

**Decision Session – Executive Member for
Transport and Planning**

11 August 2016

Report of the Director of City and Environmental Services

Safe Routes to School-Sheriff Hutton Road / The Village, Strensall

Summary

1. This report details the findings of a feasibility study into pedestrian safety at the junction of The Village and Sheriff Hutton Road, Strensall. The report also includes the results of consultation on a proposal to provide a vehicle activated sign on Sheriff Hutton Road, and seeks a decision on implementing the scheme.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that the Executive Member approves:
3. Option (i) – Approve the introduction of the proposed signs (**Annex E**), along with the changes to the riverside path access (**Annex B**). Additionally approve the provision of a hatch marking to tighten the entry radius at the junction (**Annex F**).

Reason: This option provides a value for money safety scheme which aims to make crossing the road safer.

Background

4. There have been long standing concerns regarding pedestrian safety on Sheriff Hutton Road between the hump back bridge and the junction with the Village. In 2011 Robert Wilkinson Primary school completed a review of its travel plan, and crossing the road close to this particular junction was raised as an issue. In response to these concerns a feasibility study was carried out by City of York Council and minor alterations made to the existing dropped crossing point at the junction.

5. On 5 November 2014 an accompanied child was involved in an accident on Sheriff Hutton Road close to the junction resulting in a minor injury. Following the accident a petition was received by City of York Council in December 2014 which stated:

“We the undersigned, as residents of Strensall, call upon City of York Council (CYC) to put measures in place to protect children crossing the junction of ‘Sheriff Hutton Road’ and ‘The Village’ before a further accident occurs.”

6. The petition was presented to the Cabinet Member on 19 February 2015. At the meeting it was resolved that the Cabinet Member:
 - i) Instruct Officers to undertake an update of the feasibility study carried out in 2011.
 - ii) Instruct Officers to hold a site meeting with representatives of the local community.

Feasibility Report

7. Officers met with local representatives in April 2015 which helped to shape the direction of the feasibility study. The study was added to the Safe Routes to School element of the 2015/16 Capital Programme and planned for completion by the end of March 2016.
8. The report (presented in full as **Annex A**) considered the following options for improving pedestrian safety at this location:
 - A controlled crossing – Zebra or Puffin
 - Pedestrian Refuge
 - Rumble Strips
 - Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS)
 - Guardrail

Full signalisation of the junction was not considered in any detail at this time as it was not considered to be in keeping with the village environment, and would have a significant impact on parking in the area.

9. The report also noted that the T-junction with a dropped kerb crossing arrangement is not unique and the layout of the junction

itself doesn't introduce any site specific hazards. The significant difference between this junction and other similar locations in the city is the proximity to the hump back bridge.

10. The report concluded by recommending the following options:
 - a. Introduce a pedestrian refuge to improve the existing crossing arrangement at the junction. This would require utilities diversions and a potential landtake to be successful.
Estimated cost: £60,820
 - b. Provide a permanent warning sign with an additional vehicle activated component to warn southbound drivers that they are likely to encounter pedestrians crossing the road on the other side of the bridge. Estimated cost: £5,000 (see Appendix D within Annex A)
11. To provide a cost / benefit analysis of the two options recommended in the feasibility report accident savings have been estimated and the First Year Rate of Return (FYRR) calculated for each proposal (see **Annex B** for full calcs). The predicted accident savings for the signing option is lower than the refuge scheme as there is no alteration to the crossing point itself. However the signing scheme is significantly cheaper than the refuge and still considered to offer an accident reduction at this site. The FYRR results were as follows:

Pedestrian Refuge

- Predicted accident saving in the first year 0.33 casualties
- *FYRR = 49%*

Signing option

- Predicted accident saving in the first year 0.16 casualties
- *FYRR = 292%*

This analysis demonstrates that the sign proposal also offers better value for money than the pedestrian refuge scheme although it does not address all of the concerns at the junction location. The refuge scheme would address concerns relating to traffic from all directions but has a lower value for money and is not affordable within current budgets.

