

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 7 November 2019

Report of the Director of Growth, Environment and Planning

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
Penwortham West;

Penwortham Slip Road Closure

(Appendices 'A' and 'B' refer)

Contact for further information:

Alan Eastham, Tel: (01772) 534561, Principal Engineer,
alan.eastham@lancashire.gov.uk

Executive Summary

Approval is sought for the closure of the slip road from the A59 Liverpool Road to A59 Golden Way in Penwortham for all vehicular traffic. Pedestrians, equestrians and cyclists will still be permitted to use the slip road. This is to comply with planning condition 10 of the Penwortham Bypass (the Bypass) planning permission, which seeks to discourage through vehicular traffic on the A59.

Traffic modelling demonstrates the closure will result in additional traffic transferring to the Bypass, further reducing through traffic and congestion in Penwortham, providing additional environmental and air quality benefits, and maximising opportunities to improve the public space in the town centre.

The proposal is vital to enabling the delivery of high quality cycling provision to serve Penwortham and Hutton. In turn, this will help to achieve Public Health England guidance to encourage the switch to active travel in place of short car journeys.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to approve closure of the slip road between the A59 Liverpool Road and A59 Golden Way to all public vehicular traffic whilst keeping it open for pedestrians, equestrians and cyclists by the making of a Traffic Regulation Order.

Background and Advice

The completion of the Penwortham Bypass with a direct link between the A582 Broad Oak roundabout and A59 west of Penwortham has been a longstanding aspiration to improve conditions for all travel modes, reduce traffic passing through Penwortham, which experiences very significant peak hour congestion, and allow

public realm improvements and measures to promote buses, walking and cycling in the town centre and along the A59.

Improvements to the A59 through Penwortham are required by a condition on the planning permission granted for Penwortham Bypass. This requires a scheme to be implemented which discourages vehicular use of the current A59 through Penwortham and promotes the use of the Bypass ensuring the traffic reduction benefits to noise and air quality in the residential and retail areas of Penwortham are achieved.

The scope of these improvements was first set out in the county council's Highways & Transport Master Plan for Central Lancashire under its plans for *Better Public Transport* and *Better Public Realm*. It can be summarised by the following objectives, to:

1. Discourage through-traffic from using the Liverpool Road corridor by removing any journey-time savings/reliability to private motorists of using this local route over the primary route provided by the Penwortham Bypass.
2. Positively manage and direct through-traffic to use the Penwortham Bypass.
3. Prioritise and enhance the user experience, convenience and journey-time savings/reliability for bus users, pedestrians and cyclists travelling through and within Penwortham; and
4. Ensure necessary car trips originating in, or to destinations in, Penwortham can be made conveniently and safely.

The closure of the slip road (length shown on Appendix 'A') to vehicular traffic is one of a series of measures designed to comply with the planning condition. Closure of the slip road to vehicular traffic also supports several local planning policy objectives and aligns with existing and future investment strategies in Central Lancashire. The proposed measures have been developed following public consultation in September 2018 which sought suggestions from the local community and stakeholders for measures to discourage through traffic in Penwortham following completion of the Penwortham Bypass.

The results of this consultation have been considered as part of an engineering design exercise, and supported by extensive traffic modelling of the network at strategic and local levels. The resultant package of complementary measures comprises:

1. A59/Penwortham Bypass Signal Timings.
2. Advanced signage on east and west approaches to the corridor.
3. Downgrading the A-road status of Liverpool Road through Penwortham, between its junctions with the newly completed Bypass and Penwortham Triangle (A59 Liverpool Road/Leyland Road).
4. Reconfiguration (initially as an interim arrangement) of the junction of Liverpool Road/Cop Lane/Priory Lane and modifications to the signal timings to prioritise cyclists and pedestrian movements.
5. Closure of the slip road to vehicular traffic between A59 Liverpool Road (Penwortham Brow) and Golden Way.
6. Reconfiguration of the Penwortham Triangle junction.

7. Reduction in the speed limit along part of the corridor (through Penwortham Town Centre) to 20mph.
8. Reduction of carriageway space for motor vehicles with road space reallocated to form dedicated cycle lanes as part of a cycle superhighway serving the Hutton to city centre corridor.

