

WIRRAL COUNCIL

HIGHWAY AND TRAFFIC REPRESENTATIONS PANEL – 5 MARCH 2010

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES

OBJECTIONS: PEDESTRIAN REFUGE SCHEME – SEABANK ROAD, LISCARD
(LISCARD WARD)

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report considers objections received to provide a Pedestrian Refuge and complementing bus stop relocations in Seabank Road, Liscard.
- 1.2 The report recommends that the Panel notes the objections and that the Pedestrian Refuge as shown on attached drawing number BEng/10/10a together with the proposed bus stop relocations be recommended to The Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee for approval and implementation.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The initial concept to provide a pedestrian refuge at this location was developed in liaison with local ward members who, acting on behalf of local concerned residents requested an improvement in facilities to enable pedestrians to cross Seabank Road as well as measures to curb the speed of traffic at this location.
- 2.2 Although the Director of Technical Services had reported on the Transport Capital Programme for 2009/10 in respect of the Environmental And Quality block to Cabinet on 19th March 2009 it was not possible at the time to identify resources to undertake a scheme at this location owing to other pressing demands on the available budget.
- 2.3 Cabinet at the same time were however considering the Capital Programme Integrated Transport Block – Area Forum consultation and approved an award to each Area Forum of approximately £18,200 to carry out schemes of a Traffic Management/Road Safety nature (Minute 421 refers).
- 2.4 Arising out of local consultation in the Liscard and Seacombe area, the Liscard and Seacombe Area Forums chose this particular refuge scheme for Seabank Road as a scheme to be funded from its allocation.
- 2.5 Following detailed design, letters were delivered to residents of properties in the vicinity of the proposed scheme informing them of the proposal. Party Spokespersons and Ward Members were also informed.
- 2.6 To facilitate the construction of the pedestrian refuge it would be necessary to relocate two bus stops. One on the north-east side of Seabank Road and one on the south-west side. Each of these bus stops having a bus shelter.
- 2.7 As part of the detailed design, it was originally proposed to relocate the bus stop on the south-west side of Seabank Road to a position opposite Seabank Road's junction with Maddock Road Plan No. BEng/10/10a refers. Following further consultation with Merseytravel however, it was agreed that the proposed relocated bus stop was too close to the bend on Seabank Road and also that its position was too far away from its current one to properly meet residents desires.
- 2.8 As a result of the comments received to the initial consultation, a further public consultation was undertaken to advertise the relocation of the bus stop on the southwest side of Seabank Road to a position fronting property numbers 35 to 39 Seabank Road. Again Plan No. BEng/10/10a refers.
- 2.9 During the advertisement period unresolved objections to the proposals were received from 3 households. The objections are detailed below.

3.0 OBJECTIONS & RESPONSE

- 3.1 Objectors believe that the position of a relocated bus stop will block access to five properties.

It is envisaged that buses over 10 metres in length would be positioned across the access to the properties when stopping in the bus bay. However, stopping times for buses are usually minimal. Buses will not be permitted to layover at the bus stop.

- 3.2 One objector believes that the bend in the road would not conflict with the position of where the bus stop was initially proposed. The bend is further towards King Street.

The initial proposal to position the bus stop opposite Maddock Road has raised concerns about possible vehicle overtaking conflicts due to the restricted forward visibility when buses are present at the stop.

- 3.3 Two objectors believe that the bus stop would encourage unsociable behaviour outside the properties, the bus stop would be damaged and there would be an increase in alcohol related littering.

The proposed bus stop is to be positioned approximately 20 metres away from its existing position. It is not envisaged that unsociable behaviour will increase as a result of relocating the bus shelter. A new litterbin can be positioned next to the proposed bus shelter position as part of the works.

- 3.4 Two objectors believe that the privacy of 37 to 45 Seabank Road would be invaded as their living rooms are situated on the first floor of their properties.

Buses currently pass the frontage of the properties. Stopping times for buses at the proposed bus stop are usually minimal. Buses will not be permitted to layover at the bus stop.

- 3.5 Two objectors believe that it is possible to relocate the position of the proposed pedestrian refuge without affecting the existing position of the bus stops.

