

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	16 JUNE 2021		
TITLE:	THE HEIGHTS SCHOOL: RESULTS OF STATUTORY CONSULTATION		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT
SERVICE:	TRANSPORT	WARDS:	MAPLEDURHAM
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides the results of the statutory consultations undertaken for the proposals to install a new zebra crossing and 'School Keep Clear' restrictions to support The Heights School, Upper Woodcote Road.
- 1.2 Officers recommend that the Sub-Committee agrees to the implementation of these measures, as advertised. Members are asked to consider the contents of this report and the representations in response to the consultations and decide whether or not these measures may proceed to implementation.
- 1.3 Background and detail of these proposals are included in the report.
- 1.4 Appendix 1 - Drawing to show the proposed School Keep Clear restriction
Appendix 2 - Feedback to the statutory consultation for the proposed School Keep Clear restriction
Appendix 3 - Drawing to show the proposed zebra crossing
Appendix 4 - Feedback to the statutory consultation for the proposed zebra crossing

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Sub-Committee notes the report.

- 2.2 That the Sub-Committee reviews the consultation feedback in Appendix 4, alongside the officer recommendations in this report, and agrees whether the zebra crossing can be implemented as advertised, or not implemented.
- 2.3 That the Sub-Committee reviews the consultation feedback in Appendix 2, alongside the officer recommendations in this report, and agrees whether 'School Keep Clear' restriction can be implemented as advertised, or not implemented.
- 2.4 That the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to seal the resultant Traffic Regulation Order for the 'School Keep Clear' restriction, subject to the outcome of action 2.3.
- 2.5 That no public enquiry be held into the proposals.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The proposals align with the principles of the Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP), Local Cycling, Walking and Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and the priorities set out in the Council's Corporate Plan.

4. BACKGROUND AND PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The development of The Heights School proposal at Mapledurham Playing Fields is currently progressing towards occupation later this year with some Highway alteration works having already been delivered.

As part of this development a zebra crossing on the A4074 Upper Woodcote Road was secured through the S106 Agreement with the detailed design also providing for school keep clear markings to protect the immediate vicinity around the school entrance from potentially obstructive parking.

- 4.2 The implementation of these measures requires the Council to undertake statutory consultations in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

It would be standard practice to request the commencement of consultations of this nature through Traffic Management Sub-Committee. However, a number of factors have resulted in this not having been possible for March's meeting of the Sub-Committee and there was an urgency to ensure the best possible chance of delivering these measures, subject to agreement, as close as possible to the forecast opening date for the school.

- 4.3 With joint agreement between the Ward Councillor, appropriate portfolio holders, the Sub-Committee chair and Officers within Legal Services, Committee Services and Transport, statutory consultations were undertaken between 13th May 2021 and 4th June 2021 inclusive.
- 4.4 This report, therefore, provides the results of these statutory consultations and the detailed background to ensure that members are fully informed prior to taking their decision on implementation.

Drawings for the proposals can be found in Appendix 1 and 3.

Feedback to the proposals, submitted in response to the statutory consultations, can be found in Appendix 2 and 4.

- 4.5 Sub-Committee members are being asked to agree whether the proposed zebra crossing and the 'School Keep Clear' restrictions can be implemented as advertised.

Detailed Background

- 4.6 The proposed development of The Heights School at Mapledurham Playing Fields received permission on 14th August 2018 with a variation to this application granted on 25th February 2019.

The provision of the zebra crossing is to aid the movement of pedestrians to and from the school over the A4074 Upper Woodcote Road so as to promote the use of alternative modes to the private car and alleviate traffic congestion around the school. The zebra crossing was proposed in this as it would serve those children living north of the school that would travel via Woodcote Way and beyond and includes a large proportion of the school catchment. Although the catchment includes areas to the west including Gurney Close and Crispin Close the pedestrian movement generated by these areas would not be as intensive and therefore those persons could utilise the pedestrian refuge island to the west of the school entrance on Upper Woodcote Road, which is also be delivered as part of this development. The principle of this was agreed at the planning application stage.

- 4.7 Members are also asked to note that there has been a longstanding item on the 'Requests for Traffic Management Measures' list (reported to this Sub-Committee twice annually) requesting pedestrian crossing facilities for Upper Woodcote Road. Mapledurham playing fields also attracts visitors for sports and leisure purposes and the implementation of this zebra crossing supports this longstanding request for Highway improvements and may reduce visits made by motor vehicle.

- 4.8 Post-planning the applicant has entered into a Section 278 Highway Works Agreement with the Council to undertake various works on the Highway that include the provision of the school keep clear restriction and the zebra crossing.

The proposed zebra crossing is located outside 142 Upper Woodcote Road 14.6m west of the centre of Knowle Close and all issues identified by the Road Safety Audit have been addressed by the developer by way of updated revisions to the scheme. Isolated street lighting is proposed to ensure the crossing is adequately lit through the night with back shields provided to ensure that light spillage into the adjacent properties does not occur.

- 4.9 The school keep clear restriction commences 9m west from the centre of the Upper Woodcote Road / Little Woodcote Way junction and extends for a distance of 37m west across the face of the access to Mapledurham Playing Fields and the School concluded to the frontage of 131 Upper Woodcote Road.

This School Keep Clear restriction will prevent vehicles from stopping between the hours of 8am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 This proposal supports the aims and objectives of the Local Transport Plan and contributes to the Council's priorities, as set out below:
- Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe
 - Ensuring the Council is fit for the future

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 6.2 The placement of controlled crossings, particularly near to higher footfall areas, should have a positive effect to the perception of safety. These features could have a positive impact on chosen transport modes, with a hoped increase in walking and cycling, alongside a reduction in car journeys.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 7.1 Statutory consultation has been conducted in accordance with appropriate legislation. Separate Notices for both the intended zebra crossing and 'School Keep Clear' restriction have been published in the printed press, placed on site and have been available on the Council's website, where the consultation was hosted.

7.2 Persons that have provided feedback to the consultations, and have offered contact details, will be provided with the outcome of the Sub-Committee's decision following the publication of the agreed meeting minutes.

7.3 Sealed Traffic Regulation Orders will be published in the printed press.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Resultant Traffic Regulation Orders will be sealed and published in the printed press in line with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

9. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1 In addition to the Human Rights Act 1998 the Council is required to comply with the Equalities Act 2010. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:-

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

9.2 The Council does not consider that the proposals will be discriminatory to any groups with protected characteristics. Statutory consultations provide opportunities for objections/support/concerns to be raised and considered prior to a decision being made on whether to implement a scheme.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Funding for the statutory consultation comes from monies secured through the Section 278 Highways Agreement dated 3rd February 2021.

10.2 The implementation of the School Keep Clear restriction and the zebra crossing will be undertaken by the developer by way of the Section 278 Agreement.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 Requests for Traffic Management Measures (Traffic Management Sub-Committee, March 2021).