

Albert Road junction with Highmoor Road improvement options reviewed by Reading Borough Council.

OPTIONS

1. **Close the west side of Highmoor Road at the junction with Albert Road** to general traffic allowing access only for public transport. This removes the risk of a collision almost entirely whilst allowing public transport, emergency services and other public services to continue to use the junction. Whilst this will displace traffic onto other roads the largest public service vehicles (such as refuse vehicles) and buses that currently use Highmore Road would be unaffected. This will also improve the junction for pedestrians by removing some of the vehicle movements. Access into Highmoor Road west side is unaffected by this proposal.

2. **Remove the central hatch on Albert Road and push the stop line on the west side of Highmoor Road** further into the junction. This has been raised by a couple of residents and also CADRA. Whilst this may slightly improve visibility concern would be that accidents would thereafter increase.
 - a. This is because the previous right turn accidents may return.
 - b. Also this option may increase the number of drivers not fully stopping and spending less time properly looking before crossing the junction.

3. **Change the priorities at the junction** making Albert Road stop to Highmoor Road traffic. This option does not change the visibility problem and relies on Albert Road drivers obeying the stop signs and giving way to crossing drivers from Highmoor Road. Whilst this would have an added positive impact on Albert Road traffic speed, residents of Highmoor Road are likely to resist this. Further measures would have to be included such as raising the junction to form a self-enforcing traffic calming feature. Making this change is likely to create new accidents until the well-established movements that currently exist are fully realised by drivers.

4. **Re-position the fence line on the South West side** of the junction to improve visibility to the right for drivers exiting Highmoor Road west side. Whilst this may seem an attractive option the fence line and the land that sits behind it is private. In addition, other street furniture (telecommunications cabinet) would also require relocation. Even if the landowner were willing to give up the land, legal processes involved to ensure any future owner does not reclaim the fence line would be lengthy and expensive.

5. **A mini roundabout at the junction** would slow traffic down and highlight the presence of the junction but the visibility on the West side of Highmoor Road would worsen. The give way at a mini roundabout is curved following the shape of the roundabout, hence drivers would be required to give way further back into Highmoor Road than they currently do with the stop line.
6. **Traffic signals** would completely remove all conflicts at the junction, therefore, the restricted visibility would not be an issue. Whilst traffic signals could also include a pedestrian movement, catering for all users at the junction, they are expensive to install and are likely to be unpopular in this location. A very basic fixed time traffic signal control junction could cost in the region of £50,000. A more intelligent traffic signal control junction including pedestrian facilities could cost in the region of £120,000.
7. **Other considerations**
 - (1) Traffic calming measures to slow speed on Albert Road. Whilst this may gain support from residents of the area, it does not solve the main cause of the accidents at the junction which is the restricted visibility exiting from Highmoor Road West side. Although, slowing vehicle speeds on Albert Road is likely to reduce the severity of the accident rather than numbers of accidents occurring.
 - (2) Close Northbound Albert Road at the junction of Highmoor Road except to public transport and other public services, such as the emergency services. This removes the vehicle conflict completely but is not likely to gain support as Albert Road is considered as one of the main residential routes serving Caversham Heights.
 - (3) Removal of vegetation within the area of the junction. Whilst there is some overhanging of vegetation encroaching onto the public highway, it is the visibility looking south that is the main problem. This side of the junction is a fence line and it is not vegetation encroaching onto the highway that is causing visibility problems. There is clearly a case to encourage residents to maintain their hedge lines; the removal of vegetation is unlikely to significantly improve the main safety concern.
 - (4) Inclusion of rumble strips on the western approach of Highmoor Road towards Albert Road to slow drivers. It could be argued that this is a practical low cost method of slowing traffic down as it approaches the junction and making it more likely that drivers will take note of the STOP signs. Rumble strips are not typically used in urban areas as they create noise. The purpose of rumble strips is to alert the driver of a change in the road ahead by the use of vibration to the vehicle. The noise created may vary from vehicle to vehicle but those that live closest to the rumble strip are likely to be affected by noise. Furthermore the perception is

that the majority of drivers are local and already familiar with the junction but failing to STOP and give way as required.

- (5) Close the eastern side of Highmoor Road to West-East traffic in the form of a "build out", thus preventing Highmore Road traffic crossing the junction west to east as well as left and right turns from Albert Road. This option is not likely to solve the main accident issue and concern of the lack of visibility exiting the west side of Highmoor Rd into Albert Road. Whilst it may remove the perception of 'see-through' to some extent it appears that the accidents largely involve local drivers who know the road layout.