

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 7 April 2022

Report of the Head of Service - Highways

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
Lancaster Central

Corporate Priorities:
Delivering better services;

Lancashire County Council (Long Marsh Lane, Lancaster, Lancaster City) (Prohibition of Driving Except Cycles) Order 202* (Appendices 'A' and 'B' refer)

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Brief Summary

This report outlines proposals to introduce a Traffic Regulation Order for a Prohibition of Driving for all motor vehicles on Long Marsh Lane, Lancaster, which is required as a road safety and amenity measure aimed at promoting walking and cycling on local roads around the Luneside East housing and regeneration site.

During the period of public consultation 10 objectors responded and 27 others supported the proposals.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to approve the proposals to introduce a Traffic Regulation Order for a Prohibition of Driving for all motor vehicles on Long Marsh Lane, Lancaster as advertised and as shown on the plans attached at Appendices 'A' and 'B'.

Detail

The site developer secured planning consent for the construction of 149 dwellings on the Luneside East site, Lancaster. The proposals include the construction of a pedestrian and cycle access from the housing site onto Long Marsh Lane which serves as direct access to the historic Castle area and onward city centre, and to the Lancaster cycle and pedestrian path network. The Traffic Regulation Order will introduce a prohibition of driving except cycles on Long Marsh Lane to enhance the amenity of the road for pedestrians, cyclists, and the increased number of adjacent

residents. The proposed measures, including signs and bollards and turning space to implement the prohibition, are funded through a Section 278 agreement with the developer.

The prohibition of driving is necessary to ensure that the road is more safe to be used for local access only and to enhance walking and cycling routes to the cycle/pedestrian path network and city centre by preventing the use of Long Marsh Lane to through traffic at all times. The prohibition leaves other routes available for vehicular traffic. Other options have been considered as set out below.

Consultations

Formal consultation was carried out between 29 April 2021 and 27 May 2021 and advertised in the local press and notices were also displayed on site. The divisional county councillor was also consulted. Public consultation has resulted in 27 responses in support and 10 responses objecting to the proposal. Both sets of responses included multiple reasons as to why the proposal should be abandoned altogether or implemented.

Objections and support

A summary of the responses both supporting and objecting the proposal is detailed below along with the county council response where relevant:

10 Respondents objected to the proposal for the following reasons:

Reason 1

Parking and unloading in Castle Park area and near to the junction with Market Street will cause egress and access problems for residents of Castle Park and Hillside.

Response

Unloading and loading to the Storey Institute and the adjacent pub have been observed but this does not prevent access to Castle Park and Long Marsh Lane. The Castle Park area is subject to a Restricted Parking Zone and enforcement action can be taken against drivers who also park illegally.

Reason 2

The restriction on access to motor vehicles will result in reduced natural public surveillance and potentially create anti-social behaviour issues.

Response

Long Marsh Lane serves as a link to the cycle and pedestrian specific networks which do not have motor vehicle use and any issues are not anticipated to be increased or relocated due to the restriction. There is street lighting throughout the area to deter anti-social behaviour. The proposal also has the potential to increase walking and cycling activity in the area.

Reason 3

Alternative traffic calming measures should have been considered instead such as chicanes and humps rather than a restriction on motor vehicle use.

Response

Proposals to introduce chicanes, one-way traffic and humps also present several design considerations within the highway and in the terraced areas where there is high demand for on-street parking, physical traffic calming measures were not deemed suitable due to the road layout.

Reason 4

The closure of Long Marsh Lane will reduce options for drivers and result in congestion due to displacement of traffic onto other roads which access the city centre gyratory.

Response

Long Marsh Lane has no direct access to the city centre gyratory system and access to the wider network is via St George's Quay/Damside Street and Market Street and therefore through traffic that used Long Marsh Lane will be using routes that are already directly accessed at some point for most car journeys from the area.

Reason 5

Long Marsh Lane is an historic road and has always carried drawn vehicles such as drawn carts and subsequently cars.

Response

There are many historic roads in Lancaster which over a period of time have had restrictions imposed to manage traffic for safety, amenity and access reasons.

Reason 6

The proposal will affect access for emergency vehicles and their response times to incidents.

