Cheltenham Transport Plan: Frequently Asked Questions

Roles and Responsibilities

1 What are the roles of Cheltenham Borough Council, Cheltenham Development Task Force and Gloucestershire County Council?

Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) is the promoter of the Cheltenham Transport Plan (CTP) which means that they are putting the scheme forward and publicly supporting it.

The Cheltenham Development Task Force (CDTF) is a private, public and voluntary sector partnership. The Task Force considers specific issues or sites and recommends action to Cheltenham Borough and Gloucestershire County Councils.

Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) is the Traffic Authority for Gloucestershire and one of the functions of the Traffic Authority is to be able to draft and make Traffic Regulation Orders. TROs are necessary to make changes to the road network in the county and are required in order to implement the CTP proposals.

Traffic Authority

Consultation process

2 Which areas of the town have been involved in the CTP consultation process to date, including the consultation during summer 2013?

During the public consultation carried out in the summer 2013 16,000 consultation leaflets and questionnaires were hand delivered to properties in the central part of Cheltenham. People who attended any of the 13 public exhibitions were also able to pick up a questionnaire. Leaflets and questionnaires were also made available at the libraries and the CBC Municipal Offices. The consultation was also available to complete online to everyone who wished to take part.
In March and April 2014 the first round of consultation was carried out on the draft Traffic Regulation Orders that support the changes to the roads. Having reviewed the responses, GCC have made some changes to the draft Traffic Regulation Orders which include:

- Provision of access for permitted street traders using the Promenade.
- Retention of the existing pedestrian crossing at Boot’s Corner to assist people, in particular those with mobility and sight impairments to cross the road.
- Provide a loading bay in Sherborne Place.

These changes have been included in the second round of consultation on the draft Traffic Regulation Orders being carried out in October and November 2014.

3 I have particular concerns about potential impacts of the proposals in my street / area. How do I express these concerns more directly to the Council?

The current stage of the project will involve the publication of the revised draft Traffic Regulation Orders necessary to implement the changes to the one-way system and restriction of traffic at Boot’s Corner. Residents wishing to object to the changes will have a second opportunity to make representations to Gloucestershire County Council who are the traffic authority. Objections to the draft TROs will be considered and any unresolved objections will be put to GCC’s Traffic Regulation Committee, where people would have the opportunity to attend.

4 What are the role and responsibilities of GCC as Traffic Authority (for the Cheltenham Transport Plan – not just the TRO process)?

The Cheltenham Transport Plan is an initiative which has been developed by Cheltenham Borough Council. Gloucestershire County Council has been working with Cheltenham Borough Council, as highway authority, in developing the plan. This has included providing technical support and advice and consulting on the Plan.

On 18 November 2013, Cheltenham Borough Council decided to support the Plan and requested the County Council to undertake the statutory traffic regulation order process to facilitate the delivery of the Cheltenham Transport Plan.

A final decision has not been made about the changes to the highway network in Cheltenham. The County Council now has to consider whether the legal orders should be made to introduce the changes. This involves the County Council carrying out a formal consultation and considering whether the changes should be made to the road network.
5 Why is Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) drafting the TROs?

GCC is the Traffic Authority for Gloucestershire and one of the functions of the Traffic Authority is to be able to draft and make Traffic Regulation Orders.

6 Why is this scheme not been advertised by way of Experimental TROs?

Permanent TROs need to be in place to support the actual physical changes being made by the scheme promoters (Cheltenham Borough Council). The modelling was carried out for the whole scheme which includes the Ring Road junction works and the closure of the Town Centre around the Boots Corner area. There are certain inter-dependencies between different parts of the scheme that stop the TROs from being separated or advertised as experimental. An example of inter-dependency is the need to restrict the volume of traffic passing through Boots Corner prior to making Albion Street two-way.

7 Why is there more than one TRO being advertised?

Due to purely administrative and legislative reasons we have had to publish more than one TRO and requisite notices. As part of this scheme, GCC are revoking and then remaking some old TROs as a “tidying up” exercise. Some types of TRO are governed by different legislation and methods which is why they have been drafted in separate TROs/Notices. For example, pedestrian crossings are governed by Section 23 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and have to be drafted and advertised by way of a Notice. Whereas, Prohibition of Driving TROs are governed by Section 1 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 so need to be incorporated into a TRO and advertised by a Notice. This does not mean that the scheme has been separated in any way.

