

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 4 November 2021

Report of the Head of Service - Design and Construction

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
Lancaster Rural North;

Corporate Priorities:
Supporting economic growth;

A601(M) Improvements - Revocation of Special Road Status

(Appendix 'A' refers)

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Brief Summary

This report recommends revocation of the special road status of the remaining 1.3 mile (2.1km) northern section of the A601(M) to allow a £9.245m refurbishment of the road to proceed.

This investment, as part of the Transport Infrastructure Investment Fund and revocation of the special road status, will significantly reduce future maintenance costs.

The A601(M) is designated a special road and covered by motorway regulations. The county council considers that this remaining section of special road no longer needs to be a special road and proposes to revoke this special road designation along with the removal of motorway regulations and reclassify the road as an all-purpose road.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to approve the revocation of the special road designation of the remaining section of the A601(M) to the north of the Junction 35 roundabout and to authorise the Director of Corporate Services to carry out the necessary procedural steps and promote same for confirmation by the Secretary of State for Transport.

Detail

The A601(M) linked the A6 to the North of Carnforth to the B6254 to the east of the town and was designated a principal motorway, for which the county council was the highway authority. Its principal function being to connect the local road network with the M6 at Junction 35.

The shorter southern section was added by the county council in 1987 to connect Junction 35 with the B6254 east of Carnforth, its purpose being to remove quarry traffic from the town centre.

In December 2018, Cabinet approved the revocation of the special road status for the southern section of the A601(M) arising from development proposals. This was confirmed through statutory instrument, by the Secretary of State, in January 2020.

The longer, northern section of the original A601(M), Appendix 'A' refers, is a dual two-lane carriageway road with discontinuous hard shoulders, built originally as part of the M6 Lancaster Bypass which opened in 1960. It retained its motorway designation and M6 numbering even after subsequent extension of the M6 northwards towards Kendal and eventually Carlisle.

The council was awarded £15.891m as part of the Transport Infrastructure Investment Fund with Cabinet allocating £9.245m (decision taken on 9 July 2020) to be spent on the A601(M) works from this allocation.

These works consist of removing the motorway status of the road, refurbishment and repair of associated bridges along with removal of the Higher North Road Bridge and replacement with a new junction.

Revocation of the special road status will allow for substantial savings in maintenance both on the highway and on the associated structures, including the road bridges; currently all maintained to motorway standard.

Consultations

The county council is consulting with National Highways (formerly Highways England) on this matter.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

There is a risk of objections to the revocation order. Draft orders are subject to publication a minimum of six weeks in advance, so any person or organisation has the opportunity to object to the making of the order. Objections, if not withdrawn, initiate the holding of a public inquiry. This could lengthen the time taken to complete the revocation process and in turn, delay the commencement of the capital works.

Legal

Revocation is a legal process requiring a Scheme to be made under Sections 16 and 326 of the Highways Act 1980. There is a statutory procedure to be followed and the opportunity for objections. The removal of motorway regulations and reclassification as an all-purpose road will mean that the county council would dedicate a right of way for all classes of traffic.

Financial

The A601(M) Improvements Project, of which this revocation forms a part, is funded through the Transport Infrastructure Investment Fund.

It is forecast that the project will deliver £26.9m of benefits/savings (2010 prices, discounted over 30 years).

List of Background Papers

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