
Meeting: Traffic Management Meeting
Date: 11 September 2013
Subject: Houghton Regis – Consider an Objection to a Proposed Raised Zebra Crossing and two raised uncontrolled crossings In Parkside Drive and consider objections to a proposed Contraflow Cycle lane in Easthill Road

Report of: Jane Moakes, Assistant Director Environmental Services

Summary: This report seeks the approval of the Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Services for the installation of a raised zebra crossing and two raised uncontrolled crossings on Parkside Drive and for the implementation of the proposed cycle contraflow on Easthill Road, Houghton Regis.

Contact Officer: Nick Chapman
nick.chapman@amey.co.uk

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: Parkside and Tithe Farm

Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

This proposal will improve pedestrian and cycle networks in Houghton Regis and improve safety when crossing the carriageway contributing to the following corporate priorities:

- Maximising employment opportunities
- Getting around and caring for a cleaner and greener environment
- Supporting and caring for an aging population, and the following Local Transport Plan priorities:
 - Increase access to employment by sustainable modes
 - Reduce the impact of commuting trips on local communities
 - To maximise opportunities for training and education for those without access to a car

Financial:

The overall budget for the Parkside Drive scheme is £60,000 of which £35,000 is from the LATP programme (ref., 3.2), the balance being part of the LSTF programme. The overall budget for the Easthill road cycle scheme is £15,000 and part of the LSTF programme of works.

Legal:

None from this report

Risk Management:

None from this report

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

None from this report

Equalities/Human Rights:

None from this report

Community Safety:

The proposal will improve road safety for all road users, but in particular pedestrians and cyclists.

Sustainability:

A crossing of Parkside Drive is identified as a priority in the Local Area Transport Plan whilst also being identified as part of a package of works identified through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, providing improved access to employment, education and training by sustainable modes of transport reducing reliance on the private car. The contraflow cycle route is also part of the LSTF programme, again improving the network for cyclists making it easier to cross town to and from local employment and educational sites.

These schemes are partly funded by the Local Area Transport Plan (LATP) and partly funded by the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF). They are part of a wider package of walking and cycling network improvements for Houghton Regis and Dunstable, improving access to education and employment areas. Appendix E contains a map showing those proposals identified as part of the LSTF programme which was signed off as part of the funding bid process. These particular proposals are shown as numbers 10 and 11 (Parkside) and 5c (Easthill).

These schemes were formally advertised by public notice in June/July 2013. Consultations were carried out with the emergency services and other statutory bodies, Houghton Regis Town Council relevant Elected Members. Residents likely to be directly affected by the proposals were informed via letters and notices were displayed on street.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the proposals to install a Raised Zebra Crossing and two Raised Table Uncontrolled Crossings on Parkside Drive and the proposed Contraflow Cycle lane in Easthill Road are to be implemented as published apart from the addition of a green high friction surface cycle lane along Easthill Road to further highlight the route to motorists.

Background and Information

1. The scheme is partly funded by the Local Area Transport Plan (LATP) and partly funded by the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF). The schemes are part of a wider cycle network improvement (LSTF) for Houghton Regis and Dunstable. Improving the signage and use of new shared use facilities. Appendix E contains a map showing cycling facilities in Dunstable and Houghton Regis.
2. The proposals were formally advertised by public notice in June/July 2013. Consultations were carried out with the emergency services and other statutory bodies, Houghton Regis Town Council relevant Elected Members. Residents likely to be directly affected by the proposals were informed via letters and notices were displayed on street.
3. One objection has been received in relation to the proposed raised zebra crossing and tables on Parkside Drive. A copy of the correspondence is included in Appendix C. The main points of objection are summarised below:-
 - a) One crossing at the school would be enough.
 - b) Three crossings will cause more congestion.
 - c) It will increase pollution from all the vehicles stopping and starting.
4. Eight objections have been received in relation to the proposed contraflow cycle lane on Easthill Road, Houghton Regis. A copy of the correspondence is included in Appendix D. The main points of objection are summarised below in order of number of times mentioned:-
 - a) It is difficult to sustain cycle lane with cars parked, parking bays will cause conflict with neighbours.
 - b) It is a waste of tax payer's money.
 - c) Motorists already drive illegally the wrong way down Easthill Road towards Sundon Road. The proposed contraflow will encourage more motorists to do the same.
 - d) Few cyclists use Easthill Road
 - e) Something should be done about the speeding first, such as installing traffic calming.
 - f) Concerns about the safety of the proposal with motorists not expecting to be faced with cyclists traveling the other way.
 - g) It is inappropriate to encourage cycles to travel in the direction of Sundon Road when this road was made one-way due to the visibility at this junction.
 - h) There is a perfectly good cycle route via Leafields.

