
Meeting: Traffic Management Meeting

Date: 20 October 2009

Subject: Proposed Road Humps - Westoning Road, Harlington

Report of: Basil Jackson

Summary: To report to the portfolio holder the results of a consultation with residents of Harlington Village on the introduction of a raised table crossing point - with half width carriageway narrowing – outside Harlington Lower School and a raised junction with improved crossing points at the village cross roads, and to seek approval for a way forward for implementation.

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

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: Woburn and Harlington

Function of: Council

RECOMMENDATIONS:

that the measures proposed and advertised be implemented as set out in this report.

Background and Information

1. As part of the CBC Safer Routes to School initiative, Harlington Parish Council sought the design and implementation of measures outside Harlington Lower School and village cross roads (junction of Westoning Road/Church Road/Station Road/Sundon Road) in order to improve safety for both parents and school children and for the wider community. The design of the scheme has been developed by the Parish Council in partnership with Bedfordshire Highways, with the design of the scheme being funded by the Parish Council with an additional contribution towards implementation.

2. Following a feasibility study undertaken to provide improvement measures at the Lower School and Cross Roads, the following proposals were subject to an exhibition held at the Parish Council Offices:
 - Raised table crossing with half carriageway width narrowing on Westoning Road outside the lower school, intending to assist pedestrians crossing the road and to slow vehicle speeds past the school
 - Raised junction with improved crossing points and widened footways at the cross road junction of Westoning Road/Church Road/Station Road/Sundon Road intending to improve function-ability of the School Crossing Patrol and slow vehicle speeds through the junction on all approaches.

The results of this consultation were sufficiently positive that the decision was made between Harlington Parish Council and Bedfordshire Highways to proceed to formal consultation and detailed design.

Consultation and the Way Forward

3. An extensive consultation exercise was undertaken in September 2009 with all stakeholders, including letters being delivered to all residents in the vicinity of the proposals, as well as notices placed on site and details included in the Village Newsletter – delivered to all residents of the village.
4. As a result of this consultation, five objections were received to the proposals:
1no. Objection to the Raised Cross Roads and Raised Crossing Point, and
4no. Objections to the Raised Crossing Point, Westoning Road

The summary of the received objections and response are as follows:

5. Objection 1 – Proposed Road Hump, Westoning Road

The proposal for a half width build out with flat top hump will not help teach pupils to safely cross a standard width carriageway road. It will not improve safety of the children; it will still be possible for a child to run out in front of a moving vehicle. Suggest that money is spent educating the children in greater depth. Would recommend a part time 20mph speed limit. The half width build out will have an unnecessary impact on traffic for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Response:

Should the proposals go ahead, it is recognised that Road Safety Training should be delivered, both for correct and safe use of the crossing, and general road safety skills. Pedestrian guard-railing is to be provided adjacent to the pedestrian access to the school. An engineering solution to prevent children running into the carriageway in general is not possible, but education as previously mentioned would be of benefit. A part time 20mph speed limit is not considered deliverable and best value for the funds available for this scheme.

6 Objection 2 – Proposed Road Hump, Westoning Road

The proximity of the feature could result in situations where I would not be able to access my drive. I also have a caravan which needs to be coupled on the road, this will cause problems. If the proposal were to go ahead I would be seeking a reduction in my rateable value. The proposal does nothing to help the children cross the road. Traffic still has priority. A pedestrian crossing should be installed. Suggests traffic calming of Westoning Road and footway repairs.

Response:

The proposed 'No waiting at any time' restrictions have been extended since the exhibition of proposals as referred to in the letter of objection. As a result, vehicles waiting at the giving way lines will further from the vehicle access leaving the access clear from parked or waiting vehicles. The proposal will reduce the width of carriageway for which pedestrians need to cross, and therefore reducing the amount of time required to cross the road. The flat top road hump and priority give way will also reduce vehicle speeds through the crossing and on the approaches. The proposal will therefore go some way to help pedestrians cross the road safely. A request for structural maintenance improvements has been made and will be included in the 5 year programme. Details will be available later in the year when the draft programme is complete.

