

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF STOKE-ON-TRENT (WATERLOO ROAD /
COBRIDGE ROAD / ELDER ROAD JUNCTION IMPROVEMENTS)

COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER 2019

THE HIGHWAYS ACT 1980

THE ACQUISITION OF LAND ACT 1981

SUMMARY OF PROOF OF EVIDENCE

DAVID STUBBS OF STOKE-ON-TRENT CITY COUNCIL

ON BEHALF OF THE ACQUIRING AUTHORITY

Department for Transport Ref: NATTRAN/WM/HAO/210

1. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- 1.1 My name is David Stubbs and I am the Strategic Manager for Highways Infrastructure and Transport at Stoke-on-Trent City Council.
- 1.2 I have 34 years' experience within the area of Highways and Transportation.

2. SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 2.1 This Statement of Evidence focuses on demonstrating that there is a compelling case in the public interest which justifies the confirmation of the CPO, demonstrating both a need for the Scheme that there is funding available to deliver the scheme.
- 2.2 My Evidence also deals specifically with points raised in the objections of Mr Steven Stanley owner / proprietor of Sherwin Rivers Printers.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE SCHEME

- 3.1 This Junction is located at the intersection of two 'A' Classified roads, the A50 and the A53 and acts as a key 'gateway' to the Stoke-on-Trent city centre whilst experiencing significant levels of congestion and delay especially during peak hours.
- 3.2 The 2007 North Staffordshire Road Network Junction Assessment Feasibility Study involved a comprehensive review and feasibility design of 24 key junctions across the City and concluded that Waterloo Road / Cobridge Road junction was one of three priority junctions which should be taken forward for further assessment and development.

3.3 Severance / Accessibility / Public Transport

- 3.4 This junction currently also causes severance to the local communities and restricts accessibility for them to goods, services and community facilities in the local area due to the lack of adequate pedestrian crossing facilities.
- 3.5 First Bus as the major bus operator in the City has identified this junction as one of their key priorities for the city council to improve across the city, as a result of the journey time delays to their services.

4. KEY OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 The primary objectives for the Waterloo Road/Cobridge Road/Elder Road Junction Improvement are to reduce congestion, unlock economic growth, improve safety for all users and improve the health of the local community.

5. DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHEME

- 5.1 The proposed Scheme consists of widening of all four arms of the junction, provision of new controlled pedestrian crossing facilities on all arms of the junction, provision of safer improved right-turn facilities.

6. NEED FOR THE SCHEME

- 6.1 The need for the scheme was formally established and referred to within the City Council's **Local Transport Plan Transport Strategy (LTP3) 2011/12 to 2025/26**, approved as Council policy on 8th September 2011. In addition, this Scheme was identified within the **North**

Staffordshire Road Network Junction Assessment-Feasibility Study as a priority junction within the City in need of improvement.

6.2 The Scheme directly responds to the core principle of the National Planning Policy Framework and the current joint Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy (CSS) 2006-2026.

6.3 Transport Assessments

6.4 Department for Transport – National Productivity Investment Fund

6.5 As a result of a bid to the Department for Transport in 2016, the City Council, were successful in being awarded £2.09m towards the Scheme. A Transport Appraisal and Business Case was submitted which demonstrated the need and justification for the scheme, and resulted in a Benefit to Cost Ratio for the Scheme of 2.0, this being rated by the DfT as High and therefore classed as representing good value for money.

6.6 North Staffordshire Road Network Junction Assessment – Feasibility Study

6.7 As outlined in paragraph 6.1 above.

6.8 Nearby Development Sites

6.9 This scheme will benefit residents moving into the Barratt Homes Development site providing 193 new homes, located directly at the Waterloo Road / Elder Road junction. In addition, a City Council designated Housing Zone Site for 450 new homes is located only 390 metres away from the junction along Waterloo Road. Both of these developments will increase traffic flow and increased pedestrian movements through this junction.

