

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	14 NOVEMBER 2019	AGENDA ITEM:	5
TITLE:	RESPONSE TO PETITION REQUESTING REINSTATEMENT OF PELICAN CROSSING ON WOKINGHAM ROAD		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	TONY PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT
SERVICE:	TRANSPORTATION SERVICES	WARDS:	PARK & REDLANDS
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report is in response to a petition, submitted to Traffic Management Sub-Committee on 11th September, requesting the reinstatement of a pelican crossing on Wokingham Road near Palmer Park.
- 1.2 Appendix A - Wokingham Road Parallel Crossing - Photos

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Sub-Committee notes the report.
- 2.2 That the lead petitioner be informed accordingly.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 National Cycle Network Route NCN 422 is a recognised scheme in 'The Cycle Strategy 2014: Bridging Gaps, Overcoming Barriers & Promoting Safer Cycling', which is a sub-strategy to the Local Transport Plan.
- 3.2 The NCN 422 scheme is also included within the Council's Corporate Plan 2018-21 and Thames Valley Berkshire LEP's Strategic Economic Plan 2016-21.

4. THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 A petition, containing 194 signatures, was submitted to Traffic Management Sub-Committee on 11th September 2019 requesting the reinstatement of the pelican crossing on Wokingham Road between St Bartholomews Avenue and Palmer Park Avenue.
- 4.2 The wording of the petition reads: *'The zebra crossing you have recently installed on the Wokingham Road is more dangerous than the pelican crossing it replaced. This crossing is used by many children and it is too easy for a pedestrian/cyclist to go straight across the island when traffic has not stopped in the other direction. There have been many cases already where traffic has not stopped - even when pedestrians are part-way across the crossing (going towards the park). Also - buses may stop in the North-bound bus-lane but traffic in the adjacent North-bound lane may not (this has happened already). Please reinstate a pelican crossing as soon as possible before there is an accident'*.
- 4.3 The pelican crossing was replaced with a parallel pedestrian and cycle crossing as part of the cross-boundary cycle scheme NCN 422, funded by Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership.
- 4.4 As part of the NCN scheme, the existing shared-use facility along London Road to Cemetery Junction was extended to Palmer Park Avenue via the crossing facility to the east of St Bartholomews Avenue. It was necessary to make changes to the pelican crossing to enable cyclists using the extended shared-use facility to legally cross between the adjacent footways and Palmer Park. It was therefore proposed to change the crossing to a parallel pedestrian and cycle crossing, giving non-motorised users greater priority when crossing due to reduced waiting times and removing the staggered island.
- 4.5 A combined Stage 1 and 2 road safety audit was undertaken, by an independent road safety expert, as part of the design process in January 2018, and did not highlight any concerns regarding the proposed design of the parallel pedestrian and cycle facility.
- 4.6 Approval to advertise the conversion of the pelican crossing to a parallel pedestrian and cycle facility was subsequently sought and granted by Traffic Management Sub-Committee in March 2018.
- 4.7 Consultation was undertaken with Ward Councillors during the design process, including a site meeting with a Park Ward Councillor in December 2018, and no concerns were raised about changes to the crossing. Full scheme and spend approval was subsequently sought

and granted by Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee in November 2018.

- 4.8 As required under the Highways Act, Notices of Intention were subsequently displayed on-site from 21st March 2019 for 21 days as part of the statutory consultation with the emergency services. Our intention to convert the crossing was also advertised in the local press. No objections were received in response to the consultation with the emergency services.
- 4.9 The pelican crossing was subsequently converted to a parallel pedestrian and cycle facility, between April and July 2019, by our in-house Highways team.
- 4.10 The Council received fifteen complaints regarding the conversion of the crossing from May 2019, which led to a desktop review of similar facilities consisting of a two-lane approach. This also led to additional signage being installed on approach to the crossing warning drivers of the new layout.
- 4.11 As required by the Highways Act, a further road safety audit (Stage 3) was undertaken on the crossing, by independent assessors, in July 2019, and attended by Thames Valley Police and Council Officers. The audit was conducted over three separate dates and consisted of daytime and night time observations, including two observations that coincided with school pick-up times.
- 4.12 As part of the audit, the Council highlighted concerns raised by residents, including speed of vehicles approaching the crossing facility, visibility of users both on the footways and in the carriageway and vehicles not stopping to enable pedestrians and cyclists to cross.
- 4.13 Whilst the road safety audit report acknowledged that further improvements to the crossing could be made, it did not recommend any alterations to the design of the crossing at this time.
- 4.14 The recommendations set out within the road safety audit report, included the installation of tactile paving to the west of Palmer Park to alert visually impaired users of the shared path from the crossing facility to Palmer Park Avenue and the application of anti-skid to highlight the approaching parallel crossing facility. The report also suggested vegetation trimming outside the park and that ongoing observations be undertaken to record user behaviour on approach to the crossing and for those to be reported back to the auditor.

- 4.15 The recommendations highlighted in the road safety audit report and the suggested improvements outlined above, which were outside the scope of the audit, have been implemented. In addition, variable speed signs will be displayed on-site for two week periods to alert drivers of their speed on approach to the crossing, before being rotated to other sites, and redisplayed on Wokingham Road.
- 4.16 As suggested by the independent road safety experts, ongoing monitoring of the crossing is taking place, including regular observations of users approaching the crossing. These are being reported to the auditor on a termly basis.
- 4.17 Further changes to the crossing will be considered in response to observations recorded as part of ongoing monitoring of the crossing.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 This proposal supports the aims and objectives of the Local Transport Plan and helps to deliver the following Council Priorities:
- Keeping Reading's environment clean and green.
 - Ensuring the Council is fit for the future

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1 Changes to the crossing were implemented following consultation with Ward Councillors, the emergency services and local cycling representatives as set out above.
- 6.2 The lead petitioner will be informed of the findings of the Sub-Committee.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 All statutory duties have been undertaken as required by the Highways Act.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 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.

8.2 The Council carried out an equality impact assessment scoping exercise as part of the development of Phase 3 of the NCN 422 scheme. This assessment was reported to Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee in November 2018.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Our transport strategy is focused on encouraging the use of sustainable transport, walking and cycling as attractive alternatives to the private car. The Cycling Strategy 2014 sets out the benefits of cycling and our approach, including the delivery of the National Cycle Network Route NCN 422 scheme to encourage more people to cycle for local journeys or as part of multi-modal longer journeys.

9.2 Transport is the biggest greenhouse gas emitting sector in the UK accounting for around 27% of total emissions. Therefore significant investment in sustainable transport solutions, such as the delivery of the National Cycle Network scheme, is vital in order to respond to the Climate Crisis declared by the Council in February 2019 and to help achieve our target of a carbon neutral Reading by 2030.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The works described in this report have been delivered as part of the NCN 422 scheme.

10.2 Scheme and spend approval was granted by Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee on 21st November 2018.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 Traffic Management Sub-Committee, Major Transport and Highway Projects - Update, March 2018 to March 2019.

11.2 Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee, National Cycle Route NCN 422 - Phase 3, 21st November 2018.

11.3 Traffic Management Sub-Committee, National Cycle Network Route NCN 422 - Update, 12th June 2019.