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Early delivery of Green Lane Link Road not justified by safety case

A study into the potential road safety benefits of a new link road bypassing villages in West Lancashire has concluded that it would not significantly reduce casualties.

The Green Lane Link Road is a proposed new road connecting agricultural and horticultural businesses to the A565 to relieve problems in villages, particularly Tarleton, which currently suffer congestion due to HGVs passing through.

Lancashire County Council's current timetable for the scheme proposes building it in 2019/20, with work taking place in the interim to develop the business case, and secure funding.

A debate took place at a Full Council meeting earlier this year about the potential business case for delivering the road at an earlier date in order to improve road safety, and realise the benefits to people's wellbeing and the economy of preventing casualties.

An accident investigation study has indicated that the link road may lead to a reduction of 2 injury collisions a year, equivalent to a 7% fall on the portion of the road network covered by the study.

County Councillor John Fillis, cabinet member for highways and transport, said: "Whilst I want to reduce the number of collisions and injuries on our highway network, it is clear that the Green Lane link road would not make a significant contribution to the reduction of collisions, and at £4m it is not a cost-effective way to achieve this.

"The county council's published highways and transport masterplan for West Lancashire recognises the value of the Green Lane link road scheme and it's one of a number of new roads we're working to deliver across the county in the coming years, subject to further work to develop the business case, and funding being available.

"However the study confirms that the potential road safety benefits are not a viable justification for bringing the scheme forward as has been suggested.

"I'd like to clarify that the study has been carried out independently as far as possible. The officers who have been involved have had no previous involvement in the link road scheme and the findings of the report are independent of any previous work."

The study covered the local road network in Tarleton and Banks north of the A565 to the district boundaries of Southport and Preston. This large area was chosen to make a meaningful assessment of the existing safety problems on the local road network and conclude on the potential accident savings which may result from the link road being built.

It looked at all the recorded injury collisions in that area over the previous 5 years. The

records show that in the 5 year period covering 2010-2014 there were 137 injury collisions recorded on the roads in the study area.

An analysis of each of the collisions looked at factors including speed, vehicle movements, and weather conditions, indicating that the construction of the Green Lane link road may lead to a reduction of 2 collisions per year due to rerouting of large goods vehicles and reduced congestion. This means that the number of collisions may reduce from 137 to 127 over the five years for which delivery of the road has been deferred, which represents a 7% reduction in injury collisions.

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