12. As the vehicle activated sign option would have immediate benefit and could be delivered within existing budgets consultation has been undertaken on the detail of the location of the sign. Subject to approval the sign could be delivered soon after the decision.
13. Additionally the feasibility study identified that the existing access arrangements to the riverside path allow users to exit straight onto the carriageway close to the bridge where visibility is at its worst. The existing bollards do nothing to stop children who may have run ahead of parents walking straight out into the road. To address this problem the report proposes a new gated arrangement (shown in **Annex C**), which is designed to replace the existing bollards. Estimated cost: £4,000.

Consultation

14. A letter and plan (shown in **Annex D**) with details of the VAS option were issued to properties on Sheriff Hutton Rd along with the Parish Council, the local primary school, Ward Councillors, political party spokespersons, the emergency services and other external interest groups. A summary of the responses received is given below.
15. North Yorkshire Police (NYP)

North Yorkshire Police have objected to the erection of the VAS citing the following road safety concerns;

NYP – “The siting of the VAS is opposite the junction into the new housing development (Fossvie Close) and will not indicate to any driver emerging from the estate.”

Officer response – Local residents exiting the estate are likely to be travelling at a low speed and furthermore will be familiar with the site and the potential for pedestrians crossing south of the bridge. However, having reviewed the site the sign can be relocated to ensure that motorists emerging from Fossvie Close have sight of the sign.

NYP – “It is noted that there are no plans to erect other traditional warning signs to TSRGD, which the VAS would usually be expected to supplement.

The VAS sign will be misleading to motorists, unless it is activated only when pedestrians are crossing or in the road.

The signs intended purpose, as a VAS, is to forewarn motorists of an actual hazard not a potential hazard which may or may not be present.

Pedestrians and drivers will not be aware if the sign were to break or power supply be interrupted, leading to a danger to both pedestrians and motorists.”

Officer response – The sign is made up of two elements, a traditional retroreflective warning sign with supplementary plate to The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 (TSRGD) and a vehicle activated sign mounted beneath. As the traditional sign is visible 24/7 the issues raised by NYP are not applicable. The standard sign Diag No. 562 along with the supplementary plate ‘Pedestrians crossing’ can be used to warn of the potential for pedestrians to be crossing the road ahead.

NYP – *“The sign appears to be used as a speed management tool as it is activated by the approach speed of vehicles and the sign under TSRGD is clearly not intended for that purpose.”*

Officer response – The speed activated element of the sign is not designed as a speed management tool. Its intention is to draw the attention of any driver that is exceeding the speed limit to the warning sign.

To try and reduce speeds before the bridge an advisory 20mph speed limit plate accompanying the hump bridge warning sign is now proposed. This will help to provide a series of warnings on approach to the hazard. The advisory limit also allows the VAS part of the pedestrian crossing warning sign to be set to trigger at speeds over 20mph. The amended proposed is shown in **Annex E**.

NYP – *“The sign will rapidly be brought into disrepute, as motorists discover no pedestrians in the road and create a more dangerous situation at this location than before.”*

Officer response – It is the Officer’s opinion that drivers who regularly use the route are already aware that pedestrians cross the road to the south of the bridge. The sign acts as a notification to road users who are new to the area.

16. Strensall Parish Council (SPC)

Strensall Parish Council has not directly objected to the provision of the new sign but has made the following comments;

SPC – “The proposals only address vehicles approaching the junction from the north. The speed of vehicles turning left into Sheriff Hutton Road from The Village is dangerously fast and a danger to pedestrians attempting to cross the road.”

Officer response –The junction is designed to accommodate the large agricultural traffic which passes through the village hence the larger radii which unfortunately does allow cars to turn at a higher speed. However, recent speeds surveys recorded northbound average traffic speeds at 20mph on Sheriff Hutton Road between the junction and the bridge. Therefore, it can be assumed that most vehicles are not negotiating the junction at speeds any higher than this. As the entry radius cannot be reduced the best way to address this perceived danger is to provide an overrun strip which visually reduces the radius but allows larger vehicles to overrun it. Initially this could be formed from a hatched road markings (as shown in **Annex F**).

SPC – “To cross this junction safely traffic from three directions has to be controlled.”

