

Report of the Corporate Director of Economy and Place
Portfolio of the Executive Member for Transport and Planning

PETITION FOR A FORMAL PEDESTRIAN CROSSING ON LOWTHER STREET NEAR PARK GROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Summary

1. The report acknowledges receipt of a 220 signature petition for a signalised pedestrian crossing on Lowther Street. It details previous assessments which have been undertaken at this location and seeks permission to investigate other potential improvements to this section of road for pedestrians.

Recommendations

2. The Executive Member is asked to:

- 1) Acknowledge receipt of the 220 signature petition and note the work which has previously been undertaken to assess whether this site is suitable for formal pedestrian crossing facilities and for a School Crossing Patrol.

Reason: To note the wishes of the signatories and to note work which has previously been undertaken by officers to assess the suitability of the site.

- 2) Instruct officers to investigate other potential engineering measures to improve this section of Lowther Street for pedestrians.

Reason: To assess whether other engineering options are feasible which would help pedestrians to cross the road.

Background

3. A 220 signature petition was presented by Cllr James Flinders to Full Council on 26th October 2017 on behalf of local residents. The petition was worded as follows: “We the undersigned being residents and / or users of Lowther St hereby call on City of York Council to provide in the interests of public safety a Puffin crossing (or otherwise) on Lowther St in the vicinity of Park Grove Primary School”. A scan of the front sheet of the petition, with the names blanked out, is included as Annex A to this report.
4. This site on Lowther Street at the rear entrance to Park Grove Primary School has been suggested for a formal pedestrian crossing on several occasions in the past. It has also been put forward as a potential School Crossing Patrol (SCP) site.
5. The summary report for the SCP site assessment is attached as Annex B and concludes that following the latest Road Safety GB guidelines (2016) the site does not justify the provision of a SCP.
6. Over the past decade many requests had been received by council officers for pedestrian crossing improvements at numerous sites across the City of York administrative area. For many years there had been no specific budget to deal with pedestrian crossings and as such improvements tended to be delivered as part of other work-streams such as school safety zones, safe routes to school, local safety schemes and danger reduction schemes. In 2016 a budget was secured in the Transport Capital Programme to specifically tackle this backlog of requests.
7. The site on Lowther Street where the rear access into Park Grove Primary School is located was one of 75 sites where requests for pedestrian crossing improvements had been received.
8. A new methodology for evaluating and prioritising pedestrian crossing requests was agreed at Executive Member Decision Session in August 2016. The report put forward a multi-stage approach for tackling the backlog of requests.
 - Stage 1 – A desktop review of the list of sites by a panel of relevant council officers to identify sites which would have the highest benefit and to also identify which sites could be tackled under other work-streams
 - Stage 2 – Undertake surveys and in-depth evaluation on the top few sites identified during Stage 1, prioritise this shortlist and get the necessary approvals for future delivery

- Stage 3 – Undertake design work and consultations prior to delivering the feasible schemes on the ground
 - Stage 4 – Roll the process forward to future financial years to evaluate future scheme requests and consider those sites which weren't successful in the first round of evaluation
9. The list of sites was put through Stage 1 as above and Lowther Street was deemed at that point to be unsuitable for a formal pedestrian crossing. There were several reasons behind this decision
- The relatively low number of pedestrians who would use the crossing and the tidal nature of the pedestrian flow at school start and finish time meaning any crossing would be virtually unused over the remainder of the day.
 - The narrowness of the road in the suggested location, the relatively low speed of traffic and one-way flow of traffic meaning pedestrians only have to look in one direction.
 - The fact that if the PV^2 value (see Annex B) was insufficient to justify a SCP then even with the modified adjustment factors approved in August 2016 it would not be high enough to justify provision of a formal crossing where the threshold is 25 times higher.
10. Lowther Street was, however, suggested as being a site that could be improved using other work-streams. No detailed survey work or in-depth evaluation has been undertaken on the site thus far.

