



FOR PUBLICATION

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET MEMBER DECISION – HIGHWAYS ASSETS AND TRANSPORT

7 December 2021

Report of the Executive Director - Place

Petition Requesting Traffic Lights at Froggatt New Bridge

1. Divisions Affected

1.1 Derwent Valley.

2. Key Decision

2.1 This is not a Key Decision.

3. Purpose

3.1 To inform the Cabinet Member of investigations undertaken following the receipt of a petition requesting traffic lights and associated traffic management measures at Froggatt New Bridge.

4. Information and Analysis

4.1 An E-petition containing 297 signatures has been submitted to the County Council.

4.2 The petition reads as follows:

4.3 *“We the undersigned request that an urgent item is submitted to the Derbyshire County Council full Cabinet concerning the ongoing problems with Froggatt New Bridge. We ask that the review examines the frequency of damage to the bridge and the associated costs including the delays to traffic. We also ask that priority be given to the*

funding of traffic lights at the bridge and the other associated traffic management measures to improve safety including pedestrian safety.”

- 4.4 Further information submitted by the lead petitioner reads:
“Over many years there has been a problem with the frequent damage to Froggatt New Bridge. The bridge is narrow and the approach from the west involves a 90 degree turn to the bridge at the point of entry. There is limited space to manoeuvre for large HGVs and there has been many examples of vehicles catching the south western section and as a result demolishing a significant part of the bridge.
- 4.5 *Forward visibility for road users is particularly restricted, and very impaired during the summer months by overgrown vegetation which is extensive on both banks of the River Derwent.*
- 4.6 *The bridge itself is of historic interest and is within the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument and Listed Building which is Calver Weir. Public footpaths run on both sides of the bridge and the south side path is part of the designated Derwent Valley Heritage Way. Pedestrian safety is compromised by the vegetation because it is very difficult to see approaching vehicles as attempts are made to cross the road next to the bridge to continue on the footpath on the other side.*
- 4.7 *We see the solution to all the problems through the provision of traffic lights and the associated control of vehicle parking near the location. Grindleford has such a solution and we consider that the problems at Froggatt bridge are more severe than elsewhere.”*
- 4.8 A report was considered by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Infrastructure at a meeting on 28 January 2021 relating to representations received following the advertisement of a speed limit consolidation Order for the A625 (Minute No.06/21 refers). This is attached at Appendix 2. Calver Parish Council had submitted comments relating to damage to the bridge as part of that consultation. The Cabinet Member resolved that further investigation be carried out into the feasibility of signalling the bridge.
- 4.9 Damage has been caused to the bridge on 18 occasions, all of which involved damage to the western approach wall. The earliest record of an impact was 2007, the latest has been September 2021. Ten of these impacts have occurred since 2016.
- 4.10 Typically, each repair costs around £3,000 to £5,000 including the cost of a road closure. Whilst the cost of many of these repairs has been

covered by the vehicle's insurers, some have not where the vehicle has not been traced.

- 4.11 Following a site meeting with Parish Council representatives and some residents in 2016, a package of measures has been carried out by the County Council to improve the situation here. This has included extensive removal of foliage on the inside of the bend to improve inter-visibility, widening of the carriageway at the bend to enable additional room for large vehicles to pass each other and to create additional road space to enable the manoeuvring of long vehicles and some signing and lining amendments on each approach to the bridge.
- 4.12 The bridge is on the A625 so carries traffic commensurate with its principal road status. It is a rural stretch of road so is subject to the national speed limit in accordance with the national guidance on setting speed limits.

Officer Comments

- 4.13 From discussions held on site and subsequent correspondence, there appears to be a general assumption that damage to the bridge is caused when two vehicles meet on the bridge and this is where the request for traffic lights has come from. However, there is little evidence to suggest that this is always the case and it is likely that driver error is as much to blame where drivers of long vehicles have just misjudged their turning manoeuvre, resulting in damage to the parapet walls.
- 4.14 The provision of traffic lights would not necessarily prevent this from occurring as drivers can still strike the bridge when misjudging the turn. Therefore, engineering measures to align vehicles in conjunction with the traffic signal control would be required.
- 4.15 According to the Police's injury collision records, there have been no recorded injury collisions at the bridge during the latest five year period from 1 September 2016 to 31 August 2021. When investigating collision data, the latest three-year period is the standard test period, however, five years have been studied to account for the fluctuations in traffic levels due to the recent lockdown periods.
- 4.16 Bearing the collision history in mind, there would be little justification to consider further intervention measures from a casualty reduction perspective. However, the continued damage to the structure, along with the disruption to the network that the ensuing repairs can present (a road closure is usually required), there would be justification from a structures' protection and a minimisation of network disruption perspective.

