

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 13 September 2018

Report of the Head of Service, Design & Construction

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
West Lancashire North;

Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984

Moss Hey Lane, Mere Brow, West Lancashire Borough, Prohibition of Driving Order

(Appendices 'A' and 'B' refer)

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Executive Summary

The above Order proposes to prohibit motor vehicles from using the southern arm of Moss Hey Lane at its junction with Southport New Road (A565) north east of Mere Brow due to the number of ongoing vehicle collisions. The draft Order has been advertised locally with a total of 28 responses being received objecting to the proposals.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to authorise the sealing of the Prohibition of Driving Order of the southern arm of Moss Hey Lane at its junction with the A565 Southport New Road, a draft of which is attached at Appendix 'A'.

Background and Advice

The A565 Southport New Road at its junction with Moss Hey Lane has been identified as a location requiring measures to reduce the number of road traffic collisions. The accident records indicate that over the preceding 5 year period there have been 17 collisions at the junction. This level is considered high for an unclassified rural road and it is appropriate that interventions be considered to reduce the number of collisions.

An analysis of the collisions has identified that 12 resulted in slight injuries and 5 in serious injuries. The majority of collisions were the result of vehicles failing to observe the 'Give Way' when crossing the A565 from Moss Hey Lane in either

direction. Further analysis has suggested that of the 17 collisions, a total of 8 collisions may have been prevented if the proposed closure had been in place.

Consultations

A formal public consultation was undertaken between 7 March 2018 and 4 April 2018. This included an advertisement in the local newspaper and posting of notices on site. Letters were also posted to properties/businesses directly affected and information was provided in the local primary school and village hall.

In total 28 respondents have objected to the proposals, these have been grouped into 5 categories. The number indicated within the title, represents how many respondents raised each objection.

1. Increased traffic flow through the village/past the school - 21 objectors

Increased traffic through the village increasing the risk to school children.

Response

A traffic survey has established that the majority of traffic using the junction use it to travel to and from the village. The survey identified peak traffic movements associated with school start and finish times together with peaks during morning and afternoon rush hours. Closure of the southern arm would not prevent any of this traffic travelling through the village as it would merely access it in a different direction.

2. Alternative solutions keeping the junction open - 18 objectors

Objectors suggested making the junction safer by installing traffic signals or a roundabout at the junction.

Response

The creation of a roundabout will require the purchase of land together with the diversion of underground utilities both at significant additional cost. The installation of traffic signals, whilst exceeding the available budget, would, at this location in close proximity to the other controlled junction have a detrimental effect on the efficiency of the highway network causing unnecessary delays

3. Close the complete junction - 5 objectors

Objectors wanted the whole junction to be closed out of concern for the safety of road users, with a number quoting the precedent set by the closure of similar junctions in the wider area.

Response

The alternative routes for traffic consist of narrow country lanes which the large agricultural vehicles within the area would struggle to negotiate. In addition the alternative junction also has a significant accident record.

4. Disruption to local businesses (mainly agricultural) - 4 objectors

Objections were raised due to the increased distance that the local farmers, etc. would have to travel especially during harvest times with multiple journeys in the same day.

Response

There will be a modest increase in the distance and time required for travelling along the new route, however, this new route is via an easier to navigate roundabout avoiding a very sharp turn at Mere Brow.

5. Other miscellaneous objections - 11 objectors

The other objections covered:

a. Objecting to the temporary diversion route and night works.

The temporary diversion and night works will be of a short duration and disruption to local residents will be minimised as far as possible over that short duration.

b. May increase overall incident frequency and/or severity. There is no proof the proposal will reduce frequency and/or severity of the incidents

It is not anticipated that incident frequency or severity will increase by removing the traffic manoeuvres involved in the recorded incidents. Approximately 50% of incidents over the last 5 years may have been prevented if the proposed closure had been in place.

c. Existing road markings and signage are in poor condition

These will be inspected with work being undertaken if appropriate.

d. Increase the use of Blackgate Lane junction

The distance from the Mere Brow village roundabout and Blackgate Lane (measured from Moss Hey Lane) is very similar. It is anticipated that traffic will use the roundabout rather than Blackgate Lane as this junction is easier to navigate.

e. There is some "ancient law" that prohibits closing of historic rights of way

The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 provides for a traffic regulation order to be made to prohibit driving by motor vehicles. The highway will not thereby be stopped up or 'closed' but will be available for other users by foot or by cycle.

f. Green Lane Link created instead

Green Lane Link is outside the scope of this scheme.

Police response

Lancashire Constabulary wish to see both the northern and southern arms of the Moss Hey Lane junction closed to motor vehicles.

A meeting was held on site, during which it was explained that due to budgetary constraints and the lack of an alternative route for the northern arm of Moss Hey Lane, only the closure of the southern arm was possible at this time. Following this discussion, the police representatives support the proposal as the benefits in accident reduction gained by the closure was in their view preferable to no change at the junction. They requested that the situation be monitored and closure of the northern arm be considered if and when the budget became available.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

If these measures are not installed then there is not expected to be any change in the current frequency and severity of incidents at this junction.

Financial

The estimated cost of the proposals is £49,923 and will be funded from the road safety programme, Project ID 2785.

Legal

All works will occur within the highway boundary. The Traffic Regulation Order will be made under sections 1, 2, 4 and 92 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
None		
Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate		
N/A		