

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Public Rights of Way Committee

Date of Meeting:	17 th December 2012
Report of:	Public Rights of Way Manager
Subject/Title:	Highways Act 1980 s.119 Application for the Diversion of Public Footpath No. 10 (part), Parish of Congleton

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 The report outlines the investigation to divert part of Public Footpath No.10 in the Parish of Congleton. This includes a discussion of consultations carried out in respect of the proposal and the legal tests to be considered for a diversion order to be made. The proposal has been put forward by the Public Rights of Way Unit as an application has been made by the landowner concerned. The report makes a recommendation based on that information, for quasi-judicial decision by Members as to whether or not an Order should be made to divert the section of footpath concerned.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 An Order be made under Section 119 of the Highways Act 1980, as amended by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, to divert part of Public Footpath No.10 Congleton by creating a new section of public footpath and extinguishing the current path as illustrated on Plan No. HA/075 on the grounds that it is expedient in the interests of the owner of the land crossed by the path.
- 2.2 Public Notice of the making of the Order be given and in the event of there being no objections within the period specified, the Order be confirmed in the exercise of the powers conferred on the Council by the said Acts.
- 2.3 In the event of objections to the Order being received, Cheshire East Borough Council be responsible for the conduct of any hearing or public inquiry.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 In accordance with Section 119(1) of the Highways Act 1980 it is within the Council's discretion to make the Order if it appears to the Council to be expedient to do so in the interests of the public or of the owner, lessee or occupier of the land crossed by the path. It is considered that the proposed diversion is in the interests of the landowner for the reasons set out in paragraph 10.4 & 10.5 below.

3.2 Where objections to the making of an Order are made and not withdrawn, the Order will fall to be confirmed by the Secretary of State. In considering whether to confirm an Order the Secretary will, in addition to the matters discussed at paragraph 3.1 above, have regard to:

- Whether the path is substantially less convenient to the public as a consequence of the diversion.

And whether it is expedient to confirm the Order considering:

- The effect that the diversion would have on the enjoyment of the path or way as a whole.
- The effect that the coming into operation of the Order would have as respects other land served by the existing public right of way.
- The effect that any new public right of way created by the Order would have as respects the land over which the rights are so created and any land held with it.

3.3 Where there are no outstanding objections, it is for the Council to determine whether to confirm the Order in accordance with the matters referred to in paragraph 3.2 above.

3.4 The proposed route will not be an improvement to the existing route and diverting the footpath will be of considerable benefit to the landowner in terms of providing privacy and security to property. It is considered that the proposed route will be a satisfactory alternative to the current one and that the legal tests for the making and confirming of a diversion order are satisfied.

4.0 Wards Affected

4.1 Congleton West

5.0 Local Ward Members

5.1 Councillor Gordon Baxendale, Councillor Roland Domleo and Councillor David Topping.

6.0 Policy Implications including - Climate change - Health

6.1 Not applicable

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 Not applicable

8.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

- 8.1 Once an Order is made it may be the subject of objections. If objections are not withdrawn, this removes the power of the local highway authority to confirm the order itself, and may lead to a hearing/inquiry. It follows that the Committee decision may be confirmed or not confirmed. This process may involve additional legal support and resources

9.0 Risk Management

- 9.1 Not applicable

10.0 Background and Options

- 10.1 An application has been received from Ms S Shaw of Bloor Homes, 2-4 Whiteside Business Park, Station Road, Holmes Chapel, Cheshire, CW4 8AA, requesting that the Council make an Order under section 119 of the Highways Act 1980 to divert part of Public Footpath no. 10 in the Parish of Congleton.
- 10.2 Congleton FP10 consists of two separate footpath sections that are not linked. The section of Public Footpath No. 10, Congleton that would be affected by this diversion commences at its junction with Newcastle Road OS grid reference SJ 8447 6221 and runs in a generally easterly direction for approximately 4 metres and then runs in a generally north, north easterly direction for approximately 97 metres to an unclassified road along which it then runs in a generally easterly direction for approximately 18 metres to terminate at OS grid reference 8447 6221 near Astbury Mere lake. The section of path to be diverted is shown by a solid black line on Plan No. HA/075 between points A-C. The proposed diversion is illustrated on the same plan with a black dashed line between points A-B-C.
- 10.3 The land over which the current path and the proposed diversion run belongs to Bloor Homes. The land over which the proposed diversion runs belongs to the Church of the Latter Day Saints. Under section 119 of the Highways Act 1980 the Council may accede to an applicant's request, if it considers it expedient in the interests of the landowner to make an order to divert the footpath.
- 10.4 The section of Public Footpath No. 10, Congleton to be diverted runs through the gardens of two new residential dwellings on a new Bloor Homes development giving rise to concerns relating to security.
- 10.5 The proposed new route (A-B-C) would follow a current permissive path. Referring to Plan No. HA/075, the new route would start from point A and run in a generally north easterly direction along a semi-surfaced track to terminate after approximately 21 metres at point C. The new route would have a recorded width of 2.5m and would be enclosed.
- 10.6 Ward Councillors have been consulted about the proposal. No comments were received.

- 10.7 Congleton Town Council members have been consulted and have raised no objection.
- 10.8 The statutory undertakers have also been consulted and have raised no objections to the proposed diversion. If a diversion order is made, existing rights of access for the statutory undertakers to their apparatus and equipment are protected.
- 10.9 The user groups have been consulted. The Peak and Northern Footpath Society registered no objection. No other comments were received.
- 10.10 The Council's Nature Conservation Officer has been consulted and has raised no objection to the proposals.
- 10.11 An assessment in relation to the Equality Act Legislation 2010 has been carried out by the PROW Network Management and Enforcement Officer for the area and it is considered that the proposed diversion is an improvement on the old route.

11.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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