

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

<b>TO:</b>	<b>TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE</b>		
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>10 NOVEMBER 2022</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	
<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>PETITION - REQUEST FOR CONTROLLED PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS AT JUNCTION OF HENLEY ROAD/PEPPARD ROAD/WESTFIELD ROAD/PROSPECT STREET</b>		
<b>LEAD COUNCILLOR:</b>	<b>TONY PAGE</b>	<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	<b>CLIMATE STRATEGY AND TRANSPORT</b>
<b>SERVICE:</b>	<b>HIGHWAYS &amp; TRAFFIC SERVICES</b>	<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>CAVERSHAM</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>JIM CHEN</b>	<b>TEL:</b>	<b>0118 937 2198</b>
<b>JOB TITLE:</b>	<b>ASSISTANT ENGINEER</b>	<b>E-MAIL:</b>	<b><a href="mailto:NETWORK.MANAGEMENT@READING.GOV.UK">NETWORK.MANAGEMENT@READING.GOV.UK</a></b>

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To report to the Sub-Committee the receipt of a petition requesting the Council to install pedestrian crossing facilities at the locally named 'Last Crumb' junction (the junction of Henley Road, Prospect Street, Peppard Road and Westfield Road). The petition contained the results of a survey with 1341 responses.
- 1.2 A request for controlled crossing facilities at this junction is already contained within the 'Requests for Traffic Management Measures' that is regularly reported to this Sub-Committee. This report recommends the entry on this list is updated to reflect the receipt of this petition and of recent officer correspondence on this request.
- 1.3 Appendix 1 - Officer summary of the survey results.  
Appendix 2 - Comments received in the survey.  
Appendix 3 - Indicative potential location for a pedestrian refuge island, as has been suggested.

#### 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Sub-Committee notes the content of this report.
- 2.2 That the petition request remains within the 'Requests for Traffic Management Measures' report, but is updated to reflect the receipt of this petition and additional options raised during officer correspondence.

- 2.4 That the lead petitioner be informed of the decisions of the Sub-Committee, following publication of the agreed minutes of the meeting.
- 2.4 That no public inquiry be held into the proposals.

### 3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Requests for new measures would need to be considered alongside the Borough Council's Traffic Management Policies and Standards and Strategic Aims, the Local Transport Plan (LTP), and Local Cycling, Walking and Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). Removing potential barriers to walking will support the Council's Climate Emergency Strategy and Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

### 4. THE PROPOSAL

#### Current Position

- 4.1 On 13<sup>th</sup> October 2022, a petition was submitted to the Council containing results of a survey conducted by MP Matt Rodda with 1341 responses from residents and which followed meetings with Ward Councillors and residents. The petition stated the following:

*Please accept this email as a formal petition to the Council to install a pedestrian crossing at the Last Crumb junction. Matt Rodda will be emailing you the results of the recently completed survey which I understand can be accepted instead of signature.*

- 4.2 Appendix 1 provides a summary of the responses, with Appendix 2 providing the written comments that were submitted. A total of 1244 respondents expressed that they are in favour of a pedestrian crossing at the 'Last Crumb' junction.
- 4.3 The Council has previously received a petition requesting the installation of controlled pedestrian crossing facilities at the 'Last Crumb' junction. The petition was reported to the Traffic Management Sub-Committee in November 2017 and a subsequent update report to the Sub-Committee in January 2018.

At the time of the update report in 2018, the Sub-Committee agreed to add the request of pedestrian crossing facilities to Council's regularly reported 'Requests for Traffic Management Measures' list. This report informs the Sub-Committee of requests for traffic management measures that have been raised, where there is no identified funding for scheme development.

This report is a useful source for the Council when considering options for funding allocation through, for example, local 15% Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds. Many schemes that originated from this list have been delivered and continue to be developed following funding allocations.

- 4.4 It was acknowledged that the 'Last Crumb' junction is a very traffic sensitive junction, and the implementation of pedestrian facility within a traffic signal-controlled junction will reduce traffic flow and potential capacity, depending on the eventual solution. While this should not necessarily be a barrier to the delivery of such a change, given the benefits that the change would bring, it

will be important to understand the potential impact and that this is a consideration - there are comments in the survey results that suggest a level of local concern about this impact. Officers recommended that traffic impact modelling should be a part of the scheme development, once funding is identified.

- 4.5 The most challenging aspect of this request is the funding that would be required. There is currently no identified funding to develop and deliver pedestrian enhancements at this junction.

In addition to the professional survey, modelling and design work required, it is very likely that the junction would require a complete technology and hardware refresh for the traffic signal equipment and much of the cable ducting will likely need to be excavated and replaced. Factoring in the other civils works, professional programming of the traffic signal control equipment and the temporary traffic management that will be required for the work, it is expected that the costs would be in excess of £250,000. Unfortunately, this is very indicative, as the true extent of the works won't be fully known until the initial survey work is conducted.

The above assumes that the crossing facilities would be deliverable with the current layout, the narrow footways being an initial concern to officers. There could be additional engineering works necessary to alter the layout of the junction in order to provide these facilities.

