

Forward Plan reference number: Not Applicable

Report title: Proposed No Entry to Southbound Traffic – Lower Road, Loughton	
Report to: Councillor Kevin Bentley, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure	
Report author: Andrew Cook, Director for Highways and Transport	
Date: 22/10/2019	For: Decision
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County Divisions affected: Loughton Central	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Essex County Council (the Council) has formally advertised the introduction of a No Entry to Southbound Traffic on Lower Road at its junction with Goldings Road and Goldings Hill, Loughton (the Proposal). As objections have been received, the Cabinet Member is now asked to decide whether the Proposal should be implemented. The objections to the Proposal are outlined in Appendix 2, and the Proposal design is shown in Appendix 1.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To approve the introduction of a No Entry to southbound traffic on Lower Road at its junction with Goldings Road and Goldings Hill, as formally advertised (as set out in section 4.1 of this report).

3. Summary of issue

- 3.1 Lower Road is a residential road which runs parallel to the A121 Goldings Hill. At Lower Road's northern end, it comes into junction with Goldings Road, simultaneously as it joins with A121 Goldings Hill. At its southern end, it once again joins the A121 Goldings Hill, just prior the zebra crossing on the A121 Goldings Hill.
- 3.2 As mentioned, Lower Road is a residential road, with many of the properties on its northern stretch (north from the mini roundabout joining England's Lane) not possessing driveways. This subsequently forces its residents to park their vehicles directly on the highway, restricting the highway to one lane and increasing risk of collision when vehicles are travelling on it in both directions.
- 3.3 As a result of Lower Road's northern junction and narrow carriageway, a request was received from the Epping Local Highways Panel (LHP) to investigate the flow of traffic turning from the A121 Goldings Hill into Lower Road at Lower Road's northern end. Concerns have been raised about drivers entering Lower Road from A121 Goldings Hill and Goldings Road, creating potential conflicts between vehicles at the junction and pedestrians on Lower

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Road. Following this request, a number of options to reduce traffic volume and control access into this road were considered.

- 3.4 In January 2018, residents were informally consulted on two proposals:
- A one-way restriction northbound between Goldings Road and England's Lane (Option 1).
 - A permanent closure at the junction with Goldings Road (Option 2).
- 3.5 During the consultation, the suggestion of a 'No Entry' on Lower Road (Option 3) was also received. Lower Road would remain a two-way road with vehicles being able to exit the road at both ends. But entry into Lower Road would only be permissible from the south end where it is marginally wider.
- 3.6 A feasibility study was conducted regarding the options available to resolve the conflict at the A121 Goldings Hill and Goldings Road junction which is causing concern. Upon investigation, it was decided that Option 1 would not be feasible due to difficulties with installing signs needed to enforce the restriction due to the lack of footway on Lower Road. There were also potential enforcement issues and concerns with getting drivers to adhere to the restriction. Traffic speeds may also increase northbound. Option 2 was deemed as not feasible due to difficulties in creating a vehicle turnaround north of Seymour's, to enable delivery vehicles to turn.
- 3.7 Option 3 does not have issues with signage, or creating a vehicle turnaround, but still removes the conflict at the junction in question. Having reviewed the requirements and assessed the proposed measures for suitability and compliance of all 3 options, it was recommended that Option 3 should be taken forward to detailed design.
- 3.8 The results of the study were presented to the Epping Forest LHP, whereby support was received to implement Option 3 as recommended in the feasibility report, subject to another informal consultation. It was felt that leaving the current arrangements in place, and making no changes was not a preferred option due to the safety concerns at this junction that were originally raised through the LHP.

Informal Consultation

- 3.9 The Council conducted an informal consultation from 18th June to 9th July 2018 regarding the Proposal as shown in Appendix 1. The following stakeholder's responses were as follows:
- Essex Police did not wish to comment.
 - County Member for Loughton Central, Chris Pond did not object
 - District Councillor Bob Jennings indicated his support for the Proposal however queried whether double yellow lines would be provided on both sides of the junction between Seymour's and Lower Road as part of this scheme. The Council responded that parking restrictions cannot be

incorporated into this particular scheme at this stage, however restrictions may be able to form part of another scheme in the future (subject to approval by the LHP) or raised with the North Essex Parking Partnership who are responsible for the installation and enforcement of parking restrictions.

