



SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL South East Community Assembly Report

7

Report of: Southern Project Delivery Manager

Date: 11th October 2012

Subject: Proposal to make Skelton Lane and Spa Lane, Woodhouse, one-way – consultation feedback

Author of Report: Simon Nelson (tel. 0114 2736176)

Summary:

This report describes the outcome of consultation on a proposal to make Skelton Lane and Spa Lane one-way to all traffic. It goes on to recommend measures to alleviate congestion.

Reasons for Recommendations:

Despite the high level of support for the one-way system on Skelton Lane and Spa Lane there remain significant concerns about its impact. The recommended measures would go some way to addressing the problems of congestion without the same drawbacks.

Recommendations:

- The Assembly note the outcome of the consultation and the content of this report.
- The Assembly fund and promote the introduction of 'bus clearway' restrictions at bus stops, and waiting restrictions around the mouths of junctions and at crossing points, along the length of Skelton Lane and Spa Lane.
- The petitioners and those who provided contact details with their survey response are informed of the Assembly's decision.

Background Papers: NONE

Category of Report: OPEN

Statutory and Council Policy Checklist

Financial Implications
YES Cleared by: Matthew Bullock
Legal Implications
YES Cleared by: Andrew Bullock
Equality of Opportunity Implications
YES Cleared by: Ian Oldershaw
Tackling Health Inequalities Implications
NO
Human rights Implications
NO
Environmental and Sustainability implications
NO
Economic impact
NO
Community safety implications
NO
Human resources implications
NO
Property implications
NO
Area(s) affected
South East Community Assembly area of Sheffield
Relevant Scrutiny Committee if decision called in
Safer and Stronger Communities
Is the item a matter which is reserved for approval by the City Council?
NO
Press release
NO

PROPOSAL TO MAKE SKELTON LANE AND SPA LANE, WOODHOUSE, ONE-WAY – CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report describes the outcome of consultation on a proposal to make Skelton Lane and Spa Lane one-way to all traffic. It goes on to recommend measures to alleviate congestion.

2.0 WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR SHEFFIELD PEOPLE

- 2.1 If approved, the proposals recommended in this report would address some of the issues and priorities of local people.

3.0 OUTCOME AND SUSTAINABILITY

- 3.1 The measures identified in this report would help to make the roads and pavements safer for pedestrians and vehicle drivers, one of the priorities in the South East Community Assembly Plan.
- 3.2 The measures would support the City Council's priorities, values and outcomes as set out in the Corporate Plan 'Standing Up For Sheffield', in particular *Supporting and protecting communities; Spend public money wisely;* and making the City *A Great Place to Live*.

4.0 MAIN BODY OF THE REPORT

Introduction

- 4.1 South East Community Assembly has received complaints that cars parked on Skelton Lane and Spa Lane, Woodhouse, sometimes prevent drivers from passing each other, causing congestion and delays to bus services. (Bus services operate in one direction, clockwise, from Spa Lane into Skelton Lane.)
- 4.2 In May 2011 the Assembly asked officers to investigate the feasibility of making either the full length of Skelton Lane and Spa Lane one-way only. Consideration was also given to making a section of Skelton Lane one-way from Water Slacks Road to Tannery Street. The resultant report, presented to Assembly Members in September 2011, concluded that whilst either arrangement would be feasible, there would be significant drawbacks:
- Either proposal would adversely affect the accessibility of all properties along Skelton Lane and Spa Lane;
 - Visitors driving to Woodhouse Library and Woodhouse Health Centre would have to travel a considerable additional distance to reach the car park or to be able to park on Skelton Lane;

- Some drivers would be likely to travel at higher speeds knowing that no traffic would be coming from the opposite direction. (The feasibility report recommended that some form of measure to moderate speeds should be introduced alongside a one-way system); and
- That the considerable cost of such a scheme would be disproportionate to the problem

The feasibility report contained an alternative proposal which would maintain two-way traffic but prohibit drivers from parking at bus stops and around junction mouths, creating a series of passing places. This was rejected by the Assembly on the grounds that it would remove much needed parking opportunities.

Consultation

4.3 The Assembly decided that the opinion of local residents should be canvassed. In February 2012 letters were delivered door-to-door to properties on, or accessed from, Skelton Lane, Spa Lane and Water Slacks Road. People were asked two questions: whether they agreed that congestion was a problem; and whether Skelton Lane and Spa Lane should be made one-way. A prepaid envelope was provided for questionnaire returns. A copy of the information delivered to residents is appended to this report (Appendix A).

