

1 October 2020**Agenda Item: 11****REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR, PLACE****THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (TRENT LANE, EAST BRIDGFORD) EXPERIMENTAL TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER 2019 (8278) – MAKE PERMANENT****Purpose of the Report**

1. To consider the objections received in respect of the above Experimental Traffic Regulation Order and whether it should be made permanent.

Information

2. At the 6th December 2018 Communities and Place Committee approval was granted for the introduction of an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) along a section of Trent Lane in East Bridgford. The Order prohibited the use of a 370m section of Trent Lane east from its junction with the A6097 at Gunthorpe Bridge towards East Bridgford. The ETRO being proposed in response to concerns raised by the East Bridgford Parish Council regarding the volume and speed of vehicles using Trent Lane in East Bridgford.
3. Trent Lane is a narrow road that is rural in nature providing access to a small number of businesses including a marina, mobile home park, sewage works and a number of agricultural fields. Prior to the Experimental Order being implemented in May 2019, it provided a link between the A6097 close to Gunthorpe Bridge and East Bridgford.
4. Trent Lane was popular with drivers seeking to avoid north-west bound queues on the A6097 and the Parish Council stated that there were increasing numbers of drivers leaving the A46 and cutting through the village along Butt Lane, Main Street and Trent Lane to access the A6097 by turning right onto Gunthorpe Bridge. This route avoided the Kirk Hill / A6097 traffic signalled junction and the roundabouts at the A46T / A6097. It was also reported that the rat running traffic was contributing to a speeding problem and that the right turn from Trent Lane onto the A6097 was dangerous.
5. Traffic surveys showed that west-bound usage of Trent Lane from East Bridgford to the A6097 in the PM peak had nearly doubled between 2013 and 2018. It was considered that the use of an Experimental Order to alter traffic movements was appropriate as it enabled the effects of the restriction to be evaluated prior to any permanent changes being made.
6. The Experimental Order created a prohibition of driving on Trent Lane from its junction with A6097 Gunthorpe Bridge for a length of approximately 370m preventing motor vehicle turning movements into or out of Trent Lane from the A6097. The prohibition affects only the section of Trent Lane from the A6097 junction to a point just west of the access road to the sewage treatment plant. The majority of Trent Lane remains open to motorised

traffic. A through-route for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians onto Gunthorpe Bridge has been retained, with gaps in the temporary barriers to facilitate this. Access for all motorised traffic onto and along Trent Lane to the eastern closure point is now via East Bridgford village centre.

Experimental Traffic Order Process (ETRO)

7. The prohibition of driving on the western section of Trent Lane included within the ETRO came into force on 3rd May 2019 and can be implemented for period of up to 18 months, the first 12 months of which was considered the evaluation period. At the end of the 18 month period the ETRO either needs to be removed or a decision made to make the restrictions proposed permanent.
8. Introducing the closure as an ETRO allowed the scheme to be implemented as a trial and forms part of the decision-making process taking into account the actual effects of the scheme, including:
 - Traffic volumes in East Bridgford and the number of vehicles cutting through the village along Butt Lane, Main Street and Trent Lane to access the A6097 by turning right onto Gunthorpe Bridge;
 - Impacts on businesses on Trent Lane;
 - Traffic volumes and patterns on the wider highway network including whether through-traffic has been removed from the village or relocated to other routes such as Kirk Hill; and
 - To identify any unforeseen consequences of the closure and to quantify these.
9. Traffic surveys were carried out prior to the closure of Trent Lane to provide baseline data on the volume, speed and flow of traffic in East Bridgford before the road was closed. Further surveys were carried out in October 2019 to determine the effect of the changes on routes within the village, on the A6097 and the wider network.
10. The first six months of the Order, between 3rd May 2019 to 4th November 2019 constituted the statutory period within which anyone could submit written objections to the scheme. During this period sixteen comments were received. Eleven of those, including East Bridgford Parish Council and the East Bridgford Community Plan Group expressed support and/or made comments on the proposals, whilst five responses are considered to be outstanding objections to the permanent closure of Trent Lane.