Response

All of the emergency service providers were consulted directly, and no objections were received. Local access will be retained at the north and south ends of Long Marsh Lane.

Reason 7

The prohibition of driving will increase traffic use at one end of Long Marsh Lane due to it becoming a cul-de-sac.

Response

The closure will prevent 'rat-running' by through traffic and will only generate traffic for local residents' access and delivery or service access. While two-way flows may increase this would be more than offset by the removal of through traffic particularly at peak travel times. It is important to keep the flow of through traffic to a minimum as the route, at one point only supports one way working. At this point there is also a problem with forward vision. This situation contributes to a collision risk.

Reason 8

There is no evidence or data to support the closure.

Response

While there is a good road safety record on Long Marsh Lane the reasons for making the proposal is in line with those grounds for making an Order as set out in Section 1 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and for avoiding danger to persons or other traffic using the road or for preventing the likelihood of any such danger arising and for preserving or improving the amenities of the area through which the road runs.

Reason 9

It is pleasant to drive the route past the castle.

Response

The castle area is of historic character and the proposal does not prevent vehicular access to Castle Park and the wider castle area for those that wish to visit or require access. The proposal will prevent through traffic on Castle Park and the historic castle area. The prohibition of through traffic will provide additional road safety benefit and amenity for vulnerable road users and support both the county council's and national government ambition to get more people walking and cycling for short journeys where possible.

Reason 10

Traffic volume and use is already low, so the restriction is not required.

Response

It is acknowledged that traffic volumes are relatively low. However, in order to create and support further improvements to the cycle and pedestrian networks and encourage further modal shift to cycle and pedestrian journeys the removal of current through traffic would result in a benefit to alternative modes of transport.

Reason 11

Access will be an issue when temporary road closures are in place on alternative roads.

Response

If temporary or emergency closures are required on adjacent access routes, Long Marsh Lane could potentially be reopened temporarily at relatively short notice if the Traffic Management plan determines that this is required to support access across the wider network.

28 Respondents supported the proposal with the following reasons given:

- Concern that currently drivers do not appear to observe the posted 20mph sign only speed limit raising road safety concerns.
- There are no footways over a significant length of Long Marsh Lane toward Castle Park.
- Concerned about their safety when accessing or exiting the cycle path link at the railway bridge due to reduced visibility and vehicle speeds.
- Concerns about the ongoing rat-running on Long Marsh Lane and use by through traffic on a regular basis.
- Visibility is poor due to the historic nature and character of Long Marsh Lane.
- Due to their proximity to the carriageway some properties are subject to noise and vibration issues which will be exacerbated in the longer term as traffic volumes increase.
- Concerns over air quality and increased through motor vehicle use.
- Reported vehicle damage incidents.
- Support but raised concern over possible emergency access issues if the restrictions are introduced.

Other comments received

The proposal is supported by the divisional county councillor and city councillor.

Lancashire Constabulary has confirmed that they have no objection to the proposal being implemented.

United Utilities has confirmed the presence of apparatus within the proposed restriction. In response this is not affected by the proposed restriction and access for all utility providers and Network Rail to maintain the bridge structure will be permitted as required.

The Cyclists Touring Club responded confirming support for the proposals.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Financial

The costs of the Traffic Regulation Order and supporting traffic measures are funded by the developer of the Luneside East housing regeneration site. The cost of the order and the works will all be included in the cost of the Section 278 works and be paid by the developer in full. The developer will be responsible for all costs including any cost over runs.

Risk management

Without implementation of the Traffic Regulation Order and measures as detailed in this report road safety and amenity for use of the route by vulnerable road users is likely to be reduced due to through traffic. The number of said users is to increase. The proposal also meets the county council's wider aims to promote walking and cycling as an alternative to vehicle usage for short journeys.

The Road Traffic Management Act sets out various grounds to satisfy before an Order can be made and there has been careful consideration that the grounds can be satisfied and consideration of traffic using the network and other objectives in accordance with the county council's duty under the Traffic Management Act to manage the road network with a view to achieving, so far as may be reasonably practicable having regard to their other obligations, policies and objectives, the objective of securing the expeditious movement of traffic on the network.

List of Background Papers

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