The pedestrian refuge is proposed in a position to cater for the desire line of both pedestrians and public transport users. The location of the pedestrian refuge has been selected by the Liscard/Seacombe Area Forum, and it is considered to be in a suitable location to cater for pedestrian movements. On-site observations have shown that pedestrians currently cross at this location. There would be difficulties in siting the refuge elsewhere due to physical site constraints.

- 3.6 Two objectors believe that the relocation of the bus stops will increase noise pollution outside residential properties.

Seabank Road (A554) is classified as a main distributor road, which by nature is subject to heavy traffic movements. The proposed bus stop is located close to the position of the existing bus stop and therefore it is not considered that noise pollution levels will increase.

- 3.7 One objector believes that the pedestrian refuge is not required as there is currently one situated close to Seabank Road's junction with Maddock Road.

The pedestrian refuge will cater for the pedestrian and public transport users demands at this location and will also assist parishioners wishing to access the adjacent church.

- 3.8 One objector believes that it would be better if traffic signals were introduced at the junction of Seabank Road and Manor Road.

There is insufficient funding allocated within the Integrated Transport Block – Area Forum works to consider the introduction of signal controlled junction at Seabank Road/Manor Road.

4.0 SUMMARY

- 4.1 There is, from the accident record, merit in introducing a pedestrian refuge scheme in Seabank Road, as there have been 2 recorded personal injury accidents in the current three-year study period, one of which could have been prevented if a pedestrian refuge had been present.
- 4.2 The Council prioritises its resources in line with the aspirations of the Local Transport Plan objectives. This is to make specific improvements in Local and National Performance Indicators. For Wirral Council road safety is a Key Improvement Aim and this reflects the importance afforded to Road Safety by the Department for Transport in its national indicators. In addition a Local Authority Agreement has been signed with the Government Office for the North West to provide specific impetus into road safety to achieve a better performance against targets than the Government's nationally recognised target.
- 4.3 Officers have carefully considered the points raised by the objectors both in meetings and through this report and conclude that the benefits that the scheme provides outweigh the objections raised and that the objections should not prevent the scheme from going ahead.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The provision of the pedestrian refuge, estimated to cost in the region of £9,100, will be financed from Area Forum allocation from the 2009/10 Integrated Transport Block.
- 5.2 The cost of relocating the 2 bus stops is approximately £12,000. The cost of these works is to be funded by Merseytravel.

6.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Existing staff resources have been used for the design and will be used for the supervision of the works.
- 6.2 There are no additional financial or staffing implications arising directly from this report. Future maintenance costs will be met from the Highway Maintenance Revenue Budget with Merseytravel maintaining the bus shelters.

7.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES/EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 The provision of the pedestrian refuge in Seabank Road will have a positive effect on assisting disabled, visually impaired persons and persons with prams and pushchairs to cross the road. The proposed scheme meets the aspirations of Equality Impact Assessments, which have been completed for Road Safety, Accessibility, Dropped Crossings and Public Transport.

8.0 HEALTH IMPLICATIONS/IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 The proposed scheme would have positive health implications, either through improvements in road safety or through encouraging a healthier mode of transport (walking).

9.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The provision of a pedestrian refuge will be of particular benefit to children, the elderly, persons with disabilities and pedestrians in general.

10.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The scheme will assist pedestrian movements and thereby support a reduction on reliance upon the private motor vehicle – key aims within the Merseyside Local Transport Plan.

11.0 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no specific planning implications arising directly from this report.

12.0 ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no specific anti-poverty implications arising directly from this report.

13.0 SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no specific social inclusion implications arising from this report.

14.0 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

14.1 There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

15.0 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

15.1 This report has implications for Members in the Liscard Ward.

16.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

16.1 Letters and emails received from residents objecting to the scheme have been used in the preparation of this report. Part of this correspondence is classed as 'Confidential'.

17.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

17.1 Panel is requested to note the objections received and the officers' responses and recommend to the Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee that the "pedestrian refuge" scheme together with complementary bus stop and shelter relocations (as shown on drawing number BEng/10/10a) be approved for implementation in Seabank Road, Liscard and that the objectors be informed accordingly.

DAVID GREEN, DIRECTOR
TECHNICAL SERVICES