

Report for Resolution

Report to Norwich Highways Agency Committee
26 March 2009

Report of Head of Transportation and Landscape

Subject Silver Road Area – Traffic Management

Item
8

Purpose

This report informs members of the results of public consultation on proposals to address local peoples concerns about the increase in traffic volumes and speed in the Silver Road since the introduction of changes to the junction of Barrack Street and Silver Road removed the right turns both in and out of Silver Road.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:-

- (1) note that the results of the consultation on possible options for the Silver Road area were inconclusive;
- (2) agree that an alternative solution to the problems in the area is progressed, as shown on the plan attached as Appendix 6, and comprising of:-
 - (a) the experimental removal of the bus gate on Bull Close Road,
 - (b) The introduction on an experimental basis of one way system, with Silver Street operating one-way eastbound, Bull Close Road operating one way westbound and Steward Street operating one way southbound;
 - (c) traffic calming on Mousehold Street and St James Close;
- (3) ask the Head of Transportation and Landscape to consult with local residents on the proposed experimental scheme and report the results back to the July meeting with a recommendation on whether to proceed with the scheme;
- (4) ask the Head of Transportation and Landscape to implement a traffic calming scheme in Mousehold Street and St James Close.

Financial Consequences

The Local Transport Plan has allocated £50,000 from 2008/9 and £50,000 from 2009/10 budget to fund this scheme.

Strategic Priority and Outcome/Service Priorities

The report helps to meet the strategic priority “Strong and prosperous city – working to improve quality of life for residents, visitors and those who work in the city now and in the future” and the service plan priority of delivering the Local Transport Plan.

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Background

1. In summer 2007, Barrack Street was widened and the junction of Silver Road with Barrack Street with Silver Road was re-engineered to remove the right turns both in and out of Silver Road. At the time it was acknowledged that this would have an inevitable impact on traffic movements on Silver Road and the surrounding streets and it was agreed that funding should be made available from the LTP for measures to mitigate the affects of the changes to traffic movements.
2. Prior to the widening scheme being implemented, there were frequent complaints from residents and Members about traffic volumes and speed in Mousehold Street and Silver Street. Since the scheme was implemented the residents of Silver Street have submitted a petition demanding action to combat the increased traffic in their street.
3. Before and after automatic traffic counters have shown changes in traffic movements with increases in traffic on Mousehold Street, St James Close, Bull Close Road, Steward Street and Silver Road, see Appendix 1

Consultaion Undertaken

4. Officers considered the changes to the traffic movements in the area, and could find no one obvious solution to mitigate the problems, without simply transferring the traffic to other streets in the area. Instead they devised 3 different options that could be progressed. These are shown on the plans attached as appendices 2, 3, and 4 and can be summarised as follows:
 - Option 1 – Remove the bus gate on Bull Close Road. Make Silver Street no entry from Silver Road, traffic calm some streets.
 - Option 2 – Traffic calm most streets
 - Option 3 – Introduce no entry restrictions and traffic calming
5. A fourth, do nothing, option was included as part of the consultation that was undertaken with residents in February 2009

Results of Consultation

6. 5250 leaflets were printed with 4069 leaflets distributed to the Silver Road area and 600 leaflets to the 3 local schools. Of these, 392 responses were received.
7. The response to the consultation was 68% of response said something needs to be done to tackle traffic problems in the Silver Road area. The preferred option for change was Option 1, with a 29% response, however it must be noted that Option 4 no change had a 39% response rate. See appendix 5 for a breakdown of the results.
8. If we look more closely at the streets most affected by the changes to the traffic patterns, Silver Street, Bull Close Road (between Charlton Road and Silver

Road), and Mousehold Street¹, and the street most likely to be affected by the removal of any traffic from these streets, Wodehouse Street, the results are;

Something needs to be done to tackle traffic problems in the Silver Road area				
	Bull Close² Road	Mousehold Street	Silver Street	Wodehouse Street
Yes	22	16	30	7
No	3	1	0	11
Don't know	2	0	1	0
No opinion	0	1	1	1

My preferred option is:				
	Bull Close Road	Mousehold Street	Silver Street	Wodehouse Street
Option 1	7	6	15	1
Option 2	6	4	7	2
Option 3	9	3	6	3
Option 4	5	5	4	13

9. Even among these streets there is no clear consensus on what needs to be done.
10. Looking at the commonest made by people as part of the consultation the main concerns were;
 - there should not be any loss of parking,
 - the need to reduce conflicts between vehicles
 - be careful not to just move the problem from one street to another.