7 Objection 3 – Proposed Road Hump, Westoning Road

The proposal is totally inappropriate for a tranquil village such as Harlington. There has never been any sign of an accident outside the school. Parked cars make it impossible to speed. The danger is parked cars, this should not be allowed. Yellow lines with enforcement are needed. A defined crossing point however would be welcomed. Should the proposal proceed then I would require:

- Compensation for the devaluation of my property
- A reduction in the rateable value of my property
- Compensation for the loss of my living environment
- The name and address of the person/persons who concocted this proposal

Response:

Whilst there is not an injury accident problem outside the school, problems identified in the Schools' Travel Plan orientated around difficulty crossing the road and speed of traffic outside the school. The measures have been developed to address these issues whilst being as sympathetic as possible to the surrounding areas. The location of the works is not within a heritage area, but finishes have been chosen to enhance the feature for both aesthetics and to increase awareness of the feature. Parked vehicles are being removed from the area outside the school as suggested by the objector, but by doing so may result in increased vehicle speeds past the school. A speed reducing feature built into the crossing point was therefore felt to be required – as is being proposed.

8 Objection 4 – Proposed Road Hump, Westoning Road

I have no objection to the construction of road humps; I have concerns about the kerb build outs. In my experience, such build outs pose a potential danger to traffic. A sudden unexpected build out seems to me to do more harm – an example is Brewers Hill Road, Dunstable. In addition, an example in Tottoernhoe, if a vehicle is following close behind a large vehicle, the build out will not be seen, and may cause sudden swerving.

Response:

The build outs referred to in the letter of objection are not comparable with the feature proposed on Westoning Road. Due to the down hill alignment of Westoning Road, visibility to the feature will be excellent, giving the opportunity to plan manoeuvres in advance. The build out is approximately 3m wide and the contrast to the red herringbone on the road hump will achieve high levels of conspicuity. The raised platform will eliminate the potential for high approach speeds to 'beat' opposing traffic to the feature.

9 Objection 5 – Proposed Raised Cross Road Junction and Road Hump, Westoning Road

Whilst supporting the aim of improving safety for pedestrians, I must object to these proposals. As to the Confederation of Passenger Transport's response to Government consultation, road humps are unsuitable where public transport operates. The use of a raised junction is also not suitable for cross roads, as only Westoning Road and Sundon Road require slowing down. Driver and pedestrian behaviour at the junction will lead to confusion and increased danger. The main problem is traffic from the A5120 using Station Road. A new roundabout should be constructed at the Barton Road/Goswell End Road junction to re-route traffic through the village.

Response:

Whilst it is recognised that public bus services operate on this route, a balance must be struck between passenger comfort and providing infrastructure to improve pedestrian safety. The two features are to be installed in two isolated locations, rather than a series of deflections which could severely affect passenger discomfort. No objections have been received from the bus operator. Whilst vehicles approaching the cross road junction on Station Road and Church Road are required to stop or give way, there have been cases of overshoots and excessive speeds towards the junction. With the presence of a School Crossing Patrol operative at this location, a feature to reduce vehicle speeds on all approaches is felt to be appropriate. Crossing points at the junction are to be highlighted with flush dropped kerbs, tactile paving and reflective bollards, in order to increase conspicuity to approaching motorists. Despite engineering measures to improve and highlight crossing points, and measures to reduce vehicle speeds, the onus is always on the pedestrian to assess conditions before choosing to cross. Again, education for pupils could be of benefit with regard to using the crossings. It is not viable to construct a roundabout on the A5120 as part of this scheme.