Objections Received

11. Objection – closure causing inconvenience / queues at Kirk Hill traffic lights
Four objections were made on the basis that the closure of Trent Lane had increased queue lengths at the Kirk Hill / A6097 junction. The comments included complaints that journey times had increased for residents and that this caused considerable inconvenience. Respondents also stated that the longer queues increased the likelihood of collisions at this junction and requested that the phasing be changed to allow more green time when exiting Kirk Hill onto the A6097.
12. Response – closure causing inconvenience / queues at Kirk Hill traffic lights
The traffic signals at the Kirk Hill junction are automated and offer an adaptive method of control (MOVA) using sensors in the road. The light phasing will automatically adapt to the

traffic flow; however, this system will prioritise the movement of vehicles on the main road over the side road to ensure the junction operates at maximum capacity.

13. It is acknowledged that the traffic levels have increased at Kirk Hill. Queue lengths during the PM peak especially have increased, with vehicles which may have previously used Trent Lane now leaving East Bridgford at this junction. This increase however, is likely to comprise of both resident / local vehicles and through traffic.
14. Traffic data gathered as part of the evaluation shows that in the AM peak 111 fewer vehicles use Trent Lane, whilst vehicle numbers at Kirk Hill have only increased by 90, indicating a net reduction of vehicles travelling through East Bridgford during this period.

Trent Lane Traffic Volumes	Before ETRO	After ETRO
AM Peak	123	12
PM Peak	214	20

Kirk Lane Traffic Volumes	Before ETRO	After ETRO
AM Peak	246	336
PM Peak	199	284

15. The data for the PM peak shows a reduction of 195 vehicles on Trent Lane and an increase of 86 at Kirk Lane. This indicates that substantial numbers of vehicles previously travelling through East Bridgford during this period are now using other routes. Comparing the 2018 and 2019 traffic data the average two-way traffic flows in East Bridgford, over a full 24hr period, have reduced on Trent Lane and Butt Lane by 1357 (88%) and 382 (12%) respectively, whilst traffic levels at Kirk Hill have increased by 944 (38%). The results indicate that there has been a net reduction of 795 vehicles travelling through East Bridgford in an average 24hr period.
16. If the traffic phasing was altered to provide additional green time for vehicles using the Kirk Hill junction the disbenefit for rat-running, created by the closure of Trent Lane, would be reduced. Evidence of previous rat-running levels suggest that there is significant latent demand for this route and improving current journey times by increasing green time for Kirk Hill would attract additional traffic, which has now moved onto primary routes. It would also increase journey times on the A6097 while traffic at the junction is held for longer to accommodate an increase in green time for vehicles at Kirk Hill, further incentivising rat-running. The time benefits provided by additional green time would be subsumed by the additional traffic volume attracted.
17. An investigation of the most recent recorded personal injury collision (PIC) patterns show that no PICs have been recorded at the Kirk Hill junction during the experimental closure period from 3rd May 2019 to 30th April 2020 (latest 12 month period).
18. The Secretary State of Transport announced in October 2018 that Nottinghamshire County Council had been allocated £22m worth of funding from the Department for Transport (DfT) for a package of measures to upgrade several junctions along the A614 / A6097 Major Route Network (MRN) corridor. Initial design work has identified a package of schemes to deliver capacity and safety improvements at six junctions on the A614 / A6097 MRN. These improvements aim to increase traffic capacity so that both future residential and employment traffic can be accommodated whilst also reducing journey time delays.