Discussion

11. Each of the options proposed included traffic calming on Mousehold Street and St James Close. This has been well received and it is suggested this is implemented, along with a 20mph zone in that area.
12. With regard to Silver Street, Bull Close Road (part) and Steward Street which were the other streets most affected by the banned right turns at the Silver Road / Barrack Street junction, all of the 3 options put to the residents had advantages and disadvantages for the local area, with none having clear benefits over the others. This is reflected in the results of the consultation, with no overall favourite being identified.
13. The traffic counts undertaken before and after the right turns were banned, showed that although there was a change in the routes vehicles took, the

¹ Steward Street has 4 properties fronting it, none of whom expressed an opinion.

² Please note these responses include those from all parts of Bull Close Road as it was not possible to separate the responses from the 2 sections.

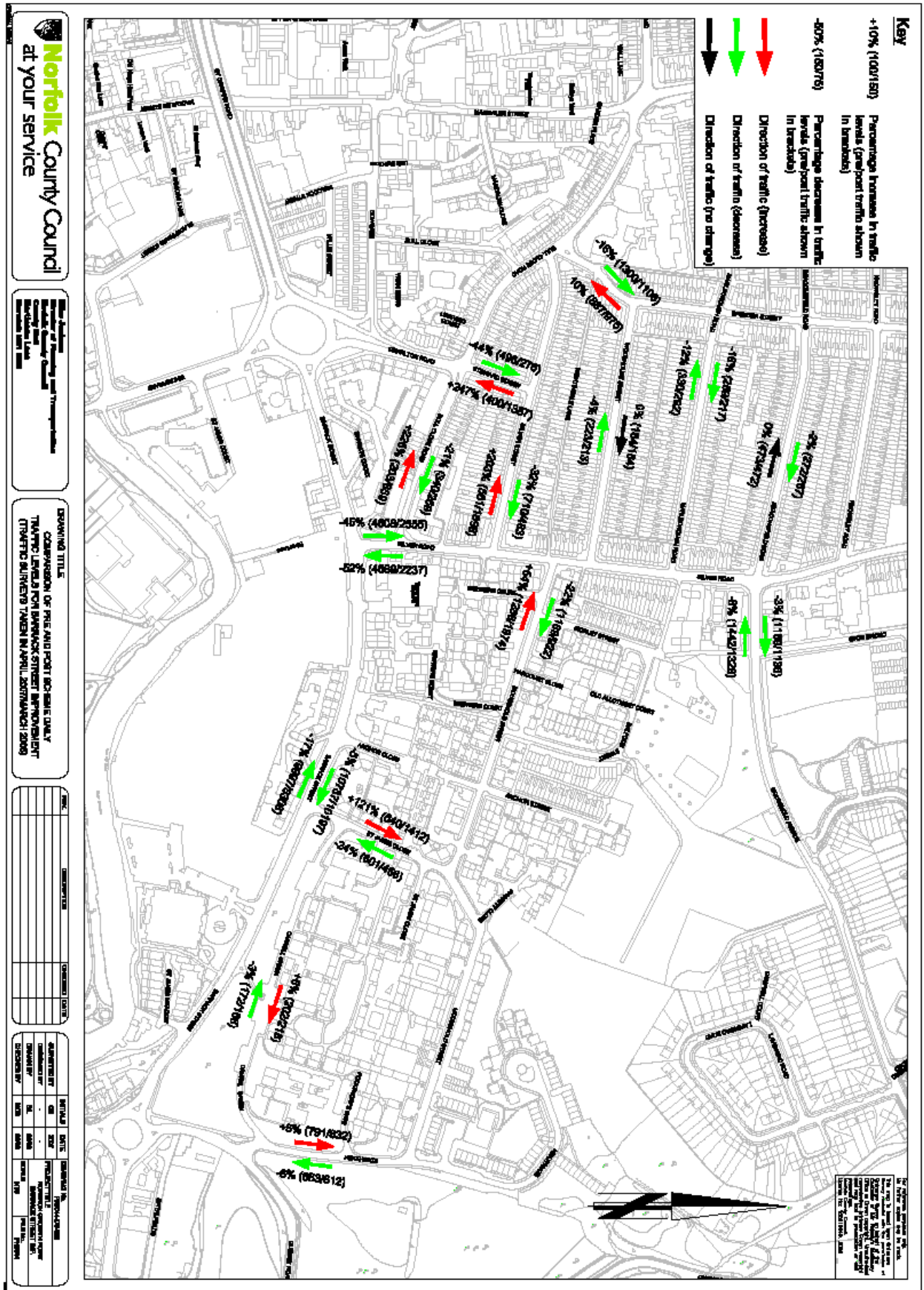
overall number of vehicles using the area did not reduce significantly.

