

## **REPORT TO THE HEAD OF HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT**

### **REPRESENTATIONS TO AN ADVERTISED TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER**

#### **The Metropolitan Borough of Solihull (B4102/B4025 Warwick Road, Solihull) (Prohibition of U-Turn Movements) Order 2022**

**01/02/2023**

**LEAD OFFICER: STEVE HAWLEY**

### **1 Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To consider representations received to a permanent Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to introduce a prohibition of U-Turns

### **2 Background**

- 2.1 In 2020, as part of the Council's ongoing Covid19 traffic management measures and in response to the reopening of schools across the borough, a temporary prohibition of U-turn Order was implemented on Warwick Road at the Hampton Lane/Park Avenue traffic signal controlled junction.

The temporary order was introduced due to consistently high number of motorists exiting Solihull School at the start and end of the school day, travelling eastbound and then seeking to make a U-turn at the junction and head back towards the town centre. This resulted in a build-up of traffic and delays at this junction.

Monitoring of the prohibited movement and operation of the junction suggests that the measures were successful in discouraging this potentially dangerous manoeuvre and improving traffic flows.

It was therefore considered that the prohibition of U-turn should now be brought into permanent effect to assist with the free passage of traffic and aid road safety.

### **3 Matters for Consideration**

- 3.1 The proposals were formally advertised on 30 June 2022 and the closing date for receipt of representations was 21 July 2022.
  - 3.2 4 representations to the TRO were received during the consultation period; all 4 objecting to the proposal. The objections originate from properties on Warwick Road and New Road, access to these households for motorised vehicles (if travelling south eastbound on Warwick Road) requires the driver to pass the properties, continue on Warwick Road (B4025) to the roundabout at the bypass link and return north westwards – a total additional distance of ~ 1.2km. The alternative would be to enter into one of the side roads along this length of Warwick Road, turn round and proceed. All the representations are based on the inconvenience/additional time traversing Warwick Road takes rather than performing the U-turn. The main arguments from these representations are summarised below.
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Table 3.2.1 Representations to Proposed Permanent Prohibition of U-Turn

Representation	Supporting Commentary	Officers Comments/ Response
Objections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When I return home, driving southbound, I need to drive all the way to the island in order to turn and come back to wait at the lights again before turning left into the slip road where our house is. This is an additional approx. 2.2km. I could of course go down one of the other side roads and turn around. However, this is often awkward and busy and I feel not fair on the residents of those roads. It really is inconvenient, time consuming and, with petrol prices as they are, expensive, to drive this extended route. It is REALLY difficult to direct anyone to the house; guests, deliveries, taxis etc. It would be a whole lot easier to just 'DO A U TURN AT THE LIGHTS'. I can honestly say, that if I had known about the sheer awkwardness to leave and return to the house by car, I would have had second thoughts buying the property. My request would be to allow U turns at this junction. My second choice would be to allow U turns to visitors and residents of the houses on Warwick Road/New Road that this affects. My third choice would be for a time restricted 'no U turn' order.</li> <li>• As the only residents who are adversely and continually affected by the permanent u turn ban, it seems rather unfair that we are being punished like this. I myself drive a long wheel based sprinter van for work, which has an audible reverse warning . I fear this will upset my neighbours on Park Avenue when I have to drive down their cul de sac to turn around after work as this would be unsociable hours. The other alternative is reversing into MUMS Clinic, but this is private property and may cause more issues. Is there no way the council would entertain the idea of a local (B91 3EH) resident only exemption? Possibly just a small sign below the no u turn sign?</li> <li>• When the temporary arrangement was introduced, we sent our objections and would now like to offer our own thoughts after the trial period. Your proposals come on top of already restrictive measures i.e. we are on a red route and have the occasional road closure for events. The order was introduced to improve traffic flow conditions caused by motorists exiting Solihull school, means that travel restrictions are only needed for less than 3% of the time for whole the year. We have to travel an extra one and a half kilometres to Brueton Park Island and back. We carry out this manoeuvre on average once a day costing over £70 a year at present day fuel prices. We note that congestion in many primary schools in Solihull has been reduced by prohibiting traffic dropping off near the school. Perhaps Solihull School parents (some of whom are probably not Solihull Council rate payers) could be encouraged to drop pupils elsewhere and let their children walk to school (think of health benefits). Public transport? Perhaps agreements could be made with Morrisons, the Bridge Club, Malvern/Brueton Park car parks where children could be unloaded. Perhaps one idea you could consider is that the affected residents could be given a dispensation to make a U-turn and a permit could be issued to each of the residents of the seven properties affected by the arrangement which would allow them to make a U turn at this junction – this would have minimal effect on traffic flow as Solihull parents could still be prohibited from making a U turn. We look forward to your response, including evidence of the monitoring you did which informed your present opinion.</li> <li>• The reasons for the Order were not a concern pre-covid but is now and doesn't seem evidence based. The prohibition means I have to drive a lot further down Warwick Road increasing my carbon footprint which goes against Government sustainability agenda. Driving the extra few minutes in an emergency could mean I see a patient late. A solution would be exemptions to residents.</li> </ul>	<p>See paragraph 3.3 to 3.6</p> <p>See paragraph 3.3 to 3.6</p> <p>See paragraph 3.3 to 3.6</p> <p>See paragraph 3.3 to 3.6</p>