10. It is considered that the proposed measures will best meet the aspirations of the Parish Council and community, to both reduce vehicle speeds at perceived vulnerable locations and to improve safety at desired crossing locations on routes to/from school.
- 11 The Westoning Road proposed road hump/crossing would be delivered in conjunction with proposed waiting restrictions and no stopping on school entrance markings, in order to keep the area around the school and crossing clear from parked vehicles.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The proposed course of action is therefore to implement the following measures as advertised as part of the Safer Routes to School package of measures:

- (a) To implement a raised table crossing point (75mm flat top road hump) with half carriageway narrowing outside Harlington Lower School
- (b) To implement a raised junction (75mm high) at the junction of Westoning Road/Church Road/Station Road/Sundon Road

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS
<p>Council Priorities: Improve road safety and promote sustainable modes of transport</p> <p>Financial: There is an allocation of £32,364.00 in the current years capital work programme in addition to funds made available from the Parish Council from which this work will be funded.</p> <p>Legal: None as a result of this report</p> <p>Risk Management: None as a result of this report</p> <p>Staffing (including Trades Unions): None as a result of this report</p> <p>Equalities/Human Rights: None as a result of this report</p> <p>Community Development/Safety: Will improve safety for pedestrians amongst community</p> <p>Sustainability: Improved crossing points and traffic calming may help encourage modal shift.</p>

Appendices:

