

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	17 <sup>th</sup> JUNE 2015	AGENDA ITEM:	6
TITLE:	PETITION FOR A ZEBRA CROSSING OUTSIDE ENGLISH MARTYRS CATHOLIC SCHOOL ON DEE ROAD - UPDATE		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	TONY PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT
SERVICE:	TRANSPORTATION & STREETCARE	WARDS:	NORCOT
LEAD OFFICER:	SIMON BEASLEY	TEL:	0118 937 2228
JOB TITLE:	NETWORK & PARKING SERVICES MANAGER	E-MAIL:	<a href="mailto:simon.beasley@reading.gov.uk">simon.beasley@reading.gov.uk</a>

#### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To report to the Sub-Committee an initial response to a petition asking the Council to install a zebra crossing outside English Martyrs Catholic School on Dee Road.

#### 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Sub-Committee notes the report.
- 2.2 That this proposal proceeds to detailed design and subject to the results of a safety audit implement the changes outlined within this report to introduce two zebra crossings for the schools in Dee Road.
- 2.3 That the Head of Legal Services be authorised to carry out the statutory notice procedures of the intention to establish two pedestrian crossings for the schools in Dee Road in accordance with Section 23 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
- 2.4 That in consultation with the chair of the Sub-Committee, the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport and Ward Councillors, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to carry out statutory consultations and advertise

the proposals in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

- 2.6 That in consultation with the Chair of the Sub-Committee, the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, and Ward Councillors, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to advertise the Traffic Regulation Orders for the proposed introduction of traffic calming in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulation 1996 and with Section 90c of the Highways Act 1980.
- 2.5 That subject to no objections received, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make the Traffic Regulation Order.
- 2.6 If objections are received to the statutory consultations, those objections will be reported back to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.

### 3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The provision of pedestrian crossing facilities and associated criteria is specified within existing Traffic Management Policies and Standards.

### 4. THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 At Traffic Management Sub-committee on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2015 a petition was received that read:

*'KEEP OUR CHILDREN SAFE - Objective:- to make a safer, accessible, child friendly road to ensure the safety of our children! When crossing a VERY busy road to access our school, whilst the road is currently 20mph, drivers go excessively faster than this causing frequent near misses'. The petition concludes with the aim 'For a zebra crossing to be installed outside English Martyrs school.'*

- 4.2 A response was provided at the next meeting of the Traffic Management Sub-committee on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2015 which explained the complex nature of Dee Road and the complication of having two schools so close to each other. The March report concluded that: *the wider traffic concerns raised by both schools are investigated further and solutions promoted to make a safer, accessible, child friendly road to ensure the safety of all children and a further report submitted to the Sub-Committee for consideration at a future meeting. This will include the provision of a zebra crossing(s) at the*

*most suitable location(s) and as a part of a wider package of road safety measures for public consultation*

- 4.3 The initial assessments have been completed. The conclusion drawn is that it would be too difficult to carry out significant change to this area within Dee Road due to the residential nature of the street and positioning of private driveways. There is little scope for additional traffic calming features, raised crossing points and improved parking measures to stop footway parking. This then leaves the focus on the current crossing points constructed as a part of the safer routes to schools. These are well established crossing points and are very effective regardless of the concern raised. However, consideration has been giving to converting both crossing points directly outside each school to zebra crossings. This will need to be subjected to the usual road safety audit process along with any other changes required as a result of the concept and final designs.
- 4.4 National standards, guidance and good practice are provided for a purpose. Should be deviate from these we need to consider the consequences. The fact is that this section of Dee Road does not have any history of casualties as a result of the schools and the demand on the road due to the schools. When carrying out any change to the highway we have to consider what the impact of that change will have to all users. Where drivers are forced to stop this will increase the risk of a collision and thus an increased risk of this resulting in a casualty. As Dee Road has no history of casualties we may need to accept that changes will carry a risk where there is no measurable road safety problem previously.
- 4.5 At the current pedestrian crossing points we will need to increase the width of the dropped kerbs to provide crossings at carriage level. As Dee Road is already traffic calmed this is preferable to creating raised, at grade, crossings. The residential nature of the road and its use by public transport has also been considered in determining the type of crossing. There will be a loss of a short length of the parking bay opposite English Martyrs Primary School, by approximately half to one car length, to create the width required for a zebra crossing. There will be a need to alter the current waiting restrictions as the crossing zig-zags will overlay the school keep clear markings. We have also received a request, from the police, to review and remove a gap in the current waiting restrictions on Dee Road between Elvaston Way and the bus stop. The existing traffic calming in the form of cushions shall be extended to the limit of the 20mph speed limit thus covering the area outside English Martyrs School and the new zebra crossing at this point. Additionally, we have already committed to replacing the school warning signs on the two Dee Road approaches in to the area of the schools. These new signs will be

programmable so that they come on automatically and do not rely on being switched on manually. A concept design showing the location of formal zebra crossings along with the accident data for the area has been submitted for independent road safety audit.

#### 4.6 Risks

- Whilst there will always be an increased risk of an accident where drivers are forced to stop, this is a very controlled area (traffic calming with a 20mph speed limit) thus any increased risk is minimised. The occurrence of an accident, particularly within this context, is impossible to model but we should expect two crossings to function very well in this location.
- Whilst the focus is on the petition from English Martyrs primary school St Michaels primary school has long campaigned for the same. Whilst both schools would clearly support this proposal having two crossing so close together may worsen traffic conditions. The loss of on-street parking as a result of the crossing zig-zag markings will limit the ability to stop on-carriageway thus increase irresponsible parking and stopping on the footways.
- In the submission of the original petition there was concern expressed about drivers overtaking at the informal crossing points whilst people were crossing. Any worsening of traffic conditions may only encourage impatient drivers to continue to take risks. The zebra crossings will not stop impatient drivers from behaving in such a way although we can hope that the presence of formal crossings will encourage better driving. Overtaking within crossing zig-zag markings is a driving offence that is enforceable by the police.
- Residents within the area will be further restricted in their ability to park in-carriageway and may not like the idea of further urbanising of their street.

4.7 In conclusion, the recommendation is to proceed with the detailed design work and promote formal zebra crossing as indicated subject to the committee agreement. The estimated cost of this scheme is in the region of £50K with the final value determined at detailed design. Any objections to the changes in waiting restrictions will need to be considered by the committee at a future meeting (this is expected to be September 2015).

## **5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

- 5.1 To promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all.

## **6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

- 6.1 The lead petitioner will be informed of the findings of the Sub-Committee.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There will be a need to notice the intention to install zebra crossings and alter waiting restrictions and traffic calming under the appropriate various acts of parliament.

## **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 will carry out an equality impact assessment scoping exercise prior to submitting the update report to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 This scheme will be funded from the section 106 paid as a part of the St. Michaels Primary School development.

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 10.1 March 2015 TM Sub.