



Northumberland County Council

**DELEGATED DECISION REPORT
SERVICE DIRECTOR, LOCAL SERVICES IN CONSULTATION WITH
PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

LAVEROCK HALL ROAD, BLYTH

Cabinet Member: Councillor Glen Sanderson

Purpose of Report

To consider what measure(s) should be implemented to prevent through traffic using Laverock Hall Road in Blyth, between Primrose Gardens and the B1523 South Newsham Road/Newcastle Road.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the County Council makes an application to the Secretary of State for the necessary powers to enable Option 4, CCTV camera enforcement, and if successful for the camera enforcement scheme to be implemented.

Link to Corporate Plan

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Key Issues

1. A section of Laverock Hall Road in Blyth is currently 'bus only' to allow public transport to serve the surrounding residential area while preventing through traffic and 'rat running'.
2. Traffic is frequently ignoring this restriction, resulting in additional traffic within the residential area and concerns over road safety.
3. The local Ward Councillor and residents have raised safety concerns associated with this additional traffic, particularly speeding.

4. Arriva North East can re-route their X11 service, however, they will be unable to directly serve the new housing development unless new stops are provided on the A1061.

Background

1. A section of Laverock Hall Road in Blyth is 'bus only'.
2. This restriction allows buses to serve the Benridge Park and Primrose Gardens areas which are residential in nature, but prevents through traffic and 'rat running'.
3. The restriction is 'Prohibition of Driving Except Buses' and is marked on site with signage and build-outs at either end. Its location is shown in Figure 1. A photograph showing each end of the restriction is shown in Figures 2 and 3.

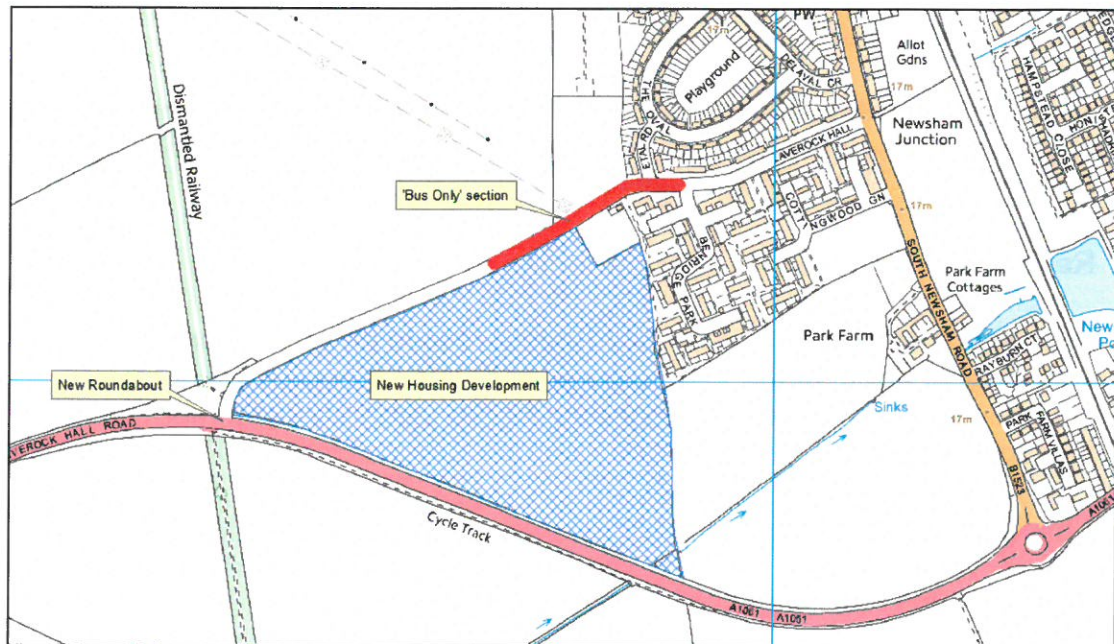


Fig.1 Location of 'Bus Only' section of Laverock Hall Road



Fig. 2 West entrance to bus only section.