4.4 Approximately 830 questionnaires were delivered. 287 (34.6%) were returned and the responses are summarised below:

Q1)	Do you agree that there are often congestion problems on Skelton Lane and Spa Lane?	Yes	250	87.1%
		No	33	11.5%
		No Answer	4	1.4%
		Total	287	100.0%

Q2)	Do you agree that Skelton Lane and Spa Lane should be made one-way from Meetinghouse Lane to Tannery Street / Sheffield Road?	Yes	196	68.3%
		No	82	28.6%
		No Answer	9	3.1%
		Total	287	100.0%

163 people gave their name and address so that they could be informed of the Assembly's decision.

- 4.5 The overwhelming majority of people completing the questionnaire (87.1%) agree that congestion is a problem. 68.3% of respondents support the proposal to make Skelton Lane and Spa Lane one-way.
- 4.6 Respondents were asked for comments or suggestions about how to improve the traffic flow on Skelton Lane and these are summarised in Appendix B.
- 4.7 Many people have no alternative but to park on Skelton Lane and Spa Lane due to a lack of off-street parking provision, something that is mentioned time and again in the survey responses (67 comments). There is a general consensus that Skelton Lane/Spa Lane can be congested at times and that this is caused by cars being parked so as to deny drivers travelling in opposing directions the opportunity to pass each other.
- 4.8 All 40 people that named a specific 'problem' location identified the approaches to, and junctions with, the B6064 Tannery Street/Market Street. The majority of those people also referred to the congestion that they feel is generated by Woodhouse Health Centre and Woodhouse Library at the north end of Skelton Lane. 70 people, including many who support the one-way proposal, asked for additional waiting restrictions, particularly in the area close to the Health Centre.
- 4.9 Others questioned whether the problems were so acute as to justify changing the working of the whole road.

Woodhouse Health Centre

- 4.10 The Practice Manager has indicated that the Practice would object to the introduction of the one-way proposal. Whilst agreeing that congestion is a problem, and one that is contributed to by their patients, they believe that the proposal would:
- cause critical delays to doctors going to emergency home visits from the surgery
 - significantly increase the time it takes Ambulances to reach the surgery
 - contribute to congestion. *"People will come round Spa Lane to Skelton Lane to see if there are parking spaces in the surgery car park, when there are none they will then go round again to try and park on the street as near to the surgery as possible."* The Practice feels that this increase in traffic and exhaust fumes would have an impact on the health of the local population, a relatively high proportion of who suffer from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.
 - cause speeds to increase and so create a danger for frail and elderly people crossing the road *"as drivers drive recklessly around the loop in frustration at driving the long way around... and it's otherwise a relatively long stretch of otherwise quiet road... The parked cars slow*

people down in order to allow others through – they would have to have traffic calming at a massive cost to achieve the same effect.”

They query whether there is evidence that car traffic is delayed much more than on other residential roads in Sheffield.

Finally the practice request the introduction of parking restrictions in the area around the entrance to the staff car park and nearby junctions *“to spread people a little further up the road as there is actually plenty of space to park”*

Woodhouse Library

- 4.11 The Area Library Manager completed a survey form on behalf of the staff of Woodhouse Library. It indicates that they support the one-way proposal but offered no additional comment. However they have requested further waiting restrictions on Skelton Lane (there is currently a ‘Keep Clear’ marking) so that delivery drivers would be able to pull in without blocking the road. The Library staff would also like a length of waiting restriction across the access to a small gated off-street car park at the side of the building as they are sometimes unable to access this area because of other parked vehicles on the road.

Petition

- 4.12 A petition containing 43 signatures has been received, requesting that Skelton Lane and Spa Lane be made one-way on the grounds that *“It is not a safe road for either the traffic or pedestrians, it is not even safe for the traffic to travel both ways at the same time.”*

Ward Members

- 4.13 Officers met with the three Members for Woodhouse on 3rd September 2012 to discuss the results of the consultation and the way forward. The Members reiterated their support for the proposal to make Skelton Lane and Spa Lane one-way only.

Emergency Service

- 4.14 The Fire Service and Veolia have confirmed that a one-way system would not cause any difficulties. The police, who would be responsible for enforcing the scheme *“would not support a one-way system in this area at all”*.

