

A34 Stratford Road / Stanway Road – Central Reservation Gap Closure Evaluation and Monitoring report November 2022

Scope

This report captures the data associated with the Experimental Gap Closure Order on the A34 Stratford Road, at its junction with Stanway Road. In addition to traffic volume and casualty data, the report also summarises feedback received during the initial 6-month consultation period (July to December 2021).

Traffic Data

The gap closure in isolation has been successful in reducing the conflicting turning movements in and out of Stanway Road and the service road adjacent to the Saracen's Head public house. The gap is physically closed so compliance is very good. Closure of the gap has also resulted in fewer motorists using Stanway Road as a through route (rat running).

Based on the table below we can see a significant reduction (41% when adjusted for baseline) in the volume of traffic driving through Stanway Road because of the gap closure. *Baseline taken from TfWM Data Insites Covid-19 Traffic Variance data.

Survey Date	Total number of vehicles	Traffic volumes difference from typical (2019 baseline*)	Total number of vehicles (adjusted for baseline)	7 day average (adjusted for baseline)
Mar-21	4119	-29%	5314	759
Feb-22	3767	0%	3767	538

Table 1: Vehicles taking less than 105 seconds to traverse the length of Stanway Road in either direction (through traffic)

Road Traffic Collision Data

Road safety along the A34 Stratford Road corridor was flagged up as a concern due to its high collision rates in the 2021 Annual Road Safety assessment of Solihull Borough. On further investigation, the junction of A34 Stratford Road and Stanway Road was highlighted with 6 injury collisions occurring in the 3-year period 2018 to 2020.

Since the introduction of the Gap closure on the Stratford Road, the collision issues have been resolved, and importantly has not transferred to other junction on the main alternative routes as summarised in the table below:

Location	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 part Provisional
A34 Stratford Road / Stanway Road	0	4 (3 Slight, 1 Fatal)	2	0	0
A34 Stratford Road / Richard Lewis Way	1	0	0	0	0
A34 Stratford Road / Solihull Road	1	0	2	0	0
Solihull Road / Stanway Road	0	0	0	0	0

Consultation Summary

The area contains 782 properties, all of whom were initially sent a letter to inform them of the proposal.

As part of our engagement process, to help us understand how the closure was impacting residents and road users, we created and engaged with the community on a dedicated portal website. Through this we asked the question “Would you like this change made permanent?” The results are shown below.

Whilst ‘No’ was the answer made by 55% of responders, it has to be considered against the relatively small number of participants (around 18.6% of residents responded from the 782 properties we letter dropped). Our experience is that people are naturally motivated to make representations against something, whilst if they support or have no strong feeling, they are less likely to engage in the consultation process. To receive as much as a 34% positive rate in favour of the measure is overall seen as quite positive.

Commonplace feedback from residents

Responses to the question *Would you like this change made permanent?*

Answer	Number	%	% of properties responding
No	80	55	10.2
Yes	50	34	6.4
Too early to tell	10	7	1.3
Did not answer	6	4	0.7
Total	146	100	18.6

Summary of comments received

- *There is still a big problem with traffic turning left out of Stanway Road then 'U' turning on the Stratford Road at Richard Lewis Way to travel north.*
- *People are driving through the car park/service road behind the shops instead.*
- *Has doubled my journey time and petrol consumption.*
- *I have noticed better journey times when using public transport along Stratford Rd.*
- *Drivers make U-turn at junction with Richard Lewis Way or those more obeying the law, makes U turn technically on RLW.*
- *The change has improved Stanway Road significantly for its residents, cutting down on the cut through traffic and the speeding.*
- *This does not reduce the speed of traffic driving down Stratford Road or cars driving down Stanway Road at speed.*
- *Causes more traffic on Stratford Road as cars still try and do an illegal U-turn at Richard Lewis Way.*
- *There has been no noticeable reduction in vehicles using Stanway Road as a carpark or cut-through.*
- *I would like the access from the Stratford Road closed completely to cars.*
- *Since the trial the illegal parking outside Pepe's has improved but not been eliminated.*
- *I am now used to the closure and have found alternate routes out of my road.*
- *The impact on the closure has made no difference to speeding vehicles they drive so fast it's frightening down Stanway Rd.*
- *I do not think it's achieved its purpose with regard to reduction in volume or speed of traffic*
- *The u turns it cause's is dangerous!*
- *Need to close barrier on Stratford Road so traffic can't do illegal u turns*
- *Richard Lewis Way junction is still being used as a U-turn gap in the road. This should also be closed off as well.*
- *From Lloyds/Aldi you are now supposed to travel all of the way to poppy island in order to get back towards Solihull.*
- *I live in Ralph Rd. It seems that the number of vehicles traveling up Ralph Rd. from Prospect Lane has increased.*
- *I actual believe the speed of traffic on the Stratford Road has increased.*
- *Despite the fact that it takes me longer to begin travelling towards Birmingham, I feel it has made that junction much safer and it has cut down fast traffic around Stanway, Crophorne and Welford roads.*
- *There has not been any consultation as required by statute which opens such action to Judicial Review*

Email feedback from residents

Although the bespoke consultation portal was set up on the Commonplace platform, many people choose to e-mail in their views as well as use the Commonplace system. The reason for this is not known but possibly due to a lack of confidence or difficulty experienced using the relatively new system.

The number of e-mails regarding the gap closure on Stanway Road and the issues created at Richard Lewis Way are summarised in the table below.

View	Number	%
Negative	33	87
Positive	3	8
Related matter	2	5
Total	38	100

Conclusion

The experimental gap closure has been successful in reducing the conflicting turning movements in and out of Stanway Road and the service road adjacent to the Saracen's Head public house. Whilst not transferring the road safety risks elsewhere on the highway network.

There are some consequential dis-advantages to the local community which include additional journey distances travelled and the additional journey times. These are not considered to be un-reasonable and like other local communities along this corridor e.g. Longmore Road.

As a result of there now being fewer road traffic collisions where injury has been sustained, there will also be no damage only collisions occurring for which there are no accurate and reliable data source. The reduction in incidents occurring overall will have reduced congestion, improved public transport reliability and emergency services response times.