8 What will happen if the TROs go ahead and there are problems?

The scheme will be reviewed after 12 months. If there are obvious concerns before that date then measures can take place to rectify these. Permanent orders can be revoked at any time and the roads would revert back to what they were like before the TRO was implemented. TROs can also be varied to make them work better.

9 How long do I have to make a representation to the scheme?

The consultation period will run from 30th October 2014 to 22nd November 2014.
10 I think part of the scheme is a good idea and part is a bad idea so how do I make a representation to this effect?

We welcome letters of support as well as letters of objection. You need to be specific in your representation about which part(s) you are supporting and which part(s) you are objecting to. All representations need to be in writing.

11 What will happen when the objection period has expired?

The case officers will look at all representations that have been received and try to resolve any objections. If there are still outstanding objections, the case officer will draft a report which will make an officer recommendation on how to proceed with the scheme. In view of the representations received so far a Traffic Regulation Committee (TRC) will be held to consider all the evidence and will make a recommendation to the Commissioning Director: Communities & Infrastructure on how to proceed. The report will then be signed off accordingly and the TROs will either be made as they were drafted, made with less restrictive amendments or abandoned.

12 Will a Public Inquiry be held?

Under Regulations 9 and 10 of The Local Authorities’ Traffic Orders (Procedures) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996, the County Council, as Traffic Authority for Gloucestershire, does have a discretion to hold a public inquiry, chaired by an inspector selected from a panel of persons chosen by the Secretary of State. However, in this case, the Commissioning Director: Communities & Infrastructure (in conjunction with the Lead Cabinet Member) has decided that there is nothing out of the ordinary in this case to warrant making the decision to hold a public inquiry at this time. For example, there are no cross-county boundary issues where multiple communities will be affected.

Given that, it is not felt to be in the public interest to hold a public inquiry and the TRO process will continue as usual. The County Council does not have a policy that determines whether there is a need to hold a public inquiry in cases like this. An Inspector does not make the final decision: the inspector can only give a recommendation to the Commissioning Director: Communities & Infrastructure.
13 Will TRC Members be impartial?

Considering the objections received so far the scheme will be referred to a TRC. Members of the public (either supporting or objecting to the scheme) can address the TRC although this is time limited. There is no formal cross-examination although the TRC Members can ask questions via the case officer. The structure and procedure of any TRC that may be held will be confirmed nearer the time. TRC Members have to have an open mind and are trained in order to understand the legal requirements. They can only give a recommendation to the Commissioning Director: Communities & Infrastructure just like an inspector at a public inquiry.

14 Who makes the final decision as to whether the TROs should go ahead?

Once any objections have been resolved or a report written and/or a TRC held, the Commissioning Director: Communities & Infrastructure will look at the whole picture and will use his delegated authority along with the Lead Cabinet Member to make the final decision on how to proceed. If the process has been contentious in any way, the decision can be referred up to Cabinet.

15 Has the County Council fulfilled its duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010?

Thorough consideration was given to the County Council’s duty and a draft due regard statement was published alongside the TRO consultation documents and comments invited on it from members of the public.

Scheme

Impacts on particular streets or areas

16 My street is likely to be affected by the proposed changes in traffic flow. What are the proposals for mitigating these affects?

Through the government funded Local Sustainable Transport Fund a range of projects have been carried out since 2012 to minimise the impact of traffic in Cheltenham. This includes working with major employers, educational establishments and residents to encourage a wider range of travel choices and reduce general traffic levels. In response to the concerns of local residents, Cheltenham Borough Council has set up a Community Liaison Panel to consider what further mitigation measures may be necessary in streets likely to be affected by the proposals.
17 My street has lots of residents’ parking but will experience an increase in traffic as a result of these proposals. Will the residents’ parking be removed?

All of the alterations currently proposed to parking and various other kerbside waiting restrictions will be depicted on documents associated to the Traffic Regulation Order consultation process.

There are currently no proposals which remove or make alteration to areas where parking is currently unrestricted. Some minor amendments are proposed in areas of existing residents’ permit parking, these are:

- Montpellier Street near the junction of St Georges Rd, extend no waiting at any time restriction by one vehicle length to improve safety for cyclists.
- Imperial Square (East), relocate disabled parking bay from Imperial Square (North) into permit parking bay for the provision of one blue badge holder vehicle.
- Bath Road opposite Bath Parade, extend existing no waiting at any time outside The Salvation Army community church by one vehicle length for provision of loading vehicles.