Fig.3 East entrance to bus only section.

4. Recently a new roundabout was constructed at the junction of Laverock Hall Road with the A1061 to facilitate a major new residential development at its west end known as Primrose Gardens.
5. Vehicles wishing to access this new development must enter and leave via the new roundabout. Upon leaving the new development vehicles must turn left onto Laverock Hall Road and travel west to the roundabout with the A1061. Advance signage is in place to warn drivers of the bus only restriction to the east of the new development.
6. Despite the restriction, since the new housing development began, the Council has received claims that vehicles have been ignoring the restriction and are using the 'bus only' section of road to travel east.

7. In addition, through traffic now appears to be using Laverock Hall Road as a 'rat run', instead of remaining on the A1061 and turning left at the roundabout junction with South Newsham Road to reach Newcastle Road.
8. A contravention of the 'Prohibition of Driving Except Buses' restriction is a moving traffic offence which means that Police enforcement is required for it to be effective. Northumbria Police have visited the site on numerous occasions at the request of local residents and have stopped drivers who contravene the restriction. However, they have opted not to issue any fines and drivers continue to use the road when the Police are not present.
9. Consequently, through traffic is increasing through the residential area of New Delaval at the east end of Laverock Hall Road, and local residents and the Ward Councillor have raised concerns over traffic speeds.
10. A speed survey in January 2015 showed an average speed of 24.4mph and an 85th percentile speed (the figure used by the Police to determine whether enforcement is necessary) of 30.2mph. Following recent concerns received from residents about speed, a new speed survey has been requested to establish whether average speeds have increased.
11. Numerous complaints have been received and officers have also been informed anecdotally of an incident where local residents protested by standing in the road, resulting in Police attendance.
12. A number of options have therefore been considered to determine how best to address the problem. These are set out below.

Potential Options

Option 1 - Bus 'Gates'

13. A bus 'gate' is a raised 'island' which is designed so that buses can straddle but cars cannot. Officers have obtained the dimensions of the buses used by Arriva who run services along Laverock Hall Road, to determine whether this option is feasible. Whilst such a feature would deter some motorists, because of the type of buses using this location and the dimensions of many cars now in use, the clearance required by buses would also allow most cars to pass over the 'gate'.
14. This option is estimated to cost around £14,000.

Option 2 - Guided Busway

15. This is similar to option 1 but instead of a raised area, a sunken pit is provided which wide vehicles can straddle but cars cannot. The same

disadvantage applies in this case as some cars may be able to straddle the pit.

16. This option will be similar in cost to option 1, around £14,000.

Option 3 - Automatic Rising Bollards

17. This option involves installing bollards in the carriageway that remain in the raised position to prevent unauthorised access and are lowered by a transponder installed in the bus. The bollard would automatically lower to allow the bus access then automatically rise once the bus had passed through. Green and red lights indicate when it is safe to proceed.

18. This option would be an effective way of enforcing the bus only restriction. However, there are ongoing costs associated with operation and maintenance, including the electricity supply.

19. It would also mean that bus companies would have to ensure that a transponder was installed in all their buses. In the event of a regular vehicle being taken out of service, a replacement bus without a transponder would not be able to follow the planned bus route.

20. This option is estimated to cost around £48,000 with an ongoing liability of circa £10,000 p.a. including annual maintenance, inspections and damage repair.

Option 4 - Camera Enforcement

21. This option would involve the installation of CCTV cameras which monitor and enforce the restriction. Fines would be issued automatically to those who contravene the traffic regulation order.

22. Alongside the installation of the cameras the system would also require a new Traffic Regulation Order and new signage.

23. To enable bus lane enforcement to be carried out by the County Council we will need to apply to the Secretary of State for the necessary powers to set up and operate civil enforcement of bus lanes under the provision of the Transport Act 2000. This is not something that the authority has done before and the process usually takes 4 months.

24. It is recommended that consultation with the public and stakeholders is carried out prior to introducing camera enforcement. The police retain the power to carry out bus lane enforcement, so if we decide to take this option forward it will be important to liaise closely with them.

