
Decision Session – Cabinet Member for
Transport, Planning and Economic Development

19 February 2015

Report of the Director of City and Environment Services

1. This report is in response to a petition, received following a minor injury to an accompanied child on their journey to school on 5 November 2014.

“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.”

2. The area of concern is, Sheriff Hutton Road, from New Lane (Tannery Site) to the junction with The Village.

Summary

3. Following an accident in which a child was knocked down on 5 November 2014 an investigation was undertaken of the area of concern. This area is from New Lane, where there is a new 54 house development on the former Tannery Site, to the junction of ‘The Village’. A map and photographs of the location can be found at **Annexes A1 and A2**.
4. Looking at the accident history on this short section of road and the junction it is of note that in the last 10 years there have been no injury accidents, at this location, other than the accident on 5 November 2014, classed as a ‘slight’.
5. Requests for improvement to this area of the public highway and in particular calls for a School Crossing Patroller (SCP) to work in this location were previously investigated in 2008 and 2011.
6. The investigations have highlighted two main desire lines (A&B) for crossing Sheriff Hutton Road in the village, and this report will look

at each of the desire lines, in terms of issues before concluding with possible solutions:-

- A. End of the pedestrian path which leads from “The Brecks” and exits on Sheriff Hutton Road, (marked on **Annex A1**, as *path A*) is currently a desire line for crossing the road on the way to school.
- B. The mouth of the junction, where people cross in both directions. This is a possible desire line on the walk to school, but also a more general desire line for villagers to access local amenities.
- C. It is also recognised that the new Tannery development, may impact on the use of the public footpath, on the north side of Strensall Bridge which could increase the numbers of people crossing Sheriff Hutton Road at this location.

Recommendations

- 7. The Cabinet Member for Transport, Planning and Economic Development is recommended to:

- i- Instruct officers to undertake an update of the feasibility study carried out in 2011**

Reason: To enable the impact of recent changes in the area to be established and considered in the development of options and to determine more accurate costs for any possible solutions.

- ii- Instruct officers to hold a site meeting with representatives of the local community**

Reason: To ensure that the concerns of the residents in the area are fully understood during the development of options.

Background

- 8. In this section, each of the locations identified at paragraph 6 above is considered in turn.

Location A

9. This location is a pedestrian 'desire line' for crossing Sheriff Hutton Road, at the point where the pedestrian path A (shown in **Annex A1**) exits from the development known as "The Brecks".
10. In the original layout, the pedestrian exit onto Sheriff Hutton Road was via a kissing gate, to one side of locked metal gates. Pedestrians found the kissing gate difficult to negotiate with a pram and an alternative was agreed with the Parish Council to enable the Drainage Board and Parish Council access for the river and allotments.
11. Path A, linking Sheriff Hutton Road with 'The Brecks' development, was formally adopted by City of York Council on 23 July 2013. There are no further plans to upgrade the path or surface as this would be against the requirements of the Internal Drainage Board (IDB). The vehicle access is locked.

Location A – recent developments

12. Over the last year an additional housing development (54 houses) has been constructed on land known as the Tannery, which is just to the north of the humped back bridge, called Strensall Bridge. As part of the planning requirements the development included a new pedestrians and cycle footbridge to run adjacent to the west side of the bridge and an extension of the footpath along Sheriff Hutton Road to the junction with The Village. The extension of this footpath means that children living at the Tannery development are on the right side of the road for the school, and have no need to cross Sheriff Hutton Road as part of their route to school.
13. There remains, however, the likelihood that pedestrians from the Tannery will cross Sherriff Hutton Road to reach local shops and facilities at the opposite side of Sherriff Hutton Road, and The Village.
14. Work is still ongoing to finish surfacing to the new footpath. The stage 3 (post construction) safety audit on the works is therefore yet to be carried out. As building work to the new estate road and footpaths, is as yet unfinished, this Stage 3 safety audit is not likely to be completed for 4-6 months.
15. Please note the proposal, by the developer to add tactile paving in the area of the exit of *path A* – indicating a crossing point will not be

constructed. This is still evident on some plans in the public domain, but was removed as the sight lines were not appropriate for a crossing point at this location.