Responses and Conclusion

5. Bedfordshire Highways' response to the points in paragraph 3 regarding the raised zebra crossing and two raised tables on Parkside Drive are as follows:-
 - a) The reason we are proposing the other two raised crossings (uncontrolled) is due to an anticipated overall speed reduction to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists.
 - b) The proposals are unlikely to have a significant impact on congestion. Measures aimed at encouraging walking and cycling will hopefully mean that people are less reliant on private cars and hence should reduce congestion.
 - c) It will have a minimal impact on pollution production, however as stated above (b), it may even have a positive impact by discouraging motorists from using this section of Parkside Road.

6. Bedfordshire Highways' response to the points in paragraph 4 above regarding the proposed contraflow cycle lane along Easthill Road are as follows:-
 - a) The proposed parking bay arrangement is to encourage the use the north side of Easthill Road and is not enforceable. However this can be reviewed following implementation. The proposed arrangement is not forcing any motorists to park in the parking bays only. It is suggesting to the cyclists to keep their desire line away from the possible parking/parked cars.
 - b) This scheme and other schemes similar to it, are being funded by the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) which was awarded to Central Bedfordshire Council by the government to only be used on schemes such as this, to improve walking and cycling routes.
 - c) The fact that motorists may be currently using the one way street illegally by travelling the wrong way is a police enforcement matter. However, part of the proposal for this scheme is that there will be a cycle only entrance with a bollard on Easthill Road (junction with The Quadrant) to prevent this from happening in the future.
 - d) It is thought that the reason for few cyclists using Easthill Road is due to the current direction of travel. It is anticipated that more cyclists will use the contraflow direction because it will tie in with the rest of the future promoted route across Houghton Regis, to Parkside Drive.
 - e) The proposed cycle entrance mentioned above (c) is also a traffic calming feature as it will be (or give the illusion of) narrowing the carriageway and also the presence of cycle symbols along with the new contraflow signage will alert motorists to slow down as the road is being used as contraflow.

- f) As stated above (e), the presence of new signage and road markings should alert motorists to the new arrangement, which has been used successfully on many other roads. The addition of green surfacing (as stated in the recommendation) to show a cycle lane would be beneficial to both the cyclists and the motorists.
 - g) Cyclist will not be encouraged to exit Easthill Road (onto Sundon Road) on carriageway, it will be marked and advised to enter the footway (via dropped kerbs) and cross Sundon Road via a proposed raised zebra crossing (already advertised and programmed for October half term).
 - h) Easthill Road is a better option for cyclists because the promoted route runs straight into Easthill Road from the proposed shared use path towards Parkside Drive.
7. There has only been one objection to the proposals for Parkside Drive. The number of raised platforms proposed are not just to provide safe crossing points, but also to reduce traffic speeds to create a safer and more pedestrian friendly area. It is recommended that the proposed raised crossings on Parkside Drive be implemented as published.
8. Some residents appear to have misinterpreted the main objectives and some elements of the Easthill Road contraflow cycle lane. The marked parking bays will be more for the attention of the cyclists to keep them clear of the parked cars, rather than to dictate where residents can and cannot park. The points raised about motorists being unaware of the potential for cyclists heading towards them should be addressed by the new signage and markings. The minimum standard contraflow layout is being exceeded by the proposed cycle 'gateway' being installed to discourage motorists driving the wrong way in Easthill Road. It is recommended that the proposed contraflow on Easthill Road be implemented as published.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Drawing of Proposals