Appendix A – Advertised plans of proposals

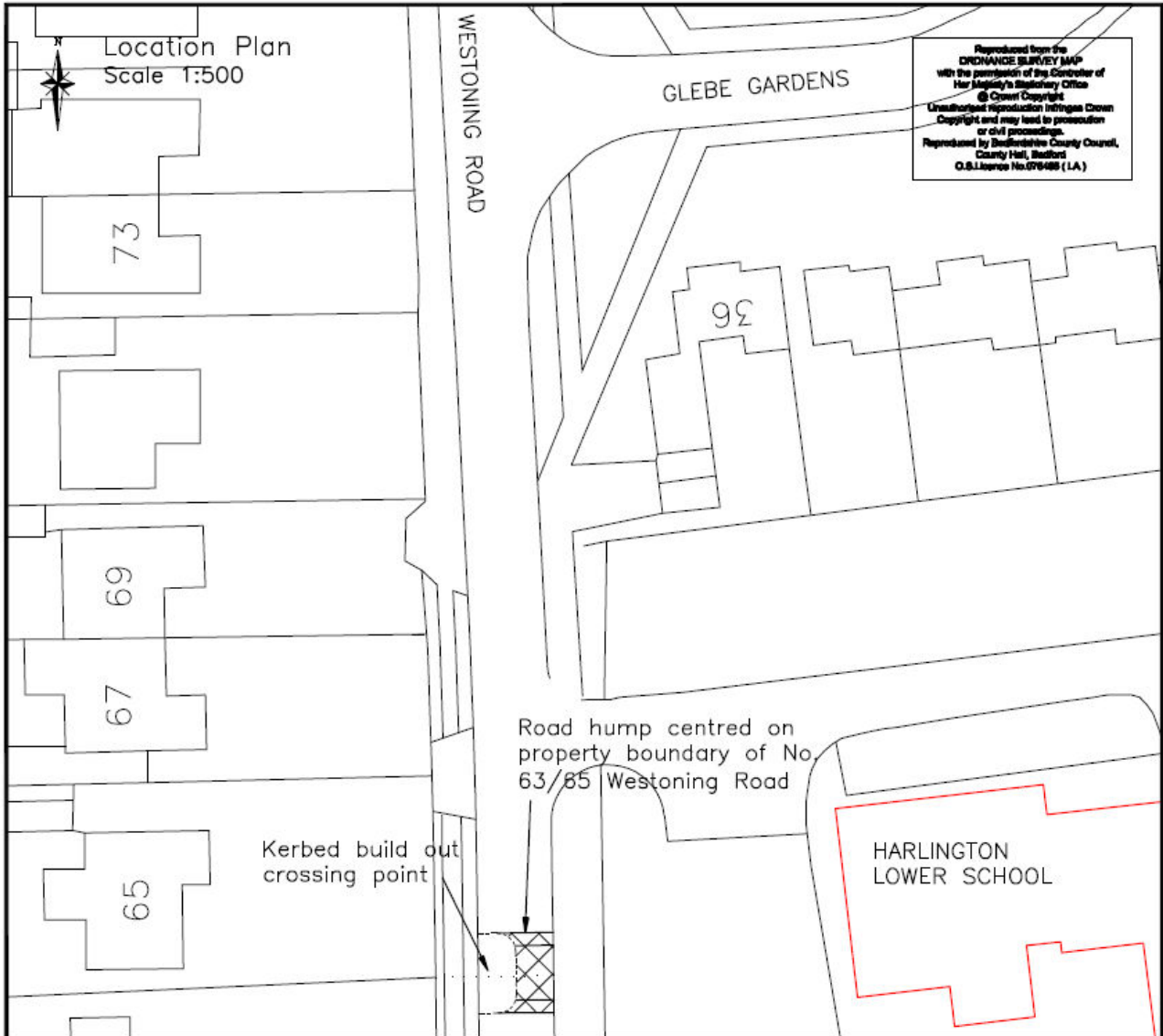
Appendix B – Copy of original notices

Background Papers

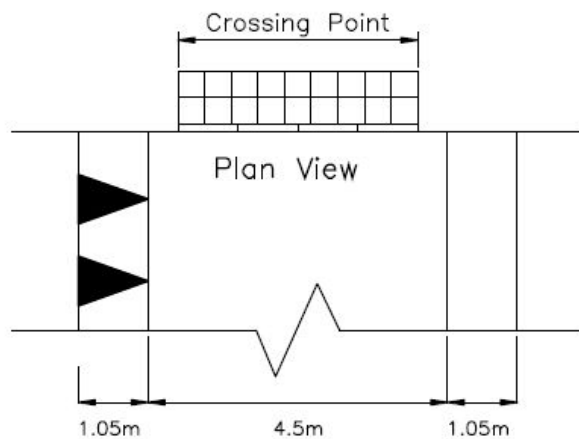
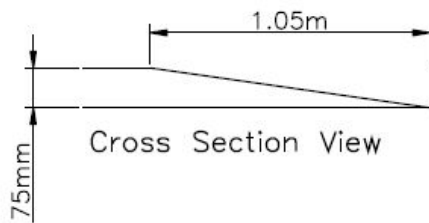
Copies of objections

Location of papers: Priory House, Chicksands and Parish Council Offices, Harlington

