

Stanwell Hill Westward Ho! - Traffic Flow Investigation

Report of the Acting Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste

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

Recommendation: It is recommended that:

- (a) The widening of the road at Stanwell Hill not be pursued;**
- (b) The current route signing directing traffic to Stanwell Hill is examined in greater detail to determine if improvements can be made.**

1. Background/Introduction

Report HIW/16/5, Request for One Way System in Westward Ho!, was considered by Torridge HATOC at its meeting on 28 February 2017. It was resolved that the proposal for a one way system on Fosketh Hill and Stanwell Hill not be pursued and that other ways of improving traffic flow on Stanwell Hill be investigated, together with a review of signage to restrict HGVs for report to the next meeting.

2. Main Text/Proposal

Proposals for a one way traffic system on Stanwell Hill and Fosketh Hill have been rejected by this Committee. Consequently officers have been asked to consider other ways to improve traffic flow on Stanwell Hill. Two options have been considered, and are summarised in this report:

- Widening Stanwell Hill
- Redirecting traffic, especially HGV traffic, using signing

Consideration has been given to widening Stanwell Hill by extending either on the higher (south) side or the lower (north) side, both options would require the purchase of additional land and major engineering work.

Extending on the higher side would require removal of the existing rock face and securing of a fresh rock face. This may have a negative impact on properties at the top of the rock face, and it may be difficult to gain enough land to significantly widen the road.

Extending on the lower side would require building a retaining structure in order to support the extended road width. The current owner of the land has informally suggested that they would be reluctant to sell the land but would consider leasing it, which would lead to difficulties in the long term maintenance of the road.

The widening of Stanwell Hill using either of the above options would be uneconomic, would require the road to be closed for an extended period of time, and would be unlikely to be able to achieve significant widening due to restraints on land ownership and cost.

An option to review the current direction signing, to coincide with the upgrade of the A39 junctions and roundabouts, has also been examined. This would aim to direct traffic, principally freight and tourist traffic, via the A39 and A386 Heywood Road into Westward Ho!, as an alternative to using Buckleigh Road and Stanwell Hill.

3. Options/Alternatives

The alternative option is to leave the situation as it is.

4. Consultations/Representations/Technical Data

The options have been assessed as a desktop study with site visits; no public formal consultation has been undertaken at this stage.

5. Financial Considerations

Detailed estimates for road widening have not been calculated at this stage, as this would require a thorough engineering assessment, but a reasonable estimate can be derived from previous works of a similar nature. The cost would be dependant upon the length of road widened, but would be likely to exceed £1,000,000 due to the extensive engineering works required. There would also be additional cost to acquire land, which may require the use of Compulsory Purchase Orders.

There is no budgetary allowance for such schemes at this time and it is likely that funding would need to be sought from either Capital budgets or Development funding, where it would need to compete with other schemes. The scheme would be unlikely to achieve the required funding when there are other which are more readily available and would be able to be delivered at a lower cost. The traffic flows also would not support a need for funding, being relatively light and mainly consisting of local traffic over the majority of the year.

Redirecting traffic using signing is more readily achievable and could be undertaken at a much lower cost.

6. Environmental Impact Considerations

The environmental impact of widening the road would be severe with existing historic hedgerows removed, established rock faces cut back and substantial underpinning required to provide a solid structure for the new road width and support and protect existing land and properties.

It would be likely that a greater road width would make the route more attractive and may lead to an increase of traffic flows with a subsequent rise in associated pollution in an area heavily reliant on tourism and of outstanding natural beauty.

Redirecting traffic using signing would have a much lower impact, as traffic would be directed on to a more suitable route.

7. Equality Considerations

There are not considered to be any equality issues in regards to this scheme.

8. Legal Considerations

The lawful implications and consequences of the options have been considered and taken into account in the preparation of this report and of the recommendations set out above.

Widening the road may require the use of Compulsory Purchase Orders.

9. Risk Management Considerations

Any proposal to widen Stanwell Hill would bring significant risks in terms of cost, engineering requirements and the acquisition of land.

Redirecting traffic using signing has low risk as traffic would be diverted on to a more suitable route.

10. Public Health Impact

There are no long term public health impacts. Noise and dust is likely to be generated during the construction phase of a road widening scheme.

11. Summary/Conclusions/Reasons for Recommendations

It is recommended that widening of Stanwell Hill not be pursued, and that officers be asked to look into route signing alterations in more detail in order to bring a formal proposal back to this committee.

Meg Booth
Acting Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste

Electoral Divisions: Bideford East, Bideford West & Hartland, Northam

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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Background Paper	Date	File Ref.
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None

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