14. Officers therefore looked again at the situation and have identified a scheme that is concentrated on those 3 streets and which is not likely to move the problem to adjoining streets. This was a concern strongly expressed by many respondents outside of this immediate area. The proposal is to
 - Remove the bus gate from Bull Close Road at its junction with Silver Street
 - Make Bull Close Road between Silver Road and Charlton Road one way westbound
 - Make Silver Street one way eastbound
 - Make Steward Street one way southbound
15. It is suggested that this should be done on an experimental to allow for an assessment of the impact of the changes. These proposals are shown on the plan attached as appendix 7.
16. While it is accepted that the traffic will remain in these streets, it is anticipated that this will reduce vehicle conflicts in the area and will mean in both Bull Close Road and Silver Street the through traffic will be using the streets in just either the morning or evening peak, not both, as is the situation now. Traffic on Steward Street would be greatly reduced on the current situation.
17. The choice of Silver Street being made one way eastbound and Bull Close Road one way westbound is significant. If these were to be reversed a very convenient cut through would be formed between Charlton Road and Barrack Street, avoiding the ring road roundabout, which is likely to further increase the use of Bull Close Road.
18. The removal of the bus gate on Bull Close Road is suggested as compliance with the current restriction is extremely poor. Before the right turns were banned an average of 203 vehicles a day were recorded using it. There is only one scheduled service that now uses the bus gate, once every 30 minutes throughout the daytime, a total of approx 24 movements. Following the Barrack Street scheme an average of 659 vehicles now use it on a daily basis. Informal discussions with the Passenger Transport Group indicate that the bus gate is now of little benefit and its removal is not thought to be significant for buses.
19. Previous experience of one way streets shows a tendency for vehicle speeds to increase marginally. Speeds will be monitored as part of the experiment and if necessary, consideration can be given to traffic calming, as part of any decision on whether the experimental scheme should become permanent.
20. As this option is different to any of those originally proposed it is suggested that further consultation is carried out with the affected residents and the results of that consultation brought back before this committee in July, when a decision can be made as to whether to proceed with the experimental scheme.