- District Councillor Caroline Pond supports the Proposal.

3.10 In addition, a letter drop was conducted simultaneously to nearby residents likely affected by the Proposal. Two comments of support were received, along with some suggestions as well as five objections where the following concerns were raised:

Informal Objections from the Public

3.11.1 A respondent commented that the Proposal may cause issues for delivery vehicles, including refuse collection lorries, due to the access from the southern end of Lower Road and lack of room for vehicles to turn around in Lower Road. The Council confirmed that Lower Road is marginally wider at its southern end and there is no footway at either its northern and southern end. There should be no need for vehicles to turn around in Lower Road, as they will still be able to exit the road at both ends.

3.11.2 It was also suggested that parking restrictions at the Lower Road/England's Road and at the Lower Road/Seymour's junction in order to keep these accesses clear, allowing vehicles to turn. The Council stated that parking restrictions can be considered but not at this stage but perhaps as another scheme. The parking restrictions would not impact the effectiveness of the proposal, which could proceed independently of any future considerations.

3.11.3 There were comments that vehicles speed up Lower Road as fast as they speed down it and expressing the view that this Proposal will reduce the traffic flow from the north but the problem of vehicles speeding up Lower Road to avoid the queue to turn right onto Goldings Hill at the junction closer to Rectory Lane will remain the same. The Council stated that speed data recorded on 28 November 2017 revealed that almost 4 times as many vehicles were travelling southbound than northbound, and average daily speeds were 16mph in each direction. This scheme aims to reduce the number of vehicles travelling south on Lower Road, crossing the junction with Goldings Road from A121 Goldings Hill- concerns for which were raised previously. The matter raised here is a separate issue which is outside the scope of this proposal which aim is purely to improve the Lower Road/Goldings Hill/Goldings Road junction. However, members of the public and/or Councillors may request additional schemes through the Local Highway Panel. However, this objection does not change the recommendation to proceed with the scheme.

3.11.4 Further a respondent indicated that there had been several near misses, because of cars using the southbound exit and then trying to cut in to get an opportunity onto the A121. This is a separate issue to the issue addressed by the Proposal but this comment does not change the officer's recommendation to proceed.

- 3.11.5 By way of support one respondent stated that they understood that Lower Road would be closed at the southbound end and that it was quite a relief as they know how dangerous that exit is, and regularly hear tyres skid to avoid accidents. The Council confirmed that Lower Road will remain a two-way road, and vehicles will continue to be able to enter and exit the road at its southern end. Entry into the road will only be permissible from the south.

Queries from the Public

- 3.11.6 A member of the public objected to the proposed no entry at the top of Lower Road at its junction with Goldings Hill. They felt that existing from the northern end of Lower Road onto Goldings Hill/Goldings lane was dangerous and unsafe due to the busy oncoming traffic and that no changes should be made to the current site.

Leaving the site as is and abandoning the scheme would not address the concerns that have been raised about drivers entering Lower Road from A121 Goldings Hill and Goldings Road.

Although Essex Highways can confirm that there have been 3 reported collisions within the past 5 years, if the Proposal is implemented there will be less vehicle movements approaching the junction. This will then reduce the amount drivers need to be aware of, providing benefits when negotiating the junction and potentially reduce risk of collision when exiting Lower Road onto Goldings Hill/Goldings Lane.

- 3.11.7 Further, a respondent commented that the proposed entry to Lower Road via England's Lane only is also a danger when coming down from Goldings Hill and having to take a very wide left hand turn into a very narrow Lower Road. The Council confirmed that this is not connected with the scheme we are proposing.