Consultation

11. The Planning & Transport representatives of each political party and the Guildhall Ward members have been consulted on the content of this report, their comments are listed below.
12. Cllr. Janet Looker (Guildhall Ward Member) - The principal issue at Lowther St. is the fact that although the traffic does indeed move quite slowly, because it is almost continuous it is very difficult for a number of groups of pedestrians to cross the road easily. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that there is parking along most of the street. To cross the road in a wheelchair, or with a pram/pushchair, one has to move out between the parked cars to get a good sightline for a safe crossing moment. This can mean that one is having to leave the pavement, and stand between parked cars which can put parents with pushchairs, and wheelchair users in a very vulnerable position.

13. So I would strongly support Option 1 in the report. Residents have wondered if putting a Keep Clear sign at certain road junctions might have the additional value of allowing pedestrians a clear space at which to organise their crossing options. As I have said it is not the speed of the traffic, but the fact that it seems to move through the street almost continuously and therefore hampers pedestrians from feeling they have a safe area in which to cross the road.
14. Cllr. Denise Craghill (Guildhall Ward Member) - I would also support further investigation as indicated by Option 1. Although the petition refers specifically to the area outside the school the problem with the use of this road as a major traffic cut through is along the whole length of the road and applies generally for residents throughout the day as well as for children and families at school times.
15. Average traffic speeds are not really relevant – at relatively quieter times speed can be a problem but mainly it is the constant flow of traffic which makes it very difficult to cross and means pedestrians have to wait a very long time to find a gap in the traffic. Parked cars as Cllr Looker mentioned don't make this any easier. This is a residential area with a major part of the city's traffic directed through it by the design of the junction at Haxby Rd/Wigginton Rd/Clarence Street. Clearly by the number who have signed the petition there is considerable concern about this road.
16. Ward councillors have asked for 'Keep Clear' signs at intervals on the road to be investigated as part of the ward highways programme (and as a partial solution supported by the Residents Association) but little progress has been made on this so far.
17. I am glad the paper makes reference to the HCA Groves Regeneration work currently underway. I think ward councillors agree that this is an opportunity to look more fundamentally at the impact of this constant stream of traffic (one way along Lowther Street being the most serious problem) but also in the other direction along Penley's Grove Street/Townend Street on the quality of life in the Groves.
18. An early draft of this work supports the fact that traffic and movement come high on the list of resident concerns in the Groves and suggests

that 'there is nowhere really safe to cross' and that all options should be considered.

19. Personally I would like to see us get on with implementing some 'Keep Clear' signs as an interim measure whilst also looking at more substantial changes such as re-routing a large proportion of traffic from this side of the city away from these residential streets.
20. Cllr. James Flinders (Guildhall Ward Member) – expressed concerns about the lateness of the Member consultation and that this gave him very little time to consult residents. The report author has pointed out that residents will have to opportunity to voice their comments at the Decision Session meeting itself.
21. Cllr. Mark Warters (Independent) - It seems apparent that the concerns regarding crossing of the road are more related to the volumes of traffic using the roads through the Groves area rather than actual vehicle speeds.
22. Such concerns can be applied to many residential roads throughout York and these concerns will only get more pronounced as the huge expansion of York, the region and the whole U.K. takes place.
23. About time there was some honesty from all concerned as to the reasons behind the rapid overdevelopment of the U.K.
24. In this specific case as traffic volumes create slow speeds and indeed stationary traffic at long periods of the day additional crossing measures should not be necessary.
25. I am intrigued though as to just where this traffic will go (onto someone else's residential street!) if "re-routing" of this traffic ever took place.