Officer response – Pedestrians currently cross the road safely with only one slight casualty accident recorded in at least the last 15 years. To control traffic from all directions would require full signalisation of the junction something which is completely out of keeping with the rest of the village environment and would cause delays to traffic using the route.

SPC – “There should be a 40mph intermediate buffer zone from the 60 mph limit before entering the 30 mph limit on Sheriff Hutton Road. The 30mph limit needs to be set further back to encourage traffic to slow down on the approach (with the aforementioned 40mph buffer zone).”

Officer response – The 30mph limit gateway is positioned at the start of the built up area of the village. This is a standard position for village entry gateway as it associates the change in speed limit with a change in environment. The average recorded speed of southbound vehicles at the existing 30mph limit is 33mph, this is not considered excessive especially considering the surrounding environment at this point. A buffer zone is unlikely to change current behaviour as it makes no alteration to the road environment. The addition of an advisory 20mph limit (**Annex E**) would provide a step down before the bridge to try and slow drivers further as they approach the area where pedestrians are crossing the road.

SPC – *“The “No footway” sign is no longer relevant in its present location and needs to be re-positioned to face traffic travelling in a northerly direction.”*

Officer response – The “No footway ahead” sign was erected to warn drivers that there was no footway between New Lane and a point south of the bridge. The presence of the cemetery means pedestrians are likely to travel between there and the village and needed to walk in the road for part of this journey. As part of the Tannery development a pedestrian cycle bridge and new section of footway have been provided completing this missing link. Therefore it is proposed that the sign be taken down. It is not necessary to sign the route out of the village as having no footway as it is a rural road with no attractors for pedestrians and therefore drivers would not expect a footway to be present.

SPC – *“A flashing slow down sign on the approach to this bridge will not prevent a pedestrian fatality at the junction.”*

Officer response – The proposed sign is considered an appropriate response to the problems identified at the site, as discussed in detail in the feasibility report (**Annex A**).

17. Ward Councillors

Cllr. Doughty

“The proposed solution only seems to pay attention to traffic movement from Sheriff Hutton. It is a T junction with traffic from three directions.

The long standing will of the village is that a crossing is provided to protect pedestrians in particular. There was also previous suggestion of barriers at the junction to encourage crossing in a safer location.”

Officer Response – The additional proposals shown in **Annex F** seek to address traffic turning in from The Village but as previously explained controlling traffic from all three directions via full signalisation is not considered appropriate at this location. Consideration to guardrail was considered and discounted as part of the feasibility study (**Annex A**).

Cllr. Douglas
No response

18. Local Residents

Four residents responded to the consultation.

Three supported the introduction of the sign. Whilst the remaining respondent questioned if anything could be done to address the speed of vehicles turning into Sheriff Hutton Road and suggested that there appears to be no safe crossing point between the bridge and the junction.

Officer Response - The additional proposals shown in **Annex F** seek to address traffic turning in from The Village. The existing crossing point at the junction of Sheriff Hutton Rd and The Village is considered safe as the recorded accident took place 50 metres North of the crossing point. Detailed considerations of options for a controlled crossing are available in the feasibility study (**Annex A**).

19. Robert Wilkinson Primary Academy

The Principal of Robert Wilkinson Primary Academy responded on behalf of the school, noting that the “safety of the pupil’s in the village is paramount” and that he and the school would welcome the introduction of the sign.

20. The York Consortium of Internal Drainage Boards

The drainage board have access rights to the riverside path to perform maintenance and were consulted regarding the proposed gate arrangement. They responded to confirm that the proposals were satisfactory.

Options

21. Option (i) – Approve the introduction of the proposed signs (**Annex E**), along with the changes to the riverside path access (**Annex B**). Additionally approve the provision of a hatch marking to tighten the entry radius at the junction (**Annex F**).

Option (ii) – As option (i) but with revisions as the Executive Member deems appropriate.

Option (iii) – Do nothing, reallocate spend elsewhere.

