

Albert Road junction with Highmoor Road. Further analysis of alternative options following response to close west side of Highmoor Road at its junction with Albert Road.

OPTIONS

1. **Traffic signals** are arguably the next best option in meeting the expectations of the original petition as well as dealing with the very specific accident problem at this junction. Traffic signals will completely remove the Highmoor Road and Albert Road conflicts whilst maintaining all movements at and through the junction. However, due to the very limited space with relatively narrow footways the traffic signals would only be a very basic set-up. Anything other than a two stage operation allowing both opposing approaches on Highmoor Road and then Albert Road to run together is likely to create unacceptable delay. Whilst traffic signals will remove the visibility problems they will not cater for the opposing right turning movements that will have to give way to on-coming vehicles. At busy times a single right turning vehicle will completely block the ability for all following vehicles to proceed. As previously reported a very basic fixed time traffic signal controlled junction could cost in the region of £50,000. Whilst there was some limited support expressed for traffic signals their use in this location is not likely to be popular. This option, not only likely to be unpopular, is relatively expensive to deliver when a more cost effective injury reduction option may be available. Traffic signals should remain a consideration if other measures are not successful in reducing injuries.
2. **Change the priorities at the junction** by 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. The perception is that vehicle speed on Albert Road is as much to blame for the accidents at this junction. Whilst changing priorities will have an added positive impact on Albert Road traffic speed, residents of Highmoor Road are likely to be worried that speeding will increase outside their homes. Additional traffic calming measures may be required on all approaches to the junction to support this change and reduce speeds. In making this change there is a fear that it may create new accidents until the change in priorities are fully realised by drivers. This option is by far the most cost effective solution although it has its limitations and does not meet the wider concerns of the original petition. It is, however, worth changing the priorities thus reducing the impact of the very restricted visibility within Highmoor Road. This option can be delivered without any further legal process so it is the easiest and quickest option to deliver.
3. **4-Way STOP** had been raised a number of times within responses to the initial consultation. The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) prohibit the use of STOP or GIVE WAY signs on all

approaches to a junction, as this would cause uncertainty as to which vehicles had priority. The TSRGD is an act of parliament and something that we are unable to change therefore we are unable to promote this option.

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 may be lengthy and expensive. This option should remain a consideration depending upon the success of the change in priorities.
5. **A mini roundabout at the junction** was raised in a number of replies to the consultation. Unfortunately this is not a viable option as it requires drivers to give way slightly further back from the junction that currently worsening visibility for drivers. This option offers no obvious benefit and may only worsen safety at this junction.
6. **Remove the central hatch on Albert Road and push the stop line on the west side of Highmoor Road further into the junction.** There was not a lot of call for this within the recent consultation responses. Although, this has been raised by a couple of residents and also CADRA previously. 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.

This option can remain a consideration as a part of the change of priorities and on-going monitoring of the junction.

7. **Traffic calming measures on Albert Road** to slow speed of drivers travelling north/south. Many of the responses to the consultation raised speeds on Albert Road and this is perceived to be a safety issue that needs addressing. Although, there was a real mix of responses in how to slow drivers on Albert Road with some support for traffic calming and others for a 20mph limit only. Specifically the introduction of road humps received a divided response. Some respondents strongly support the use of road humps whilst others strongly oppose such measures. Other physical measures such as build-outs and chicanes require a regular and even flow in both directions to be effective. The traffic flows on both Highmoor Road and Albert Road are relatively light and tend to be quite tidal. Such traffic conditions do not benefit from build-outs and chicanes so it is

unlikely that speeds will be reduced to the extent that will improve safety at the junction. Some on-street parking does exist within Albert Road creating natural chicanes from time to time and yet despite this the accident problem exists at the junction. Should we choose to use physical traffic calming measures we would typically promote speed cushions as both Highmoor Road and Albert Road are bus routes. Speed cushions are designed to improve the ride for public transport passengers and emergency services. However, with larger cars and wider wheel bases now typical speed cushions are arguably become less effective. Whilst speed within Albert Road received a significant number of comments it does not solve the main cause of the accidents at the junction. Slowing vehicle speeds on Albert Road may reduce the severity of the accident but may not reduce the number of accidents occurring. Sinusoidal humps were raised a few times as a solution for dealing with Albert Road vehicle speed. The sinusoidal profile is similar to that of a round-top hump but has a radiused initial rise. They were found to be just as effective at reducing vehicle speeds as the conventional humps, but were far more comfortable to cycle over. As the accidents are specific to vehicles crossing from Highmoor Road west side to east side promoting a much wider traffic calming scheme is much more difficult to demonstrate best value.

8. **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 gain support and we should expect a similar reaction to any closure to that already received. Furthermore, this option would not solve the visibility problems that currently exist. This is not an option that should remain a consideration.
9. **Close Albert Road northbound 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. This is similar to the closure already promoted and likely to receive the same response. This is not an option that should remain a consideration.
10. **Use of a Mirror at the junction.** Mirrors are not an approved road sign and are not available of use without specific central government approval. We are required to demonstrate that we have tried other options before applying for approval to use a mirror. Mirrors are restricted on road safety grounds as it is very difficult to judge vehicle speed in a reflection. This is not an option that should remain a consideration.