

REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL

MINSHULL STREET TRAFFIC



Report Reference C-21-16
Meeting Date 6th September 2021
Agenda Item 10
Prepared by Town Clerk

1.0 BACKGROUND

There are two aspects to this item which are separate but linked; the first is the continual issue of drivers turning right out of Minshull Street in contravention of the one-way system on King Street and the second the suggestion of permanently closing Minshull Street to create a pedestrian zone.

Additionally, traders on Minshull Street have highlighted problems resulting from lorries struggling to turn left from Minshull Street resulting in congestion.

2.0 CONTRAVENTION OF KING STREET ONE WAY SYSTEM

There has been a continual issue of drivers contravening the one-way system on King Street by turning right from Minshull Street in order to drive onto Egerton Square. In some instances, this has resulted in near collisions with vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.

Following the July All Member WG meeting, the Town Clerk contacted Cheshire East Council CCTV Team and Cheshire Police urging them to take action to enable prosecutions of those flouting the one-way system on King Street. Enforcement was undertaken on one morning in July where two drivers were caught committing an offence and the Police have stated they intend to undertake further enforcement at different times of the day, demand permitting.

The Police have stated that they do not have the resource to review CCTV camera footage and identify any offences caught with the system. The CCTV team has not responded to the correspondence asking it to undertake additional monitoring of the camera to pass footage of offences directly to the Police. The Council has a meeting with the Cheshire East CCTV Manager on Wednesday 8th September where this can be raised again.

The local PCSO has highlighted the problem with the Town Centre and Marketing Officer and suggested an engineering solution be employed to prevent right turns, for example an extension of the pavement to make turning right difficult.

3.0 CLOSURE OF MINSHULL STREET

At the March Environment Committee meeting, the Town Mayor highlighted the suggestion of closing Minshull Street to traffic to enable traders to utilise the space and installing boarding to extend pavements to provide outdoor seating areas. This followed communications he had received from local businesses.

The Town Centre and Marketing Officer has spoken with Minshull Street businesses about the idea, of which nine were in support, two against and one had not responded. One objecting business stated that their shoppers are elderly and need to be dropped off outside the door, the other that they felt cars brought passing trade. Those in support did highlight that provision would need to be made for delivery access.

4.0 CONSIDERATIONS

It should be noted that the *From Top to Bottom Street* proposals suggest reversing the flow of traffic on Minshull Street.

Cheshire East Council has introduced a 'highways top-up' service which affords town and parish councils the opportunity to fund highway schemes; additionally, Cheshire East Ward Councillors for Knutsford have a combined budget of £12,600 for highway improvements in Knutsford per year. It is likely that Cheshire East Council will look to place any request from the Town Council under these schemes. The guide price for a traffic regulation order is indicated in the region of £5,000 to £10,000+.

Consultation has not taken place with residents on the idea of closing Minshull Street. The closure of the road would most likely be an issue for residents living off of Drury Lane (Ruskin Court, Hillside Road, Ruskin Way, Brier Close and Coppice Grove) as it is known that Minshull Street provides those driving from Manchester/Northwich access to their properties without the necessity of travelling via the A50 and up King Street.

The closure of Minshull Street would require some form of physical closure, for example moveable bollards or a barrier. The cost and operation of this would need to be considered.

5.0 DECISIONS REQUIRED

Council should consider:

- a) Whether it wishes to lobby or fund works to prevent vehicles contravening the one-way system on King Street
- b) Whether it wishes to progress the idea of closing Minshull Street to traffic