

Report detailing reasons for the Lansdowne Avenue – Experimental road closure

Background

Slough Borough Council was awarded £4.3 million by the Department for Transport as part of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) to improve pedestrian and cycle links across the borough. Lansdowne Avenue is already well used by pedestrians and cyclists travelling from the town centre to Salt Hill Park or over Stoke Poges Lane railway bridge to the north of the Borough. As part of the LSTF programme this route will be upgraded to encourage more users to travel sustainably from the town centre to the trading estate.

Lansdowne Avenue is used, throughout the day, by vehicles travelling south on Stoke Poges Lane as a short cut to the eastbound A4 to avoid the traffic light controlled junction. The road itself is primarily residential though it has a Doctor's surgery which serves as a destination to local traffic.

Accidents

A three year accident search to 31/01/13 found six accidents occurred at this junction (see accident plan Appendix A). Three involved pedal cyclists and three involved pedestrians, in four of the cases the pedestrian/cyclists was crossing the junction of Lansdowne Road from east to west and was in collision with a vehicle turning east out of the junction onto the A4. As traffic leaving this junction is merging with a heavily used one-way traffic route (eastbound towards Slough town centre) the drivers concentration is focused on giving way to vehicles from their right, increasing the likelihood of 'failing to see' pedestrians and cyclists travelling from their left.

The proposal, to close the junction of Lansdowne Avenue at its junction with the Bath Road will prevent vehicles from using Lansdowne Avenue to avoid the traffic signals at the Stoke Poges Lane, Bath Road junction. This will reduce vehicle volume and speeds on Lansdowne Avenue and eradicate the accident type described above.

Consultation

On 7 January 2013 the consultation leaflet was delivered to approximately 300 households and businesses on Lansdowne Avenue and those surrounding roads directly affected by the proposals. Information and plans were also posted on the Council's internet consultation portal (Uengage). The

closing date of the consultation period was 31 January 2013. Scheme information was issued to Councillors from the Chalvey and Central wards as well as key statutory stakeholders.

Consultation Results

A total of 79 responses (26%) have been received within the consultation period. 52% of responders supported the experimental closure, with many commenting that the closure will tackle the problems of speeding and inconsiderate driving.

The main objection was that the closure will lead to an increase in congestion at the junction of Stoke Poges Lane and the A4. No objections were received from Councillors or statutory stakeholders.

Though there is currently a perception of congestion on this approach to the junction, site observations and survey data show that the junction is currently operating within acceptable limits. The traffic signals at the junction are controlled by SCOOT a dynamic signal programme that reacts to traffic demand by adopting the signal timings. It is proposed, in the first instance, to allow the software to adapt to the increased traffic flow. If delays are found to be unacceptable there is potential to alter the software to allow additional time on this approach. Advanced signing will be put up in all directions to advise drivers of the closure.

It is proposed that the measures be introduced under an experimental order; this will allow the residents a six month period in which to comment. The order will be in place for a maximum period of 18 months, after which time the Council must have introduced a permanent order, or remove the provisions. However, if the measures are well received we will be able to make the order permanent before the end of the 18 month period.

An advisory letter will be distributed to stakeholders and all residents in Stoke Poges Lane.