

REPORT TO: Environment and Urban Renewal
Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 13 November 2024

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director - Environment & Regeneration

PORTFOLIO: Environment & Urban Renewal

SUBJECT: Petition for Regent Road to become one-way

WARD(S) Appleton

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To report on the receipt of a 36 name petition requesting that Regent Road be made a one-way street as a measure to reduce traffic flows and increase public safety.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That the request as set out in the petition is not supported for the reasons given in the report.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Regent Road is a residential street in the Appleton Ward of Widnes. It starts / terminates at Appleton Village to the west and to the east runs into Cooper Street, which terminates at Albert Road (itself a one-way street running south to north). It is approximately 170m in length and has a constant carriageway width of 6.3m.

3.2 The road is subject to a 30mph speed limit and is currently traffic calmed using 6 no. 37mm high full width speed thumps laid out at 30m spacings. This series of thumps continue into Cooper Street. There are 49 residential properties (mainly terraced) fronting the road, as well as a large electricity substation. Other than the odd exception, no properties have any off-street parking amenity, and cars are parked on both sides of the street. The footways on both sides are wide (averaging 2.2m), kerb heights are low, and people routinely bump up onto the footway to park their vehicles, thereby leaving sufficient carriageway width to allow other vehicles to pass without obstructing the footway.

3.3 STATS19 road traffic collision data, as supplied by Cheshire Police, indicates that between January 1990 and December 2023 there have been two recorded injury collisions (both slights) along the entire length of Regent Road, with the last occurring in 1995.

3.4 In September 2022, traffic signals were installed at the crossroad

junction of Appleton Village / Leigh Avenue / Deacon Road / Frederick Street. The lights were installed to increase connectivity, especially for pedestrians, between residential areas, Victoria Park and adjacent schools and doctors' surgeries. Since then, the petitioners allege that traffic levels have increased on Regent Road as road users seek to avoid queueing at the traffic lights. A review of correspondence regarding the traffic lights indicate that since their implementation, the Council has received one complaint from a member of the public, and this was unrelated to queue lengths, increase in journey times or migration of traffic.

- 3.5 Although undated, it should be noted that the petition was received at a time when the section of Appleton Village, between Regent Road and Deacon Road, was closed for an extended period in July and August, to allow emergency utility works. This road closure undoubtedly caused some traffic to migrate onto adjacent roads, including Regent Road.
- 3.6 On receipt of the petition, it was arranged for automatic counters to be installed on Regent Road, Cooper Street and Appleton Village, once the recent road works were complete, to determine current traffic levels and speeds and gauge the impact of any new one-way system on neighbouring roads. In addition, site inspections were undertaken on three separate dates to observe driver behaviour and establish the amount of available on-street parking amenity.
- 3.7 The traffic counts, undertaken independently using lighting column mounted radar units, indicate that on average 305 vehicles traverse Regent Road in an eastbound direction each day, with 300 cars travelling the other way. Average speeds for both directions were 16.3mph. On Cooper Street, flows were even lower, with 243 vehicles recorded travelling eastbound and 168 vehicles moving westbound each day. Two-way average speed was 16.6mph. Morning and afternoon peak hours for each road were between 34 vehicles per hour (both directions) and 57 vehicles per hour (both directions). These figures rather confirm what was observed on site: these roads are very quiet with traffic traversing them at appropriate speeds. Flows on Appleton Village were much higher, averaging 1141 northbound and 1040 southbound. Southbound speeds were higher than those for northbound (14.6mph and 13.0mph) indicating that queueing at the traffic lights is not significant.
- 3.8 A one-way street can only be imposed as part of a legal Traffic Regulation Order requiring statutory consultation with all frontages and organisations such as the Police and other emergency services, and it is essential to gain their support for the proposals. After writing to Cheshire Police to ascertain their opinion regarding a one-way TRO here, they have indicated they would not support such a change for the following reasons:
 - Vehicles speeds will increase, as there will be no opposing

flow of traffic.

- Roads in the immediate vicinity will see an increase in traffic.
- Response times for emergency vehicles will increase.

3.9 All the evidence indicates that there is no requirement to make Regent Road a one-way street. There is no recorded injury collision history and traffic flows are low and slow, with no evidence of traffic migrating here to avoid the Deacon Road traffic signals. Some residents would undoubtedly have to access their street by an alternative and less convenient route which will involve the use of other neighbouring streets (adding approximately 1km to journey lengths) and traffic speeds may increase. In addition, all residents of Cooper Street would be inconvenienced by this measure, none of whom have asked for it. Evidence from other roads with short lengths of one-way running indicate they are likely to be contravened by some drivers, thereby requiring police enforcement.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

None identified.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

None identified.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

None identified.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

None identified.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

One-way system will increase journey times and lengths for many residents and may encourage an increase in traffic speeds, both of which will increase traffic-related air pollution.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

One-way working may see traffic speeds increase due to drivers' perception that there is no opposing traffic, thereby increasing the risk of serious collisions, especially with vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 None identified.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None identified.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Any one-way Traffic Regulation Order would undoubtedly increase journey times and lengths, and traffic speeds may see an unwelcome increase. All of this would contribute to an increase in CO₂ emissions and other forms of traffic-related air pollution in a highly residential area.

10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

None under the meaning of the Act.