Appendix A



Approximate Dimensions of Hump
Not to Scale



Client

Managing Agent/Contractor

Project Title:
SRIS HARLINGTON

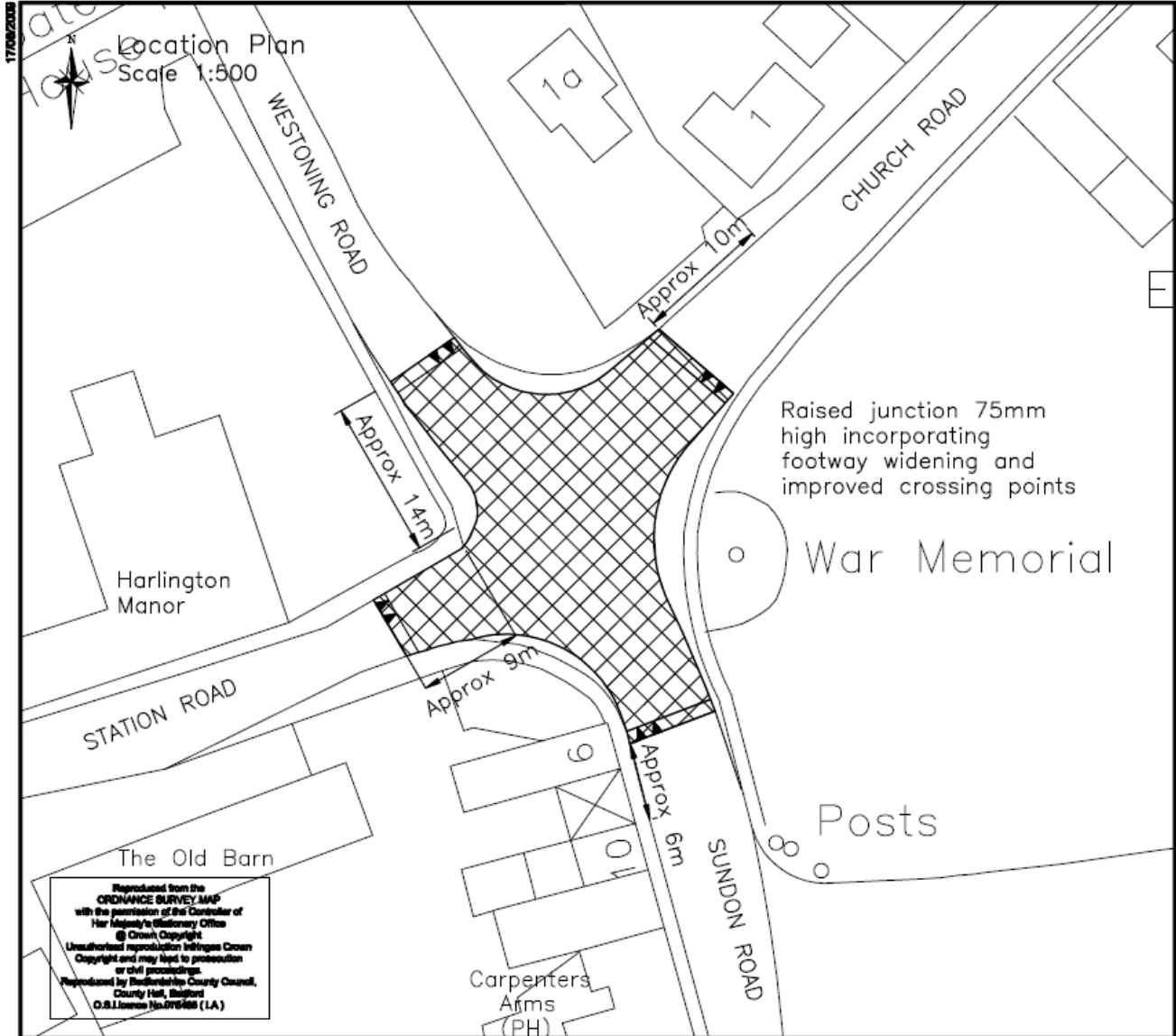
Drawing Title:
WESTONING ROAD HUMP TRO

Revision	By	Date	Description	Checked	Approved

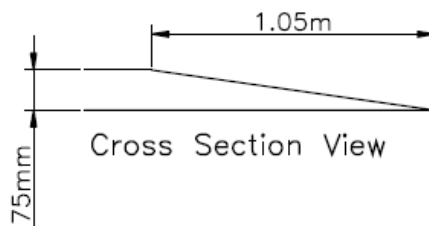
Drawing Number:
BH/300060/DR/TRO/001

Revised: -

Drawn By	Date	Checked	Approval	Drawing Scale	Drawing Status
AC	01/07/08	NOL	NOL	AS SHOWN	CONSULT



Approximate Dimensions of Ramp
Not to Scale



Project Title:
SRIS HARLINGTON

Drawing Title:
RAISED JUNCTION

Revision	By	Date	Description	Checked	Approved
Drawing Number:			Revision:		
BH/300060/DR/TRO/002			-		
Drawn By:	Date:	Checked:	Approved:	Drawing Status:	Drawing Status:
AC	03/07/09	NOL	NOL	AS SHOWN	CONSULT

PUBLIC NOTICE



THIS NOTICE SUPERSEDES THE NOTICE PUBLISHED ON 10 JULY 2009

HIGHWAYS ACT 1980 PROPOSED ROAD HUMP, WESTONING ROAD, HARLINGTON

Central Bedfordshire Council propose to construct a Flat Top Road Hump under Section 90 A-I of the Highways Act 1980 and all other enabling powers in connection with a road safety engineering scheme at Harlington Lower School as an integral part of the Harlington School 'Safer Routes to School' scheme to improve safety outside the school and promote walking.

