
Meeting of Executive Members for City Strategy and Advisory Panel

06 June 2007

Report of the Director of City Strategy

Petition for measures to improve road safety on Holgate Road near the Watson Street junction.

Summary

1. This report advises Members of the receipt of a petition from St Paul's C of E Primary School, seeking the reinstatement of a 'School Crossing Patrol' (currently vacant), enforcement of road traffic regulations and traffic calming measures on Holgate Road.

Background

2. The petition was presented to the Council in April 2007, and contains signatures from 369 people. The front page of the petition is attached in **Annex A**.
3. A plan showing the area in question is included in **Annex B**. The existing pelican crossing on Holgate Road has been in place for many years, but has been the source of many complaints and concerns, particularly over the safety of school children. These concerns have been heightened due to the absence of a School Crossing Patrol (SCP) at the Pelican. This post has been vacant for around two years.
4. At the beginning of December 2006, an incident occurred at the crossing involving a vehicle and young boy. This prompted the road safety concerns for children on their journey to and from school to be raised again by parents, governors, the local councillor and MP. Several letters were subsequently received expressing concerns about the lack of a School Crossing Patrol.
5. The main safety concern occurs when the pelican crossing becomes blocked by queuing vehicles. Although drivers should keep the crossing clear at all times, this does not always happen. This can result in children crossing between queuing vehicles whilst the green man is displayed. There is then a risk that a driver waiting on the Pelican sees the queue ahead begin to move forward and follows suit without being aware that people are trying to cross the road directly in front of their vehicle. Many people feel that the best way deterring drivers from queuing over the crossing, or at least guiding children across safely when this happens, would be to have a School Crossing Patrol in attendance.
6. Officers from City Strategy, being responsible for road safety matters, and Learning, Culture and Children's Services (LCCS), being responsible for the

School Crossing Patrol Service, subsequently met to discuss the situation. Officers from LCCS confirmed that the site has been vacant for a long time, but has not been considered a high priority for a replacement to be recruited because there is a Pelican crossing present to assist children in crossing the road. However, given the current level of concern, it was agreed that LCCS should undertake a detailed assessment of both the public usage of the crossing and an assessment of traffic (type, volume, speed) with a view to determining if a SCP is justified under current criteria. Because of the local effects on traffic and pedestrian movements due to the on-going road works at Holgate Bridge, it was agreed that this assessment would need to be done after these works are completed (probably in late May).

7. The Speed Management Plan for York, adopted in 1997, sets a framework for speed management measures. The aim is to ensure that all road users know the speed limit and that all road users drive at or below the posted limit. Holgate Road is an arterial route in and out of the city centre and under the plan is designated as a Traffic Route. Such routes need to be kept clear of any form of vertical speed reduction measures so as to minimise possible adverse effects for emergency service and bus operations. This means traffic calming measures, such as road humps or rumble strips, could not be introduced on Holgate Road.
8. Most Road Traffic Regulations, with the exception of yellow line parking controls, require a Police Officer to enforce them. Given the level of Police resources, it is very difficult for any contraventions of regulations relating to Pelican crossing lights or zig-zag markings to be detected or acted upon by the Police. However, the presence of a School Crossing Patrol is thought to generally raise driver awareness of, and compliance with crossing facilities. The Police are also able to act on information from a SCP if details of an offending vehicle can be recorded and provided to them.

Options / Proposal

9. It would appear that the petitioners' concerns might be best addressed by the reinstatement of a School Crossing Patrol at the Holgate Road pelican crossing. Therefore Officers in LCCS propose to undertake a detailed assessment of both the public usage of the crossing and an assessment of traffic (type, volume, speed) with a view to determining if a SCP is justified under current criteria.

Analysis

10. A School Crossing Patrol on Holgate Road would offer reassurance to the school community. It would also help to keep the crossing clear at the pertinent times of the day and thereby improve pedestrian safety. However, given that there is a cost implication for operating a SCP and a need to be consistent over their deployment, LCCS wish to review this site to ensure that it would be justified. Also, it should be pointed out that there are significant problems in recruiting SCPs, and a recommendation to reinstate a SCP at this site will not guarantee that one will be in place within a set timescale.

Consultation

11. No external consultation on the proposal is considered necessary.

Corporate Priorities

12. A data led approach of assessing road safety issues and prioritising schemes meets the Council's corporate priorities to create a Safer City. It also supports the aims and objectives of the Road Safety Strategy as part of the Second Local Transport Plan.

Implications

13. There are financial implications for LCCS in the form of staff costs.
14. There are no Human Resources (HR) implications
15. There are no Equalities implications
16. There are no Legal implications
17. There are no Crime and Disorder implications
18. There are no Information Technology implications
19. There are no Property implications.

20. Risk Management

Risk Category	Impact	Likelihood	Score
Strategic	Very Low	Remote	2
Physical	Very High	Remote	5
Financial	Medium	Possible	9
Organisation/Reputation	Medium	Probable	12

21. There is likely to be opposition to a recommendation to take no action following the assessment of the site. However, the method of assessment for School Crossing Patrols should enable the council to justify when no action is deemed appropriate.

Recommendations

22. That the Advisory Panel advises the Executive Member to:
 - (i) Note the content of the petition.
 - (ii) To support the proposal for officers in LCCS to carry out a detailed assessment of the location for the provision of a SCP pelican crossing on Holgate Road, and request a report back on the outcome in due course.

Reasons: To respond to the petitioners' concerns.

Contact Details

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Report Approved

Date 24/05/07

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Specialist Implications Officer(s)

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Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex A: Scanned copy of petition (page one only, of 38 pages)

Annex B: Map of Holgate Road and pelican crossing