

Report to the Cabinet



28 June 2021

Wards: All

Digitising Traffic Regulation Orders

Report of the Director of Legal Services and Partnerships

This item is not exempt
Therefore exempt reasons are not applicable

This is a key decision: 0025/21

1. Purpose of the Report and Summary

- 1.1 To adopt within the Authority use of a digital format for consolidation of existing and the making of subsequent traffic regulation orders (TROs), which will ultimately replace paper based records and make TROs more accessible to users of digital appliances.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To approve the introduction of digital Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) across the city subject to all TROs being fully compliant with the requirements of the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) Regulations 1996 and any subsequent amendments
- 2.2 To delegate authority to the Director of Legal Services and Partnerships to make and confirm such individual or consolidated digital Traffic Regulation Orders in accordance with legal process as are necessary to implement citywide coverage and create a comprehensive digital record in consultation with the Assistant Director of Major Projects & Infrastructure.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The Council's Traffic Regulation Orders are presently maintained in paper form. Several Traffic Regulation Orders may be introduced in the course of each year. The TRO environment provides the framework for both parking and moving restrictions upon the highway and effective management of evolving traffic circulation patterns and demand necessitates on-going detailed review of the paper based orders.
- 3.2 Converting the Traffic Regulation Orders into digital format will enable their presentation in a consistent and combined format through the Council's website, affording easier access to and greater clarity upon the restrictions that apply, and going forward should help to avoid the potential for discrepancies between the information held in paper based documentation and what is physically on the ground. It will avoid the potential for inaccuracies in measurements articulated in text, as the textual version of the order will be generated from the map-based digital data.
- 3.3 The virtual data will be accessible in real time through an Open API which is being integrated into the Council's Smart City Platform. This will allow existing and new TRO restrictions to be accessed by artificial intelligence and the use of that data in real time to manage parking and in due course moving traffic orders around the city.
- 3.4 An accessible comprehensive virtual record will provide visualisation of road markings and associated traffic signage linked to TROs. In addition the TRO itself will be in a digital format, publicly accessible via the Hull City Council Website. A digital map based record will also provide paperless consultation to support the legal process for the adoption of new TROs,
- 3.5 Having the virtual form of Traffic Regulation Orders available through an Open API enables accurate communication on where it is possible to park in the city and restrictions that apply on the road system. This will support real time identification of locations for access to space identification of parking bay/loading bay availability and payment for parking, creating digital kerbside management and reducing congestion and obstruction of shop delivery vehicles through a booking platform (such as the developing National Parking Platform sponsored by the Department for Transport).
- 3.6 This approach and the integration of the data into the Smart City Platform contributes to national strategy, and resource planning, providing a key building block for the communication of accurate, digitally available data that car manufacturers are now building into their vehicles to understand restrictions and space availability that apply in a city.

4. Impact on other Executive Committees (including Area Committees)

4.1 Traffic Regulation Orders impact on all areas of the city and virtualisation of the orders is relevant to all wards.

5. Background

5.1 The Council's Smart City Platform allows the breaking down of digital silos, accessing previously hidden data and getting maximum value from that data by using it with other datasets to create insight. It also allows simplified and secure means of sharing and visualising city wide data.

5.2 The Council was successful in obtaining DfT funding to support a project to open local authority transport data. Through that programme the Council became a member of the Transport Technology Forum and within the programme was included in national initiatives which have the aim to virtualise Traffic Regulation and Parking. This has enabled the Council to plan its approach to align with the national initiatives, allowing Hull to be promoted as a potential testbed for further DfT projects.

5.3 At the outset of the Coronavirus Pandemic it was recognised that there was an opportunity for teams within the Town Clerk's service and Street Scene to work together to 'walk the city' to support the digital capture of the traffic regulation data by staff employed in the Highways Service. Alongside this, work was undertaken to enable the data once produced to be integrated into the smart city platform.

6. Issues for Consideration

6.1 The digital record of road markings and associated signage is an essential part of the digital framework that will provide the Council with opportunities to work with the Department of Transport upon trials of smart technologies, keeping the city at the forefront of opportunities for UK smart city inward investment.