In order to promote healthier lifestyles by walking and cycling to school rather than car use, it is felt measures are necessary to improve the area outside Harlington Lower School to make walking and particularly crossing the road directly outside the school safer.

The proposed feature is designed to restrict vehicle speeds and to provide an improved crossing point for pedestrians in conjunction with a half width carriageway build out.

The introduction of this measure will improve road safety and reduce the risk and severity of pedestrian, particularly child, injuries

The type of feature:

Flat Top Road Hump 75mm high across the full width of the narrowed carriageway between kerbs, with maximum overall length of 6.6m and ramp gradient of approximately 1:14

The feature is to be sited at the following location:

Westoning Road, Harlington – centred on the property boundary of numbers 63/65 Westoning Road

Further Details: of the proposals and plan BH/300060/DR/TRO/001 may be examined during normal office hours at Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Chicksands and normal opening times at Harlington Parish Council Office, rear of Parish Office, Church Road, Harlington. 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. Telephone 0845 365 6142 for further advice on this proposal.

Objections: should be sent in writing to the Orders and Commons Registration Officer, Countryside Access Service, Central Bedfordshire Council, PO Box 1395, Bedford MK42 5AN, stating the grounds on which they are made by 18th September 2009.

PO Box 1395
Bedford MK42 5AN

Basil Jackson
Assistant Director for Highways

20th August 2009

PUBLIC NOTICE

THIS NOTICE SUPERSEDES THE NOTICE PUBLISHED ON 10 JULY 2009

HIGHWAYS ACT 1980

PROPOSED RAISED JUNCTION - WESTONING ROAD/STATION ROAD/SUNDON ROAD/CHURCH ROAD, HARLINGTON

Central Bedfordshire Council propose to construct a Raised Junction under Section 90 A-I of the Highways Act 1980 and all other enabling powers in connection with a road safety engineering scheme at the junction of Westoning Road/Station Road/Sundon Road/Church Road, as an integral part of the Harlington Lower School 'Safer Routes to School' scheme to improve safety outside the school and promote walking.

Crossing the carriageway at the cross roads poses a problem for many pedestrians, especially on route to/from school. The purpose of the raised junction is to slow vehicle speeds at this location and provide improved crossing points.

The type of feature:

- Raised Junction 75mm high across the full width of the junction between kerbs with on/off ramps with gradients of approximately 1:14

The feature is to be sited at the following location:

At the junction of Westoning Road/Church Road/Sundon Road/Station Road, Harlington, with on/off ramps at the following locations:

- Westoning Road – approx 14m north-west of the boundary wall of Harlington Manor at the junction of Station Road.
- Church Road – approx 10m south-west of the property boundary of numbers 1a/1 Church Road.
- Sundon Road – approx 6m north of the northern property boundary of number 10 Sundon Road.
- Station Road – approx 9m south-west of the boundary wall of Harlington Manor at the junction of Westoning Road.

Further Details: of the proposals and plan BH/300060/DR/TRO/002 may be examined during normal office hours at Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Chicksands and normal opening times at Harlington Parish Council Office, rear of Parish Hall, Church Road, Harlington. Telephone 0845 365 6142 for further advice on this proposal.

Objections: should be sent in writing to the Orders and Commons Registration Officer, Countryside Access Service, Central Bedfordshire Council, PO Box 1395, Bedford MK42 5AN, stating the grounds on which they are made by 18th September 2009.