Location A - investigations

16. Requests for a SCP, and a “safe route to school” to aid parents and children who are exiting *path A* were received in 2008 and 2011, as well as the most recent investigation which took place on 11 November 2014.
17. All requests for a SCP are investigated and considered. Often there is a misconception that a “safe place to cross the road” is created simply by the addition of a SCP. This is not the case. Sites for SCP have to be assessed or “engineered” to be “safer places to cross the road”. An unsuitable place to cross the road cannot automatically be made “safe” by the addition of a SCP.
18. Sites suitable for a SCP need to conform to the following 3 factors:-
 - Clear sight lines; this is because when operating a SCP site, the patroller needs to spend a longer amount of time in the road than a person crossing for themselves. Therefore, particular attention is paid to the available sight lines to take account of this fact.
 - Room on each pavement, for groups of standing pedestrians, away from traffic which may require to turn into or out of drives or entrances.
 - That requirement in the National Criteria for the implementation of SCP are met at the site location in line with Road Safety GB (RSGB) Guidelines.
19. In all 3 investigations, 2008, 2011 and 2014 the requests were fully considered, including doing counts for children crossing and vehicles. The most recent counts and how these apply to the guidelines are attached at **Annex B**.
20. In all 3 investigations the section of road from the humped back bridge to and including the junction were assessed. It was established that on the stretch of Sheriff Hutton Road from the Bridge to the junction there is no location that is appropriate for a SCP to work safely. This is because of:-

- the lack of sight lines,
 - the limited width of the footpath in places,
 - the instances of drives and entrances
21. With reference to sight lines, the Government's 'Manual for Streets' gives a required minimum stopping distance of 38 metres for light vehicles and 41 metres for Heavy Goods Vehicles and buses. These distances have been marked approximately, on the map at **Annex A1** and highlight that the area where path A meets Sherriff Hutton Road is not appropriate for a SCP site.
22. Additionally, on all 3 occasions the traffic/child counts did not meet the basic volumes required for the establishment of a SCP as per the National Criteria Guidelines. It is of note that the RSGB adopted criteria gives clear advice on parental responsibility for children on the journey to school, see the below extract from the current 2013 document below.

1.5 Parental Responsibility*

Even where an SCP is provided, parents remain responsible for ensuring their children's safety, just as they do when a zebra crossing or pelican crossing is provided. Some parents may believe the Authority assumes responsibility for the safety of their children on their whole journey to and from school when it provides an SCP. This is a misconception that should be countered, perhaps by conducting local 'awareness-raising' campaigns to reinforce the message of parental responsibility every time a new SCP is appointed.

The issue of parental responsibility also needs to be understood clearly by Elected Members, and officially enshrined in policy statements, road safety plans and guidelines. The responsibility for ensuring the safety of children travelling to and from school is, and must remain, a parental one.

**A good description of case law on the duty of parents to ensure their children are able to travel to school safely can be found in Section 1 and Appendices 4 – 7 of Road Safety GB's "Assessment of Walked Routes to School Guidelines"*

Best Practice

The Authority's policies should make it clear that parents are responsible for ensuring their children are able to travel to school safely, whether or not the Authority is able to provide safer routes or safer crossing facilities.

Sites should be established, using the Authority's adopted criteria, based on the number of children walking to and from school and traffic flows at the site in question.

23. In 2010 as a result of the requests, and investigations a further feasibility study into a 'Safe Route to School' was commissioned. The report, dated September 2011, is shown in full at **Annex C**. The conclusions of the report were that the site was not safe for a SCP and the only options for a crossing facility were:-

'a pedestrian refuge at the junction, which would involve the remodelling of the junction with the movement of all underground services, possibly including fibre optics, electric, gas and water which are located under the pavement. No depths or cable type details are as yet available but an estimate of £30 - £40k would be reasonable for diversion costs and time scales for moving services would be a minimum of 3 months possibly longer.

Or

The signalisation of the whole junction.