- 4.17 Some preliminary design work suggests that signal control could be an option bearing in mind having sufficient road space to accommodate the relevant infrastructure (signal poles and heads, control box, etc). Some new areas of hardstanding would be required to facilitate this aspect. According to Western Power's records, there is an available power source feeding the properties on the bend.
- 4.18 The access road on the apex of the bend to the south of the bridge complicates the operation of any signal control as drivers emerging from this lane would be doing so within the controlled area. It would probably be necessary to provide this lane with its own signal head and detection equipment to manage this.
- 4.19 As this location is within the Peak District National Park, liaison would need to take place with the Peak District National Park Authority with regard to the visual and urbanising impact of any intervention measures.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Consultation would be carried out on any proposal taken forward

6. Alternative Options Considered

- 6.1 Extensive removal of foliage on the inside of the south-western corner has been carried out to improve inter-visibility for motorists entering the bridge. Northbound drivers can now see if there are any vehicles already on the bridge before committing to entering the bridge.
- 6.2 A road widening scheme has taken place to incorporate the verge area into the carriageway on the south side of the bend. This provides additional road space for turning manoeuvres and to enabled to "square up" before entering the bridge to minimise the possibility of damage by the rear axles of longer wheelbased vehicles. It also acts as a deterrent to parking as the area is now part of the live carriageway and not verge.
- 6.3 A review of the signing and road markings has taken place resulting in some amendments.
- 6.4 A review of the speed limits has taken place and this is covered by the report to the Cabinet Member on 28 January 2021 (Appendix 2). It is considered that the existing speed limits are commensurate with the Department for Transport's current guidance.

- 6.5 **Do nothing:** If no further work is carried out here to address the on-going damage to the bridge, it is likely that such damage will continue to occur to this structure on a periodic basis with the on-going cost implications of this, as well as the disruption to the network and the impact that this can have on local residents and businesses.

7. Implications

- 7.1 Appendix 1 sets out the relevant implications considered in the preparation of the report.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1 Derbyshire County Council Speed Management Protocol - <https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/site-elements/documents/pdf/council/meetings-decisions/meetings/cabinet/2017-11-16-speed-management-plan.pdf>
- 8.2 DfT guidance, circular 01/2013 Setting Local Speed Limits - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/setting-local-speed-limits>
- 8.3 Traffic Regulation Act 1984 - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1984/27/contents>
- 8.4 Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2016/362/contents/made>
- 8.5 Traffic Signs Manual Chapter 6 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/851465/dft-traffic-signs-manual-chapter-6.pdf

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1- Implications.
- 9.2 Appendix 2 – Report to Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Infrastructure dated 28 January 2021.

10. Recommendations

That the Cabinet Member:

- a) Approves the installation of a traffic signal scheme at Froggatt New Bridge.

- b) Approves that the scheme be added to the 2022-23 Capital Schemes programme.
- c) Notes that the lead petitioner will be informed accordingly.

11. Reason for Recommendations

11.1 This proposal should help to reduce continual damage to the structure and minimise disruption to the highway network.

12. Is it necessary to waive the call in period?

12.1 No.

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Implications

Financial

- 1.1 The estimated cost to deliver the traffic signal scheme is £250,000 and is subject to approval of the Place Department Service Plan for 2022-23. Until this has been approved there is no budget to fund these works.

Legal

- 2.1 The County Council, as the local traffic authority, can provide traffic signs (which include traffic signals and road markings) on the public highway through powers provided by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

Human Resources

- 3.1 Due to current workloads for the County Council's in-house teams, any proposed traffic signal scheme may have to be out-sourced to produce a detailed design. External assistance may also have to be considered for the construction element of any scheme. These costs would be met from the identified budget for the scheme and have been included in the cost estimate.

Information Technology

- 4.1 None.

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 None.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 6.1 The scheme supports the Council's key priorities in contributing towards a resilient, healthier, and safer community.

Other (for example, Health and Safety, Environmental Sustainability, Property and Asset Management, Risk Management and Safeguarding)

- 7.1 None.