

Report for consideration by Corporate Director of Economy and Place

Low Poppleton Lane –Rising Bollard

Summary

1. This report outlines a number of options for addressing the failure of the rising bollard between Low Poppleton Lane and Millfield Lane for consideration.

Background

2. A traffic restriction to prevent all vehicles travelling between Millfield Lane and Low Poppleton Lane was put in place between the mid-1980s and 2009 to encourage usage of the A1237 rather than parallel residential routes by high volumes of vehicles and in particular use by HGVs accessing the British Sugar site. A fixed bollard restriction ensured that movements were prevented during this period.
3. The Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) was changed and a rising bollard was installed at this location in 2009 to enable buses to serve the new Manor School site and Poppleton villages while negating the impacts of other general traffic in the area that would impact on road safety and the level crossing. The road was narrowed to enable the rising bollard to operate effectively. Local buses, school buses and emergency service vehicles are permitted to pass through the restricted area. The aim of the restriction was to:-
 - prevent drivers using the route in preference to the A1237 and A59
 - Improve Public Transport in the area
 - and as part of the Manor Schools planning process be “in the interests of the safe and free passage of highway users and in the interests of providing sustainable transport option to the school site in accordance with policy T7c of the Development Control Local Plan”.
4. A petition from local residents requesting that a fixed closure be re-installed at the location of the rising bollard was considered by the

Executive Member for City Strategy in March 2011. The Executive Member at that time decided to leave the rising bollard in place owing to the impact of a full closure on bus services.

5. Following a period of intermittent operation the rising bollard and its associated ducting has recently irreversibly failed and requires either replacing or the provision of a new solution in order to maintain a physical traffic restriction. The current traffic restriction within the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) remains in place.
6. During the period with the bollard inoperable there has been considerable abuse of the TRO which has resulted in more vehicles travelling along Low Poppleton Lane. A number of complaints have been received highlighting concerns almost on a weekly basis, including near misses between traffic and school children and about the impact of the additional traffic on bus services, pedestrians and cyclists in the area. The road narrowing and the bend in the road at the bollard location means that buses and any unauthorised vehicles have to proceed with caution.
7. It should be noted that the progression of the British Sugar Development will have a significant impact on the road layout in the area. It is anticipated that, subject to planning consent being granted, Low Poppleton Lane will become a cul-de-sac off the new access road into the development.

Proposals

8. The estimated cost of reinstating the existing bollard and repairing the ducting is approximately £90k. Owing to the high cost it is considered prudent to investigate options for the traffic restrictions and enforcement in the area before progressing any repairs.
9. The retention of the existing traffic restriction i.e. road closure except buses with appropriate enforcement will ensure low levels of traffic in the area minimising the impact on the school and level crossing. The existing TRO only allows the local bus service, school buses and emergency services access through the restriction. The restriction reduces the levels of longer distance routing of traffic through residential areas from Wetherby Road through to the A1237 and Millfield Lane and the level of traffic through Poppleton from the A59. Public Transport access to the school would remain via Low Poppleton Lane.

Options for Enforcement of Traffic Regulation Orders

10. Enforcement options which allow existing traffic movements in the area. 4 Options are considered viable.
 - Option 2A – Reinstatement of Existing Bollard
 - Option 2B – Reinstatement of Existing Bollard with ANPR Camera Operation
 - Option 2C - Bus Lane Enforcement with ANPR Camera
 - Option 2D - Police Enforcement

Option 2A Reinstatement of Existing Bollard.

11. At the time of installation, a rising bollard system reliant on a network of carriageway detector loops was considered the best option for the site. The reinstatement of the existing system would cost approximately £90,000.
12. The decision to use a detector based system was partly based on experience of the rising bollard at Stonebow, where an Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system proved to be unreliable. In the intervening years, the performance of ANPR has improved and it is considered that such a system, potentially backed up by thermal imaging cameras, could successfully manage the operation of rising bollards in this location with little to no staff involvement.

Option 2B Provision of ANPR Activated Bollard.

13. This system would involve the replacement of the current rising bollard but substitute cameras in place of the present loop detector system for a cost of approximately £50,000. In brief, this system works by using an ANPR system reading the licence plate number and triggering the lowering of the bollard.

Option 2C Provision of Bus Lane Enforcement Cameras –
Recommended Option

14. An alternative solution to this ANPR/rising bollard system would be to use the Bus Lane Enforcement (BLE) cameras and powers available to the Council to implement a bus gate in the vicinity of the existing rising bollard and use an approved ANPR camera to enforce compliance – estimated cost £20,000. This would allow the Council to issue Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) to the owners of vehicles contravening the restriction through an expansion of the

facilities and processes currently in operation to support the Coppergate traffic restriction. A change to the Traffic Regulation Order which could be progressed on an experimental basis would be needed to allow camera enforcement to be implemented. It is recommended that a transition period is put in place to ensure that drivers are aware of the changes.

15. It is proposed to implement the enforcement on the following basis:
 - 2 week grace period with a letter sent to all drivers who pass through the area during the restriction period notifying them of the changes.
 - A further 2 weeks with first offence warning letters indicating that a Penalty Charge Notice would be issued if the vehicle passed through the restriction again.
 - Following those periods PCNs would be issued on all vehicles which contravened the TRO.
16. In addition to the significantly lower implementation costs of this, it would also reduce any maintenance and repair bills given the robustness of the cameras, its supporting infrastructure and a longer service life. A white list would be developed to ensure all agreed public transport vehicles could pass through the restrictions, maintaining the current access arrangements.
17. As with any scheme using the civil enforcement of bus lanes, this would be subject to the national appeals process operated by the Traffic Penalty Tribunal (TPT). Although the TPT does not have the power to make general rulings about bus lane enforcement schemes, it does have the power overturn individual PCNs on appeal, which can in turn call into question the validity of the scheme. As has been seen previously in York, this can have severe reputational risk to the Council and so it is essential that this risk is mitigated by careful design of the scheme and appropriate specialist consultation regarding design and operation.
18. The nature of the restriction, being local bus only would make the signing of it much simpler. A timed restriction rather than a 24 hour restriction would make the signage more complicated and increase the risk of potential challenge and the need to relook at other options.

Option 2D Police Enforcement.

19. As an alternative or to compliment a mechanical/technical solution the Police could be requested to regular patrol the area. As

enforcement of a traffic restriction would unlikely to be a high police priority it is anticipated that there could be high levels of abuse of the restriction in line with experience at Coppergate, if camera enforcement is not used.

Consultation

20. As this area is under an existing TRO it is not considered necessary to consult if the recommended option to continue as it will have a similar restrictive impact on traffic if implemented.
21. If any changes to the TRO are progressed on an experimental basis the objections can be received during the experimental period and considered along with other options before making the order permanent.

Financial Implications

22. Costs associated with the options to implement a new enforcement system to ensure the restriction is in place or costs to implement a trial opening of the restriction, including monitoring and supportive capital works. Funding the cost of implementation would be identified in existing Transport budgets.

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