Appendix B – Public Notices

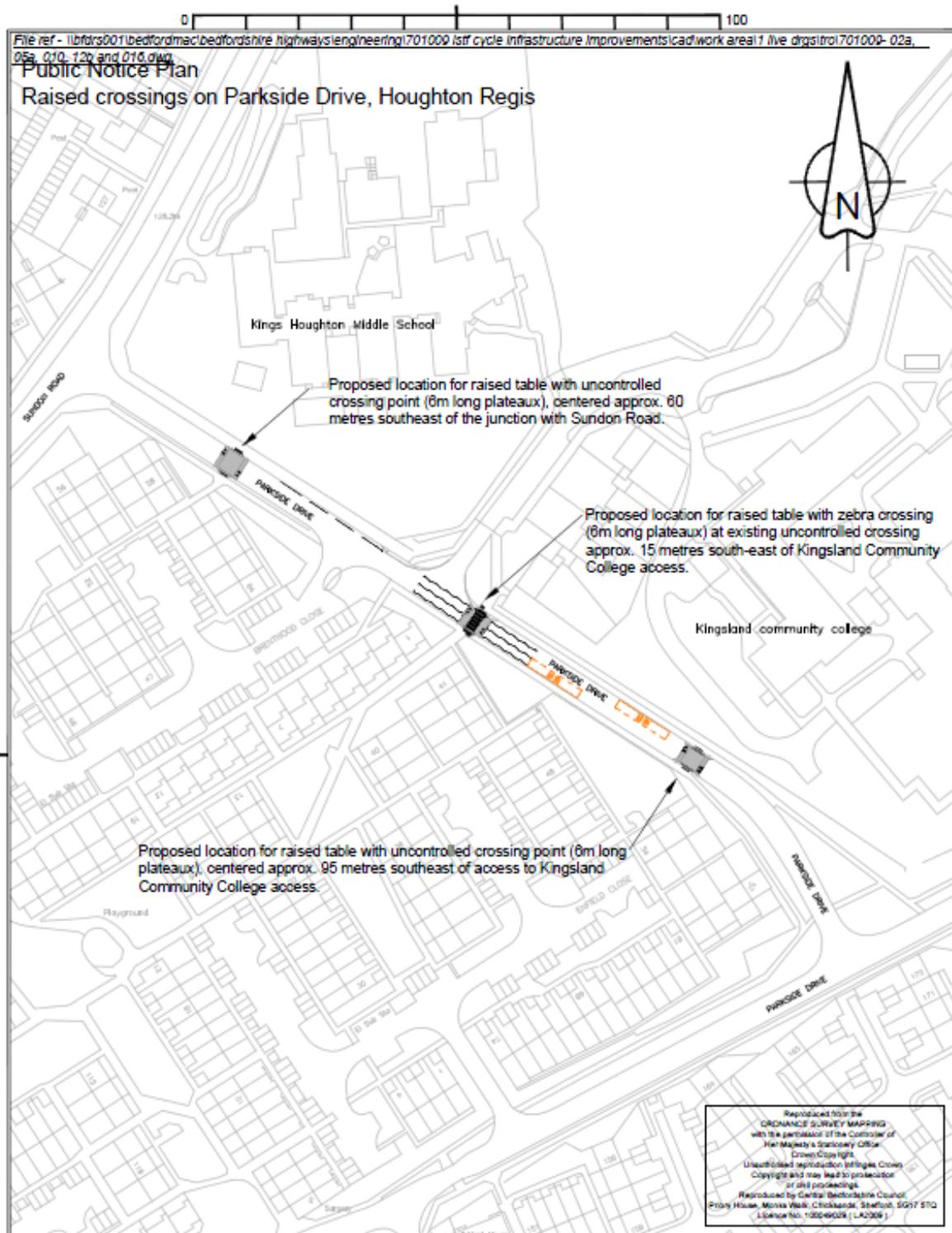
Appendix C – Objection to Proposed Raised Zebra and Tables in Parkside Drive

