

Meeting of Wem Town Council Traffic Working Party held on Monday 6th December at 14.00 on the Zoom Virtual Meeting Platform

Present: Cllrs P Broomhall, E Towers, A Everett, G Soul, R Drummond – Wem Town Council

Phillip Lloyd, Kevin Aitkin - Shropshire Council Traffic Team

Town Clerk – P O'Hagan

Before the responses to the consultation were considered Kevin asked those in attendance what they perceived to be the advantages of undertaking a trial one way system.

It was also explained that a one way system had been discussed for many years and the introduction of an experimental one way system was the only way to see whether it would make a difference to the traffic in the town centre. It was explained that one of the benefits would be that it would allow the High Street to become a pleasant shopping environment for pedestrians as traffic would not be mounting the pavement in its attempt to pass large vehicles. In addition to this the introduction of a one way system may deter HGV's from using the town as a cut through.

Kevin presented the comments received from consultees which were received from

Wem Town Council – the impact on pedestrians of coaches turning right from Pyms Road into the School and the potential use of the Co-op car park as a short cut were discussed. Kevin explained that the only thing that would prevent traffic using the car park as a cut through would be a physical barrier which was not possible. However Shropshire Council would be willing to improve signage in this area.

Shropshire Council Network Management comments included

- The one-way system would reduce the options available for suitable/appropriate temporary diversion routes to be signed in the event of either a planned temporary road closure for works/events or an unplanned event. This would result in the increase of "B Road" traffic using lesser class routes such as Lowe Hill Road and Pyms Road to by-pass any restriction and also increase journey times and "carbon footprint."
- Road widths at Maunds Corner and various pinch points on Aston Street mean that the likelihood and future temporary road closures due to works by statutory undertakers, Highways and Developers is high. This is also due to Network Rails cyclical programme of maintenance works for the level crossing at Souton Road.
- Increase in the amount of traffic using the Lowe Hill Road/Pyms Road route (including delivery drivers and HGV's) in order to access the larger commercial area of Wem. This could also lead to "rat-running" from Mill Street via Drawell Lane/Leek street and through the Aston Street/Supermarket car park in order to gain access to the B5063 and east of the town.
- the ability to be able to temporarily revoke any imposed one-way section of either High Street/New Street and revert to two-way traffic (i.e. ensuring that no amendments include permanent physical restrictions/road narrowing etc.) would be strongly advised as both a contingency measure

St Peters Primary School Comments

Proposals may increase traffic flow along Station Road during school drop off and pick up times. This road is difficult to traverse at all points of the day due to residents parked cars and effectively a single lane for traffic from both ways.

Diversion of vehicles and lorries from Shrewsbury around to the area of Pyms Rd would cause an increase in traffic (in particular, lorries attempting to access the industrial parks on the opposite side of the railway line) moving the problem into residential areas.

Thomas Adams Secondary School Comments

The proposal is not a realistic option for the Thomas Adams School because the change in traffic flow will have a significant detrimental impact on entry and exit for our bus transport.

The School operates a one-way system at school due to the layout of entrances at both Lowe Hill Road and Pyms Road. Vehicles enter the school site at Pyms Road and exit on Lowe Hill Road and they simply would not be able to gain access or egress the other way around.

A discussion took place on the Thomas Adams comments and it was explained that modelling has identified that it will be impracticable to ask Thomas Adams coaches to make a right turn off Pyms Road as they would not physically be able to make this turn. It was agreed that further detailed discussions with Thomas Adams school were needed as based on the school's statement Shropshire Council would be unwilling to proceed with the experimental order. Kevin made it clear that there was a need to balance any advantages of the experimental order with any new issues that may arise from its implementation.

A question was asked whether the traffic flow for the proposed experimental one way system could be reversed so it was in line with the school's current system and Kevin indicated that this may be possible.

Fire service – no response

Ambulance service – no issues

West Mercia Police Comments

The proposals do not solve the current problem at Maund's Corner which I understand was brought recently to the attention of Shropshire County Council to address. There is also concern that the introduction of a one way system on High Street may actually increase the volume of traffic through Maund's corner by vehicles travelling from the south of Wem unable to turn right from Mill Street.

Other potential road safety issues as a consequence of this proposal raised.

- Coach access for Thomas Adams" School from Pyms Road.
- Increased use of Pyms Road in general by vehicles particularly traffic travelling south of Wem to the north of Wem towards Whitchurch and traffic travelling from the west of Wem on the B5063 Ellesmere Road.

- Increased use of Station Road in general by vehicular traffic particularly travelling from the east of Wem to the north of Wem using the B5063 Soulton Road.
- The potential for increased congestion at the junction with Station Road and the B5065 Soulton Road adding to congestion caused by the close proximity of the railway level crossing.
- The “One Way” section on New Street may be liable to be contravened by road users tempted by its short length and time saved by doing so.
- The potential for increased travel speeds along Aston Street/High Street, Wem due to traffic travelling only in one direction.

Chapel Street / Leek Street Proposals

- The visibility of vehicles on Chapel Street approaching the junction with Drawwell Lane when on Drawwell Lane due to the close proximity of a residential fence on the nearside at the junction (see attached photograph).
- The visibility to the right when exiting Leek Street coupled with potential for increased approaching speeds of vehicles travelling on Aston Street.

A discussion took place on the visibility issues at the junction of Drawwell Lane and Chapel Street. Kevin explained that in light of West Mercia Police's comments he was concerned about this part of the experimental order. It was recognised if the proposed one way system on High Street / New Street was reversed then the reversal of Chapel Street and Leek Street may not be needed although implementing this would reduce traffic on the High Street (through cars using this route to access the car park rather than the High Street) and reduce access issues when deliveries are being made at the top of Leek Street.

Waste management – no problem

Passenger Transport – no response

Taxi – no response

Parking Comments- The only concern I have with this proposal is it will generate lots of complaints from residents to the fact it will increase traffic through residential areas.

A discussion took place after all the comments had been considered and it was agreed that Kevin would go back and look into the feasibility of reversing the current proposal so that the High Street would be one way West to East and New Street one way South to North so that both options can be compared before going through the consultation process again.

It was agreed to meet again to discuss this option on 18.1.22 at 14.00 via zoom

The meeting ended at 14.55