6.2 Digital mapping of road markings which can be reflected in TROs will enable virtual access to records.

7. Options and Risk Assessment

7.1 Do Nothing

The Council would continue to retain Traffic Regulation Orders in paper form. This will remain fully compliant with current statutory requirements, but does not open up opportunity to consolidate existing restrictions into a digital map base and obviously prevents any ability to integrate data into the Smart City Platform

7.2 Agree to the implementation of the process for introduction of digital TROs and to authorise the Director of Legal Services & Partnerships to consolidate existing and make new TROs utilising this format

This will:

- (a) Provide easier access to the public to Traffic Regulation Order restrictions in map format as well as enabling access to paper based orders;
- (b)
- (c) Allow the data upon restrictions that apply to the highways infrastructure to be consolidated with other sources of data through the Smart City Platform to enhance traffic management and planning and to make data available as appropriate in accordance with national strategy;

8. Comments of the Monitoring Officer (Director of Legal Services and Partnerships)

- 8.1 The work to virtualise the data has been primarily been undertaken by a team of staff across the Council with limited investment in improvements to the Council's existing software system. The Department for Transport are keen to promote virtualisation of Traffic Regulation Orders for the benefits that can materialise for the country as a whole. The process of revoking the existing Traffic Regulation Orders and replacing those orders with virtual orders is being project managed through the Town Clerk's service to ensure compliance with the legal requirements. At the present time, the prescribed requirements that must be contained in TROs and, equally importantly, the public notices that indicate to members of the public that a TRO is proposed, are set out in the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) Regulations 1996. The Regulations stipulate that the effect of a TRO must be described, as must the road and length of road to which it applies. This means that until and unless the legislation changes, TROs cannot be made by using digital maps alone: text will still be necessary to comply with the statutory requirements, as a map cannot be held to be a "description". However, this does not prevent a move to digitalisation of TROs and their integration with Smart City

technology. Accurate digital mapping should still improve the accuracy and thereby the enforceability of TROs and a digital source will allow almost instant access to those with mobile devices, reducing the need for calls and visits to the Guildhall or other Council premises.[CA]

9. Comments of the Section 151 Officer (Director of Finance and Transformation)

9.1 The s151 Officer supports the recommendations and welcomes the proposals.

10. Comments of Assistant Director of HR & OD and compliance with the Equality Duty

10.1 There are no staffing issues, in terms of equalities an impact assessment will have to be made as certain groups with protected characteristics may be less likely to be able to access digital only information.

11. Comments of Overview and Scrutiny

11.1 The Forward Plan entry related to this decision will be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee at its meeting of 7 June, 2021. The Committee will decide if the report should be subject to further scrutiny, and if so which Scrutiny Commission will carry out that work. (Ref.Sc6219 FH))

12. Comments of the Portfolio Holder Transportation, Roads, Highway and Flood Prevention

12.1 I support the steps proposed to maintain the Council's drive toward effective engagement with our community through digital means and placing the city on a strong standing for smart city opportunities.

Ian Anderson

Contact Officer:

Officer Interests: None

Background Documents: - A list of background documents must be included. These documents are then available (if not exempt) for public inspection.

Implications Matrix

This section must be completed and you must ensure that you have fully considered all potential implications

This matrix provides a simple check list for the things you need to have considered within your report

If there are no implications please state

I have informed and sought advice from HR, Legal, Finance, Overview and Scrutiny and the Climate Change Advisor and any other key stakeholders i.e. Portfolio Holder, relevant Ward Members etc. prior to submitting this report for official comments	Yes
I have considered whether this report requests a decision that is outside the Budget and Policy Framework approved by Council	Yes
Value for money considerations have been accounted for within the report	Yes
The report is approved by the relevant Assistant Director	Yes
I have included any procurement/commercial issues/implications within the report	Yes
I have considered the potential media interest in this report and liaised with the Media Team to ensure that they are briefed to respond to media interest.	Yes
I have included any equalities and diversity implications within the report and where necessary I have completed an Equalities Impact Assessment and the outcomes are included within the report	Yes
Any Health and Safety implications are included within the report	Yes
Any human rights implications are included within the report	Yes
I have included any community safety implications and paid regard to Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act within the report	Yes
I have liaised with the Climate Change Advisor and any environmental and climate change issues/sustainability implications are included within the report	Yes

I have included information about how this report contributes to the City Plan/ Area priorities within the report	No
I have considered the impact on air quality, carried out an appropriate assessment and included any resulting actions or opportunities necessary to improve air quality in the report.	No

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