24. The above possible options were not implemented at that time owing to funding constraints. However, minor improvements to the tactile paving and signage for the junction, as shown in annex C and D of the 2011 report, were implemented.
25. There have been a number of changes to the highway network and development in the area, such as the delivery of the Tannery development which need to be considered if the 2010 feasibility study is updated. In addition the impact of any future anticipated development in the area such as the potential increase in the size of 'The Brecks' development should also be considered in any review of the feasibility study.

Location B

26. The main crossing point for pedestrians in the area is at the junction of Sheriff Hutton Road with the Village however it should be noted that SCP sites are never placed at junctions, where the requirement is for the patroller to stop 3-way traffic, as would be the case at this location. Minor improvements to the tactile paving and signage were made in 2011; for further detail, please see the recommendations in the study into a Safe Route to School, 2011, **Annex C** as given above.

Location C

27. Accompanying the new development there has been an improvement in the 30mph limit gateway, just north of the new houses and the ancient bridge.
28. As part of the latest investigations into desire lines across Sheriff Hutton Road, it was noted on a site visit that the establishment of 54 houses adjacent to the public right of way on the north side of the humped back bridge, may well have an impact on the frequency and type of use of this recreational path.
29. It was noted that all the houses are built, with the new footbridge and footpath in use. With the new footbridge opening up pedestrian access across the river it is considered that this would be a convenient path for residents of the new development and the wider village to walk dogs, or for children to access the riverside and open countryside to play.
30. Although it is accepted that this access has historically been in a location where sight lines for both a pedestrian and motorists are severely restricted, the possible change of use and frequency of this desire line, has raised officer concerns which may not be fully addressed by the proposed improvements suggested by the developer. It is anticipated that these concerns will be considered at the stage 3 safety audit (See **Annex D** pictures, 9, 10, 13, 14 and 16).

Options

31. Reduction of casualties on the road network is the result of a combination of interventions including physical measures, enforcement and education. To improve the awareness of road hazards in the area cycle and pedestrian training sessions have been booked with the school.
32. There are 2 important notes to take into account when considering options:-
 - a) That, whilst City of York Council (in common with most UK local authorities), attempts to provide SCPs in a number of locations, the provision of a SCP is not a statutory duty. All roads and traffic cause an element of "risk". It is the responsibility of parents to ensure the safety of themselves and their children on

the journey to and from school.

- b) The new Tannery development will not increase the numbers of children crossing Sherriff Hutton Road on their route to the school.
33. **Option A** - No action now, but ensure that CYC's Highway Development Control officers are aware of the issues for future development in the area.
 34. The review of the location indicates that it is not appropriate for a SCP. Implementation of both pedestrian and cycle training for children at the school has already been instigated, and bookings with the school have been made.
 35. Whilst there has been some new development in the area, the fundamental layout of the road and the issues with providing a crossing facility, on the stretch of road, south of the bridge to the junction with The Village are similar to those investigated in 2011 and any further investigation is likely to result in the same recommendations as that report.
 36. As in 2011 the cost of possible improvements is high relative to the volumes of people crossing. This is in common with other locations across the local authority areas which are also awaiting identification of budget for the implementation of similar measures.
 37. The allocation of this site as part of a 'safe route to school' is not an option due to the small number of children crossing. It should also be reiterated that the new houses at the Tannery will not cause an increase in children crossing Sheriff Hutton Road as part of the journey to school.
 38. The casualty record for this location is 1 slight, in the last 10 years. Whilst it could well be argued that one accident is one too many, use of the casualty reduction budget is also not an option as there are a number of accident cluster sites and specific routes which have a much higher number of casualties and which would take greater priority for funding than this scheme.
 39. Although there is a danger reduction budget, this is a very small budget for minor improvements and does not hold the capital required to action the suggested improvements.

40. This option proposes that a site visit is held, attended by Officers representing SCP (in relation to request for SCP) and Highways Development Control (in relation to the new houses at the Tannery) to meet community representatives to explain the current issues and to feed back the outcomes of this Decision Report.