Appendix D – Objections to Proposed Contraflow Cycle Lane in Easthill Road

Appendix E – Map of Cycle Facilities in Dunstable and Houghton Regis

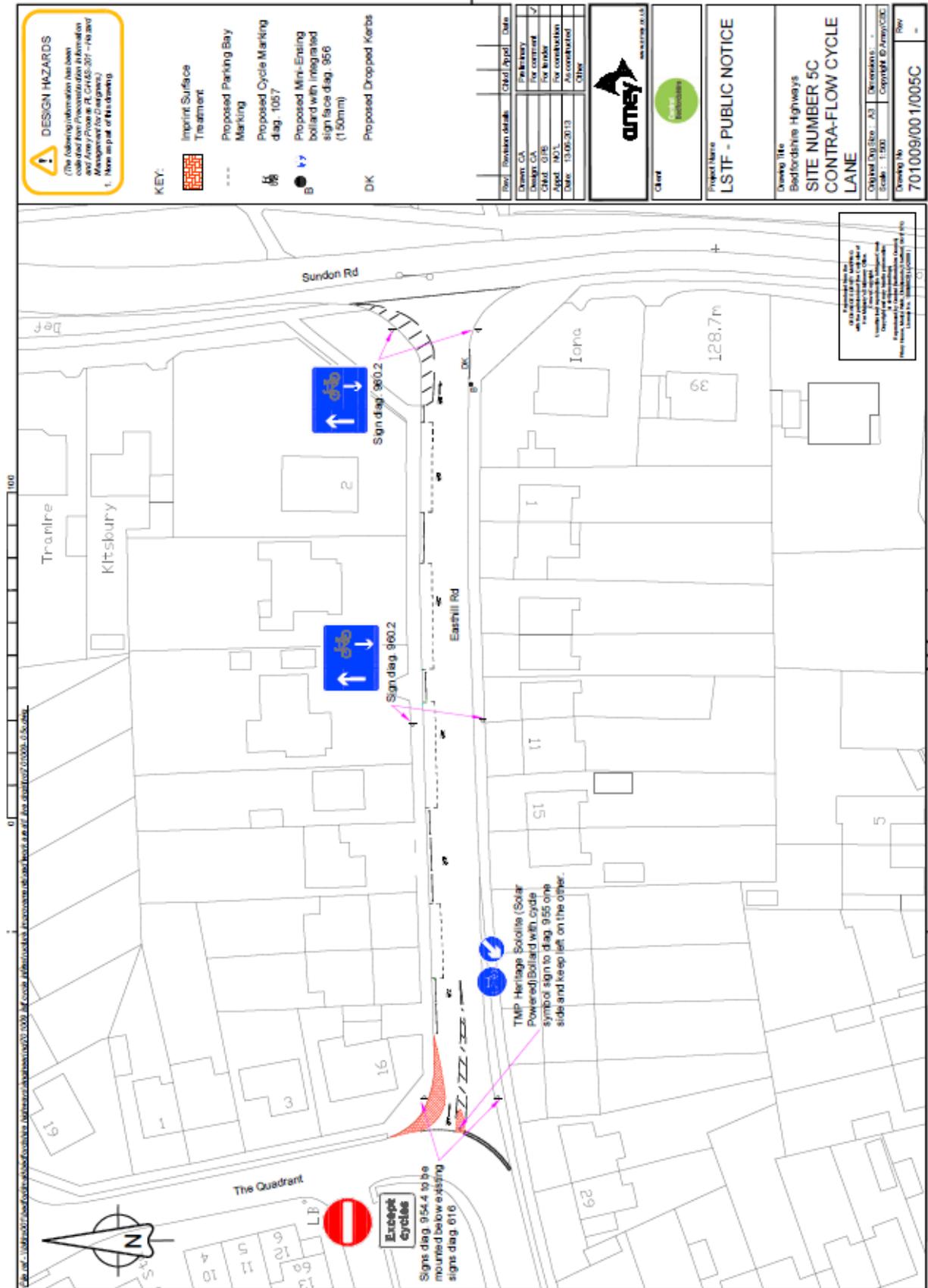
Appendix A

Proposals for Parkside Drive, Houghton Regis.



| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|------|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Project Name Local Sustainable Transport Fund | | | | |  Client  | |
| Drawing Title Bedfordshire Highways - Trans Public Notice | | | | | | |
| Rev | Revision details | Chkd | Appd | Date | Drawing No 701009/010/001 | Rev - |
| Drawn: CA | Preliminary | | | | | |
| Design: CA | For comment | | ✓ | | | |
| Chkd: GPB | For tender | | | | | |
| Appd: NO'L | For construction | | | | | |
| Date: 13-06-2013 | As constructed | | | | | |
| | Other | | | | | |
| Original Dwg Size : A4 | | Dimensions : - | | Scale : NTS | | |
| | | | | Copyright © Amey/CBC | | |

Proposals for Easthill Road, Houghton Regis





PUBLIC NOTICE

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 – SECTION 23

PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS – PARKSIDE DRIVE, HOUGHTON REGIS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL, in exercise of its powers under Section 23 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act, 1984 and all other enabling powers, proposes to establish a pedestrian crossing, including its associated zig-zag markings, in Parkside Drive, Houghton Regis. These works are part of a wider scheme to improve pedestrian and cycling facilities.

Zebra Crossings are proposed to be sited at the following locations in Houghton Regis:-

1. Parkside Drive, at a point approximately 15 metres south-east of the vehicular access to Kingsland Community College.