- 4.6 Officers have received an increased level of correspondence regarding this junction in recent months and some alternative/interim suggestions have been put forward.

4.6.1 There has been suggestion of installing controlled crossings away from the main junction, to reduce the traffic impact.

The main cause of additional traffic impact will be the necessity of a relatively lengthy 'all-red' phase that will be required to enable pedestrians to cross, which will be demand-based and activated by pedestrian push-buttons. Unless the pedestrian facility was set a significant distance away from the junction, there would remain a necessity for it to be linked to the junction in some way and will still have an impact on traffic flow. It may also add to the costs of the work, due to the extended ducting and cabling required, although the use instead of zebra crossing facilities could mitigate this element.

There are feasibility issues on Peppard Road, as the eastern footway is raised significantly from carriageway level and sits behind a retaining structure until close to the junction.

Ultimately, however, the pedestrian desire-lines for crossing the road will inevitably be at the junction and any facilities that are provided a reasonable distance away (for example, 20m) will see significantly less use.

4.6.2 There has been suggestion of installing a pedestrian refuge island on the Henley Road approach.

It seems feasible that such an island could be installed at this location, however it would be in place of the existing right turning lane. This would provide pedestrians an opportunity to cross this relatively wide approach in two parts.

For ease of reference, Appendix 3 indicates the potential location of this facility.

The removal of the right turning lane will cause some traffic delays for the westbound (Henley Road) approach, as the junction capacity will be reduced and all traffic will be using a single lane. At busier times of the day, this will mean that those wishing to turn right onto Peppard Road will be mixed with those heading to/through Caversham Centre.

While the development and delivery of this proposal would be at a lower cost relative to the addition of controlled facilities across the junction, it would deliver a relatively small benefit overall. It would provide no controlled facilities and would not improve pedestrian crossings on the other approaches. It could be considered as a potential interim solution (subject to funding being identified) and could also become part of the eventual junction redesign.

- 4.7 Through this petition and officer correspondence, references have been made to the safety of the junction. While it is acknowledged and accepted that users may have safety concerns, Highway safety is based on casualty evidence. The Police supply confidential data to the Council regarding incidents that occur on the Highway involving casualties. This summarised data provides the initial findings and suspected causes of such incidents, which can be useful in identifying any patterns that could be ‘treated’ by reasonable engineering solutions.

The aforementioned ‘Requests for Traffic Management Measures’ report contains high-level summary of this data for each entry on the list. The report shows two incidents involving casualties in the latest three-year period (up to August 2021). Reviewing this further, there are two incidents within the latest 60-month period (up to June 2022).

#### Options Proposed

- 4.8 There is currently no allocated funding for the development and delivery of the requested changes. However, it is acknowledged and understandable that there is a high demand for controlled pedestrian facilities at the junction.

It is recommended that the content of this report is summarised within the ‘Requests for Traffic Management Measures’ entry that already exists for this element. The entry will therefore reflect this additional petition and reference the additional ideas that have been put forward to officers since receipt of the original petition.

#### Other Options Considered

- 4.9 None at this time, as there is regrettably no identified funding to develop or deliver pedestrian crossing enhancements at this junction.

## **5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

- 5.1 The recommendation of this report does not directly delivery changes. However, the addition of controlled pedestrian crossing facilities at this junction would contribute to the following Corporate Plan Theme:

### **Healthy environment**

The implementation of controlled pedestrian crossing facilities would remove barriers to walking, encouraging people to make more healthy and sustainable transport choices. This will contribute toward the Council's goal of making the town carbon neutral by 2030, through reducing emissions by private vehicle use.

- 5.2 Full details of the Council's Corporate plan are available on the website and include information on the projects which will deliver these priorities.

## **6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 6.2 The proposals contained in this report proposes no change, so a Climate Impact Assessment has not been considered necessary. Once funding is available to deliver enhancements at this junction, an Impact Assessment will be undertaken.

## **7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

- 7.1 The lead petitioner will be informed of the decision of the Sub-Committee regarding the request that they have made, following publication of the meeting minutes.
- 7.2 Officers have considered feedback received in the petition, and arising from correspondence, which has formed a basis of the report recommendation.
- 7.3 Meeting reports and minutes are published on the Council's website and Traffic Management Sub-Committee is a public meeting that can be attended. Recordings of the meetings are also available via the Council's website ([www.reading.gov.uk](http://www.reading.gov.uk)).

## **8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, 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.

- 8.2 It is not considered that an Equality Impact Assessment is relevant at this time as the report recommendation does not directly lead to any physical change. Assessment will be considered once funding for development and delivery of a scheme is identified.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no foreseen legal implications relating to the recommendation of this report.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

None arising from the recommendations of this report.

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 Requests for Traffic Management Measures (last updated at Traffic Management Sub-Committee, March 2022)
- 11.2 Pedestrian crossing petitions update (Traffic Management Sub-Committee, January 2018)