

WIRRAL COUNCIL

HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC REPRESENTATIONS PANEL

13 JUNE 2013

SUBJECT:	OBJECTIONS: WALKING STRATEGY / CYCLING STRATEGY / SCHOOL TRAVEL IMPROVEMENTS SCHEME – TOUCAN CROSSING - BRIDGE ROAD / ORRYSDALE ROAD, WEST KIRBY
WARD/S AFFECTED:	WEST KIRBY AND THURSTASTON WARD
REPORT OF:	MARK SMITH, HEAD OF ENVIRONMENT & REGULATION
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report considers objections received as a result of proposals to introduce a Toucan crossing on Bridge Road, near to the junction of Orrysdale Road, West Kirby.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 On 15th March 2012 Cabinet considered and approved that year's Local Transport Capital Programme. Identified within the programme was the proposal to introduce a Toucan crossing on Bridge Road, West Kirby, to be part funded from the Local Transport Capital Programme, 'Walking Strategy' - Pedestrian Signals,' Cycling Strategy and 'School Travel Improvements - Safer Routes to School' sub-block allocation(s).
- 2.2 As a result of the spending review undertaken in late 2012, these proposals were one of a number of schemes deferred for further consideration as part of a future programme of Transport Capital Works. Subsequently, on 24th January 2013, Cabinet considered and approved the 2013/14 Local Transport Capital Programme. Identified within the programme are proposals for this scheme to be fully funded from the Cycling Strategy sub-block.
- 2.3 Following preliminary scheme design, consultation letters were delivered to residents of properties in the immediate vicinity of the proposed scheme detailing the scheme proposals. Notices were also erected on site and Party Spokespersons and Ward Members were informed.
- 2.4 Following this period of formal public consultation, two objections to the proposals were received, both of which remain unresolved at this present time.

One objector is a resident of no.2 Orrysdale Road, with the second objection being forwarded on behalf of the Merseyside Cycling Campaign (Wirral Group).

- 2.5 The content of the objector's concerns along with a detailed response are as follows:
- 2.6 The resident of no.2 Orrysdale Road is concerned that the proposed zig-zag carriageway markings for the Toucan crossing will result in difficulties for deliveries accessing his driveway of no.2 Orrysdale Road which is located on Bridge Road.

An officer has met with the resident of no.2 Orrysdale Road to discuss these concerns. As a result, it is proposed that the zig-zag markings on the eastbound exit side of the crossing be reduced to 2 marks and the existing no Waiting At Any Time waiting restrictions are retained. This amendment (plan no. R&E/1/13/MCR-b attached, refers), permissible under the pedestrian crossing regulations, will allow the resident of no.2 to access his property and to load and unload on the highway adjacent to his access in the same manner he is currently able to do so and without detriment to the safety of pedestrians using the proposed crossing facility.

- 2.7 The resident of no.2 Orrysdale Road believes that the Toucan crossing facility is unnecessary, due to low traffic flows on this section of Bridge Road as no one crosses at this location as the majority of pedestrians cross on the west side of its junction, including teachers crossing school children.

Surveys undertaken in the vicinity of the proposed Toucan crossing, confirm that many people attempt to cross Bridge Road throughout the day with a particularly high volume of pedestrians (mostly school children travelling to West Kirby School and Nursery) between the hours of 8am - 9am and 3pm - 4pm.

The proposed Toucan crossing facility not only provides a much-needed crossing facility for pedestrians and school children in particular, but will also serve the wider community, such as elderly people and persons with disabilities in providing direct links to the new Bridge Court Medical Centre development.

The proposed facility also forms a direct link as part of the Wirral Circular Trail and will cater for the more vulnerable cyclists who do not yet have the skills to negotiate difficult junctions and cycle on other less desirable routes.

Many comments of support for the scheme have been received outlining the benefit of a Toucan crossing at this location for both cyclists and school children attending West Kirby Primary School and Nursery.

The provision of pedestrian crossing facilities, such as Toucan crossings, help to reduce the number of cars taking children to and from school, so

there is less congestion and pollution, and less potential for accidents outside school gates. Walking also provides everyday exercise, encouraging children to be more active and healthy.

- 2.8 The resident of no.2 Orrysdale Road believes that the introduction of traffic signals at the junction of Bridge Road / Orrysdale Road would be more appropriate and would help to eliminate the number of traffic accidents at the junction.

Consideration has been given to the potential to introduce traffic signal at this location, however in addition to the greatly increased costs associated with such a scheme, physical site and topographical constraints preclude the possibility of providing a safe and appropriate traffic signal junction layout. Vehicles travelling east on Bridge Road would be at greatly increased risk of a rear-end shunt collision with the tail-end of traffic waiting at the traffic signal stop line to the restriction to forward visibility posed by the 'hump' of the bridge over the railway, and greatly increased speeds through the junction would be experienced.

- 2.9 The objection received from Merseyside Cycling Campaign (Wirral Group) considers that the majority of cyclists travelling past Bridge Road to / from the Newton / Hoylake direction, or the Concourse / Wirral Way direction, will continue to ride on-road and will not use the Wirral Circular Trail and the proposed Orrysdale Road Health Centre toucan, cycle track alongside the Health Centre, or the Bridge Road / Orrysdale Road toucan.