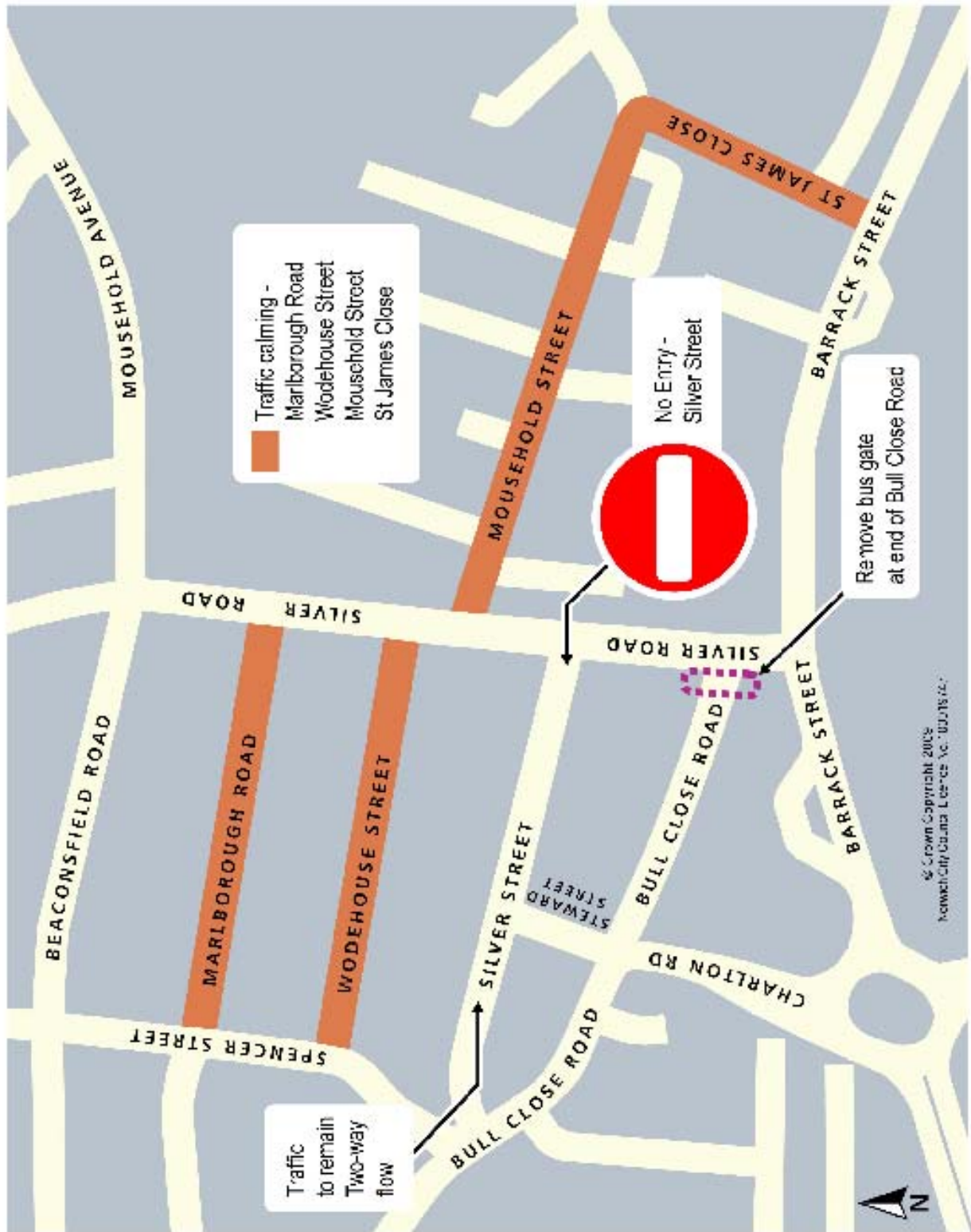
Ward Member Comments

21. The area covered by the consultation includes two wards, Sewell for for the area to the west of Silver Road and Thorpe Hamlet to the East of Silver Road. Additionally, Bull Close Road, which forms the boundary of the consultation area also forms the boundary between Sewell Ward and Mancroft Ward.
22. All ward members have received copies of the revised proposals, and a meeting has been held with the Sewell Ward members, who cover the area most affected by the proposals. Sewell members are agreeable to the proposed approach of an experimental one way system, but have asked for the experiment to be reviewed after 6 months. This is considered acceptable, and will be discussed in more detail in the follow up report, assuming the public reaction to the proposals is favourable.
23. Comments received from the Thorpe Hamlet and Mancroft ward members will be reported orally to your meeting.

