

**CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, WASTE, STREET SCENE & FLOODING –
CLLR DR MARK McCLELLAND**

TRANSPORT, WASTE, STREET SCENE AND FLOODING

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REFERENCE: HTW-24-2022

**PURTON, CROSSLANES JUNCTION
EXPERIMENTAL PROHIBITION OF DRIVING ORDER**

Purpose of Report

1. To consider objections, comments and suggestions received in response to the Experimental Prohibition of Driving Order implemented at Crosslanes Junction, Purton and to identify a way forward.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. The proposal to continue the Prohibition of Driving Order meets priorities in the Council's Business Plan.
 - Resilient Society – we ensure decisions are evidence based. We aim to communicate with communities in a way that provides constructive discussion, tailored to the community's needs and developing better solutions to these.
 - Thriving economy – we have vibrant, well-connected communities. We aim to help build an efficient and effective transport network including viable alternatives to the car.

Background

3. For several years Purton Parish Council had expressed to Wiltshire Council its concern about safety issues at Crosslanes Junction.
4. The safety issues concerned:
 - (i) The inadequacy of the junction in coping with vehicle movements.
 - (ii) Regular minor non injury collisions and near misses over many years despite low-cost attempts at safety work being carried out at the junction.
5. During 2011 minor kerbing changes were undertaken at the entrance to C70 Hayes Knoll Road to enable two-way traffic to flow more easily following an attempt without success to discourage traffic from using that entrance by narrowing. In 2018 a cost estimate was established to introduce an experimental order for closure of the exit and entry to the C70 at Crosslanes Junction. However, at this time, the Parish Council did not wish to pursue the experimental order due to the costs and potential objections. In 2019 a brief was issued to Atkins to assess road improvement options for the junction and to recommend one or more options for further development. Six options were considered with a technical note including recommendations. A cost estimate of the recommended option for a realignment of the B4553 was developed and it was estimated that the total cost of the project would be greater than £200,000. This would be a major scheme with no realistic funding source available for delivery. The Parish Council continued to pursue options to address its concerns and chose the introduction of an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO), prohibiting all motor vehicles from using the C70 at Crosslanes Junction.

6. Wiltshire Council endorsed this proposal as the most effective method of assessing any resulting impact on the local road network. It would also give the public the opportunity to comment during the first six months of operation. The experimental order would offer a positive way forward as there were no other options for improvement available or financially viable subject to major developer contributions from Swindon Borough Council.

Consultation

7. The ETRO prohibiting motor vehicles from entering and leaving Hayes Knoll Road at Crosslanes Junction was brought into operation on 24 May 2021, for a period not exceeding 18 months. A plan of the scheme is included at **Appendix 1**.
8. During the six-month period commencing at the introduction of the ETRO, 232 comments were made. The comments have been categorised as 60 objections to the scheme, 151 in support, 11 which have been classified as general observations or queries with no preference indicated and 10 repeats from individuals and therefore not included. A schedule of comments, together with officer responses, is included at **Appendix 2**.
9. An extraordinary LHFIG meeting was held on 19 October 2022 for the Royal Wootton Bassett and Cricklade Community Area to assess support to make the experimental order permanent. All six of the Wiltshire Councillors for the Community Area attended the meeting. Following discussion and with the officer's recommendation to make the Order permanent, 5 votes of support were recorded and 1 against. One representative from Purton Parish Council and Cricklade Town Council also voted, with 1 vote of support and 1 against.

Main Considerations for the Council

10. The public representations need to be assessed and taken into account when forming a decision as to the future of the Prohibition of Driving imposed by the ETRO.
11. The prime objective in introducing the ETRO was to optimize safety for all classes of road user. Concern had been raised over increase of traffic volume and collisions at various locations along the B4553, concern of extra mileage and time that would be necessary including for a small number of landowners and that a roundabout or traffic lights would be preferable to closing the road. It is acknowledged that the alternative route will result in additional distance and time, the impact is negligible. The reasons given for not proceeding with altering the junction type are set out in paragraph 5. Whilst there will be additional traffic utilising the B4553 as a result of prohibiting vehicles to exit and enter the C70, analysis of the Police collision database has not identified any significant increase in additional collisions since the ETRO was introduced. Collisions by their very nature are random events for which there are a myriad of factors. It is not considered that additional traffic on a route will significantly increase the frequency by which they take place.

Covid Pandemic

12. No traffic data is available. Any pre implementation of the experimental order data would be unrealistic as it would have been influenced by the introduction of measures during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Interpretation and Implications

13. It is inevitable that traffic previously travelling along the C70 Hayes Knoll Road would now be travelling along the B4553.

Conclusion

14. The imposition of the Experimental Prohibition of Driving Order at Crosslanes Junction has successfully addressed the concerns listed in paragraph 4 of this report. The ETRO has led to some displacement of traffic, and it is acknowledged that traffic volume along the B4553 will have increased. However, it is also recognised that mitigation can be undertaken to improve visibility and improvements, with benefits to overall highway safety along the B4553 if prioritised through the LHFIG meetings. It is therefore considered that the permanent elimination of through traffic along C70 Hayes Knoll Road is achievable through a reasonable and acceptable amount of inconvenience to the other parts of the community.

Safeguarding Considerations

15. The proposals present no risk to the Council.

Public Health Implications

16. The removal of through traffic from C70 Hayes Knoll Road will enhance public safety and amenity for non-motorised users of this route. In addition, the removal of traffic at Crosslanes Junction will serve to address longstanding concerns relating to collisions at this location.

Corporate Procurement Implications

17. There are none in this scheme.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

18. The closure of the C70 has resulted in vehicles seeking an alternative route which is longer in duration and therefore total mileage travelled by motor vehicles will have increased and this will continue should the scheme be made permanent.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

19. There are none in this scheme.

Risk Assessment

20. The proposals present no risk to the Council.

Financial Implications

21. An allocation will be supported by Royal Wootton Bassett and Cricklade LHFIG to fund this project. Should the scheme not proceed then the funding can be allocated to other schemes in the Community Area.

Legal Implications

22. The indefinite continuation of the Prohibition of Driving will require a permanent Traffic Regulation Order to be made. The process is governed by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and Associated Procedural Regulations. Failure to adhere to the statutory processes could result in the restrictions being successfully challenged in the High Court.

Options Considered

23. To:

- (i) Make a permanent Traffic Order enabling the Experimental Prohibition of Driving Order to be continued in force indefinitely.
- (ii) To abandon the Experimental Prohibition of Driving Order.

Reason for Proposals

24. After consideration of public representations and officers' comments, and having assessed the benefits against disadvantages, it is considered appropriate to make a permanent Traffic Order enabling the Experimental Prohibition of Driving Order to be continued in force indefinitely.

After due consideration of the circumstances and analysis of the representations made, it is the officer's opinion that a permanent Traffic Order should be made enabling the ETRO to be continued in force indefinitely.

The comments set out in **Appendix 2** indicate that it is considered appropriate to make the experimental order permanent.

The scheme was supported by the Royal Wootton Bassett and Cricklade Local Highway and Footway Improvement Group, which was attended by all elected Wiltshire Councillors in the community area.

The scheme has the support of Purton Parish Council.

Proposal

25. That:

- (i) A permanent Traffic Order be advertised, enabling the Experimental Prohibition of Driving Order to be continued in force indefinitely.
- (ii) The objectors be informed accordingly.

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

Email / Letters of representation