They believe that despite the facilities proposed cyclists will therefore continue on-road and 'give-way' at the junction of Bridge Road / Orrysdale Road, *'notwithstanding the effort this requires and the potential of conflict with vehicles approaching from the railway bridge'*.

On this basis, the Merseyside Cycling Campaign (Wirral Group) suggests a change of priority at the Bridge Road / Orrysdale Road junction as they believe this will facilitate most cyclist movements and buses.

As outlined in 2.6 above, the proposed facility forms a direct link as part of the Wirral Circular Trail and will cater for the more vulnerable cyclists who do not yet have the skills to negotiate difficult junctions and cycle on other less desirable routes. Whilst it is accepted that some cyclists will still choose to negotiate the Bridge Rd / Orrysdale Rd junction 'on road', the cyclist following the signed 'Wirral Circular Trail' will not.

Detailed measurements taken on site confirm that visibility would be severely restricted by land outside of the adopted highway should junction priorities be changed at this location.

Vehicles travelling east on Bridge Road would also be at greatly increased risk of a rear-end shunt collision with the tail-end of traffic stopped waiting to give-way due to the restriction to forward visibility posed by the 'hump' of the bridge over the railway.

Despite these findings having been previously discussed with them in some detail, the Merseyside Cycling Campaign (Wirral Group) wish to uphold the opinion that a change in junction priority is preferable to the proposed scheme and that a resolution should be sought to any potential obstructions to visibility that may lie outside the bounds of the adopted highway. Officers are however of the opinion that the scheme as advertised provides the safest, most cost effective and appropriate solution and that consideration to a change in priorities at the junction of Bridge Road / Orrysdale Road should not be pursued further on the grounds of road safety and practicality.

3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1 Consideration has also been given to providing a fully signalised junction arrangement or a 'changed priorities' arrangement at the junction of Bridge Road / Orrysdale Road, however due to physical site and topographical constraints and for reasons of road safety, neither option can be recommended for further consideration.
- 3.2 The proposed scheme provides the Council with the opportunity to address the Council's LTP3 Objectives and the Council's Corporate Goals and Objectives to make sure that Wirral's roads are safe and well maintained and to continue reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents.

4.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 4.1 Failure to undertake the proposed scheme would reduce the Council's opportunity to address LTP3 Objectives and the Council's Corporate Goals and Objectives to make sure that Wirral's roads are safe and well maintained and to continue reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 As part of the consultation exercise for this scheme letters were delivered to five local residents informing them of the proposals. In addition, consultation was undertaken with Party Spokespersons, Ward Members, Cycle Forum, Pedestrian Forum, Local and National Walking Groups, Emergency Services, Freight Transport Association, Road Haulage Association and Merseytravel. Notices were also posted on site.
- 5.2 Following submission of the objections, further discussions between the objectors and Council Officer's were undertaken to discuss the concerns raised. The points raised by the objectors have been carefully considered and it is concluded by Officers that the benefits that the scheme provides outweigh the objections raised and should not prevent the scheme from proceeding.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 There are no specific implications under this heading arising from this report.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

7.1 The budget allocation for this scheme is £60,000 and will be financed from the 2013/14 Local Transport Capital Programme - Cycling Strategy block.

7.2 Existing staff resources will be utilised in the progression of this scheme.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no implications under this heading.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The proposed Toucan crossing scheme is included within the 2013/14 Transport Capital Programme Cycling Strategy sub-block approved by Cabinet on 24th January 2013, for which an Equalities Impact Assessment has already been undertaken.

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The scheme will assist cyclist and pedestrian movements and thereby support a reduction on reliance upon the private motor vehicle and therefore assist in reducing the overall carbon footprint - key aims within the Merseyside Local Transport Plan.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no implications under this heading arising from the recommendation of this report.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION

12.1 The report recommends that the Panel note the objections and that the proposed scheme consisting of a Toucan crossing, as shown on attached drawing numbers 'R&E/1/13/MCR-a' and 'R&E/1/13/MCR-b', be recommended to the Regeneration & Environment Policy & Performance Committee for approval and implementation.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION

13.1 The provision of a Toucan crossing facility in Bridge Road, will have a positive effect on assisting cyclists, disabled, visually impaired persons, persons with

prams and pushchairs, children, and pedestrians in general to cross this busy road. The whole community benefits since links connect people to their work, to shops and to green spaces.

13.2 The provision of cycling and pedestrian crossing facilities, such as Toucan Crossings, help to reduce the number of cars taking children to and from school, so there is less congestion and pollution, and less potential for accidents outside school gates. Walking also provides everyday exercise, encouraging children to be more active and healthy.

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APPENDICES

Drawing numbers 'R&E/1/13/MCR-a' and 'R&E/1/13/MCR-b' indicating the proposed layout of the Toucan Crossing.

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Letters and emails from residents objecting to the scheme have been used in the preparation of this report.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet - 2013/14 Transport Capital programme	24 th January 2012