- 3.11.8 There was concern regarding the speed of traffic travelling north bound on Lower Road from England's Lane, and it was queried as to whether there was a way to reduce vehicular speed when entering Lower Road from its junction with England's Lane. The Council stated that Vehicle speed data collected on Lower Road at a point 50 metres south of its junction with Seymour's, revealed the average daily speeds for northbound and southbound traffic to be 16mph. Vehicle volumes were 387 northbound and 1,534 southbound. Southbound traffic as a result of the proposed no-entry Traffic will be greatly reduced by this scheme, subsequently, there are no plans to reduce traffic speeds at this time as the Proposal's aim is to improve the Lower Road/Golding's Hill/ Goldings Road junction, which will be achieved. However, residents can report their findings after this scheme is installed if they feel there is an issue regarding speeding.

- 3.11.9 Additionally there was concern that closing the road from Goldings Hill, would cause traffic to constantly turn around in Seymour's. There is a turning circle in Seymour's but it appears that its residents are using it for parking. Emergency vehicles and refuse lorries would struggle to come up and turn from the bottom of Lower Road. Lower Road will remain a two-way road, and vehicles will be

able to enter and exit the road at its southern end. Entry into the road will only be permissible from the south. It will not be closed at its junction with Goldings Hill. Furthermore, it is proposed that Emergency vehicles would be exempt from the 'No Entry'.

Alternative schemes proposed by residents as a result of the informal consultation

3.11.10 It was noted by respondents that the Proposal is a positive suggestion, however, most residents of the Seymour's felt that this does not go far enough. They suggested that an alternative scheme should be in order to make the Goldings Hill/Goldings Road junction safer, reduce speeding traffic, make exiting the Seymour's safer and still allow acceptable access for emergency services and residents.

1. No Entry - at the Lower Road junction with Goldings Road /Goldings Hill (Southbound)
2. No Vehicles Except for Access - at the Lower Road junction with England's Lane (Northbound)
3. Retain two-way flow of traffic along all of Lower Road.
4. Introduce Double Yellow Lines - opposite and at the mouth of The Seymour's

3.11.11 The Council responded against the above points:

1. Lower Road is public highway and remains a through route. It would not be feasible to correct to erect a sign stating, 'Access Only'.
2. Lower Road will retain two-way traffic flow along its length.
3. Parking restrictions can be considered in future.

Formal Consultation

3.12 Following the varying comments received, it was decided that the original scheme should continue to formal advertisement.

3.13 From the 13th of December 2019 to the 7th of January 2019, the Council formally advertised Proposal of no-entry to Lower Road from its northern end at its junction with Goldings Hill and Goldings Road via public notices installed on site, in the local newspaper and on the Essex Highways website. No objections were received from members of the public, however, the informal objection mentioned in section 3.7.6 is still relevant.

3.14 The relevant Councillors were once again consulted, as a result the following Councillor made comment:

Comments from District Councillor Mead

Concerns regarding collisions

3.15 District Councillor Mead raised concern over risk of accidents involving traffic travelling northbound on Lower Road to its junction with Goldings Road/Goldings Hill (A121). (junction shown in Appendices 1 and 4). The

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Councillor also raised concern over the visibility of pedestrians when travelling northwards on Lower Road as there is a point where the footpath ceases, and pedestrians would have to travel directly in the highway.

- 3.16 As previously mentioned the proposal comes as a result of a request made by the Parish Council, following concerns regarding traffic travelling southbound on Goldings Hill wanting to turn off Goldings Hill down Lower Road, having to cross Goldings Road.
- 3.17 There is no pedestrian footpath at this point, and insufficient space for vehicles to pass on this narrow road. Subsequently this is the approach that Essex Highways have proposed to amend. By reducing the number of vehicle movements the risk of collisions will be reduced.
- 3.18 In addition, when approaching Lower Road from its junction with England's Lane, vehicles are expected to adjust their speeds accordingly, in order to allow time to become aware of their surroundings, including pedestrians. It is felt that drivers are already doing so as the average speed on Lower Road is recorded as 16mph.
- 3.19 Essex Highways can confirm that there have been 3 reported collisions within the past 5 years at/adjacent to the Goldings Road/Goldings Hill/Lower Road junction, 1 of which was serious and 2 of which were slight in severity.
- 3.20 If the Proposal is implemented there will be less vehicle movements approaching the junction. This will then reduce the amount drivers need to be aware of, providing benefits when negotiating the junction and potentially reduce risk of collision.