Each individual measure provides a level of deterrence by increasing journey times for private vehicular traffic along Liverpool Road and/or promoting the Penwortham Bypass as the primary route choice. Each measure can be implemented independently of the others providing some level of benefit. However, in order for the maximum cumulative impact/benefit to be achieved, these measures are intended to be delivered as a package of works, thus satisfying condition 10 of the Penwortham Bypass planning permission.

A scheme has been designed to deliver this package in a single works phase to minimise disruption to the local area. The intention is to modify the Penwortham Triangle before the bypass opens, with the other works taking place immediately after the Bypass has opened to traffic.

Road safety improvements are also provided through removal of vehicular conflicts at the slip road where it merges with Guild Way. Conflicts will also be reduced between vehicles and northbound on-carriageway cyclists at the slip road diverge on Penwortham Brow.

The removal of merging traffic on the slip road will reduce weaving and provide journey time benefits between Golden Way and Strand Road.

This report deals with the proposed Traffic Regulation Order to close the slip road.

Consultations

Subsequent to the public consultation exercise described above, the county council has undertaken requisite publicity and consultation on two aspects of the package of works listed above.

The county council has consulted on the proposal to reduce the speed limit on part of the A59 Liverpool Road (point 7 above). This matter did not attract any objections.

A consultation with the public and with statutory bodies has recently been carried out in relation to the draft Traffic Regulation Order to close the slip road to vehicles.

Some 295 representations were received, comprising 58 individual letters and 237 set out in a standard letter. A petition against the closure of the slip road was received containing 1,229 signatures. No objections have been made by the statutory bodies including the Police.

6 letters of support were received. Penwortham Town Council expressed its support to the closure at its July 2019 meeting.

The objections and suggestions made to the consultation have been considered and fall under one or more of seven general headings presented below. A response is given in each case.

Residents will be inconvenienced

Delivery of the Penwortham Bypass and these complementary measures will reduce levels of traffic through Penwortham, in particular the significant volume of traffic passing through Penwortham on a daily basis heading to the city centre, motorway network and other destinations. Those travelling to destinations in Penwortham, to businesses, services and schools, and residents travelling into and out of Penwortham, will benefit from significantly reduced vehicles numbers along Liverpool Road. Residents and visitors to Penwortham will similarly benefit from an improved environment, with issues of severance, noise and air quality and road safety improved as a result of far fewer motor vehicles passing through the town (Appendix 'B' refers).

In order to ensure local traffic is not unduly inconvenienced, in tandem with the slip closure, the Penwortham Triangle junction will be reconfigured to give more priority to and 'green time' at the traffic signals for local traffic travelling down Penwortham Hill to turn right at the signals and proceed into Preston.

With the slip road closed, Guild Way/Golden Way will function properly and with much greater efficiency with two free-flowing lanes of traffic inbound towards the city centre and Riversway/Strand Road. Were the slip road to remain open, there would be a greater inconvenience to the greater vehicle numbers on Guild Way/Golden Way (combining traffic from the A582 and A59 routes) but also in turn to traffic using the slip road which would face greater flows when attempting to filter onto Guild Way and Golden Way.

Rat running will increase on other roads

Concerns have been raised that drivers will use any route to make their journey shorter. The traffic modelling (Appendix 'B' refers) for this scheme has indicated the amount of traffic that will use alternative routes, and it does not show any significant increases on the surrounding roads. On the contrary, the opening of the Bypass will reduce current and long-standing levels of rat running by providing additional road capacity in the area and an alternative route to the use of local roads in Penwortham, and by reducing congestion along Liverpool Road to the benefit of local journeys.

The viability of local shops will be impacted

Concerns have been expressed that the closure of the slip will affect the volumes of passing trade and impact the viability of local businesses. Currently passing traffic on Liverpool Road, with the largest volumes at peak times slow moving and queuing, has limited opportunity to stop and park in the town centre. Current volumes of traffic also impact on local journeys to these businesses, whilst congestion in general reduces the environment and overall attractiveness of the area. The opening of the Bypass and delivery of these complementary measures, including the slip closure, will significantly lessen traffic levels in the town centre, and, in itself, improve the

local environment. This in turn will allow for further public realm improvements, to introduce a safe and attractive public realm in the town centre, to encourage greater footfall, more people to walk, cycle and use public transport to journey into and through the town centre, and the opportunity for additional and better planned parking provision, benefitting local shops and businesses.

