formal approval from Policy & Resources Committee to add the project to the capital programme.
- 7.3 Indicative costs associated with various options for further non-school Car Free Day road closures are identified at Appendix 3. It is estimated that the one-off costs will require budget of up to £65,000. These indicative costs include events costs as part of the 'Take Part' festival and an additional 0.2 FTE post for event management within Transport Projects. Funding will need to be identified through the budget setting process or scheme of virement (budget transfer) to proceed.

Finance Officer Consulted: Steven Bedford

Date: 17/01/2020

Legal Implications:

- 7.4 Under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (the Act) the Council as traffic authority has the power temporarily to restrict or prohibit the use of a road by vehicles to facilitate the holding of a sporting event, social event or entertainment on a road. The order can only stay in force for 3 days unless the Secretary of

State agrees to a longer period. This power would be the most applicable to the one day taster and non-school closures.

- 7.5 The Council also has the power under the Act to make an experimental traffic order (ETRO) for the purpose of carrying out an experimental scheme of traffic control. An ETRO can stay in force for 18 months and allows a traffic authority to assess the effects of the order before deciding whether or not to continue it on a permanent basis. This would be the power under which school streets could be closed on an experimental basis.

Lawyer Consulted: Stephanie Stammers

Date: 17/01/2020

Equalities Implications:

- 7.5 Engagement with a wide range of residents has been part of the process from the start of these proposals. The use and analysis of data and engagement will continue to inform the project to ensure it addresses the needs of the local population. In particular access needs of disabled road users will need to be considered as part of the site management plan for any temporary road closure.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 7.6 None

Public Health Implications:

- 7.7 The participation of public health colleagues involved in promoting active and healthy lifestyles will be sought for events. Additional input on the health impacts of air pollution will be sought from the senior technical officer with expertise on air quality.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 7.8 The reintroduction of CFD event(s) in 2020 will provide an opportunity to further promote the council's priorities to make the city safer, healthier and more sustainable, and highlight the target of becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. School Streets Selection criteria
2. Non-school streets – feasibility assessment criteria
3. Non-school streets – CFD indicative costs
4. Access Programme – Year 4 proposals for CFD and Clean Air day 2020.
5. SCRIF Streets Costs

Background Documents (in Members' Rooms)

1. Car Free Day report to ETS 27 November 2019