There is an engagement process currently being undertaken within certain areas where the local community feel they are most likely to be detrimentally affected by increased traffic volume. It is likely that, as a result of requests from residents, further proposals for works on street will come forward which may or may not require further Traffic Regulation Order amendments. Should this be the case these alterations will be subject to a traffic regulation order consultation process in the same way as the amendments currently proposed.

18 During the previous consultation exercise in summer 2013, I was told that Boots Corner would be pedestrianised. I now understand that buses and taxis are to be allowed through there. What has changed? Will these be safe for everyone?

The plans consulted upon in summer 2013 included proposals to restrict general traffic through Boots Corner. This proposed exemption for buses, taxis and delivery vehicles (out of hours) was included at this time and the use of the area by buses was shown on the consultation plans made widely available at the time. The reason for allowing buses and taxis to have access to this area is to maintain access to the town centre for people with restricted mobility who rely on these modes of travel for access. The proposals in the TRO are broadly the same as those that were consulted upon. However Hackney carriages will be allowed access at all times in order to provide access to and from the taxi rank in Pitville Street.
19 During gas main works at Boots Corner in 2009, All Saints Road was used as a diversion route and saw a large increase in traffic flow. Will All Saints Road experience the same increase in traffic as a result of these proposals?

Traffic figures for All Saints Road are predicted as below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AM peak hour</th>
<th>PM peak hour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010 Base Model</td>
<td>879</td>
<td>955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2026 Without CTP alterations</td>
<td>887</td>
<td>833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2026 With CTP alterations</td>
<td>926</td>
<td>964</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A monitoring report in relation to the 2009 gas main work is available to view alongside the modelling information. Unfortunately there were no traffic counts undertaken at the time on All Saints Road but some information is available in relation to journey time analysis which includes the route through All Saints Road. The key difference between the Cheltenham Transport Plan and the traffic management plan implemented for the gas main works is the current plans include changes to the one-way system including the introduction of two-way working in Imperial Gardens, Oriel Road and part of Albion Street.

20 I am concerned about the impacts of the Boots Corner proposals on access for disabled and elderly people, both in terms of getting disabled vehicles close to the shops, and also in terms of these groups sharing space with buses and taxis. Can you allay my concerns?

A key objective of the proposals is to maintain and improve the safety of the town centre. Further consultation led by CBC has been held with representatives of people with mobility and sensory impairments to develop detailed proposals that create a clear distinction between the different areas for pedestrians and permitted vehicles.

Traffic modelling

Please note: a ‘PARAMICS’ traffic model has been prepared for the town centre that estimates the impact of changes to the road network. Various background reports on the model are available on the consultation website www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/consultation

21 Please explain what is meant by a validated traffic model?

It is normal practice for traffic models to be validated to ensure that the results that they give are realistic. The first stage of a traffic modelling exercise is to gather traffic data by undertaking traffic surveys to count vehicles across the area to be modelled. Part of this data is used to construct the model which replicates the traffic flow through the area. A
portion of the gathered data is ‘held back’ to then check the model of the existing network.

When the model of the current network is complete it is then run and traffic flows and vehicle speeds are measured at a number of locations. These predicted flows are then compared with measured data that was ‘held back’ from the original survey. The modelled traffic flows and the actual traffic flows are then compared and results are reported on in a validation report. The validation report for the Cheltenham traffic model can be found within the modelling section via a link on the TRO website page (www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/extra/ctp).

22 Can you clarify the assumptions made in the model about Rodney Road? I understand that a ‘rising bollard’ is included in the model, but I have not seen anything in the detailed proposals.

In the original modelling carried out, the proposals included a rising bollard at the northern end of Rodney Road to restrict the number of vehicles using this route northbound into the High Street and continuing into Winchcombe Street. Following further investigations this restriction is not in the current plans due to the potential for creating access problems to properties in Rodney Road due to the difficulty of vehicles turning around in the narrow street. Further modelling has been carried out without the restriction in Rodney Road and it is predicted that traffic flows northbound will be 250 vehicles per hour in the AM peak hour. This would have the effect of reducing traffic flows in the parallel route through St James Square and Ambrose Street by the corresponding amount.

23 How does the model account for major developments in the town centre, such as Morrisons at North Place, and planned housing expansions on the edge of the town?

In the future year traffic modelling, the forecast traffic growth included all housing, employment and retail developments with existing planning permission, as well as all committed and allocated developments in the Cheltenham Local Plan period, with all programmed highway network improvements also included.