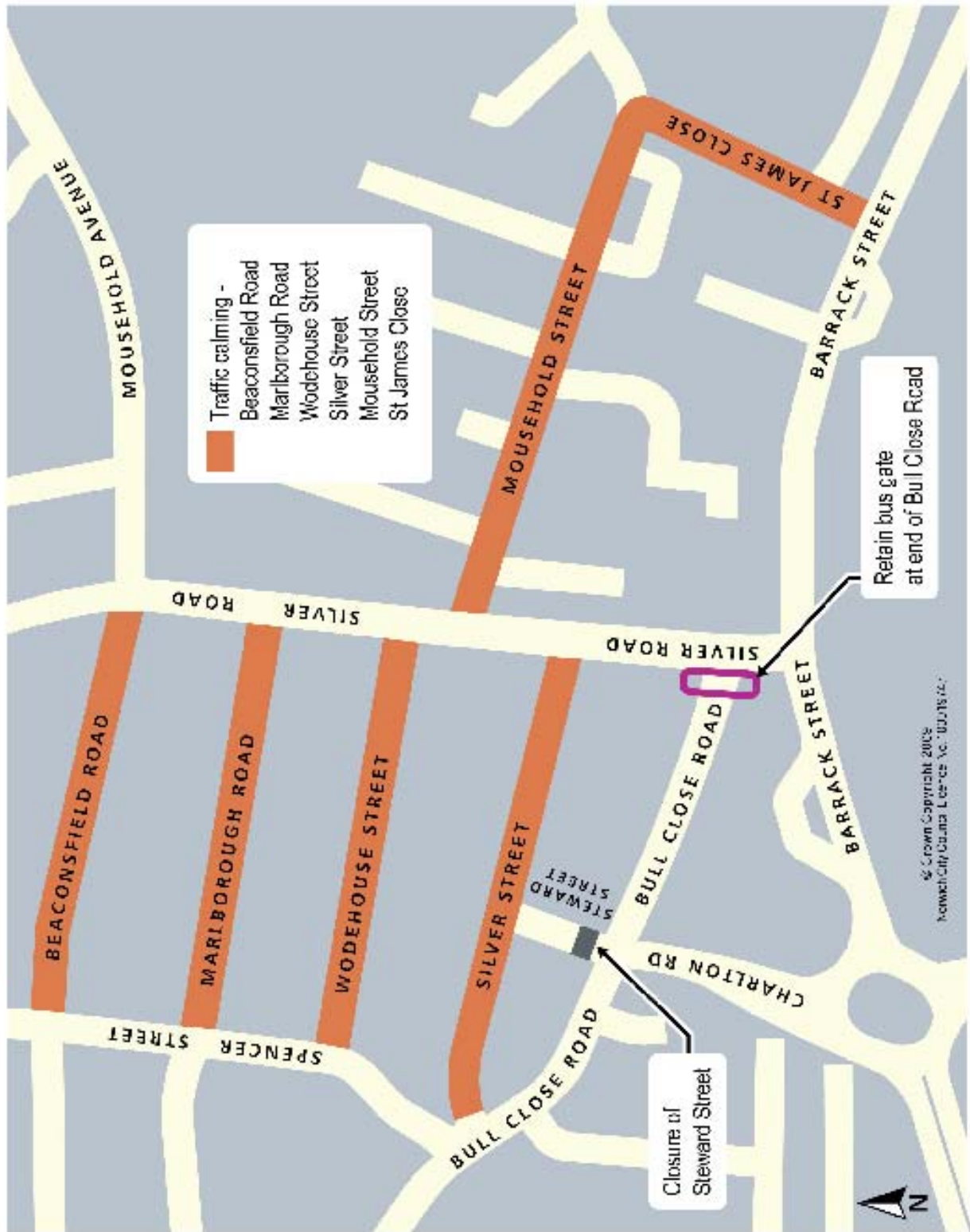
Appendix 1 – Traffic Survey Data



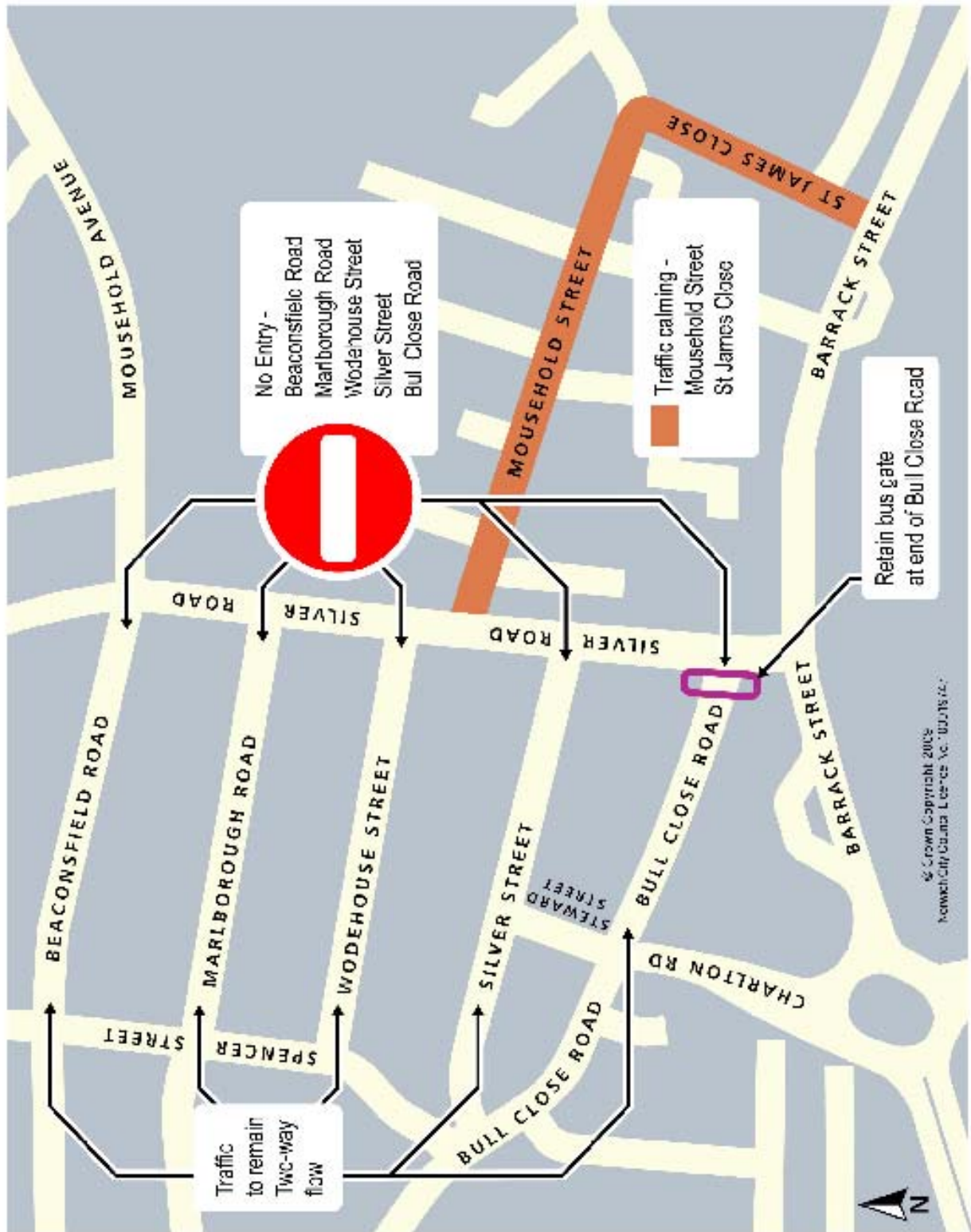
Appendix 2 – Consultation Plan - Option 1



Appendix 3 – Consultation Plan - Option 2


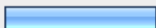





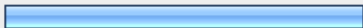


Appendix 4 – Consultation Plan - Option 3







Appendix 5 – Results of Consultation

Is traffic a concern in your street?

1. Something needs to be done to tackle traffic problems in the Silver Road area		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes 	68.3%	258
No 	25.4%	96
Don't know 	4.2%	16
No opinion 	2.4%	9
<i>answered question</i>		378
<i>skipped question</i>		14

2. I would accept the loss of a small amount of parking to enable new traffic calming or pedestrian crossings to be built in the Silver Road area		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes 	31.3%	118
No 	60.2%	227
Don't know 	5.6%	21
No opinion 	3.2%	12
<i>answered question</i>		377
<i>skipped question</i>		15

Appendix 5 – Results of Consultation

3. My preferred option is:		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Option 1: Open up Bull Close Road. Silver Street no entry, some traffic calming 	29.7%	105
Option 2: Keep Bull Close Road closed, lots of traffic calming 	12.7%	45
Option 3: Keep Bull Close Road closed, lots of no entry and traffic 	18.7%	66
Option 4: No change 	39.1%	138
<i>answered question</i>		353
<i>skipped question</i>		39

4. Do you have any comments?	
	Response Count
	289
<i>answered question</i>	289
<i>skipped question</i>	103

Appendix 6- Proposed Option 5

