

August 2011	ITEM
Delegated Decision Report	
NORTH ROAD, PURFLEET – CLOSURE	
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Andy Smith – Housing and Regeneration	
Wards and communities affected: Aveley and Uplands	Key Decision: No
Accountable Head of Service: Andrew Millard, Head of Planning and Transportation	
Accountable Director: Bill Newman, Corporate Director of Sustainable Communities	
This report is Public	
Purpose of Report: To consider objections to the proposal to implement the permanent closure of North Road, Purfleet.	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The statutory consultation for a Prohibition of Driving Order on North Road received a number of objections due to the alternative route that vehicles would have to take, through the new Bellways estate. It is also felt by the objectors that the junction should be upgraded rather than closed to traffic. An alternative option is available which will deliver the suggested upgrade and will satisfy the concerns of the objectors.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1.1 It is recommended that the objections are upheld and the proposal to close North Road at its junction with Purfleet-By Pass is not carried forward.**
- 1.2 It is recommended that the Council request Bellways take forward the alternative option (described in paragraph 3.3) to improve the existing junction and implemented as soon as possible.**
- 1.3 It is further recommended that the objectors are notified accordingly.**

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 2.1 Following the receipt of a planning application from Bellway Homes, for a residential development, approval was granted for 163 new dwellings to be built in 2008. To mitigate the impact of the increased number of vehicles on the estate as a result of that development, improvements for access/egress onto/from the Purfleet By Pass have been identified.
- 2.2 The Council has a draft policy in the Local Development Framework which seeks to minimise the number of accesses onto fast distributor roads. This is for road safety purposes, as drivers on these roads do not expect to encounter slowing and turning traffic to accesses in isolation and that lack of expectancy can give rise to dangerous traffic conditions. At the time of the Bellways application for the new houses, it was agreed that they would use their best endeavours to not increase the number of accesses, by stopping up North Road and routing all traffic through their site to the newly constructed access. The logic behind this was that the new access was better than the existing junction of North Road and the Purfleet bypass, which has a skewed approach to the Purfleet Bypass, no ghosted right turn lane and a narrow approach with no footways.
- 2.3 Contrastingly the new estate road access would approach the bypass at right angles, be of adequate width for 2 cars to pass and be provided with a ghosted right turn lane, to allow vehicles to safely wait to turn right on the bypass.

3. ISSUES AND/OR OPTIONS:

- 3.1 In order to weigh the implications of either scenario it is necessary to weigh the potential road safety benefits of closing the existing North Road access against the disbenefits of routing the Watts Wood traffic through the new Bellways development. In the last 10 years there have been 6 recorded injury accidents involving vehicles turning to and from the North Road access. Closing this access and relocating this turning traffic to the new estate road access is likely to result in a saving in the number of accidents.
- 3.2 The new estate road has been designed in accordance with the Essex Design Guide for residential and Mixed Use Areas. Consequently the layout is relatively tortuous in order to reduce the speed of through traffic. The route through the estate road is 180 metre long and the carriageway is generally 4.0 metres wide. When coupled with the presence of on-street parking, the conditions are not suitable for supporting a significant increase in through traffic. If the new estate road had been built on a more direct alignment without individual frontage access, then conceivably its use as a through route may be more acceptable.
- 3.3 It was recognised at the time that irrespective of the road safety issues, residents may object to the closure. Consequently an alternative option was

agreed, for consideration for implementation by Bellway Homes if public support was not gained in securing the road closure.

- 3.4 The alternative option involves improving the existing North Road junction by realigning the approach to the Purfleet Bypass and installing a “give-way to oncoming traffic” on the narrow section. The alternative additionally gives the opportunity for the installation of a ghosted right turn lane.
- 3.5 The statutory consultation on the initial option (closure of existing junction) was carried out between 27/05/2011 and 17/06/2011. A number of objections were received, including representation from the Purfleet Forum and a letter containing 44 signatures.
- 3.6 The objectors do not agree with the existing junction being closed off as this would result in all traffic having to travel through the middle of the estate. They also feel that improvements should be carried out to the junction, as opposed to closing it.

4. CONSULTATION (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

Ward Members were consulted on the contents of this report between 27/09/2011 and 5/10/2011. Cllr Wendy Herd and Cllr Pearce both support the recommendations made in this report.

5. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 5.1 These actions accord with the Council priorities to create a safer environment.

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

Implications verified by: Meinir Hall
Telephone and email: 01375 652147
mhall@thurrock.gov.uk

The Bellway Homes development is subject to a legal agreement whereby they are required to fund the agreed junction improvements. This is also subject to a works Bond held by the Council with Bellway Homes.

6.2 Legal

Implications verified by: Remi Aremu
Telephone and email: 01375 652 996
raremu@thurrock.gov.uk

At a general level, it is important to ensure that delegated decisions are taken by the appropriate officer, and that the origin of the delegation can be readily identified in case of future challenge.

In this instance, should the Prohibition of Driving be carried forward to implementation, it would be subject to the making of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). Under the provision of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, local authorities can implement TROs, designed to regulate, restrict or prohibit the use of a road or any part of the width of a road by vehicular traffic or pedestrians. A TRO may take effect at all times or during specified periods, and certain classes of traffic may be exempted from a TRO.

Permanent TROs are subject to the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996, which impose various legal requirements prior to the making of an order. These requirements include publishing a notice of the proposals in a local newspaper and allowing potential objectors 21 days to make representations. It is incumbent on the Council to take account of any representations made as a consequence of such an advertisement.

6.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: Samson DeAlyn
Telephone and email: 01375 652472
sdealyn@thurrock.gov.uk

There are no diversity and equality implications noted in this report.

6.4 **Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental**

None

7. **CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 Residents are opposed to the closure of the existing junction. On balance the benefits of closing North Road are unlikely to outweigh the harm from diverting traffic through the new estate road. In considering the alternative option to improve the existing North Road junction, this is likely to deliver as many road safety benefits along the bypass as the proposed closure, so it is recommended that Council require Bellways to pursue this scheme.

BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT:

- Objections

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:

- None

Report Author Contact Details:

Name: Julie Nelder

Telephone: 01375 413366

E-mail: jnelder@thurrock.gov.uk