Fuel costs for motorists will increase

Objections have pointed to longer journeys with the slip road removed. This ignores the benefits of better flowing traffic conditions which will be achieved with the Bypass open and the slip road closed. If the slip road were to be kept open and motorists used this route rather than joining the Bypass or using the Penwortham Triangle junction, fuel usage would likely be the same or possibly more. The traffic volumes on Guild Way and Golden Way will reduce opportunities to filter and motorists on the slip road will spend relatively more time queuing. Traffic modelling (Appendix 'B' refers) shows that with the removal of the slip road and the conflict between merging traffic at the slip exit and the resulting weaving movements, journey times on Guild Way/Golden Way are improved.

Using the Penwortham Triangle junction (with the slip road closed) will incur some unavoidable delay at the traffic signals however this will be controlled and minimised and traffic will generally continue to flow unopposed. Traffic modelling suggests there will be a net journey time benefit to local traffic from Penwortham on Guild Way/Golden Way. Whilst vehicles may be stopped at a red light at Penwortham Triangle junction, traffic will not be slowly crawling forward. Modern vehicles with start/stop technology do turn off the engine when stationary and this might come into effect whilst stopped at the signals.

The slip road closure should be delayed for a period of observation

The closure of the slip road is one of a series of measures that together are the most effective means to discourage through traffic and unnecessary trips by car in Penwortham and promote use of the Bypass. The benefits to this from the closure of the slip road is supported by extensive traffic modelling of the network at strategic and local levels.

The closure of the slip road does not only improve traffic and environmental conditions through Penwortham and along the Bypass and Guild Way/Golden Way. A major improvement to cycling provision to serve Hutton and Penwortham and the city centre would be compromised if the slip road were kept open. Continued free flowing vehicles onto the slip road would conflict with cyclists using a new cycle superhighway which is dedicated for cyclists and physically separated from general motor traffic.

Rely on traffic calming/speed limit through Penwortham instead of closing the slip road

This has been suggested by objectors as an alternative to closing the slip road. The package of measures already includes a reduction of the speed limit between Crookings Lane and Cop Lane junctions, to 20mph, as part of the planning condition.

Traffic calming has been considered, however, during the September 2018 public consultation, which sought suggestions for measures to discourage through traffic in Penwortham, opposition to traffic calming – in the form of speed bumps, cushions and chicanes - was raised as a likely inconvenience to travellers across all travel modes and to residents living along the route.

The closure is not needed

A number of representations concluded by saying the closure of the slip road is not needed. For the reasons given through this report, and in support of the objectives of the Bypass, there is a need for these complementary measures to discourage unnecessary traffic through Penwortham and promote use of the Bypass and Guild Way/Golden Way, and the slip road closure is an important measure to achieve this.

Officer recommendation

It is the case that many comments and objections have been received but it is suggested that consideration be given to the reasons for the proposal and the responses above and it may be considered that the reasons for the closure outweigh the issues raised and that approval may be given for the making of the Traffic Regulation Order as one of the measures to promote and facilitate the Penwortham Bypass as the primary route choice and to seek to comply with planning condition 10 of the Penwortham Bypass planning permission, which seeks to discourage through vehicular traffic on the A59. Penwortham Town Council has also expressed its support to the slip road closure.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

Financial

The cost of the measures presented in this report, including the closure of the slip road to vehicular traffic, is contained within the Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal Infrastructure Fund.

If the slip road is not closed, the county council will be required to amend the scheme, by altering, or adding other, measures to achieve the same overall reduction in traffic passing through Penwortham. The cost of traffic calming through the Penwortham corridor, whilst it has not been assessed or costed at this time, is likely to cost significantly more.

Legal

The closure of the slip road to all vehicular traffic is one of a series of measures to comply with Condition 10 of the Penwortham Bypass planning permission. If the closure is not approved the county council would need to apply to amend the scheme, by altering, or introducing other, measures in order to achieve the same

overall reduction in traffic passing through Penwortham. This could add delay to the delivery of a package of measures, leading to a continued level of detrimental impacts along Liverpool Road and a delay to, or reduction in the effectiveness of, the Bypass.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
Planning Statement, Penwortham Bypass, Condition10, Summary of measures to discourage through-traffic from the centre of Penwortham	May 2019	Marcus Hudson/(01772) 530696

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A