

CABINET MEMBER HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT – COUNCILLOR BRIDGET WAYMAN

HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT

OFFICER CONTACT: Kevin Gale tel. 01225 718023,
kevin.gale@wiltshire.gov.uk

REFERENCE: HTW-31-19

PROPOSED APPLICATION TO STOP UP HIGHWAY FORMING PART OF THE B4042 ROAD, COWBRIDGE, MALMESBURY

Purpose of Report

- 1 To ask the Cabinet Member to consider whether the Council should apply to the magistrates' court for an Order stopping up part of the highway forming part of the B4042 Road at Cowbridge, Malmesbury on the ground that it is unnecessary for public use or any other highway-related purpose.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

- 2 As part of the Council's drive for strong communities, people in Wiltshire are encouraged to take action on what is best for their own communities. It also feeds in to the aim of being an innovative and effective council as part of its focus on generating income by adopting a more commercial approach in what we do.

Main Considerations for the Council

- 3 Case law has clarified that in deciding whether to make an application to stop up highway (including highway rights for varying categories of user), the Highway Authority must consider all the factors which would be relevant to the consideration by a Magistrates' Court of whether an Order should be made. As well as whether the highway is needed for passing and repassing, issues such as safety, e.g. for visibility splays or potential development access, should also be considered.
- 4 The central question to be addressed is: what is the function performed by the relevant part (or right) of the highway and whether it is unnecessary for that function to be performed by that part or the whole of the highway. If it is unnecessary, it must also be considered whether there are any other reasons why a stopping-up application should not be made.

Background

5. The area of land concerned is owned by Wessex Water and, should a stopping-up order be made, the company proposes to construct a small wall to help with the screening of its existing apparatus. The land behind the site is owned by Mr. Troels Povslen of Cole Park, Grange Lane, Malmesbury. He has been consulted about the proposal but made no comment.

6. Under the Highways Act 1980, Magistrates' Courts have a power to authorise the stopping up or diversion of highway. Section 116 (1)-(4) provides as follows:

(1) Subject to the provisions of this section, if it appears to a magistrates' court after a view, if the court thinks fit, by any two or more of the justices composing the court, that a highway (other than a trunk road or a special road) as respects which the highway authority have made an application under this section –

(a) is unnecessary, or

(b) can be diverted so as to make it nearer or more commodious to the public, The court may by order authorise it to be stopped up, or as the case may be, to be so diverted.

[sub-section 2 has been repealed]

(3) If an authority propose to make an application under this section for an order relating to any highway (other than a classified road) they shall give notice of the proposal to

(a) if the highway is in a non-metropolitan district, the council of that district; and

(aa) if the highway is in Wales, the Welsh council for the area in which it is situated if they are not the highway authority for it; and

(b) if the highway is in England, the council of the parish (if any) in which the highway is situated or, if the parish does not have a separate parish council, to the chairman of the parish meeting; and

(c) if the highway is in Wales, the council (if any) of the community in which the highway is situated;

and the application shall not be made if within two months of the date of service of the notice by the authority notice is given to the authority by the district council [or Welsh council] or by the parish or community council or, as the case may be, by the chairman of the parish meeting that the council or meeting have refused to consent to the making of the application.

(4) An application under this section may be made, and an order under it may provide, for the stopping up or diversion of a highway for the purposes of all traffic, or subject to the reservation of a footpath, bridleway or restricted byway.

7. Should the application be made and granted, the public would no longer have the right to pass and repass along the highway concerned and the Council would no longer be responsible for maintaining it. The area has been regularly inspected but is very infrequently used and has not required any recent repairs. Officers have confirmed that if a stopping-up order were made, this would not affect maintenance or repair of the adjacent bus shelter.
8. Officers consider that the highway is unnecessary for public use or any other highway-related reason. They are therefore willing, subject to the consent of the Cabinet Member, to make the proposed application.
9. Malmesbury St. Paul Without Parish Council has consented to the proposed application and a copy of its consent is shown at Appendix 2. The local member, Councillor John Thompson has been consulted and has not raised an objection.

Safeguarding Considerations

10. There are no relevant safeguarding considerations.

Public Health Implications

11. There are no relevant public health implications.

Environmental Impact of the Proposal

12. There is no negative environmental impact to the proposal.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

13. Officers consider that there is no equalities impact of the proposal because, in practice, the area of highway concerned serves – and only needs to serve – Wessex Water.

Risk Assessment

14. Officers have no concerns with regard to risk in relation to the proposed application.

Financial Implications

15. Wessex Water has agreed to meet the legal costs of an application. Even if one does not proceed, they will still be liable for preparatory costs. Accordingly, officers are satisfied that the application would have no negative financial impact upon the Council.

Legal Implications

16. As highway authority, the Council has a discretionary power, rather than a duty, to make such applications.
17. If an application is not made or if one is made and the Magistrates are minded not to make the Order, Wiltshire Council will continue to have a legal responsibility for the maintenance of the highway concerned.

Options Considered

18. The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport may resolve to:
- (i) Refuse to give consent to the application in which event, reasons should be given for doing so.
 - (ii) Consent to the application.

Reason for Proposal

19. Officers are satisfied that the section of highway can be stopped up as it is unnecessary for public use.

Proposal

20. It is proposed that the Cabinet Member adopt the option at 18(ii) above.

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