



## Report to Leader (Transport portfolio)

<b>Decision Date:</b>	9 March 2022
<b>Reference number:</b>	TR10.22
<b>Title:</b>	<b>A413 Amersham Road, Gerrards Cross – Closure of central reserve gap</b>
<b>Cabinet Member(s):</b>	Councillor Steve Broadbent
<b>Author and/or contact officer:</b>	Kirk Adams and/or Bestman Agu, Design Services, Transport for Buckinghamshire; <a href="mailto:bestman.agu@buckinghamshire.gov.uk">bestman.agu@buckinghamshire.gov.uk</a>
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	Gerrards Cross;- Councillors Michael Bracken, Thomas Broom & Andrew Wood   Chalfont St Peter;- Councillors Isobel Darby, Jonathan Rush and Linda Smith

### Summary

*It is proposed to introduce a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) prohibiting motor vehicles using that central reserve gap at A413 Amersham Road right turn facility near South Park in Chalfont St Giles by closing the gap as well as banning all turning manoeuvres.*

*The closure of the central reserve gap would invariably cause severance issues with properties whose ability to access both the northbound and southbound carriageways of the A413 is affected by the gap closure.*

*The safety benefits of closing this central reserve gap as proposed are significant taking account of the potential increase of traffic at this junction due to conversion of empty offices in Chalfont Park to housing presently ongoing i.e. coming from Kingsway roundabout towards Gerrards Cross slip road; as well as the opportunity that this proposal brings in terms of helping to facilitate safe movement of traffic.*

**Recommendations:**

**It is recommended that the Leader:**

- a) Consider the Objections and Feedback received at Statutory Consultation**
- b) Approves the making of the Traffic Regulation Order as set out in this report, for the closure of the central reserve on A413 Amersham Road, Gerrards Cross.**
- c) That responders to the Statutory Consultation be informed of the Decision as well as implement the traffic regulation order and associated works.**

**Reason for decision:**

*Transport for Buckinghamshire was commissioned by Buckinghamshire Council to undertake a statutory consultation for the proposed closure of the central reserve gap on the A413 Amersham Road, Gerrards Cross. The closure of this gap is required for safety reasons and to reduce collisions incidences along this specific road section.*

## **1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 This Key Decision Report relates to the outcome of a statutory consultation on the proposal to close the central reserve gap on the A413 Amersham Road, Gerrards Cross. The proposal is aimed at reducing the collisions and near misses as a result of people using this gap.
- 1.2 Scheme was funded through Buckinghamshire Council's Network Safety Capital Funding and identified through the 2021-22 review of Network Safety Schemes based upon the following information:  
  
***Collision history***
- 1.3 Thames Valley Police keeps a record of all accidents that their officers attend. This data is shared with Local Authorities to help to identify accident trends and hotspots. The Council carries out regular analysis of casualties arising from such accidents, including the annual Road Casualty Review. The review informs assessment and helps prioritise problem sites.
- 1.4 TfB has undertaken collision analysis on the length of the A413 (dual carriageway) and identified the central reserve gap north of the South Park junction and towards the golf club as a cluster site. It is important to note that damage only collisions are not recorded on the database. In order to

gain a long term picture of the collisions the investigation has looked at the latest 5 year period up to the end of October 2020.

- 1.5 Between 01/11/2015 and 31/10/2020 there have been 7 reported injury collisions at the A413 Amersham Road Gerrard's Cross right turn slip road for Golf Club near South Park (1 fatal and 6 slight injuries) along with a number of reported near miss incidents. The gap has been determined to be an unnecessary hazard as the alternative, safer route is only 1.25km further.
- 1.6 Most collisions are vehicles turning right into the slip road from the northbound carriageway, and turning onto the southbound lane(s). This creates a situation where fast-moving traffic on a national speed limit dual carriageway meets slow moving traffic heading sideways across both lanes in front them.
- 1.7 Transport for Buckinghamshire's proposal prevents all right turns and U turns at this location whilst still allowing left in and left out access on the southbound carriageway for vehicles exiting the Golf Club area. This is achieved through:-
  - a. Removing the right turn manoeuvre from slip road onto A413 northbound traffic.
  - b. Prohibiting 'U' turns for traffic exiting South Park and heading directly across the A413 into the right turn facility to conduct a U-turn and head south on the A413.
  - c. Redesign the slip road to remove right turn facility for northbound A413 traffic.
  - d. Allowing a simple diversion route for A413 northbound traffic, sending vehicles to the Kingsway roundabout north of this junction.