Bus Services

- 4.15 Whilst not quantifying any difficulties, the three bus operators with services using Spa Lane/Skelton Lane have stated they would welcome the introduction of a one-way system.

Accident data

- 4.16 There have been three recorded collisions on Skelton Lane/Spa Lane in the five years to the end of June 21012, each resulting in a slight injury:
- A car emerging from Lambcroft View collided with a taxi travelling south along Spa Lane and drove away from the scene
 - A child on a pushbike. The bike's brakes failed and the child collided with the side of a car
 - An elderly lady fell from the seat of a bus as the driver braked heavily to avoid a taxi pulling out in front of it

Discussion

- 4.17 There is much frustration with the lack of off-street parking and the congestion caused by on-street parking, and widespread support for the one-way proposal. However, people both for and against the proposal raised concerns:

- i That people would choose to drive faster, making the road less safe
- ii Ease of access to and from all properties would be compromised and in some cases drivers would face significant detours
- iii Turning movements into and out of the area would be concentrated on fewer junctions, increasing the likelihood of queuing traffic on Tannery Street/Market Street as people attempt to enter the area, and on Skelton Lane as people attempt to leave
- iv More traffic would use Water Slacks Road
- v People would park/reverse in Meetinghouse Lane for a quicker exit
- vi The proposals would not address the root causes of the congestion, the lack of off-street parking, particularly the acute problems on the Skelton Lane/Spa Lane approaches to Tannery Street/Market Street

- 4.18 Officers believe that each of these concerns is justified.

- i The conversion of a road from two-way to one-way is usually accompanied by an increase in vehicle speeds as drivers become accustomed to the absence of an opposing flow of traffic. The precise change could only be determined by 'before' and 'after' speed surveys, however attention is drawn to research that suggests that a 1mph increase from an average speed of 20mph generates a 7% increase in collisions.¹ This is of particular concern given the high proportion of elderly residents.

¹ [Transport Research Laboratory Report 421 - The effects of drivers' speed on the frequency of road accidents](#) (Taylor M, Lynam D and Baruya A, 2000)

- ii Ease of access would be compromised. For instance:
 - A resident seeking to access a property just south of Water Slacks Road from the west, either via Skelton Lane or Water Slacks Road would have to drive approximately 500m further
 - Those seeking to park near the library and health centre will have to drive approximately 300m further (coming from the west) and 280m further (coming from the east)
 - Somebody who lives on Spa Lane immediately south of Meetinghouse Lane will have to travel an addition distance of over 1km in order to travel east on Market Street

The net result would be greater distances travelled on these roads. Some would of course find these increases acceptable if traffic on Skelton Lane/Spa Lane moves more easily.

- iii At present there are three ways in and out of the area, Skelton Lane, Spa Lane and Water Slacks Road. Under this proposal there would be two: Spa Lane and Water Slacks Road to enter the area; and Skelton Lane and Water Slacks Road to exit. From the consultation responses: *“Increased traffic turning right from Market Street onto Spa Lane [would cause] a bottleneck at the existing traffic island. This will also cause issues for pedestrians using the pedestrian traffic island between Market Street and the Stag car park... Increased traffic turning right onto Tannery Street from Skelton Lane [would make] it more difficult for people to cross on the zebra crossing than it already is.”*
- iv Fewer points of access would inevitably increase the attractiveness of Water Slacks Road. It is extremely likely that the volume of traffic using Water Slacks Road would increase.
- v The proposed one-way section begins immediately south of the junction of Spa Lane and Meetinghouse Lane, allowing the residents of Meetinghouse Lane to exit directly onto Tannery Street/Market Street. Without parking restrictions it is likely that some residents of Spa Lane would attempt to park in this area.
- vi Ward Councillors requested that the consultation should only be concerned with the one-way proposal and not the introduction of waiting restrictions.

4.19 Prior to being subsumed into Amey, Street Force provided a Budget Estimate for the cost of introducing the one-way proposal of £39,600. (This includes allowances for design; the provision and installation of traffic signs and road markings; site clearance; Yorkshire Electricity’s fees for making electrical connections signs that require illuminating; the cost of advertising and making a one-way Traffic Regulation Order; and a commuted sum to pay for future maintenance.) Colleagues at Amey

have been asked to review this figure, and it is anticipated that a revised Budget Estimate will be available by the time of this meeting.