PO Box 1395
Bedford MK42 5AN

Basil Jackson
Assistant Director for Highways

20th[†] August 2009

Summary of Objections

Objection 1

Dear Sirs,

HIGHWAYS ACT 1980
PROPOSED RAISED JUNCTION – WESTONING ROAD/STATION
ROAD/SUNDON ROAD/CHURCH ROAD, HARLINGTON

Whilst supporting the aim of improving safety for pedestrians within Harlington Village, I must object to the above proposal.

Firstly, I refer to the Confederation of Passenger Transport's response to the Government's consultation on Road Safety, Strategies and Targets. A copy of an article from CBW 22 July 2009 is enclosed. Grant Palmer has recently placed low floor vehicles onto the local Toddington-Bedford X42 route to the benefit of less mobile passengers. In addition local school buses are operated by a variety of operators, mostly using elderly double deck vehicles which do not ride well over road humps and speed tables.

Second, the use of a raised junction is not appropriate for the crossroads. Traffic approaching from Church Road and Station Road already has to come to a halt before crossing Sundon Road/Westoning Road as does turning traffic. The only flow requiring slowing is that travelling from Westoning Road to Sundon road or visa versa. Some form of four-way give way or stop signing would seem to provide a simpler and cheaper solution.

Thirdly driver and pedestrian behaviour over the raised junction will lead to confusion and increased danger. As examples, pedestrians may assume (wrongly) that as the road surface is level with the pavement they have priority. Milton Keynes Council had to put up signs saying "pedestrians do not have priority" when wide humps were installed in Midsummer Boulevard. Furthermore, drivers approaching the raised junction may react in many ways. Examples include: cautious owner drivers who slow right down and gingerly mount the ramp, whilst commercial drivers and 4x4 drivers barely notice the ramps and do not reduce speed. Thus the poor pedestrian has a much more difficult task when estimating approaching vehicle speed and whether it is safe to cross.

Finally and most important, the proposal is a red herring. The major problem for both pedestrians and drivers is the volume of traffic across the crossroads – a volume increased by the roundabout at the junction of Toddington Road and the A5120. A more satisfactory solution would be reducing vehicle flow over the crossroads by changing the priority at the Barton Road/Goswell End Road junction and construction of a new roundabout at the Westoning Road/A5120 junction. This would allow Goswell End Road to serve its originally intended purpose as a partial village by-pass. Removal of traffic from Church Road with two severe and narrow bends and only a single narrow footpath and from Station Road also with a very narrow single footpath would represent a much greater gain to safety than the proposed raised junction. Both of these highly dangerous pedestrian routes are heavily used at peak times by commuters to the Rail Station and students going to the Upper School.

On the other two proposals I would simply restate the CPT objection to the hump in Westoning Road and note that it is one thing to introduce no-waiting restrictions but quite another to enforce them. A trip around many Luton schools will illustrate the point. Many parents seem to believe that yellow lines are there simply to help them park parallel to the kerb!

In summary the aims are laudable but the proposals use scarce resources to benefit only one main group - schoolchildren going to the Lower School. Alternative solutions should be sought which will benefit a wider section of the village and represent true value for money.

Objection 2

Dear Sir

Re: Proposed road hump, Westoning Rd, Harlington. Plan: BH/300060/DR/TRO/001

I write with regard to the public notice of the safety engineering scheme at Harlington Lower School; proposal and plan number BH/300060/DR/TRO/001. My particular concern is in connection with the proposed flat top road hump across the carriageway adjacent to properties 63 and 65 Westoning Road.

Whilst I fully understand the need for speed-reducing measures and have no objection to the construction of road humps, I have concerns about kerb build-outs, as proposed in this instance.

In my experience, with reference to other features of this kind, such kerb build-outs pose a potential danger to traffic. Especially when visibility is reduced, due to darkness or bad weather, a sudden and unexpected kerb build-out seems to me to do more harm than good; giving rise to possible unexpected swerving or braking. The kerb build-outs in Brewers Hill Road, Dunstable seem to me to be a prime example. They are anything but clearly visible and I can easily imagine an unsuspecting motorist hitting the suddenly build-out kerb and blowing a tyre ... or worse. They don't actually seem to serve a purpose in slowing traffic; just causing a hazard. In addition, cyclists would be forced to move out across traffic at this point, which could be dangerous, both to them and to motorists.