2. Parkside Drive, at a point approximately 80 metres north-east of its junction with Elm Park Close.

HIGHWAYS ACT 1980 – SECTION 90A-I

PROPOSED RAISED ZEBRA CROSSINGS AND RAISED TABLES – PARKSIDE DRIVE, HOUGHTON REGIS

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL proposes to construct Humped Zebra Crossings under Section 90 A-I of the Highways Act 1980 and all other enabling powers in Parkside Drive, Houghton Regis. These works are part of a wider scheme to improve pedestrian and cycling facilities. In addition, the proposals are designed to reduce vehicle speeds and create a safer environment for all road users.

Raised Zebra Crossings at a nominal height of 75mm are proposed to be sited at the following locations in Houghton Regis:-

1. Parkside Drive, at a point approximately 15 metres south-east of the vehicular access to Kingsland Community College.
2. Parkside Drive, at a point approximately 80 metres north-east of its junction with Elm Park Close.

Raised Tables providing uncontrolled crossing points at a nominal height of 75mm are proposed to be sited at the following locations in Houghton Regis:-

1. Parkside Drive, at a point approximately 60 metres south-east of its junction with Sundon Road.
2. Parkside Drive, at a point approximately 95 metres south-east of the vehicular access to Kingsland Community College.

Further Details of the proposal and plans may be examined during normal opening hours at Houghton Regis library, Bedford Square, Houghton Regis LU5 5ES or online at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/publicstatutorynotices.

Objections should be sent in writing to the Transportation Manager, Bedfordshire Highways, Woodlands Annex, Manton Lane, Bedford MK41 7NU or e-mail centralbedsconsultation@amey.co.uk stating the grounds on which they are made by 12 July 2013.