#### ***Outcome of Consultation***

- 1.8 On 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021, Buckinghamshire County Council published a notice to in a local newspaper advising of its intentions to prohibit the 'right turn' movement from A413 Amersham Road leading into Gerrard's Cross Golf Club and prohibit the 'U-turn' movement at the central reservation.
- 1.9 The central reserve gap is proposed to be closed from a point 140m north-west of South Park's junction with the dual carriageway for a distance of approximately 30m (all distances are approximate only and are measured from the centre of the stated junction along the centreline of the highway). Refer to map tile number 87 in Appendix 2.
- 1.10 A proposal for improved non-physical measures to confine driver movements has been drawn up, approved by the Network Safety Team along with Elected Members, and has undergone a Road Safety Audit. It is proposed that these

measures are implemented in late March/ early April 2022 (*see Appendix 3 for the layout drawing*).

## **2. Content of report**

- 2.1 This report relates to the outcome of the statutory consultation on the proposal to introduce two Prohibition orders, No Right Turn from A413 Amersham Road north-bound traffic and No 'U' Turns on the central reserve.
- 2.2 The proposal to close the central reserve gap is part of the Buckinghamshire Council Network Safety Fund scheme, delivered by Transport for Buckinghamshire (TfB), to reduce the number of injury collisions and near miss incidents on the A413 Amersham Road from the existing road layout.
- 2.3 The Network Safety team and Thames Valley Police conducted a site visit where it was observed that nearly all traffic using the right turn facility is local traffic exiting South Park and heading directly across the A413 into the right turn facility to conduct a U-turn and head south on the A413. This is not how the junction was designed to be used, and although the slip road can be used as such, it was not intended to be used exclusively as a U-turn facility as is currently the case.
- 2.4 The close proximity of South Park to the right turn slip results in vehicles moving off from a stand still having stopped to seek a gap in north bound A413 traffic, and slowly migrating across both lanes of fast moving dual carriageway traffic to immediately enter the right turn slip between the two carriageways. This creates a situation where fast moving traffic on a national speed limit dual carriageway meets slow moving traffic heading sideways across both lanes in front them.
- 2.5 The problem is similar on the other side of the of carriageway, when vehicles finish the U-turn by turning right to join the southbound carriageway and are attempting to merge with fast moving traffic. This is not how the junction was intended to be used and is causing the collisions mentioned above. The volume of local traffic observed using this facility to complete U-turns was very high.
- 2.6 This junction near South Park, which gives access to the golf club for northbound/southbound vehicles on A413 Amersham Road, has an existing roundabout around 1.25km in its north-westerly direction should this central reserve gap be closed. The distance to this `Kingsway` roundabout (1.25km to

north) is not considerable meaning closure of this current gap in the central reserve is feasible.

### ***Alternative routes with the gap closed***

- 2.7 For this gap closure, the diversion route that would be required for southbound traffic is some 3km in length. This is not considered to be too excessive and may offset the collision benefits being obtained. Whilst the central reservation island remains open there will always be a high risk of collisions occurring, possibly serious or even fatal, due to traffic travelling at slower speeds negotiating the gap.
- 2.8 With the gap closed motorists would have to use the Kingsway Roundabout 0.8 miles to the north to join the southbound carriageway. In view of this, closing the gaps should aid road safety in the longer term even though it would be inconvenient to local residents if the gaps were closed. The reason why this was considered was on safety grounds due to seven injury collisions in five years. On safety grounds therefore, it is not unreasonable to close the gaps as a precaution.
- 2.9 Funding has been allocated within the Network Safety Fund to consult on the proposals and carry out the associated civil engineering works required to formally close the central reserve.
- 2.10 The proposed closure was advertised and promoted locally through a statutory consultation process carried out between 5th October 2021 and 26th October 2021 in accordance with the requirements of the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. The Police, Fire & Rescue and the Ambulance Services were included in the consultation.

Copies of the statutory consultation documents are located here:

<https://yourvoicebucks.citizenspace.com/roads-parking/a413-amersham-road-movement-bans/>

## **Appendices to the Report**

**Appendix 1:** Summary of Objections and Consultation Feedback

**Appendix 2:** Amended Plan showing proposed changes (TRO Map Tile)

**Appendix 3:** Overview Plan of Proposal to be Implemented

**Appendix 4:** Statement of Reasons, Notice & Traffic Regulation Order

### 3. Other options considered

- 3.1 Keep the existing central reserve gap open allowing all movements, however this will not achieve the desired reduction in collisions and/or near misses.
- 3.2 Restrict the movements at this location to only right turns out of the side road. However this wouldn't eliminate the dangerous U-Turns and could also introduce uncertainty at this location which would increase the likelihood of even more dangerous manoeuvres.
- 3.3 A roundabout or traffic signal controlled junction has been requested however these are very high costs to implement and would be out of scope of budgets available.

