

Rising Bus Bollards on Greenbank Road and Gould Road Barnstaple

Report of the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the automatic bus bollards on Gould Road and Greenbank Road, Barnstaple shall be removed and a revocation of the existing traffic regulation order (document number 45393 reference IMR/B09373 ID 5328) be advertised to allow all traffic to use the currently bollarded sections in either direction.

1. Background/Introduction

Planning application number 49761 approved by North Devon Council on 22 February 2011 required automatic rising bus bollards to be installed on Gould Road and Greenbank Road. These have been installed by the developer.

The bollards were locked in the down position on 8 October 2016 following repeated faulty operation caused by damage to the bollards.

This report reasons to remove these bollards and the traffic regulation order permanently to reduce the future ongoing maintenance cost of repairing the bollards and to provide more flexible bus service routes and better emergency vehicle access.

Motor vehicles authorised to travel through the restricted sections are:

- (a) emergency service vehicles
- (b) local buses
- (c) solo motorcycles
- (d) vehicles being used in the service of a local authority in pursuance of statutory powers or duties;
- (e) vehicles being used with a Council permit for other essential purposes (recycling and refuse lorries)

2. Discussion

The bollards and restricted sections remain part of the public highway but are maintained at private expense at the current time under the provisions within the combined section 106/278/38 agreement for the site. The developer has spent a considerable amount of money repairing the bollards going to the site approximately 30 times between their installation in August 2015 and their lock down in October 2016.

It is not considered a good use of the County Council's resources to continually repair these bollards in the future with the already stretched maintenance budget. The bollards would probably be locked in the down position permanently, rendering them useless.

The bollards operate on a system that requires a tag to lower the bollard, and they are set up so that vehicles can only pass through them in one direction.

Emergency vehicles and vehicles on Council duties are exempt from the traffic order, but must have a tag in order to lower the bollard. Not all of these vehicles have the required tags and therefore are unable to pass through the restricted section when the bollards are in normal operation.

It has been reported that ambulances have had problems accessing houses on the other side of the bollards due to not being able to lower the bollards when they were in operation.

Removal of the bollards would make it easier for vital emergency service vehicles to access all houses on the estate without the need for a tag to lower the bollard in each emergency vehicle.

Stagecoach operates the number 11A and 11C bus services that use Gould Road and Greenbank Road and has recently changed these routes to serve the doctors surgery in Newport.

It is understood that Stagecoach would like more flexibility in their routes by being able to travel through both restricted sections in either direction. Rather than in one direction only which is the current set up. Removal of the bollards would allow this.

3. Options/Alternatives

Two other alternative options have been considered.

1. No change. The developer keeps fixing the bollards and they are made to operate as the agreement states before the County Council takes on their maintenance.
2. The bollards are removed but the traffic regulation order is kept in place. This would prohibit all vehicles except those listed in section 1 above to use the road. This would allow buses to use Greenbank Road and Gould Road in either direction, but there would be no physical barrier to enforce the prohibition to vehicles.

These options have not been recommended due to the future maintenance costs of alternative option 1 and the future enforcement requirements of alternative option 2 on the police.

4. Consultations/Representations

A nearby convenience store has previously requested the removal of the bollards due to a loss of trade. It is not known if any loss of trade is directly related to the bollards having been installed.

The local police have indicated their preference would be to remove both the bollards and the traffic order as recommended. Enforcement of the existing traffic order with no bollards in place would be extremely low priority for the police.

5. Financial Considerations

The developer (North Devon Homes/Pearce Construction) would carry out the works to the satisfaction of the County Council. This would be removal of the bollards, signs and resurfacing of the road.

A section 106 contribution of £10,000 towards maintenance of the bollards that has been paid by North Devon Homes would have to be paid back with interest.

As discussed in section 2 above, the ongoing maintenance cost for the County Council would reduce considerably. And the cost of paying back the interest on the section 106 contribution would be paid back within a short time when considering the very low maintenance cost of the road if the bollards are not in place.

6. Environmental Impact Considerations

No formal environmental assessments have been undertaken.

If the bollards are removed bus services can be planned more flexibly to go either way on either road instead of having to go one way through the bollarded sections.

7. Equality Considerations

This decision is considered to not result in any discrimination, harassment, victimisation or any other prohibited conduct towards people of any particular age, disability, race/ethnicity, gender and gender identity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, pregnant women, new and breastfeeding mothers, marriage/civil partnership status or any other relevant factors such as caring responsibilities, rural isolation or socio-economic disadvantage.

8. Legal Considerations

The lawful implications/consequences of the proposals/recommendations/proposed course of action have been considered and taken into account in the preparation of this report/formulation of the recommendations set out above.

When making a Traffic Regulation Order it is the County Council responsibility to ensure that all relevant legislation is complied with. This includes Section 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 that states that it is the duty of a local authority, so far as practicable, secures the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of traffic and provision of parking facilities.