Priory House
Monks Walk
Chicksands
Shefford SG1917 5TQ

Marcel Coiffait
Director of Community Services

19 June 2013

PUBLIC NOTICE



Central
Bedfordshire

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL PROPOSES TO INTRODUCE A ONE-WAY TRAFFIC ORDER WITH CONTRA-FLOW CYCLE LANE IN EASTHILL ROAD, HOUGHTON REGIS

Reason for proposal: The proposed Order is considered necessary on the grounds of facilitating the passage of pedal cycles. Easthill Road is currently one-way for all traffic, including cycles. The proposal is to provide a contra-flow cycle lane which would allow cyclists to travel against the flow of other traffic. This is part of a wider scheme aimed at promoting walking and cycling in Houghton Regis and Dunstable.

Effect of the Order:

To introduce a One-way Traffic Order with a Contra-flow Cycle Lane on the following length of road in Houghton Regis:-

| | |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Easthill Road | From Sundon Road to The Quadrant - Traffic will be permitted to travel in that direction only, except for pedal cyclists |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

As from the date on which this Order is made any existing One-way Traffic Orders on the length of road specified above shall be revoked.

Further Details of the proposal and plans may be examined during normal opening hours at Houghton Regis library, Bedford Square, Houghton Regis LU5 5ES or online at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/publicstatutorynotices. These details will be placed on deposit until 6 weeks after the Order is made or until it is decided not to continue with the proposal.

Objections: should be sent in writing to the Transportation Manager, Bedfordshire Highways, Woodlands Annex, Manton Lane, Bedford MK41 7NU or e-mail centralbedsconsultation@amey.co.uk stating the grounds on which they are made by 12 July 2013.

Order Title: If made will be "Central Bedfordshire Council (Easthill Road, Houghton Regis) (One Way Traffic) Order 2013"

Central Bedfordshire Council
Priory House
Chicksands
Shefford SG1917 5TQ

Marcel Coiffait
Director of Community Services

19 June 2013

Appendix C - Objection to Raised Zebra and Tables on Parkside Drive

DOCUMENT REF: 153668

CENBESCONS

27 JUN 2013

Enfield close
Houghton Regis
Bedl

Dear Sir

I strongly object
to 3 crossings in Parkside
Drive, one at the school is
enough, 3 crossings will
cause more congestion, but
worse than that will be
the increased pollution from
all the vehicles stopping & starting

Many thanks

Appendix D - Objections to Contraflow Cycle Lane on Easthill Road

I am writing to object to proposal to make a one-way traffic order with contra-flow Cycle Lane - Easthill Road, Houghton Regis.

As a regular cyclist I would find it very hazardous to drive down a road where motor vehicles are unlikely to expect something coming the other way, especially as I might have to steer around wrongly parked vehicles.

I think it would be very difficult to create and sustain a cycle only track along the edge of the road as cars currently park on both sides of the road. Residents who park in the road are too used to parking on both sides; it would be difficult to break their habit, and very few cyclists would actually benefit.

I think the idea would be unsafe.

I think it would be safer, and more beneficial to all road users if Easthill Road was made two-way in both directions for all road users; it is probably as wide as the nearby Leafields which is already two-way for all.

I think it's an unnecessary expense; it is a very quiet area with little traffic. I am unaware of anyone in the town asking for this and cannot understand why officers of the council have come up with this public spending scheme.

Proposed Contra-flow Cycle Lane Easthill Road

I really do not see the point of this cycle lane as cyclist already travel in both directions with impunity, strangely almost always on the south side of the road. This proposal will give access only to Sundon Road and those few cyclist that do observe the one way signs have a perfectly good route via Leafields which is parallel and only about 40 metres to the north.

I did ring Amey and pointed out that the parking bays were printed in black, contrary to the key which shows they should have been in red.

I was told by Amey that the cycle lane imposed no restriction in vehicle parking so fail to see the purpose of these bays as residents will continue to park in the roadside areas that are most convenient to them.

Amey did mention that the school on the east side of Sundon road might be advantaged by this cycle lane, this school is a primary school and the pupils do not travel to school on cycles nor do their parents transport them on same.

My objection is that this proposal serves no assessable purpose and is a waste of council tax payers money which could more usefully employed. S reply to my letter would be appreciated.