- 3.3 Whilst the temporary order was introduced due to consistently high number of motorists exiting Solihull School at the start and end of the school day, any vehicle travelling south eastbound and performing a U-turn at the junction in question has the potential to cause a build-up of traffic and delays at this junction. Therefore, any alternative travel arrangements for the school, whilst welcome are not key to the issue being resolved. The number of vehicles performing the manoeuvre in succession at school times merely highlighted the effect of the manoeuvre. Whilst historically the U-turn has not been prohibited, the function of the offside lane is to facilitate right turning traffic into Park Avenue and straight-ahead traffic.
- 3.4 The green phase of the junction for both north westbound and south eastbound traffic operates simultaneously with no separate filter for right turning vehicles in either direction. This means that vehicles turning right must give way until a suitable gap in the opposing traffic flow presents itself before proceeding. Motorists making a U-turn must wait for the same suitable gap, but the opposing traffic is unlikely to anticipate the U-turn manoeuvre and slow down accordingly. In addition, vehicles wishing to access the affected properties on Warwick Road and New Road then slow/brake to turn left into the properties increasing the possibility of rear end type shunts. It is the manoeuvre that is the concern, not the vehicle and therefore we cannot exempt residents and their visitors from the prohibition; if permanently introduced it must apply to all motorists. Similarly, a time restricted prohibition whilst having the effect of minimising congestion if applicable at peak times, does not negate the potential road safety concern.
- 3.5 The inconvenience to a small number of residents is understood, as is the increased distance and travel costs, however it is considered that there are wider benefits to traffic flows and longer term to road safety by implementing the prohibition of U-turn restriction. Having to travel an increased distance to reach home is one of the vagaries of living on a dual carriageway and one that is experienced by many residents, not only in the borough but any dual carriageway location. Our understanding is that the U-Turn results in inconvenience/slightly longer journey times for residents returning to their dwellings, we do not necessarily agree that it could result in slower response times for key/emergency workers who would typically be leaving home in those circumstances and not returning home.
- 3.6 Monitoring of the temporary prohibition has been undertaken by the council's Urban Traffic Control team and whilst it has not discouraged all motorists from choosing to performing the U-turn manoeuvre it has resulted in a decrease. Subject to additional powers under Part 6 of the 2004 Traffic Management Act likely to be implemented in 2023, better compliance of the prohibited turn could be achieved through camera enforcement.

## **4 Ward Members' Views**

- 4.1 The Ward Members for Silhill and St Alphege were informed of the proposals prior to the advertising of the Order and did not submit any objections.

## **5 Officer Recommendation**

- 5.1 The representations received in respect of the proposed Traffic Regulation Order have been fully considered and responded to accordingly in section 3 of the report. It is a constant challenge to deliver schemes that do meet the needs of all stakeholders, particularly when those needs can often be contradictory to one another; however, delivering a fair and balanced scheme is important for the council and it is considered that bringing the prohibition of U-turn into permanent effect, has justifiable highway management reasons and potential road safety benefits.

## **6 Democratic Services**

- 6.1 Democratic Services have confirmed that the proposed order was subject to statutory advertisement on the dates reported and that representations were received as noted above.
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## 7 Risk Implications

- 7.1 The Corporate Risk Management Approach has been complied with to identify and assess the significant risks associated with this decision / project. This includes (but is not limited to) political, legislation and reputation risks.
- 7.2 The Approach is not intended to eliminate all risks and not all the risks identified can be managed all of the time. Also, risks will still exist that have not been identified

## 8 For decision

- 8.1 The Head of Highway Management is asked to approve that:

**The Metropolitan Borough of Solihull (B4102/B4025 Warwick Road, Solihull) (Prohibition of U-Turn Movements) Order 2022** is implemented as originally advertised.

**The recommendation as set out above is hereby approved:**

P.S.Tovey

10<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Signature: .....Date:.....

**Paul Tovey**  
**Head of Highway Management**

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