9. Risk Management Considerations

This proposal has been assessed and all necessary safeguards or action have been taken to safeguard the Council's position.

No risks have been identified.

10. Public Health Impact

No impacts to public health have been identified as a result of the proposal.

11. Summary/Conclusions/Reasons for Recommendations

Removal of the bollards and traffic order would:

- reduce the future highway maintenance cost to the County Council;
- make it easier for vital emergency service vehicles to access all houses on the on both sides of the restricted sections;
- Provide more flexibility for bus service routes in the local area;
- Remove the need for enforcement of the order by the police.

Dave Black
Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment

Electoral Division: Barnstaple South

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

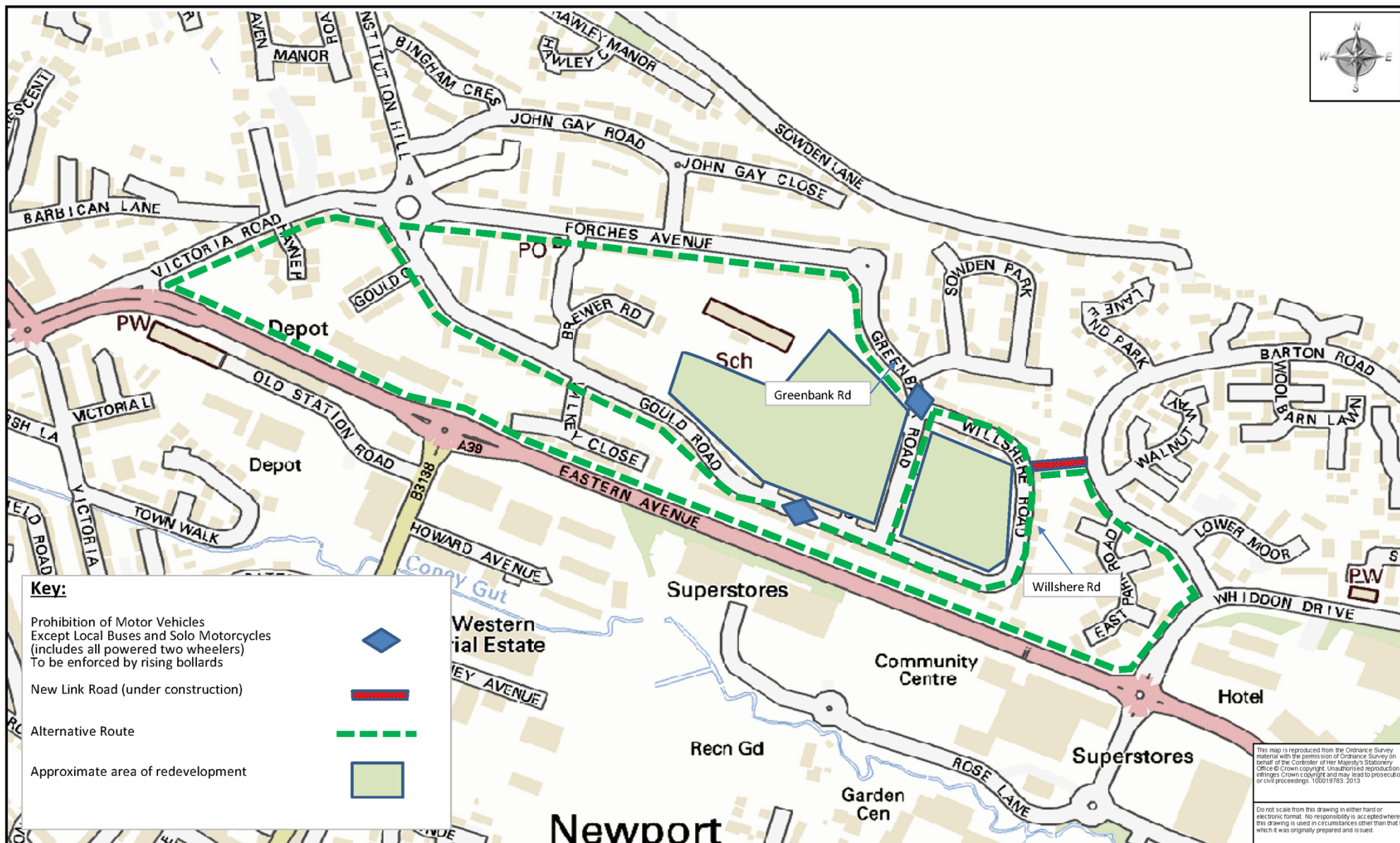
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Background Paper	Date	File Ref.
North Devon Council Planning Reports	February 2010	49761

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SCHEME
DRAWING

Forches Estate, Home Zones
Prohibition of Motor Vehicles (Except for Local Buses and Solo Motorcycles)

Overview Plan and Alternative Routes

drawn by	MP	scale	NTS
date	17-Apr-2013	O.S. Ref	257335; 132661
drawing number	ENV 5328/1/A		