

WIRRAL COUNCIL

HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC REPRESENTATIONS PANEL

16th JULY 2014

SUBJECT:	OBJECTIONS: IMPROVING ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY / LOCAL SAFETY SCHEME – TRAFFIC CALMING – SHREWSBURY ROAD / GERALD ROAD, OXTON
WARD/S AFFECTED:	OXTON 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 mini-roundabout at the junction of Shrewsbury Road / Gerald Road, Oxton.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 On 13th March 2014 Cabinet considered and approved the 2014/15 Local Transport Capital Programme. Identified within the programme was the proposal to introduce a mini-roundabout at the junction of Shrewsbury Road and Gerald Road, Oxton, to be funded from the Local Transport Capital Programme, 'Improving Road Safety' Block allocation.
- 2.2 During the study period there were four recorded personal injury accidents at the junction. Research into these incidents has revealed that three of these accidents could potentially have been prevented had the mini-roundabout been present. There has been a further personal injury accident at this location since the end of the study period.
- 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. 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.14 Broadway, Greasby and one objector is a resident of no. 19 Shrewsbury Road, Oxton. A further objection was received from a resident of no. 3a Alton Road, Oxton via a Ward Member, after the initial consultation period.

2.5 As part of the public consultation exercise emails of support were received from two Oxtun Ward Councillors and one Oxtun Ward resident.

2.6 The content of the objector's concerns along with Officers' comments are as follows:

2.7 **The resident of no.14 Broadway, Greasby is concerned that being a regular traveller through the junction and also having seen collisions at the junction they are unable to comprehend how the addition of a mini roundabout will improve road safety and in addition to this not impact on the safety of access to residential properties around the said junction. From experience when exiting Gerald Road the greatest danger of collision is from traffic travelling along Shrewsbury Road from the direction of Birkenhead town centre. Even with the addition of a mini roundabout traffic that is not turning into Gerald Road will not approach the roundabout at any less a speed than they do approaching the bend.**

It is unfortunate that the objector has witnessed a number of collisions at the junction. This scheme aims to improve road safety at the junction with the requirement for vehicles on each approach to give way to traffic from their right. Officers consider that this scheme is an appropriate engineering solution to reduce accident risk and improve road safety at this location.

2.8 **The resident of no.14 Broadway, Greasby is concerned that traffic continuing down Shrewsbury Road does not have to indicate right as it is a 'straight ahead' manoeuvre thus not warning traffic at the Gerald Road exit in any more favourable way than it does now. In observing no oncoming traffic from the direction of Claughton a vehicle will continue over the Give Way, having a tendency to mount and drive over the mini roundabout (which appears to occur at most mini roundabouts). Therefore presenting just as much of a collision hazard to the traffic exiting Gerald Road.**

The mini roundabout will provide a better and slower flow of traffic at the junction, thus providing greater opportunity for motorists to egress from Gerald Road. Mini-roundabouts are recognised by the Department for Transport as an effective form of traffic calming measure. It is an offence to travel over the central painted area of a mini roundabout unless it is not possible (by virtue of the construction of the vehicle).

2.9 **The resident of no.14 Broadway, Greasby is concerned that there are 2 driveways in very close proximity to the Give Way markings. The very hazardous manoeuvres residents will have to undertake entering and exiting the properties must surely be a concern for road safety - both to residents and approaching vehicles.**

The residents currently have to undertake difficult manoeuvres to access their properties. The mini-roundabout will provide an overall slower flow of traffic at the junction, thus providing a potentially safer opportunity for residents to access or egress their properties.

- 2.10 The resident of no.14 Broadway, Greasby has discussed these proposed changes with friends who also use this junction and request further information as to the cost to the taxpayer of these proposed changes, what statistics have been gathered to support the proposed change and the full reasoning and justification for this proposed change to the highway.**

The Council has a duty under the Road Traffic Act 1988 to undertake studies into accidents and promote programmes of measures to reduce the number of people injured on the roads.

Wirral Council's Road Safety Team receive comprehensive (confidential) details of all injury related road crashes which are analysed to see what measures are needed to improve road safety.

