

## Report for Resolution

**Report to** Norwich Highways Agency Committee  
24 July 2008

**Report of** Head of Transport and Landscape

**Subject** St Benedicts Street – Experimental Scheme to  
Pedestrianise on Saturdays – Scheme Update

---

**Item**

**9**

### **Purpose**

To update members on the first 6 weeks operation of the experimental closure of St Benedict's Street between St Margaret's Street and Charing Cross on Saturdays between 10am and 5pm.

### **Recommendations**

Members are requested to note that the experimental Saturday closure of St Benedict's street has ceased and that a further report analysing why the experiment was not successful and looking at possible future options for the street will be brought before this Committee in due course.

### **Financial Consequences**

The introduction of the experimental scheme is estimated to be £15k, of this 35% (£5,250) will be funded by the EU CIVITAS project, with the remained being funded by the Local Transport Plan.

### **Corporate Objective/Service Plan Priority**

This report aims to achieve the corporate objective to build a successful economic future for Norwich and secure sustainable growth. It achieves the service plan priority of implementing the LTP and Civitas project

### **Contact Officers**

Andy Watt, Head of Transportation and Landscape  
Joanne Deverick, Transportation Manager

01603 213511

01603 213430

### **Background Documents**

Traders Survey

# Report

## Introduction

1. At your meeting in March you agreed to introduce an experimental closure of St Benedict's Street between St Margaret's Street and Charing Cross on Saturdays between 10am and 5pm. This project is part of the City Council's commitment to the Civitas scheme, which is looking to introduce time controlled access restrictions in the City.
2. The mandate from committee allows the Head of Transportation and Landscape to make amendments to the experimental order.
3. The first closure was on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> June, the day before the road was closed for a street fair.
4. A location plan is attached as appendix 1.

