

WIRRAL COUNCIL

HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC REPRESENTATIONS PANEL

13 SEPTEMBER 2012

SUBJECT:	OBJECTIONS: PUFFIN CROSSING - SPITAL RD, SPITAL
WARD/S AFFECTED:	CLATTERBRIDGE WARD
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	STREETSCENE AND TRANSPORT SERVICES COUNCILLOR HARRY SMITH
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report considers objections submitted against the proposal to introduce a Puffin Crossing on Spital Road, 100m west of its junction with Jocelyn Close, Spital.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 On 15th March 2012 Cabinet considered and approved this year's Local Transport Capital Programme. Identified within the programme was the proposal to introduce a Puffin crossing on Spital Road, Spital, which would be part funded from the Local Transport Capital Programme, 'Walking Strategy' - Pedestrian Signals' and 'School Travel Improvements - Safer Routes to School' sub-block allocation(s).
- 2.2 Following preliminary scheme design, consultation letters were delivered to residents of properties in the vicinity of the proposed scheme with details of the scheme proposals. Notices were erected on site and Party Spokespersons and Ward Members were informed.
- 2.3 Following this period of formal public consultation, two individual objections to the proposals were received. Further discussions with the objectors resulted in the withdrawal of one objection (from the resident of no.3 Spital Road, directly adjacent to the proposed Puffin Crossing). The remaining objector is the resident of no.5 Spital Road.
- 2.4 The content of the remaining objector's concerns along with a detailed response are as follows:
- 2.5 The objector is concerned that Spital Road is already heavily trafficked and the proposed Puffin Crossing will result in further congestion, creating

added difficulties for a vehicle reversing out of the driveway to no.5 Spital Road.

The operation of the proposed Puffin facility will be linked to the phasing of the traffic signals at the junction of Spital Road/Church Road to ensure the free flow of traffic on Spital Road is maintained. Natural gaps in traffic created by the operation of the signals could reasonably be expected to ease the reversing manoeuvre out of the objector's driveway.

Notwithstanding this, Officers who met with the objector to discuss these concerns, offered to give consideration to appropriate accommodation works to widen the verge-side vehicle crossing serving the objector's property to enable a reversing vehicle to manoeuvre off the highway and enter the highway in a forward gear. The objector has since reflected on that offer and subsequently declined it.

- 2.6 The objector also expressed concern that the 'audible devices' generally incorporated into all new signalised crossings to provide assistance for blind or partially sighted people would be heard from his property and create a nuisance.

Where residential property is close to the crossing they may be switched off at night by a timetabled command and are generally only operational between 8am and 8pm. Officers who met with the objector offered to visit the property to assess the volume of the audible devices and adjust them appropriately.

- 2.7 The objector has expressed the opinion that the area is over-saturated with commercial and anti-social activity associated with the two adjacent public houses, fast food establishment, shopping precinct and taxi operation and that the presence of the proposed Puffin Crossing would make matters worse.

The concerns expressed by the objector regarding anti-social behaviour have been forwarded to Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team for noting and action as appropriate.

The new Puffin Crossing will provide safe passage for pedestrians crossing Spital Road and ease access to local shops and adjacent bus stops and forms part of Wirral Council's ongoing commitment to encourage walking in the Borough through providing better environments where it is safe and attractive to do so and in line with the Council's Corporate Goals and Objectives to promote carbon friendly, sustainable and healthy alternative modes of transport.

- 2.8 Members should also be made aware that initial concerns were raised by Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service that the proposals could have a detrimental effect on attendance times for Clatterbridge Hospital and

Junction 4 of the M53 motorway during peak times. An Officer has since discussed the issue with The Operational Planning & Policy Team for Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service to explain the operational aspects of the Puffin Crossing and in particular the proposed linked phasing arrangement between the Puffin Crossing and the traffic signals at the junction of Spital Road/Church Road to ensure that free flow of traffic on Spital Road is maintained. At the time of writing Officers are awaiting confirmation in writing of the withdrawal of the objection intimated as a result of those discussions but expect to be in a position to report such to Members verbally at the meeting of the Highways Panel on 13th September 2012.

3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1 Consideration has been given to incorporating a pedestrian signal phase as part of the traffic signal arrangement at the junction of Spital Road/Church Road, however due to physical constraints a safe and appropriate crossing facility could not be incorporated without introducing considerable delay to vehicular traffic. Whereas pedestrians are able to cross at the signalised junction in stages utilising the existing refuge islands, site surveys reveal a greater number of pedestrians attempt to cross Spital Road unaided in the vicinity of the proposed Puffin Crossing facility.
- 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 twenty local residents informing them of the proposals. In addition, consultation was undertaken with Party Spokespersons, Ward Members, the Cycle Forum, the Pedestrian Forum, Local and National Walking Groups, Emergency Services, the Freight Transport Association, the Road Haulage Association and Merseytravel. Notices were also posted on site.
- 5.2 Following submission of the objections, further discussion between the objector and Council Officers 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 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 £50,000, financed from the 2012/13 Local Transport Capital Programme - Pedestrian Signals and "Safer Routes to School" Programmes.

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 scheme is included within the 2012/13 Transport Capital Programme approved by Cabinet on 15th March 2012 for which an Equalities Impact Assessment has already been undertaken.

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The scheme will assist pedestrian movements and thereby support a reduction on reliance upon the private motor vehicle and 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 Puffin crossing, as shown on attached Drawing No.3575, be recommended to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee for approval and implementation.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION

13.1 The provision of a Puffin Crossing facility in Spital Road will have a positive effect on assisting 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 pedestrian crossing facilities, such as Puffin 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 No.3575 indicating the proposed layout of the Puffin 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