As indicated in para 2.2 above there have been four recorded personal injury accidents at the junction during the 5 year study period. Research into these incidents has revealed that three of these accidents could potentially have been prevented had the mini-roundabout been present. It is also noted that there has been a further personal injury accident at this location since the end of the study period.

The budget allocation for this scheme is £60,000 and will be financed from the 2014/15 Local Transport Capital Programme – Improving Road Safety Strategy block.

- 2.11 The resident of no.19 Shrewsbury Road, Oxton is concerned that vehicle access to the property 19 Shrewsbury Road will be severely obstructed by waiting vehicles governed by the proposed Give Way, Diag 1003.3.**

It is expected that at times there will be vehicles stationary outside 19 Shrewsbury Road waiting to enter the roundabout. However, the mini roundabout will provide a better and slower flow of traffic at the junction and it is expected that any delay should be minimal. Officers note that there are many locations across the Borough where traffic flow provides some minor impediment to traffic waiting to turn off or join the carriageway.

- 2.12 The resident of no.19 Shrewsbury Road, Oxton is concerned that vehicles exiting from the property 19 Shrewsbury Road will be severely obstructed by waiting vehicles governed by the proposed Give Way, Diag 1003.3.**

As stated, in item 2.11 above, it is expected that at times there will be some vehicles stationary outside 19 Shrewsbury Road waiting to enter the roundabout. However, the mini-roundabout will provide a better and slower flow of traffic at the junction and it is expected that any delay should be minimal. Officers note that there are many locations across the Borough where traffic flow provides some minor impediment to traffic waiting to turn off or join the carriageway.

- 2.13 The resident of no.19 Shrewsbury Road, Oxton is concerned that vehicle access to the property 19 Shrewsbury Road when approaching the proposed roundabout from Claughton along Shrewsbury Road, will result in the vehicle having to stop on the roundabout to wait for oncoming traffic**

to clear. In peak times the objector is sure that this will result in a hazardous gridlock of vehicles blocking traffic flow from Gerald Road and Shrewsbury Road (in the direction from Claughton)

Officers accept that the layout of the highway and junction is somewhat difficult, indeed, this is part of the reason why there have been a number of crashes at the junction. The location of the existing vehicular accesses are not ideal and would not now normally be approved. The proposed mini-roundabout is expected to reduce vehicle speeds on Shrewsbury Road, significantly reduce delays and to improve safety for vehicles turning right out of Gerald Road. The provision of a new traffic island on Gerald Road will also improve safety for pedestrians crossing at the junction. It is not envisaged that the implementation of the mini-roundabout at the junction will compromise vehicle access into the residential properties or significantly contribute to congestion.

- 2.14 The resident of no.19 Shrewsbury Road, Oxton is concerned that after the clearing of any traffic from the situation in point 2.11 above such vehicle will have to drive over the "Ghost Island" directly opposite the driveway of 19 Shrewsbury Road.**

Officers have designed the "ghost island" to be domed in shape with a maximum 25mm up stand in order to maintain safe vehicular access to properties.

- 2.15 The resident of no.19 Shrewsbury Road, Oxton is concerned that the proposed roundabout will make it impossible to attempt reverse parking into the driveway of 19 Shrewsbury Road which is necessary at times when loading their vehicle**

The position of the vehicle crossing in the current layout of the junction must present the resident with difficulty when attempting to reverse into the driveway and from a road safety point of view it is far from ideal. During a meeting between the objector and a Council Officer on 14th March 2014 an offer was made to adjust the existing layout of the vehicle crossing serving 19 Shrewsbury Road, which would improve turning manoeuvres into the property. It is intended that the alterations to the vehicle crossing will be included in the scope of the junction improvement works. The Road Safety Manager considers that at locations with difficult access arrangements (and including this resident's existing vehicle access), drivers should drive into and out of driveways in forward gear where possible.

- 2.16 The resident of no.19 Shrewsbury Road is concerned that the proposed illuminated traffic sign Diag 611.1 is to be positioned directly in the drivers "field of vision" when a vehicle tries to exit the driveway at 19 Shrewsbury Road.**

The proposed sign will be mounted on a 76mm post which is less than the diameter of lighting columns which are routinely used on the highway. The signface is mounted a minimum of 2.3m above the ground and will not obscure the visibility of a normal vehicle likely to access the property (ie non HGV or bus). Officers will give consideration to mounting the illuminated traffic sign on a cranked arm bracket at the back of footway.