7. FUNDING, SCHEME COSTS AND DELIVERY

7.1 A City Council Cabinet Report 26 June 2018 approved the commitment of £3m in the City Council's capital programme to the delivery of this Scheme. The Department for Transport have provided a contribution of £2.09m, as outlined above. The estimated outturn cost of the scheme is £4.720m, derived from costs within a current Highways Framework Contract, and with a contingency allowance of £0.370m to take the scheme costs to £5.09m. The existing Framework Contract with Galliford Try will be used to deliver the scheme, with a planned start on site of 7 May 2021 and completion of the works by December 2021.

7.2 The report also gained Council approval to formally progress the Compulsory Purchase of 3rd party land required for the Scheme.

8. OBJECTIONS RAISED ON BEHALF OF THE TRUSTEES OF MR A STANLEY (DECEASED) & SHERWIN RIVERS.

8.1 Grounds of Objection

8.2 **Limited negotiations**, that the Council was relying upon the CPO to secure the premises and that it had not actively engaged in negotiations, thus resulting in the Objector incurring significant abortive costs

8.3 Response

8.4 Extensive negotiations have progressed since Mon 30 November 2015 as well as the City Council making efforts to identify suitable properties should they become available.

8.5 The City Council, in order to safeguard a property that was acceptable to Mr Stanley, has acquired Unit 3, Tunstall Trade Park. This was a very critical decision for the City Council to consider, and not one without risk.

8.6 To demonstrate the City Council's commitment to relocating Sherwin Rivers rather than relying on a CPO, the City Council sought approval and then proceeded with the direct acquisition of the Unit, with the aim to then sell the Unit back to Mr Stanley, with a commitment to continue negotiations thereby allowing their relocation to complete and avoid the need for a Public Inquiry. The Council have taken every reasonable step to facilitate the Objectors move to new suitable premises and acquire their interest.

On this basis if the Council has to resort to compulsory purchase to acquire the Objector's interest it will be because it is a last resort.

8.7 Finance of the Scheme.

8.8 Response

8.9 Section 7.0 of this document clearly sets out that the required funding for the Scheme is in place and the estimated costs for the project are within this overall budget.

The Secretary of State can have confidence that if the CPO is confirmed the Scheme will go ahead.

8.10 Further quantification of the Cost Benefit Analysis used to support the Scheme

8.11 Response

8.12 The Cost Benefit Analysis was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Department for Transport as part of the City Council's bid for funding from the Government's National Productivity Investment Fund.

8.13 Whether the Scheme itself will relieve congestion in the long term and whether reducing vehicle usage would be a better option

8.14 The City Council's approved transport policy identifies the need for schemes and initiatives that are focused on encouraging sustainable means of travel, and also schemes that are able to reduce congestion and provide tangible economic benefits to the local economy in the short to medium term.

8.15 The use of the CPO should be a last resort and that the Council are relying upon the CPO rather than progressing negotiations. Consequently, the CPO is an infringement of the Objector's human rights.

8.16 The City Council continue to remain committed to the relocation of Sherwin Rivers Printers, if at all possible.

8.17 I believe the City Council has used its best endeavours to progress negotiations with Mr Stanley from the outset, at our first meeting on 30 November 2015 at Mr Stanley's office to the present day. It is regrettable to myself that the relocation of Sherwin Rivers Printers has not yet been achieved without the need for a CPO.

8.18 I consider that after 2 years and 7 months of discussions and negotiations with Steven Stanley and his Agents, and no certainty that negotiations will reach a mutually agreeable, resolution, the use of CPO powers was indeed a last resort for the City Council.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1 It is therefore considered that in order to achieve the statutory purpose of carrying out the Waterloo Road, Cobridge Road/ Elder Road Junction Improvement Scheme the use of powers under Section 239 (3) and Section 240 (2)(a) of the Highways Act are required.
- 9.2 This Scheme will deliver on some of the key outcomes set out in the City Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP3) transport policy
- 9.3 I can confirm that all funding required is in place to deliver this Scheme.
- 9.4 The use of CPO powers has only been used as a very last resort, as outlined in paragraphs 8.16 to 8.18 above
- 9.5 It is for that reason that there is a compelling case in the public interest for the CPO to be confirmed.