### 4. Legal and financial implications

- 4.1 Section 122 of The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 places a duty on Buckinghamshire Council to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians), on its highways.
- 4.2 Regulation 14 of the TRO Regulations state that an order making authority may modify an order – whether in receipt of any objections or otherwise – before it is then made.
- 4.3 When the decision is taken and recommendations agreed, the Traffic Regulation Order will be made. The responders to the consultation and persons likely to be affected will be informed of the decision made.
- 4.4 In accordance with the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996, the TRO will then be made and publicised by Buckinghamshire Council.
- 4.5 If approved, this key decision will be the authority for Legal Services to 'make' the TRO and advertise the Notice of Making in the local press in accordance with the Procedure Regulations.

### 5. Corporate implications

- 5.1 **Property & HR implications**– The prohibition of motor vehicles is contained within the current highway extents.
- 5.2 **Climate change & sustainability implications** – None identified

- 5.3 **Equality & Diversity Issues** – Equality Act 2010. This proposal will not have any disproportionate effect upon people with protected characteristics. The scheme will remove the central reserve gap and increase highway safety by removing the dangerous manoeuvres currently taking place at this location to reduce road traffic collisions / near misses, improve junction efficiency and contribute to a safer highway network. Ease of access affected for residents in either direction on this A413 Amersham Road central reservation island – see comments within appendix 1.
- 5.4 **Value for money** – The civil engineering installation work will be tendered and carried out by an approved sub-contractor on behalf of TfB {Transport for Buckinghamshire}. Sign installation as well as road marking works will be sourced via TfB Supply Chain Partners for competitive quotations and carried out by Transport for Buckinghamshire. Future sign and road markings to be maintained by TfB.
- 5.5 **Resource Implications** – If the recommendations are agreed, the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) will be made by Buckinghamshire Council and the implementation of signing and subsequent management would be delivered by Transport for Buckinghamshire and its supply chain partners. Future maintenance of all assets will be through the Transport for Buckinghamshire general maintenance budgets. The funding of the scheme is from Buckinghamshire Council Network Safety Fund.

## 6. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views

- 6.1 A period of statutory consultation was undertaken between starting 5<sup>th</sup> October 2021 and ending 26<sup>th</sup> October 2021. The consultation allowed a minimum 21-day period for all comments & objections as per Regulations.
- 6.2 Buckinghamshire Council's 'CitizenSpace' page provided plans of the proposed restrictions, the Notice and statement of reasons and a link to an online survey where residents could provide feedback on the proposed prohibition measures. The statutory consultees for the area were also informed of the consultation.
- 6.3 During the three week statutory consultation period, a total of 161 responses were received via the online questionnaire, letters or emails. These full written responses are contained in Appendix 1 and have been reviewed and considered against the Statement of Reasons.
- 6.4 Of these 161 people who responded ...

- 110 entries OBJECTED to the proposal <68.3%>
- 41 entries SUPPORTED the proposal <25.5%>
- 10 respondees made comments but did not specify whether they objected or supported the movement bans <6.2%>

6.5 The results of this consultation have now been collated and analysed.

A significant number of respondents objecting to the right and 'U' turn ban have raised common requests / issues. It is clear from the comments received that majority of residents do not support the full closure of the central reserve crossovers. They feel that the problems at the crossovers are caused by inappropriate behaviour of some motorists. The residents have great concern over the additional distance, time, and cost that they would incur as a result of this prohibition order. These comments are grouped in appendix 1 with Transport for Buckinghamshire's (TfB) response.

6.6 If closure of the crossovers is not pursued then a prohibition of U turn could be considered. It should be noted that adopting this alternative consideration {U turn prohibition} will still allow 90 degree right turns to take place and therefore require the promotion of a Traffic Regulation Order. This process will allow residents and others the opportunity to comment on the proposals. The final decision on whether the advertised proposals are implemented ultimately rests with the Leader.

6.7 The closure of the gap on A413 Amersham Road would prevent road users from the misuse of crossover facility for U-turns therefore resolving the safety concerns that the scheme is set out to achieve. The private route towards Gerrards Cross Golf Club or Kingsway roundabout north of the central reserve cross-over facility are more suitable routes for road users in comparison to carrying out right turns in this gap.