Option B –update the feasibility study of 2011

41. The review of the location indicates that it is not appropriate for a SCP. Implementation of both pedestrian and cycle training for children at the school has already been instigated, and bookings with the school have been made.
42. This option proposes that a review of the Safe Routes to School feasibility study undertaken in 2011 is commissioned and that it be undertaken following completion of the development highway works and the Stage 3 safety audit.
43. The feasibility study would take into account any changes which have occurred or which are anticipated in the area since the 2011 study was undertaken. It would consider the actual and perceived changes to the use of paths and desire lines, volumes of pedestrians crossing and where as a result of the new build. A more detailed investigation of the utility costs of any options would also be undertaken to ensure that more accurate overall delivery costs were established.
44. A site visit would be undertaken, attended by Officers representing the School Crossing Patrol team, Highways Design and Highways Development Control (in relation to the new houses at the Tannery) to meet community representatives to understand the issues and ensure that their concerns are considered in the review of the feasibility study.

Analysis

45. **Option A** - It is recognised that the changes in the area, with the new build at the Tannery will potentially create an increase in people crossing the road from west (public house side) to east (Boots side) and also the crossing of The Village, near or on the junction. It has also, however been established that this will not involve an increase in pedestrian crossing movements as part of a route to school.

46. The main issues, as identified in the 2011 report, with the lay out of this section of road are fundamentally the same. A busy junction at one end and a narrow, humped back bridge, with a short section of road between, that has a number of private and commercial entrances on it. Because these fundamental issues have not changed it is likely that any review of feasibility work will result in the same conclusions as was reached in 2011.
47. From the 2011 study, although desire lines were identified, current limitations mean there are higher priority locations, some with higher accident histories awaiting schemes from the limited budgets available for these types of junction upgrades.
48. **Option B** - This will give a full and up to date report on pedestrian movements in the whole of this area, and may help to identify the greatest need in terms of a crossing point (work in 2011 already established that higher numbers are crossing The Village, than cross Sheriff Hutton Road).
49. This report would take into consideration actual changes to the use of the paths as a result of the new build and could be extended out to encompass the stretch of road from New Lane, north of the bridge. This study would need to be commissioned after the completion of work by the contractors and after the stage 3 safety audit had concluded.
50. Funding any proposed solutions resulting from the feasibility study would remain a significant barrier to the delivery of any improvements in the area. The detailed review of the costs and benefits would enable a more informed case to be made when comparing the improvement against other schemes in the city.

Corporate Objectives

51. There is no question that the addition of pedestrian facilities would help with the below corporate objectives. An assessment does need to be made however, if this location should be placed at a higher priority than other locations that are waiting for funding:-
52. **Get York moving** – Any crossing improvements encourage walking and cycling, particularly at busy times, and may result in a reduction in car use and reduced local congestion.
53. **Protect vulnerable people** – pedestrian facilities would benefit the most vulnerable within the local community.

54. **Protect the environment** – By encouraging walking and thus reducing car use, carbon and other emissions would be cut, improving air quality.

Implications

55. **Cost** - Capital funding for Casualty or Danger Reduction are limited. All potential measures should be prioritised.
56. **Legal** - There are no legal implications with this report.
57. **HR** –There are no HR implications with this report.
58. **Other** - Road accidents by their very nature are unpredictable and it is always possible that an injury accident will occur at a location that has been assessed where no action was taken.
59. **Crime and Disorder** – there are no Crime and Disorder implications with this report.

Risk Management

60. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy the risks arising from the recommendations have been assessed, as below 16 and therefore require monitoring only.

Contact Details:

Author:	Chief Officer Responsible for the report:
Trish Hirst	Neil Ferris
Road Safety Officer	Assistant Director - Highways, Transport & Waste
Transport Service	City & Environmental Services
City & Environmental Services	

Tel: 01905 551331

Tel: 01904 551448

Report Date 3 February 2015
Approved

Specialist Implications Officer(s): None
Wards Affected: Strensall

For further information please contact the author of the report.

Background Papers: None

Annexes:

Annex A1 Site Map.

Annex A2 Pictures of site.

Annex B School Crossing Patrol Counts, 11.11.2014 & Criteria

Annex C 2011 Safe Routes to School Feasibility Report

Annex D Pictures of public right of way exit & new 30mph gateway