I live in Farm Close which is off Dalling Drive which is off Easthill Road. Every day of the week I drive up Easthill Road from Sundon Road to access my house. Over the years, there have been many occasions when I have been confronted by vehicles coming down the road as well as

turning round in the mouth of the road, not to mention cyclists, all of whom see fit to ignore the no entry signs at the other end of the road.

I am as good an expert on Easthill Road as you can get.

The road is wide enough to allow access up the centre of the road in the almost certain event of there being cars and vans parked on both sides of the road. I have seen plans of the proposed contra-flow cycle lane which appear to be sending cyclists down the right hand side of Easthill Road towards traffic. I have seen the proposed parking bays, also on the right hand side of the road. This means that any cyclist brave enough to be towards the middle of the road could easily find himself/ herself confronted by a vehicle coming towards him/her overtaking a parked vehicle on the left hand side of the road. Put another way, an unsuspecting driver might suddenly be confronted by a cyclist and, should a collision take place, we all know who will come off worse. This proposal by the council is sheer lunacy!

Take it from me, if a cyclist wants to ignore the no entry signs and get to Sundon Road, usually riding on the footpath, they will!!

The premise that this contra-flow will somehow encourage more people to cycle is risible. Have the council anything better to do than spend, sorry, waste taxpayers' money on such hare-brained schemes?

If you have money to spare then visit Farm Close where you will find quite a few potholes that need repairing.

I strongly object to your proposal of making a cycle path in Easthill Road. Thus allowing only cyclist to travel the other way to all other traffic. I feel this would be extremely dangerous, as in the "real life" situation most drivers would see this as a one way street and that all traffic should be travelling in the same direction. Plus I feel that some drivers will think "well if it's alright for a cyclist to come down this road then why shouldn't I"

We already have enough traffic dangerously going down our road the wrong way. This is either because there are not enough road signs advising so, or that they are incorrectly positioned. Therefore to allow some traffic to travel both ways will just be even more confusing and I'm sure will lead to even more near misses that we've seen or worse.

My other reason to object is that of parking restrictions, both for my family and our visitors. I do not want to start falling out with my neighbours because we are fighting for a parking space. We have a good community here and I do not want my council to be the cause of any disruption which could accumulate to a serious level in the future to such an extent which my involve the police.

If you must introduce more cycle paths then I'd propose that you extend the ones you already have in place. Or put them next to the main arterial roads for those who are able to commute to work locally.

Personally I'd rather see your money spent on making it clearer that our road is a one way street (painted white arrows) wording "ONE WAY STREET" and some traffic calming measures put in place (that don't restrict parking). Or my second suggestion would be a round-about at the junction of Leafields and Sundon Road. It is quite difficult to get out of there on some days and would also help to reduce the speeders along that stretch of road.

Your careful consideration to my objection of your plans is much appreciated and i would be interested to know the result of consultations you have in this matter.

Re: Central Bedfordshire Council (Easthill Road, Houghton Regis) (One Way traffic) order 201

My wife and I have probably lived in this stretch of the road longer than anyone else. When we first moved into our house in October 1964 the road from Sundon Road to our house was a dirt track with no made up pavements. When eventually the road was made up and pavements installed, the road was two-way, until it was decided that it was too dangerous to exit from Easthill Road on to Sundon Road because of poor visibility. This is one of the reasons why we do not think it would be advisable to have a cycle track exiting on to Sundon Road, also the volume of traffic in those days was only a fraction of what it is today. Surely it would be safer for all ALL traffic to exit onto Sundon Road from Leafields!

Another major concern is the parking. Most people on this stretch of the road have more vehicles than they can park off road, and we are concerned that if parking is in anyway restricted it will cause serious conflict between neighbours. It is not an option to think the car park at the Quadrant could be used as an overspill as it is already used to capacity by the people living in the flats.