- 2.17 The resident of no.19 Shrewsbury Road, Oxton is concerned that the proposed illuminated traffic sign Diag 611.1 will generate light pollution for the residents at 19 Shrewsbury Road**

The proposed traffic sign is a LED internally illuminated sign. Unlike, an older sign arrangement there is no external lighting unit above the sign. Such illuminated street furniture is widely used on the highway network and is some distance away from the objectors property. The internally illuminated signs reduce the amount of sideways protrusion of light.

- 2.18 **The resident of no.3a Alton Road, Oxtun believes that the roundabout will add to a traffic back-up and cause further frustration because traffic will have to give way to whatever is approaching from the right. If traffic backs-up along Shrewsbury Road it will make turning into my part of Alton Road (the Village Road end) more difficult due to slower moving traffic. Also, any traffic proposing to turn down the other part of Alton Road will be likewise affected.**

The proposed mini-roundabout is expected to reduce vehicle speeds on Shrewsbury Road, significantly reduce delays and to improve safety for vehicles turning right out of Gerald Road. By reducing vehicle speeds on Shrewsbury Road turning manoeuvres into Alton Road should actually be improved.

- 2.19 **The resident of no.3a Alton Road, Oxtun believes that the only solution that would possibly work would be traffic lights at the junction; and this would have the effect of driving traffic away from that route.**

It would not be practicable to introduce a traffic signal controlled layout at this junction due to the position of existing vehicle entrances to properties. Vehicles that egress these properties would not have any indication as to the traffic signal phase thus leading to potential conflict.

3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1 Doing nothing would not be an option in this instance as there is evidence that the trend in recorded personal injury accidents would continue at this junction.
- 3.2 As indicated in the response to para 2.19 above, it would not be practicable to introduce a traffic signal controlled layout at this junction due to the position of existing vehicle entrances to properties.
- 3.3 The proposed scheme provides the Council with the opportunity to address the Council's Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) objectives and meet the priority to reduce the number of killed and seriously injured casualties on the roads.

4.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 4.1 Failure to undertake the proposed scheme would reduce the Council's opportunity to address LTP3 Objectives to improve road safety. Failing to address this issue is likely to result in a continuing trend of road accidents at this location.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 As part of the consultation exercise for this scheme letters were delivered to sixty-four local residents informing them of the proposals. In addition, consultation was undertaken with Party Spokespersons, Ward Members, Cycle

Forum, Pedestrian Forum, Emergency Services, Freight Transport Association, Road Haulage Association and Merseytravel.

- 5.2 Following submission of the objections, further discussions and a meeting between the objector of 19 Shrewsbury Road, Oxtun and Council Officers were undertaken to discuss the concerns raised. The points raised by all 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 2014/15 Local Transport Capital Programme – Improving Road Safety Strategy block.
- 7.2 Existing staff resources will be utilised in the progression of this scheme.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Council has statutory duties under the Road Traffic Act 1988 to investigate the causes and trends for road traffic accidents and promote programmes of measures to prevent those accidents.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The proposed traffic-calming scheme is included within the 2014/15 Local Transport Capital Programme 'Improving Road Safety' Strategy Block approved by Cabinet on 13th March 2014, 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 therefore assist in reducing the overall carbon footprint which are key aims within the Merseyside Local Transport Plan.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The implementation of the proposal will make a positive contribution to improve road safety and reduce road traffic casualties.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 12.1 The report recommends that the Panel note the objections and that the proposed scheme consisting of a mini-roundabout, as shown on attached drawing number 'R&E/1/14/GR-b', be recommended to the Regeneration & Environment Policy & Performance Committee for approval and implementation.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 13.1 The introduction of a mini-roundabout at the junction of Shrewsbury Road and Gerald Road, Oxton, provides the Council with the opportunity to address the Council's LTP3 Objectives and meet the priority to reduce the number of killed and seriously injured casualties on the roads.

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APPENDICES

Drawing numbers 'R&E/1/14/GR-b' indicating the proposed layout of the proposed mini-roundabout.

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 - 2014/15 Local Transport Capital programme	13 th March 2014