- 4.20 All highway schemes of this scale are subject to a four-stage independent Road Safety Audit process (at preliminary design, detailed design, on completion and 12 and 36 months post-completion). The Assembly should be aware that it is likely that the Audit Team would raise similar concerns to those described in paragraph 4.17 above, and almost certainly in relation to the potential for vehicle speeds to increase. In this situation the Head of Transport, Traffic and Parking Services would be asked to adjudicate on the implementation of a scheme that the Audit Team were recommending should not go ahead in the form shown in the consultation document. The Assembly is therefore again advised that that the introduction of a one-way scheme should only be considered if accompanied by suitable traffic calming measures.

Alternative proposal

- 4.21 Congestion could be eased by creating a series of passing places along Skelton Lane/Spa Lane as described in the feasibility report and shown in Appendix C. This suggestion has previously been rejected by the Assembly.
- 4.22 It is acknowledged that legitimate parking opportunities are at a premium in some areas and so it is suggested that restrictions be limited to locations where people should not be parking now, such as at bus stops, within 10m of junctions or across dropped crossings. A number of dropped crossings are currently marked with the non-regulatory 'Keep Clear' marking.
- 4.23 This alternative proposal would:
- prohibit parking at places at which parked vehicles currently present a hazard to other drivers by restricting visibility and to pedestrians by denying access to crossing places and making it difficult to board buses;
 - remove parking from the Skelton Lane/Spa Lane approaches to Tannery Street/Market Street making it easier for drivers to turn in and out of these junctions; and
 - provide locations at which drivers would have space to pull in and allow an opposing vehicle to pass.

In doing so it would go some way to relieving the congestion currently experienced, without the negative impacts of the one-way proposal identified in both the feasibility report and during the consultation process.

- 4.24 The police have indicated that they “*would be more likely to support*” such a proposal. The Council’s Civil Enforcement Officers would be responsible for enforcing the restrictions.
- 4.25 Street Force has provided a Budget Estimate of £12,300 for this work. A revised estimate has been requested from Amey.

Conclusion

- 4.26 There is a lack of off-street parking for the residents of Skelton Lane and, to a lesser extent, Spa Lane. On-street parking currently narrows the road to a single lane in many places, causing congestion, delays to bus services and frustration for residents. Whilst acknowledging the widespread support for the proposal to make Skelton Lane/Spa Lane one-way, officers have a duty to make the Assembly fully aware of the possible and certain effects of introducing that scheme.
- 4.27 On balance, officers feel that the one-way scheme shown in the consultation document and requested by the petitioners does not represent the best solution to these problems.
- 4.28 It is not suggested that the alternative proposal, described in paragraph 4.21, would be a panacea; some people would not be able to park where they do at present, and may have to walk an additional distance to their destination. The road would still be narrowed to a single lane in places and drivers travelling in opposing directions would continue to have to wait to give way to each other. But clearly prohibiting parking in places where people should not park anyway would create passing opportunities, relieving the worst of the congestion. Officers feel that this represents a proportionate response to the congestion experienced on Spa Lane and Skelton Road.
- 4.29 In the event that the Assembly wishes to pursue this alternative proposal, officers would seek authority from the Head of Transport, Traffic and Parking Services to advertise and invite comments on the associated Traffic Regulation Order with a view to implementing the restrictions as soon as possible.

Relevant implications

- 4.30 The introduction of either the one-way proposal or the alternative proposal outlined in paragraph 4.21 above would be met from the Assembly’s approved 2012/13 highways budget allocation (£40,000), any funding not yet committed from the 2011/12 highways allocation, and/or the Assembly’s discretionary budget. Amey have been asked to provide Budget Estimates for both proposals in time to be reported verbally at this meeting.
- 4.31 The Council has a statutory duty to promote road safety and to ensure that any measures it promotes and implements are reasonably safe for all users. In making decisions of this nature the Council must be satisfied that the measures are necessary to avoid danger to

pedestrians and other road users or for preserving or improving the amenities of the area through which the road runs. Providing that the Council is so satisfied then it is acting lawfully and within its powers.