19. The Kirk Hill / A6097 junction at East Bridgford has been identified as an additional, seventh junction to be included in the scheme. If funding for the overall package is approved, the junction improvements at this location are likely to provide additional capacity for traffic joining the A6097. These improvements, if introduced in isolation would not resolve rat-running issues in East Bridgford but would absorb the latent demand from drivers seeking to avoid congestion on the A6097. These improvements, if approved, will be introduced as part of a wider package of junction improvements along this key transport corridor, relieving current pinch-points on the primary route and so reducing demand for alternative routes through local villages. Delivered as a package this will ensure the benefits of the junction improvement are experienced by residents of East Bridgford and not diluted by attracting additional traffic flows.
20. Objection – Trent Lane should be One-way
Two respondents stated Trent Lane should not be closed, but instead to be subject to a one-way restriction eastbound from the A6097. They stated that vehicle movements in this direction were not an issue and considered that the one-way operation of the route would reduce inconvenience to residents whilst still removing significant levels of through-traffic.
21. Response – Trent Lane should be One-way
The initial proposal was for a short section of Trent Lane to operate one-way (eastbound) with a contra-flow cycle lane along that section of Trent Lane. The one-way proposal was designed to remove the time benefit to motorised through-traffic and so reduce vehicle numbers using the route. However, following a road safety audit, a number of road safety concerns were raised which could not be resolved. These included an objection from the Police regarding the potential for contraventions leading to road traffic collisions. As such, it is concluded that a one-way system should not be introduced on Trent Lane.
22. Objection – Alternative measures should be introduced
Four respondents objected to the closure on the basis that alternative measures would better address the problem of rat-running. This included a request for traffic signals at the Trent Lane / A6097 / Shelford Road junction, improvements to the Epperstone By-pass, restricted / gated access to East Bridgford and Police intervention to prevent rat-running by vehicles leaving the A46.
23. Objection – Alternative measures should be introduced
The introduction of traffic signals at the Trent Lane / A6097 / Shelford Road junction is not considered appropriate due to the significant detrimental effect this would have on journey times on the A6097. The measure would require substantial investment and would attract additional traffic through villages and onto minor roads (Shelford Road and Trent Lane) which are narrow and inappropriate for high traffic flows.
24. The roads through East Bridgford are public highway and maintained at public expense. The Local Highway Authority has a duty to support the safe and expeditious movement of traffic on the Highway and it is not appropriate to restrict wider public access to these roads in favour of one particular group. Drivers using public roads through East Bridgford are not committing any offence or contravention of any traffic restriction and the Police would have no power to constrain or prohibit these journeys.
25. Objection – It is public highway and should not be restricted
One respondent objected on the grounds that Trent Lane and all roads within East Bridgford were public roads and that they had as much right as anyone to drive along them.

They stated that it was unreasonable to close a road due to complaints by residents regarding through traffic.

26. Response – It is public highway and should not be restricted

As the Local Highway Authority, Nottinghamshire County Council has a duty to facilitate the safe and expeditious movement of traffic on the Highway, this includes all modes of traffic and pedestrians. In the 12 month period leading up to the experimental closure (1/5/2018-30/4/19) there were two reported PICs at the Trent Lane / A6097 junction. Since the closure there have been no reported PICs. Despite an increase of traffic volume at Kirk Hill, there has been no corresponding increase in collision levels.

27. Traffic surveys show that westbound usage of Trent Lane from East Bridgford to the A6097 in the PM peak has nearly doubled since 2013. The County Councillor and Parish Council have reported that these increases in traffic levels have had a detrimental effect on the quality of life for residents and visitors to East Bridgford. The decision to close Trent Lane with an experimental order was to enable evaluation of redirecting through traffic onto more suitable routes and the reduced impact of traffic on local residential roads.

28. The closure is applied universally to all motor vehicle users and the route remains public highway and a through route for any non-motorised uses. Data shows that the intervention has led to substantial reductions in traffic travelling through the village. This is particularly the case on Trent Lane itself where traffic levels have dropped by 88%. Several respondents expressed their support for the closure and noted that the road provided a valuable, low-traffic route to East Bridgford and the wider area and that use by vulnerable users has significantly increased since the experimental order was created.

29. Objection – Traffic congestion and increased rat-running

One respondent stated that that the scheme had not achieved its objective of reducing rat-running as traffic had increased along Kneeton Road and that the scheme hindered the free flow of traffic through the village.

30. Response – Traffic congestion and increased rat-running

Traffic data collected before and after the experimental closure shows that traffic flows have marginally decreased along Kneeton Road.