Analysis

22. Option (i) - The proposed sign warns all southbound drivers on Sheriff Hutton Rd that they could encounter pedestrians crossing the road ahead. It also provides a secondary warning via the VAS sign to any drivers who are travelling above a set speed (to be determined). Whilst it is recognised that this option does not provide a significant upgrade to the existing pedestrian crossing arrangements south of the bridge as the Parish Council have requested, a scheme of this nature would be significantly more expensive than the sign proposal.
23. The changes to the riverside path which is currently managed by the Parish Council will ensure that small children on their way to school or into the village cannot run straight out into the carriageway. However, they will slow down some users especially anyone on a bike and can be difficult to negotiate for anyone with mobility problems.
24. The additional markings at the junction should help to slow turning traffic which was flagged as a concern by a number of respondents to the consultation.
25. Response to the consultation has generally been in support of the proposals north of the bridge. Unfortunately existing budgets mean it is not possible to address all of the concerns south of the bridge at this time. However, the alterations to the scheme which have been made in light of the comments received do round out the proposals to offer further benefits for all road users.

26. A methodology to prioritise funding to deliver pedestrian crossings following requests made by residents is due to be considered by the Executive Member at the Decision Session on 11 August. The refuge scheme could be evaluated against other requests across the city using this process.
27. Option (ii) - This option offers the Executive Member the opportunity to further consider the views of the consultees and instruct officers to review certain elements of the scheme further. However, funding for any of the requests made by the consultees, such as a fully signalised crossing, would need to be found and the spend justified against the other priorities in the capital programme. Furthermore the introduction of some of the other measures discussed in the feasibility report (**Annex A**) are not considered suitable for this location and could lead to an increase in accidents.
28. Option (iii) - The request for measures to protect children crossing Sheriff Hutton Rd was raised via a petition from local residents. The feasibility study identifies issues which need to be addressed and therefore doing nothing is considered an inappropriate response to the original request.

Council Plan

29. The potential implications for the priorities in the Council Plan are:

A Council That Listens To Residents

- The feasibility study and its recommended proposals were initiated by a petition put together by local residents, by acting on this request City of York Council demonstrates it is listening to residents. Consultation has included local residents and the Parish Council to allow a continued dialogue with the people most affected by the proposals.

Implications

30.
 - **Financial** – The Safe Routes to School allocation for the scheme in 16/17 is currently £10k. Spend to June 2016 is £4k and the estimated cost of the scheme is £10k.

To cover the increased spend it is proposed to reallocate £5k of the Safe Routes to School budget to this scheme. This will be ratified in the quarter one Capital Programme monitoring report.

- **Human Resources (HR)** - There are no HR implications.
- **Equalities** - There are no equalities implications.
- **Legal** - There are no legal implications.
- **Crime and Disorder** - There are no Crime and Disorder implications.
- **Information Technology (IT)** - There are no IT implications.
- **Property** - There are no Property implications.
- **Other** – If approved the sign would be a Highway asset and will be maintainable by CYC.

Risk Management

31. In compliance with the Council’s risk management strategy, the following risks associated with the recommendations in this report have been identified and described in the following points, and set out in the table below:
32. Authority reputation – this risk is in connection with the public perception of the Council if work is not undertaken following the receipt of a petition and the completion of a feasibility study which recommends work be carried out and is assessed at 10.

Risk Category	Impact	Likelihood	Score
Organisation/ Reputation	Minor	Probable	10

33. This risk score, falls into the 6-10 category and means the risk has been assessed as being “Low”. This level of risk requires regular monitoring. If a scheme is approved for implementation then this risk will be mitigated.

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Report Approved



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Wards Affected: Strensall



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Cabinet Member Decision Session Petition Strensall Report –
19/02/2015

<http://modgov.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=738&MId=8525&Ver=4>

Annexes

Annex A – Safer Routes to School, Feasibility Study – Sheriff Hutton Road / The Village Strensall – March 2016. (includes Appendices A, B, C and D)

Annex B – Calculation of First Year Rate of Return for Scheme Options.

Annex C - Proposed Gate arrangement for Riverside path access.

Annex D - Proposed Sign - Consultation Letter and Plan

Annex E – Revised Sign location plan

Annex F – Radius Reduction – Road Marking