- 4.32 An Equality Impact Assessment has been conducted and concludes that the proposed one-way system is likely to have negative equality impacts for certain groups. There would be an increased risk to vulnerable pedestrians and road users such as the young, the elderly, disabled people and their carers plus families with young children due to the likelihood that traffic will travel faster on a one-way road. There will be increased journey times for these groups if travelling by car to Woodhouse Health Centre. The alternative option, for waiting restrictions at junctions, crossing points and bus stops, would improve access for pedestrians and bus users by removing parked cars that currently cause obstructions to people seeking to cross the road and board buses and would therefore have positive implications for these groups. Both proposals are equality neutral for other protected characteristics such as race, religion, sexuality, etc.

5.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 See paragraph 4.21 above

6.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Despite the high level of support for the one-way system on Skelton Lane and Spa Lane there remain significant concerns about its impact. The recommended measures would go some way to addressing the problems of congestion without the same drawbacks.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The Assembly note the outcome of the consultation and the content of this report.
- 7.2 The Assembly fund and promote the introduction of 'bus clearway' restrictions at bus stops, and waiting restrictions around the mouths of junctions and at crossing points, along the length of Skelton Lane and Spa Lane.
- 7.3 The petitioners and those who provided contact details with their survey response are informed of the Assembly's decision.

Nigel Robson
Southern Project Delivery Manager

11th October 2012

Proposal to make Skelton Lane and Spa Lane one-way only

South East Community Assembly are concerned that cars parked on Skelton Lane and Spa Lane sometimes prevent drivers from passing each other, causing congestion and delays to the bus services. The Assembly feel that a one-way system would help.

The Assembly would like to know whether you would support or object to Skelton Lane and Spa Lane being made one-way only, clockwise from Meetinghouse Lane.

Advantages

- Car drivers and buses would not be delayed by traffic coming from the opposite direction

Drawbacks

- Many people would have to drive further to get to and from their home, and visitors to the library and medical centre would have to drive the full length of Spa Lane and Skelton Lane
- Some drivers may travel faster because they will not expect to meet anyone coming the other way
- A lot of new traffic signs would be needed

Tell us what you think

Please tell us whether you think this is a good or bad idea by completing the attached form and returning it by Friday 9 March 2012 using the Freepost envelope provided (no stamp required).

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Key

Proposed one-way traffic

Proposed banned turns from side roads onto Skelton Lane and Spa Lane

APPENDIX B

Proposal to make Skelton Lane and Spa Lane one-way Consultation responses

Questionnaires delivered Thursday 23rd February 2012

Number of questionnaires delivered: **830 (approx)**

Number of responses: **287**

Response rate: **34.6%**

Summary of responses:

Q1)	Do you agree that there are often congestion problems on Skelton Lane and Spa Lane?	Yes	250	87.1%
		No	33	11.5%
		No Answer	4	1.4%
		Total	287	100.0%

Q2)	Do you agree that Skelton Lane and Spa Lane should be made one-way from Meetinghouse Lane to Tannery Street / Sheffield Road?	Yes	196	68.3%
		No	82	28.6%
		No Answer	9	3.1%
		Total	287	100.0%

Summary of comments:

