

Accrington Town Centre Proposed Changes to Blackburn Road

Customer First Analysis

The Council's corporate values include putting the customer first, providing opportunities for bright futures and narrowing inequality across the Borough. From 1 April 2011, a new legal duty applies to all public authorities. It covers these protected characteristics:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- gender;
- sexual orientation; and, for some aspects,
- marriage and civil partnerships.

The duty means that – as previously - we should analyse the effect of existing and new policies and practices on equality. It does not specify how we should do this. However, legal cases on the meaning of the previous general equality duties make it clear that the Council must carry out the analysis before making the relevant policy decision, and include consideration as to whether it is possible to reduce any detrimental impact. The Council has developed a template for this to be assessed that requires four areas to be considered:

1. Purpose

The purpose of the report is to seek approval from cabinet to request that Lancashire County Council, in their role as Highway Authority, undertake the necessary steps to implement the following changes to the traffic regime on Blackburn Road in Accrington Town Centre.

- A.** To close to all traffic that section of Blackburn Road from its junction with Union Street eastwards to its junction with Church Street.
- B.** To make that section of Blackburn Road from its junction with Union Street westwards to its junction with Eagle Street one way, allowing vehicles to travel only in a westerly direction from Union Street towards Eagle Street.

2. Evidence

The request to make the changes originates from the need to ensure that the development of the new bus station in Accrington Town Centre will not give rise to increased highway problems coupled with the desire to develop an area of public realm outside the Town Hall and Market Hall. There have been a number of meetings between officers of Hyndburn and

Lancashire County Council to discuss the issues arising from these changes with a view to securing the best outcome for the town centre.

There are a number of the groups listed above where it will be necessary to give particular attention:

- **Age.** The Borough has a population that is aging and it is necessary to ensure that we plan for our elderly residents. The proposed changes will introduce more car parking into the town centre and the closure of that section of Blackburn Road outside the Town Hall and Market Hall should improve the safety of this section of road and make it easier to cross for elderly people. No negative impacts have been identified for this section of the population.
- **Disability.** The design of the new highway arrangements and the area of public realm should ensure that it caters for disabled people. The proposed changes will introduce more car parking into the town centre and the closure of that section of Blackburn Road outside the Town Hall and Market Hall should improve the safety of this section of road and make it easier to cross for disabled people. No negative impacts have been identified for this section of the population.
- **Race / religion or belief.** The changes that could arise from this report would have no impact on people by virtue of their race or religion.

3. Impact

It is necessary to ensure that the impacts of the recommendations are taken into consideration and regard is had to any adverse impact and the approach adjusted if necessary. At this stage only positive benefits have been identified.

4. Actions

In order to make a Traffic Regulation Order it will be necessary for Lancashire County Council to undertake consultation. This will allow the impacts of the proposed changes to be considered in more detail.

During the detailed design stage of the project it will be necessary to ensure that the needs of disabled and elderly residents are properly taken into consideration and the scheme is designed to allow access to everyone. During this stage it will also be necessary to consult with relevant groups to ensure this is the case.

October 2012.