Options

26. There are a few options open to the Executive Member:

- Option 1 (Recommended Option) – Put this site forward for investigation of other engineering measures to improve the situation for pedestrians wishing to cross
- Option 2 – Leave the site as it is
- Option 3 – Put the site through the stage 2 full pedestrian crossing evaluation process as detailed above in paragraph 8

Analysis

27. Option 1 (Recommended Option): The main advantage of this option is that alternative measures will be investigated which may help pedestrians to cross at this location without the need to install the requested formal pedestrian crossing. The main disadvantage is that the petitioners won't get the type of crossing they have requested and investigations may determine that there are no measures which could be introduced to help pedestrians cross at the site. There will also be a cost associated with the feasibility work and any subsequent installation of measures. The additional review work would also compliment the current Groves Regeneration scheme being undertaken by the Housing team.
28. Option 2: The advantages to this option would be the Transport Projects team could continue to work on higher priority schemes. The obvious disadvantage of this option is that there would be no improvement to the site and the issue highlighted in the petition would still be present.
29. Option 3: The only advantage of this option would be to undertake further work to demonstrate that a crossing increased overall risk at the site. The disadvantage would be additional work with no potential scheme at the end of the process and the costs of undertaking the assessment and surveys.

Council Plan

30. The recommendations of this report contribute to the 3 priorities in the Council Plan as follows:

31. A prosperous city for all

- *Efficient and affordable transport links enable residents and businesses to access key services and opportunities* – the access

route to the school from the direction of The Groves will be improved. This will encourage more people to walk which is the most affordable mode of transport.

- *Environmental Sustainability underpins everything we do* – walking is the most sustainable form of transport and has the least impact on the environment.

32. A focus on frontline services

- *All York's residents live and thrive in a city which allows them to contribute fully to their communities and neighbourhoods* – improved links for pedestrians, especially near schools and other community facilities help residents to get the most out of the area in which they live and study.
- *All children and adults are listened to, and their opinions considered* – the crossing request has been submitted primarily by parents of children attending Park Grove School, by considering the petition and suggesting a way forward we are listening to their views.
- *Everyone has access to opportunities regardless of their background* – walking is a form of transport which is accessible irrespective of one's background.
- *Every child has the opportunity to get the best possible start in life* – walking to school has multiple benefits to children both in terms of health and social cohesion
- *Residents are encouraged and supported to live healthily* – walking is the one of the healthiest forms of transport.
- *Residents are protected from harm, with a low risk of crime* – pedestrian crossing improvements will help children and adults reduce crossing risk and may help better enforce speed limits along this section of road.

33. A council that listens to residents

- *Focus on the delivery of frontline services for residents and the protection of community facilities* – the recommendations show a willingness to help children access education safely and residents to access community facilities more easily.
- *Focus on cost and efficiency to make the right decisions in a challenging financial environment* – the alternative solutions which will be investigated may deliver the same solutions in a more cost-effective manner.

Implications

34. The implications of the measures recommended in the report are listed below

- **Financial** – There will be costs associated with the investigation of measures and any subsequent engineering works. These will be accommodated from existing CYC Transport Capital Programme budgets
- **Human Resources (HR)** - There are no HR implications
- **One Planet Council / Equalities** – Pedestrian crossing improvements will help groups who may currently struggle to get across Lowther Street at this location. Encouragement of residents to walk will help contribute towards the council's sustainability goals.
- **Legal** – There are no legal implications
- **Crime and Disorder** – There are no Crime & Disorder implications
- **Information Technology (IT)** – There are no IT implications
- **Property** – There are no Property implications

Risk Management

21. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy, no significant risks associated with the recommendations in this report have been identified.

Contact Details

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Report **Date** 22.12.17
Approved

Wards Affected: Guildhall

All tick

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

EMDS Report – Pedestrian Crossing Request Evaluation and Prioritisation Methodology, 11 August 2016.

Annexes

Annex A – Front Cover of Petition

Annex B – School Crossing Patrol Assessment for Lowther Street

List of Abbreviations Used in this Report

SCP – School Crossing Patrol

GB – Great Britain

EMDS – Executive Member Decision Session