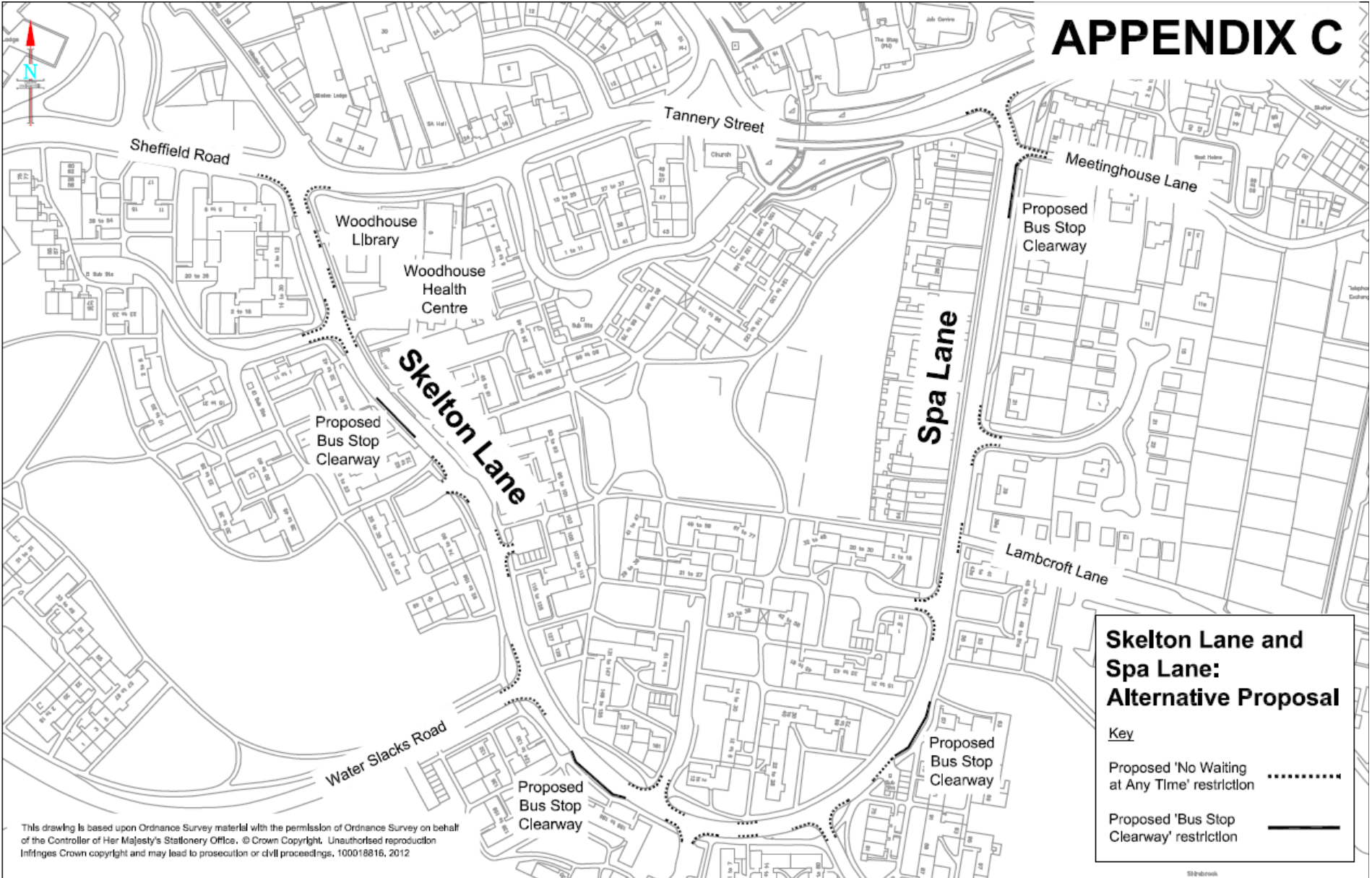
Congestion and parking	Number of comments
Double yellow lines are needed at junctions with the main road and Health Centre	48
Parking permits/off road parking needed for residents.	27
Park on one side only	22
Convert verges to parking/widen road	24
More parking needed at the Health Centre	15
Currently difficult for buses	9
Existing and new parking restrictions must be enforced	7
Create passing points	4
Double yellow lines on needed at the junction with Meetinghouse Lane	3
Create sheltered parking	1
Encourage cars to park with wheels on pavement.	1

Summary of comments (contd.):

Drawbacks of the one-way proposal	Number of comments
One-way would encourage speeding.	9
Right-turning vehicles in and out would cause a bottleneck (also have to give way to pedestrians at zebra on Tannery St)	9
Longer journeys/increased traffic flow/creates access problems for residents	9
A one-way system would be costly	5
Proposals won't stop parking problems outside Health Centre	7
There are no problems on Skelton Lane in the evening/at weekends	6
People will park/reverse in Meetinghouse Lane for a quicker exit	4
Lots of elderly and disabled, one way would mean wheelchair users going into road to enter vehicles.	3
In heavy snow it's easier to go downhill rather than uphill.	2
Problems on Spa Lane are only at night	2

General	Number of comments
Take buses off Spa Lane	5
Make one-way from Water Slacks Road to Tannery Street	5
Introduce a 20mph speed limit	5
Safe crossing points needed	5
Traffic calming needed	3
Traffic held up by learner drivers.	2
Important to keep Spa Lane and Skelton Lane accessible to buses	2
Not noticed congestion problems	2
Not busy enough for one-way	2
Buses don't have to wait for long	2
One-way would improve access for emergency services	1
Cars already speed	1
Fill in the potholes	1
One-way should be other way round	1

APPENDIX C



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