25. The County Council currently has bespoke software used to issue 'Regulation 10 (Approved Device)' Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs), related to an enforcement vehicle.
26. The Council's current supplier can also provide and support the use of cameras for bus lane enforcement so expansion of this system would be relatively cost effective, as the original investment has already been made.
27. The administrative procedures for the issue of 'Regulation 10 (Approved Device)' PCNs and subsequent representations and appeals procedures are already in place and being used as part of current working practice.
28. There would be an implication for back office resources for reviewing and issuing evidence packs gathered by the cameras, however, it is anticipated that this can be mitigated by the income received from issuing PCNs.
29. A new Traffic Regulation Order and new signage will be required.
30. This option is expected to cost around £25,000 to implement, with ongoing costs of £600 per annum for the 3G communications unit and £2,432 per annum for maintenance.

Option 5 - Road Closure

31. This option would close the road to all vehicular traffic, including buses, and only allow pedestrians and cyclists to pass through.
32. A traffic regulation order prohibiting use by motor vehicles would be put in place, and physical measures, such as bollards, would be installed. Access would still be available for pedestrians and cyclists.
33. A closure could be implemented on an experimental basis initially to allow time to assess the impact.
34. The main disadvantage of this option is that bus services would no longer be able to serve the area directly.
35. The nearest bus stops are located on South Newsham Road. The distance to these stops from the new housing development is approximately 700m. Government guidance recommends that, in residential areas, bus stops should be located so that nobody in the neighbourhood is required to walk more than 400m from their home.
36. Arriva North East state that, if this option was implemented they would re-route their X11 service so that it stays on the A1061 then joins South

Newsham Road. However, they point out that this would mean they could not directly serve the new housing development, unless new stops were provided on the A1061.

37. The A1061 experiences high traffic volumes and any new bus stops would therefore need to be within laybys. This arrangement would also create a need for bus passengers to cross the road to access a new westbound stop. Uncontrolled crossing facilities are available at the new roundabout.
38. The estimated cost of an experimental closure is around £16,000. This includes the cost of the traffic regulation order, changes to signage and provision of temporary concrete blocks.
39. The cost of a permanent closure will vary depending on the solution chosen. If new bus stops were provided, as suggested by Arriva, laybys would need to be provided with bus stop facilities. This is likely to be expensive to implement.

Conclusion

40. It is evident that the existing prohibition of driving restriction is being routinely ignored and regular enforcement is unlikely to take place.
41. The various options discussed above have their merits but most also have significant disadvantages.
42. Option 4 (CCTV camera enforcement) appears to be the most appropriate solution as it can provide more effective enforcement than relying on the Police alone, can be easily integrated with the Council's existing enforcement systems and keeps the bus route in place.

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

1. It is recommended that the County Council makes an application to the Secretary of State for the necessary powers to enable Option 4, CCTV camera enforcement, and if successful for the camera enforcement scheme to be implemented.

Implications Arising out of the Report

Policy	None
Finance and value for money	The chosen option will be funded via the LTP Programme.
Legal	None

Procurement	None
Human Resources	None
Property	None
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	None
Risk Assessment	None
Crime & Disorder	None
Customer Consideration	Statutory consultees will be consulted.
Carbon reduction	None
Wards	Blyth Newsham

Background papers:

File ref: HF163513

Report sign off.

Authors must ensure that relevant officers and members have agreed the content of the report:

	initials
Finance Officer	n/a
Monitoring Officer/Legal	n/a
Human Resources	n/a
Procurement	n/a
I.T.	n/a
Director	
Portfolio Holder(s)	

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DECISION TAKEN

Title of Officer(s) and Portfolio Holder: Service Director, Local Services
Cabinet Member for Environment & Local Services

Subject: LAVEROCK HALL ROAD, BLYTH

Consultation

Decision Taken: It is recommended that the County Council makes an application to the Secretary of State for the necessary powers to enable Option 4, CCTV camera enforcement, and if successful for the camera enforcement scheme to be implemented.

Signature of Director/
officer/Portfolio Holder



Date

3/5/18

3 may 2018