## Reaction

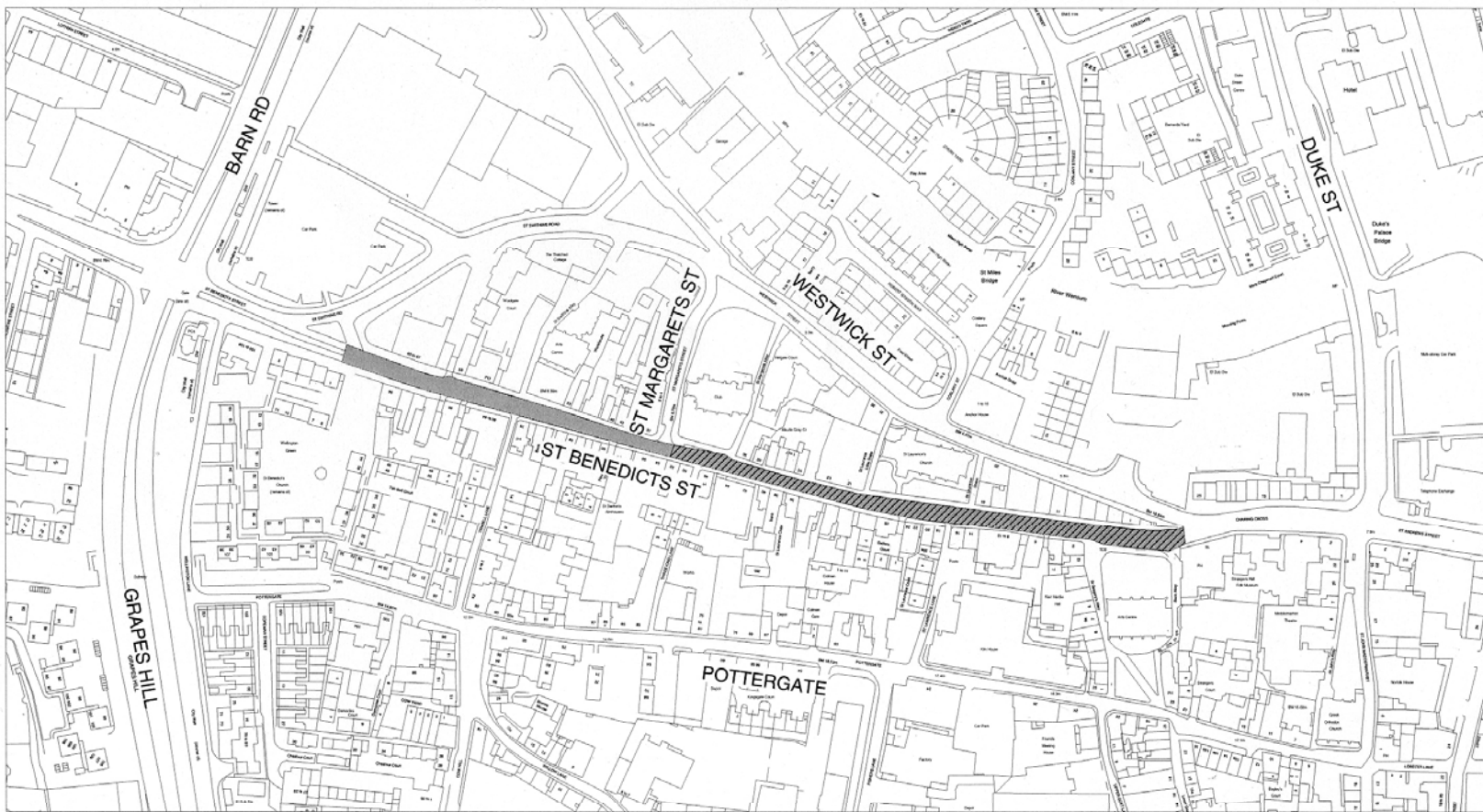
5. The idea for the closure was generated over a year ago by the St Benedict's Traders association who conducted a survey among its own members and this showed that of the 48 members polled 39 supported some form of closure on a Saturday, while 9 opposed it.
6. However in the first couple of weeks of operation of the scheme much opposition to the closure was received from traders who were not members of the association, and from those who had moved their business into St Benedict's in the last year. The complaints mostly centred on the lack of access for deliveries, the inability of costumers being able to park, and the lack of enforcement that the closure received. A letter was also received from the Chairman of the Lanes association, expressing concern about the closure, and particularly its' perceived negative effects on businesses coupled with the recent economic downturn.
7. Concerns have also been expressed by taxi drivers and users about the detour that is involved with St Benedict's closed for such vehicles, and the increased journey times and costs.

## Trader Consultation

8. All experimental traffic schemes take a while to establish themselves, but given the numbers of complaints about the closure, and the concerns expressed by the Norwich Lanes Association, who are working hard to improve the area, it was thought prudent to carry out further consultation with traders to determine whether the experiment should continue.
9. After the 4<sup>th</sup> closure on Saturday, 28 June all traders received a questionnaire asking them if they wanted to see the experiment continue after week 6 (12 July). The traders were informed that if a majority responded saying they wanted the closure to end, Saturday, 12 July would be the last closure. The survey also asked for opinions on how effective or otherwise the closure had

been and whether other options should be considered.

10. The results of the survey showed 15 business operators wanted the closure to continue and 20 wanted it to cease. However if you take out the responses for the office based businesses down the street, who by their own admission, are largely unaffected by the closure, the results are 10 in favour of continuing the closure and 19 opposed to it. The decision was therefore made by the Head of Transportation and Landscape under the mandate given to him at the March committee to stop the experiment
11. A full report will be brought before a future Committee on the reasons why the closure was not successful, and to consider possible options for future improvements to St Benedict's. This will include the results of the survey that is currently underway to gauge the public reaction to the scheme.



NORWICH  
City Council

ST BENEDICTS ST

Extent of initial  
Saturday closure



Maximum extent of  
Saturday closure



c Crown copyright. All rights reserved  
Licence No. 2009



SCALE	Not to scale
DATE	03/03/2008
DRAWING No.	
DRAWN BY	