In all the years that we have lived here the number of cyclists coming down Easthill has been minimal (has a survey been carried out?). On the other hand we do get cars, vans and motorcyclists coming down the road on a fairly regular basis. Perhaps that is something you could look at.

We do accept that there is a speed issue – vehicles coming up Easthill far too fast, and when they reach the junction with the Quadrant barely slowing down. We have witnessed several near misses at that junction.

We feel it would be far safer for all concerned to have a speed bump at the beginning of Easthill Road and one where Easthill joins the Quadrant to prevent the boy racers, cars and motorbikes tearing up the road at excessive speed.

We do hope you will look favourably on the comments we have made above, as this proposal is causing considerably concern to the residents in Easthill Road.

I am writing to you with regards to the above order that I read about in a letter I received from you recently.

I would like to object for the following reasons:

- Why is it only Easthill Road in the Leafields estate is getting the contra-flow cycle lane and it's not even a main road?
- What will happen when the cyclists reach Sundon Road, which is a main road? Surely the traffic on Sundon Road is far greater and busier than Easthill Road; it would make more sense to have the contra-flow cycle lane on Sundon Road.
- Why is there only provision on one side of Easthill Road for parking bays? What about the other side of the road? This will surely cause conflict among neighbours!

- Cars and other vehicles speed excessively up the road and I'd rather the speeding issue be dealt with than have a contra-flow cycle lane.
- I hardly see a cyclist go up or down Easthill Road but on occasion I have witnessed them go down the middle of Easthill Road without care or attention and I hardly think that having a contra-flow cycle lane will make any difference as to whether they use it or choose to go down the middle of the road.

I have also noticed that cars, motorbikes and 'off road' motorbikes go illegally down Easthill Hill the wrong way. Especially 'miniature' motorbikes, the people (in most cases children) that ride these bikes, 99% of the time, do not wear crash helmets and have a disregard for their own and other members of the public's safety.

I would rather the issues of speeding, cars that go down Easthill Road the wrong way and 'miniature' motorbikes be dealt with, along with improving the condition of the roads and getting rid of pot holes (that seem to blight our roads at the moment) be tackled rather than have a contra-flow cycle lane.

I am very concerned about the proposed contra-flow cycle lane, as I am sure are other residents of Easthill Road.

In response to the proposed Cycle Lane in Easthill Road, I would like to raise the following objections and comments.

Easthill Road is presently wide enough to accommodate parking on both sides of the road, and this is necessary as anyone can see. With the addition of a cycle lane this will no longer be the case, so cars will park on the pavement as in many other areas, I don't see this as a desirable improvement to our road.

Is there any real need for this change when we are all supposed to be cutting back on spending, i.e. austerity measures that we are constantly reminded of by our government, is this just a waste of Council Tax payers money? Yesterday afternoon I spent gardening in my front garden, how many cycles travelled down Easthill Road? Just one who was riding in the middle of the road where he could have used the pavement or travelled via Leafields.

Then we have the safety issue. The reason Easthill was made one way many years ago was because of bad visibility at the junction with Sundon Road, surely it is inappropriate to encourage cyclist to use this junction when it is recognised as being dangerous, and when they get to Sundon Road there are no cycle ways for them to continue there journey.

Finally if money is available for improvements some traffic calming in Easthill would be most welcome as vehicles are often driving too fast and many don't slow down for the junction with Leafield, an accident waiting to happen.

I oppose the above suggestion of a two-way Cycle Lane in Easthill Road, Houghton Regis and a one-way Road for other vehicles.

Can you please let me know how this suggestion came about?

Can you please supply me with information about the residents who may have requested it?

How many bicycles are envisaged to use the proposed facility as at present we see very very few going past our door?

How will this impact on the parking in the road? Currently cars park all day and night on this stretch of road.

If the road is going to be narrower then could this impact on the emergency services.

Is this proposed Scheme really worth the expense? Could the money be put to better use elsewhere.

This road is also used by school children so should health and safety be re-considered on this project.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Appendix E