6.8 The use of a central reservation gap and manoeuvring across a live lane of traffic to access existing gap in the central reservation and to then exit onto A413 Amersham Road south-bound carriageway holds a much higher potential for collisions in comparison to using Kingsway roundabout and private route towards the Golf Club.

6.9 It is true to say that should the closure of the gaps take place then traffic will displace and be diverted onto the roundabouts located to the north. The displacement equates to additional traffic to be accommodated by the existing roundabout infrastructure at peak times and the gap closure may increase the potential for conflict at this roundabout.



- 6.10 Although closing the central reserve gap would solve the current safety concerns and reduce the volume of traffic on existing parallel private route towards the Golf club, it would add considerable travel time on to motorists / residents as well as forcing many of them to travel straight ahead towards Kingsway roundabout and into A413 Amersham Road southbound carriageway, this has been highlighted as a dangerous manoeuvre due to the road layout.
- 6.11 The Council understands that the closure of the central reservation will cause a change to local resident's journeys, this is often the case with most schemes implemented and seeks residents to understand that the proposals are to promote safety within the local area. Given all the constraints with regards to funding it is accepted that this permanent TRO and gap closure plus lining works should be implemented.
- 6.12 Commenting on TfB's proposal, the following Buckinghamshire County Councillors made these statements :

**Cllr Thomas Broom commented:** *"After speaking with local residents, there appears to be widespread opposition to this change locally. Therefore I would ask that this be considered in any decision making".*

Councillor Broom further confirmed his disapproval with the proposed scheme {after the public consultation} based upon his discussions with local residents. He stated:

*I was one of the 110 people who objected to this. Local residents have been very clear to me, and judging by the results of the consultation, they have been with you as well. If TfB can provide an alternative solution that reduces risk while retaining access then I would be happy to consider it.*

*If this is to be escalated at all, I would insist on it being presented in the context of the massive and widespread local objections.*

*Given that the very decisive outcome of the consultation seems to carry no weight, why was such an exercise undertaken to begin with? It appears this decision was taken before the consultation took place.*

**Cllr Michael Bracken provided the following statement:-** *`This is of interest to many residents in the Gerrards Cross. I see the mixed views from the survey including a majority of objections but I do also think this needs to be balanced with the safety issues given the history including a fatal accident. I have no objection to the recommendation being made`.*

**Cllr Andrew Wood:** *“I have had numerous emails from local residents objecting to the proposed closure of the central reservation gap, and so as one of the elected Unitary Councillors for Gerrards Cross, I must support the objection to this project. So I am against this proposal”*.

- 6.13 No formal response was received from all local ward Members covering the diversion route i.e. Cllr Isobel Darby, Cllr Jonathan Rush and Cllr Linda Smith.
- 6.14 Thames Valley Police **have no objection to these proposals** i.e. closing the central reserve gap.
- 6.15 No objections were received from emergency services or any of the other standard consultees.

## **7. Communication, engagement & further consultation**

- 7.1 All consultees and responders to the consultation will be contacted by either e-mail or letter and will be informed of the decision and where they can find the details of the statutory consultation and the decision taken. A public notice will be advertised in the local press. The decision and key decision report will be published on the Buckinghamshire Council web page.

## **8. Next steps and review**

- 8.1 If these recommendations are accepted, Buckinghamshire Council will make the amendment to the Traffic Regulation Order covering the locations outlined in this Key Decision Report (KDR). The TRO will be signed and re-advertised by Buckinghamshire Council.
- 8.2 Following a decision on this report, the implementation of the scheme will be in Spring 2022 (**NB:-** If this report is rejected, there will be no changes to the current Traffic Regulation Order).
- 8.3 The scheme will be subject to a Road Safety Audit Stage 3 post completion.

## **9. Background papers**

- 9.1 The full written responses received are shown in Appendix 1.
- 9.2 The map tiles which were advertised at the statutory consultation stage can be found in Appendix 2.
- 9.3 The drawing which was prepared prior to the statutory consultation stage can be found in Appendix 3.
- 9.4 The full details of our proposals, contents summary from the statutory consultation and all other statutory consultation documents including its

draft Traffic Regulation Order, statement of reasons and On-Site Notice can be found in Appendix 4.

## **10. Your questions and views (for key decisions)**

- 10.1 If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report please get in touch with the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider please inform the democratic services team. This can be done by telephone 01296 382343 or email [democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk).