

REGULATORY COMMITTEE
23rd JULY 2003

A350 MELKSHAM-SEMINGTON DIVERSION -
TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDERS AND OTHER
CYCLEWAY/FOOTWAY CONVERSIONS

Purpose of Report

1. To advise on the latest position in respect of the Traffic Orders associated with the A350 Melksham-Semington Diversion and to seek approval for conversion of footways to joint footways/cycleways associated with this scheme and at two other locations in West Wiltshire.

Background

2. The Melksham-Semington Diversion received planning permission in August 2000 and was the subject of a Public Inquiry in July 2001. The Compulsory Purchase and Side Roads Orders were confirmed by the Secretary of State in July 2002. Construction of this scheme to bypass Semington Road, Melksham, and Semington village is now underway.
3. At the time of the Public Consultation on the scheme in 1996 it was indicated that traffic management measures would be incorporated on the old road. Subsequently, in March 2003, further consultations were undertaken on the closure of Semington Road to through traffic. The feedback from both the 1996 and 2003 consultations indicated that the majority of the responses supported a closure of the "old" road. Semington Parish Council supported the principle of the closure.
4. As a result a number of Traffic Orders are being processed.
5. The County Council adopted a Cycling Strategy in 1996. As part of the Local Transport Plan, the County Cycle Action Plan, approved by the Environment and Transport Committee on 5th July 2000, aimed at accelerating progress towards a sustainable transport system for Wiltshire. Priority is currently given to creating sustainable transport links for commuting and school trips. The County Council is committed to reducing the dependency of the private motor car using a variety of measures. An allocation was approved by the Regulatory Committee in March 2002 for a contribution to the inter-urban cycle network in the West Wiltshire District area. The Bradford on Avon/Trowbridge route has recently been completed.

Main Considerations for the Council

Melksham-Semington Diversion

6. The various Orders/Notices are listed in **Appendix 1**. They are being advertised at present with a closing date for objections of 11th August. Any objections to the advertised proposals will be the subject of a report to the September meeting of this Committee.
7. The construction of the new road and the closure, except for buses, of the superseded road north of the Canal Bridge will result in the conditions along the old A350 route being much more conducive to cycling. Whilst this can take place satisfactorily on the old road for the majority of the route, there are two locations where the existing footway requires conversion to a joint cycleway/footway:-
 - (i) At the location of the "closure north of the canal bridge" at which it is not possible to exempt cyclists from the "no entry except buses" restriction. It is appropriate to slightly widen the adjacent footway over this short length and convert it to joint footway/cycleway. This proposal is shown on the plan at **Appendix 2**.
 - (ii) The length leading to Semington Road, Melksham, north of the new road from the location of the proposed Toucan crossing (pedestrians and cycles) across the new dual carriageway. This proposal is shown on the plan at **Appendix 3**.
8. A formal resolution of the Highway Authority is required for these conversions to take place, as detailed in **Appendix 4**.

Other locations

9. There are two other sites in the County where conversion resolutions are required and it is appropriate to make them at the same time:-
 - (i) The inter-urban scheme to convert the footway on the A363 between Bradford on Avon and Trowbridge, referred to in paragraph 5, has been completed, jointly funded by West Wiltshire District Council and the County Council.
 - (ii) At Lambrok Road, Trowbridge, where the highway agreement associated with the redevelopment of the Studley Green Estate required the developer to widen the footway to provide a cycle facility.

These lengths are also included in the list of sites at **Appendix 4** on which a formal resolution is required.

Environmental Impact of the Proposal

10. The overall environmental consideration for the Melksham-Semington Diversion scheme as a whole includes the benefits to the environment along the existing A350 which will be bypassed.

Risk Assessment

11. The proposals for Melksham to Semington form part of the approved road construction scheme and the County Council could be in breach of its commitments if the features are not implemented.

Financial Implications

12. The cost of the measures at Melksham is included in the scheme costs. There are no additional costs relating to the Trowbridge/Bradford on Avon scheme and the Lambrok Road scheme is developer funded.

Reasons for Recommendation

13. The conversion of the footway to a joint footway/cycleway at these sites would provide for the completion of an appropriate cycle route from Semington village to Semington Road, Melksham, north of Western Way, formalise the new route between Bradford on Avon and Trowbridge, and enable the developer to comply with his requirements in respect of Lambrok Road.

Recommendation

14. That:-
 - (i) Under Section 66(4) of the Highways Act 1980, the lengths of footway shown in **Appendix 4** be 'removed', and
 - (ii) Under Section 65(1) of the Act, a cycle track (shared use path) be 'constructed' in its place.

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The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report:

None