



**‘THE COUNTY OF DORSET (VARIOUS ROADS,
SHAFTESBURY) (TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT) ORDER
NO#, 202#’,
COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE ‘SHAFTESBURY
BUS GATE’ (‘THE PROPOSED ORDER).**

PROOF OF EVIDENCE

ALISON CURTIS

DORSET COUNCIL

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 My name is Alison Curtis, and I am the Highways Development Team Leader at Dorset Council. I have over 21 years of experience in Transport Development Management.
- 1.2 My duties include managing both the TDM and Highway Agreements teams at Dorset Council, providing Highway and Transport advice to planning colleagues, developers, councillors and members of the public. This includes assessing technical information such as Transport Assessments and construction drawings against current national and local guidance, policy, and legislation. I work with colleagues to secure appropriate mitigation to developments, such as network improvements for all modes of transport, complying with legal tests. I collaborate with statutory deliver partners and negotiate with developers to deliver infrastructure. I authorise entry into legal agreements to enable developers to undertake works to improve the existing highway network and adopt new roads where constructed to adoptable standards.
- 1.3 I set out my involvement with the application for the 'The County of Dorset (Various Roads, Shaftesbury) (Traffic Management) Order No#, 202#', commonly known as the 'Shaftesbury Bus Gate' ('the Proposed Order) below. It is my opinion that it should be made.
- 1.4 I understand my duties as an expert witness; to give independent and objective evidence on matters within my expertise, based on my own independent opinion and uninfluenced by the instructing party. I confirm that I have stated the facts and matters on which my opinion is based, and that I have not omitted to mention facts or matters that could detract from my conclusions. I believe that the facts stated within this Proof of Evidence are true and that the opinions expressed are correct. I have drawn attention to any matters where I consider I lack sufficient information to reach anything other than a provisional conclusion.

2. MY INVOLVEMENT WITH THE APPLICATION

- 2.1 This matter dates back to 12 February 2007 when a planning permission was granted by an Inspector, appointed by the Secretary of State, which included a condition to provide a vehicle restriction facility, now commonly known as the Shaftesbury 'bus gate'.
- 2.2 I was not involved with this matter until it was allocated to me in August 2023 to progress the TRO.
- 2.3 Evidence provided in the Council's Statement of Case is based on work carried out and evidence acquired by my predecessors.
- 2.4 I was the author of the report which went before members of the Strategic and Technical Planning Committee on 18th November 2024. I adopt the content of the report as my professional opinion.
- 2.5 For ease of discussion at the Inquiry I append a plan showing the local highway context including the location of the Bus Gate, the road names and adoption status (**AC1**).

3 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- 3.1 The Inspector will no doubt be familiar with the legal framework for TROs which are governed principally by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 ('the Act'), Schedule 9 and the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 ('the Regulations').
- 3.2 Section 1(1) of the Act provides that a Traffic Authority may, if it considers it expedient to do so, make an order in respect of a road for one or more of the purposes specified. This includes section 1(1)(d), namely preventing the use of the road by vehicular traffic of a kind which, or its use by vehicular traffic in a manner which, is unsuitable having regard to the existing character of the road or adjoining property.

- 3.3 Section 2 of the Act explains that such an order can make provision prohibiting, restricting or regulating the use of a road, or of any part of the width of a road, by vehicular traffic, or by vehicular traffic of any class specified in the order.
- 3.4 Section 122(1) of the Act provides that It shall be the duty of every strategic highways company and local authority upon whom functions are conferred by or under this Act, so to exercise the functions conferred on them by this Act as (so far as practicable having regard to the matters specified in subsection (2) below) to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians).

4 COMMENTS ON OBJECTIONS & INQUIRY REPRESENTATIONS

Objections to the Proposed Order

- 4.1 There are 78 outstanding objections to the Proposed Order. Comments on the substantive issues raised by these objections can be found in the Council's Statement of Case at paragraph 7 (page 8).
- 4.2 The Council also received 43 representations that were either in support of the Proposed Order or were deemed to be taking a neutral stance.

Inquiry representations

- 4.3 18 representations were made to the Inspector in preparation for the Inquiry. 9 were objections and 8 were statements in support. One representation was deemed to be neutral.
- 4.4 The Inquiry representations do not raise any issues beyond those already considered by the Council and commented on in its Statement of Case. A number of representors make comments about a traffic survey and subsequent report. This report was commissioned by Shaftesbury Town Council and made public on their website. The report is annexed to this proof of evidence (**AC2**) to assist the Inspector in understanding the representations made.

5 SUMMARY

- 5.1 The requirement for a vehicle restriction facility is expressly conditioned in the planning permission. The Council is fulfilling this requirement by providing a bus gate and associated TRO.
- 5.2 Allen Road and its signal-controlled junction with the A30 has been designed and constructed to provide safe and sufficient access and egress from the development for all traffic.
- 5.3 Sustainable modes of transport for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders can continue to use the existing route via Mampitts Road in both directions. A footway is provided immediately north of the bus gate.
- 5.4 It is not possible under current legislation to allow emergency workers responding to a call out access via the Bus Gate. But emergency vehicles travelling via blue lights are able to use the Bus Gate unhindered. This exception is already included within the draft notice for the TRO.
- 5.5 In the event of an emergency that blocks access or egress from Allen Road, vehicles directed to use the Bus Gate by emergency services personnel are exempt from the enforcement of the restriction.
- 5.6 All statutory requirements have been met in the traffic regulation order process to date.