Kneeton Road	Before ETRO	After ETRO
AM Peak	194	186
PM Peak	162	142

Traffic flows on another route into East Bridgford, Butt Lane, indicate comparable drops in traffic flows.

31. Overall East Bridgford is experiencing lower traffic levels since the ETRO and closure of Trent Lane with congestion within much of the village having reduced as a result. It is acknowledged that queues have increased on Kirk Hill as more vehicles use this route, however these increases do not directly correlate with the reduction in traffic volumes on Trent Lane. This suggests that through traffic has diverted to alternative routes. Traffic data was collected at adjacent villages to determine whether any displaced traffic was now using alternative rat-runs, such as the route through Newton. Traffic surveys show that displacement to Newton is negligible, with only a 2% rise in traffic over a 24hour period, indicating rat-running vehicles have returned to primary distributor routes for their journeys.

Other Options Considered

32. Other options considered were to reopen Trent Lane to motorised vehicles, which would potentially see collisions numbers increase to 2018 levels and remove the low traffic route now used by increasing levels of pedestrians and cyclists.

Comments from Local Members

33. Councillor Purdue-Horan stated his support for the prohibition of driving, as shown on drawing number H/SLW/2664/15, to be made into a permanent order.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

34. The proposed scheme is designed to reduce the volume of through traffic using East Bridgford, without causing significant detriment to the efficient operation of the wider highway network or to businesses and residents of Trent Lane. It is considered that this has been achieved during the Experimental Order and that the prohibition of driving should be made permanent.

Statutory and Policy Implications

35. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the public-sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Crime and Disorder Implications

36. Nottinghamshire Police support the prohibition of driving. No additional crime or disorder implications are envisaged.

Financial Implications

37. This scheme is being funded through the Local Transport Plan ITM budget for 2020/21 with an estimated cost to implement the traffic order and complete works to permanently amend the Trent Lane / A6097 junction is estimated at £30,000.

Human Rights Implications

38. The implementation of the proposals within this report might be considered to have a minimal impact on human rights (such as the right to respect for private and family life and the right to peaceful enjoyment of property, for example). However, the Authority is entitled to affect these rights where it is in accordance with the law and is both necessary and proportionate to do so, in the interests of public safety, to prevent disorder and crime, to protect health, and to protect the rights and freedoms of others. The proposals within this report are considered to be within the scope of such legitimate aims.

Public Sector Equality Duty implications

39. As part of the process of making decisions and changing policy, the Council has a duty 'to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not' by thinking about the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics (as defined by equalities legislation) and those who don't;
- Foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics and those who don't.

40. Disability is a protected characteristic and the Council therefore has a duty to make reasonable adjustments to proposals to ensure that disabled people are not treated unfairly.

Implications for Sustainability and the Environment

41. Pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians are exempt from the proposed prohibition of driving. It is anticipated that the lower motorised traffic levels on Trent Lane will continue to attract cyclists and pedestrians and provide a valuable link to the wider strategic cycle network.

RECOMMENDATION/S

It is **recommended** that:

- 1) The Nottinghamshire County Council (Trent Lane, East Bridgford) Experimental Traffic Regulation Order 2019 (8278) is made into a permanent order and the objectors informed accordingly.

Adrian Smith
Corporate Director Place

For any enquiries about this report please contact:
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Constitutional Comments (SJE 07/09/2020)

42. This decision falls within the Terms of Reference of the Communities & Place Committee to whom responsibility for the exercise of the Authority's functions relating to the planning, management and maintenance of highways (including traffic management) has been delegated.

Financial Comments (GB 08/09/2020)

43. The estimated cost to implement the works and traffic order outlined in this report is £30,000. This will be funded from the 2020/21 Integrated Transport Measures capital budget which totals £8.1m and is already approved as part of the Communities and Place capital programme.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

All relevant documents for the proposed scheme are contained within the scheme file which can be found in the Major Projects and Improvements section at Trent Bridge House, Fox Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

Bingham East ED

Councillor Francis Purdue-Horan.