For the forecast period 2016 to 2026, growth factors were extracted from TEMPRO and applied for ‘car drivers’ in the Cheltenham area. TEMPRO is a DfT database that provides estimates for the growth of population, employment and trip ends for a series of future years, and takes account of all strategic development allocations on an area-wide basis). As TEMPRO does not cover Light Goods and Heavy Goods Vehicles, growth factors for these were derived from the DfT’s long term National Transport Model (NTEM).

Therefore, all land use developments with planning permissions at the time when the future year traffic forecasts were derived were included in the traffic assessment exercise.
24 The model report only gives figures for 2026. The impacts of the proposals will be felt immediately. What are the results immediately after the proposals are implemented?

In line with good practice future traffic flows are predicted for a period of 10 years after the implementation of the scheme. Due to traffic growth there will be higher levels of traffic in 2026 than in 2016. Therefore the modelling that has been produced for 2026 will give a worse scenario than what is expected in the first year after opening. A future year scenario without the scheme is also included to provide a comparison with and without the proposal.

25 How do the results from this latest model differ from those in previous models, such as that published in 2008?

It is difficult to compare the modelling outcomes between the 2008 and the 2013 reports. This is mainly because the proposed network alterations the modelling was conducted on were very different. Both reports are available on the TRO area of the website and feature plans of the modelled proposals.

The main alterations in 2008 were to close Boots Corner to general traffic and add two way bus movements through North Street, Clarence Street, Clarence Parade and Royal Well Road. All eastbound traffic on St Georges Rd was to be prevented past the signalised junction of Bayshill Road. Although the proposal for the Albion Street corridor was similar to the 2013 proposal the alteration of Imperial Square and Oriel Road to two way did not feature.

In the conclusions the 2008 report notes that the proposals... “do not have a significant impact in the majority of the study area, with the main exception of the St James’ Square sub-area which would suffer a notable negative impact, directly as a result of current town centre ring road traffic diverting away from Royal Well Road and Clarence Parade.”

26 What analysis has already been undertaken to assess the impact of the scheme? What should I do if I continue to disagree with the conclusions of any assessments, including potential areas impacted by the proposal which have not been identified in the reports?

GCC commissioned an analysis of the proposed changes to the centre of Cheltenham which was made available during the consultation on the Cheltenham Transport Plan. This involved using a PARAMICS traffic model which tested the proposed changes to the highway network. The report explains the process which was followed to assess the impact of the proposed changes and is available at www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/cheltenhamtp.

If you continue to disagree with the analysis undertaken, please include your reasons in your representations and a full explanation about why the assessment is incorrect, in your view.
27 Who do I contact if I have more detailed questions about the model?
Please contact Richard Cornell who is co-ordinating the technical work for this project at Gloucestershire County Council. Email address richard.cornell@gloucestershire.gov.uk or telephone 01452 425000.

Smarter Choices and Environmental Impacts

28 Smarter Choices are intended to encourage more people to walk, cycle and use public transport. How will this be effective when the residential streets that are attractive for walking and cycling are to take more traffic as a result of the CTP proposals?

It is not anticipated that the changes to traffic flows in residential streets will be significant enough to deter people from walking, cycling and using public transport. The Community Liaison Forum has been set up to examine with residents what measures could be introduced to maintain the amenity of the residential areas.

29 How effective will Smarter Choices be in reducing traffic levels, and when will they take effect? How much traffic will ‘disappear’ as a result of Smarter Choices?

In the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) bid it was predicted that Smarter Choices would reduce traffic demand by 6% in the peak hours reducing up to 1,100 trips. The Smarter Choices programme is continuing in 2015 and the benefits will continue to be realised over the next 12 months.

Implementation and Monitoring

30 If the TRO’s are approved by the Council, when will the CTP proposals be implemented?

If the TROs are approved they are likely to be implemented in summer 2015.

31 How are they to be co-ordinated with proposed developments at North Place, Albion Place and The Brewery?

GCC has a network manager to co-ordinate the works and assess the impact on the network from development projects in Cheltenham town centre and the Strategic Road Network (M5, A417 etc).
32 How will the impacts of the measures be monitored and over what period?

It is planned to continuously monitor the impact of the proposals measuring traffic flows and speeds to compare with the predictions in the model. These will be used to adjust signal timings to react to changes in traffic flows around the town centre. An initial report will be made six months after implementation, once traffic flows have adjusted and then again after 12 months to provide a comparison.