Concerns regarding traffic flow

- 3.21 Councillor Mead also stated that there would be the potential for vehicles to use Lower Road as a cut through in order to avoid traffic travelling north bound on Golding's Hill (A121) and suggested a no-entry at the southern end of Lower Road at its junction with England Road would be suitable to prevent this.
- 3.22 Essex Highways do not believe there will be an issue with the number of vehicles travelling north bound post implementation of the Proposal, as traffic volume data taken on site indicates that the traffic volume travelling north bound is nearly 3 times less than the traffic travelling south bound. The total number of vehicles recorded southbound were 1,534 and 387 northbound. Subsequently, it is believed that if the no-entry was proposed at the southern end, the amount of through traffic on Lower Road would be far greater than if the current Proposal were to be implemented.
- 3.23 Councillor Mead felt the proposed no-entry, which would result in residents of Lower Road having to take a longer route to access their properties when taking the southbound approach, to be an issue. However, looking at the summary of comments from residents following consultation, none appeared to raise concern that it may take longer to reach their properties or that house prices

could be affected. Reducing traffic volumes and promoting a more accommodating environment for those travelling on lower road, could have a positive effect upon the desirability of homes in this road.

3.24 A full objection report can be found under Appendix 2

4. Options

Option A – Continue with the scheme as advertised

- 4.1 This option could greatly reduce the amount of traffic travelling on Lower Road, greatly improving both the pedestrian and vehicular environment. The risk of collision could also be reduced as the current road layout does not allow for 2 vehicles to pass on the road at the same time.
- 4.2 This option would also satisfy the Parish Council who originally requested for changes to be made when travelling southbound from the Lower Road/ Goldings Hill junction.
- 4.3 However, this option would not please Councillor Mead who wishes for the no-entry to be implemented in a way which allows traffic to travel southbound on Lower Road to its junction with England Road, a route which currently has a much higher traffic count than the Proposal.

Option B – Abandon the scheme

- 4.4 This option would not follow the recommendations of Essex Highways and would not satisfy the Parish Council nor Councillor Mead. The issues regarding the junction and its difficulty to manoeuvre along with the width of Lower Road not allowing vehicles to pass each other would remain. As a result of this risk of collision would not be reduced and repetitions of previous incidents may occur.

5. Issues for consideration

5.1 Financial implications

- 5.1.1 This scheme is funded by the Local Highways Panel 2018/2019 budget

5.2 Legal implications

- 5.2.1 The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 gives the Council a statutory duty to exercise its traffic functions to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of traffic of all kinds, including pedestrians and to provide suitable and adequate parking facilities. So far as practical the council is also required to have regard to:

- (a) the desirability of securing and maintaining reasonable access to premises;

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- (b) the effect on the amenities of any locality affected so as to preserve or improve the amenities of the areas through which the roads run;
- (c) the importance of facilitating the passage of buses and their passengers.

5.2.2 Justifiable no entry assists with the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of traffic and pedestrians.

6. Equality and Diversity implications

6.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:

- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

6.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

6.3 The equality impact assessment indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic. The Equality Impact Assessment can be found in Appendix 5.

7. List of appendices

- 7.1 Appendix 1 – Drawing No. LEPP16214-00-001
- 7.2 Appendix 2 – Objection report
- 7.3 Appendix 3 – Alternative Proposal Drawing
- 7.4 Appendix 4 – Site Photos
- 7.5 Appendix 5 – Equality Impact Assessment

8. List of Background papers

- 8.1 Full consultation responses
- 8.2 Feasibility Report

I approve the above recommendations set out above for the reasons set out in the report.	Date
Councillor Kevin Bentley, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure	06/11/2019

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In consultation with:

Role	Date
Director for Highways and Transport Andrew Cook	24/10/2019
Executive Director for Corporate and Customer Services (S151 Officer) Margaret Lee	Consent not needed
Director, Legal and Assurance (Monitoring Officer) Paul Turner	22/10/2019
Head of Network and Safety/Traffic Manager Liz Burr	13/03/2019
Head of Design Vicky Presland	04/03/2019