A further example, of a more severe build-out, is at the speed limit on the outskirts of Totternhoe, at the bottom of the hill up to Dunstable. Whilst this is more visible from a distance, it is not if a large vehicle is being followed down the hill. I have seen vehicles closely following another swerve hastily to avoid hitting the build-out, as the vehicle in front moved to the right and suddenly revealed it. This is dangerous, not only for the vehicle doing the swerving, but to any vehicle coming the opposite way, which has priority and might not realise that a second vehicle is following the first as it goes around the build-out. Clearly, the vehicle should NOT be following so closely, or possibly so fast ... but this does not get away from that fact that the build-out poses a danger due to the fact that it can be unexpected and hidden from view; and seems to me not to be a safe way of slowing traffic.

In summary, I have no objection to the construction of speed humps but see no advantage in building out the kerbs as far as speed reduction is concerned. In my opinion this will only serve to make the road more dangerous, not less.

Yours sincerely

Objection 3

Dear Sir or Madam

PROPOSED ROAD HUMP HARLINGTON LOWER SCHOOL CENTRED ON THE PROPERTY BOUNDARY OF NUMBERS 63/65 WESTONING ROAD

I protest most strongly about the above proposal and clearly it has not been thought out in a proper manner. The proposal is totally inappropriate for a tranquil village such as Harlington.

I have resided at number 65 for well over 30 years and in all that time there has never been any sign of a road traffic accident outside the school due to speed. At opening and closing school times Westoning Road is full of parked school cars making it impossible for speeding traffic.

The danger problem is cars parked right outside the school gates making crossing the road hazardous. Parking outside the school should not be allowed. The simple and cheap answer is double yellow lines outside the school and occasionally regulated by the police. After all, they cost us people a lot of money and we receive very little in return. In addition, a defined school crossing would be welcomed.

If the council has a surplus of "peoples' money" available then there are projects of much higher priority in Harlington, e.g.

- The footpath up to the surgery in Westoning Road. (Try going to the surgery in a wheelchair).
- Trees need cutting back in Westoning Road.

- The appalling state of the road in Station Road.
- The walk-way at the local shops. Gaps of 5 c.m. wide between the paving slabs. (A broken ankle awaits).
- And so on, many more.

Should the proposal proceed then I would require:

1. Compensation for the devaluation of my property
2. A reduction in the rateable value of my property.
3. Compensation for the loss of the quality of my living environment.
4. The name and address of the person/persons who concocted this proposal without knowing what they were doing to the village and local peoples' environment.

Why would anybody in their right mind impose and spoil others environments that they would not impose on themselves?

My solicitors have been alerted.

Yours faithfully

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Objection 4

Dear Sir

ROAD HUMP OUTSIDE NOS 63/65 WESTONING ROAD, HARLINGTON

I object to the above proposed road hump, and whilst doing so make the following observations:-

Your Public Notice in the Herald and Post dated 9th July 2009 states "Flat Top Road Hump 75mm high across the full width of the road between kerbs- - - -" is not what I understood the proposed structure to be. According to illustrations sent to me, and an exhibition on the subject that I attended at the local Parish Hall on 9th July 2009, the proposed structure was a half road blockage allowing passage on South Bound side of road only, and waiting lines for North Bound traffic directly outside my drive, which means there could be situations when I would not be able to access my drive. I find this totally unacceptable. I have a caravan which needs to be coupled on the road and the structure proposed would cause me severe problems, and indeed severe problems for passing and waiting traffic. If this proposal were to go ahead I would be seeking a reduction in my rateable value. Also your Notice states "- - - -it is felt measures are necessary to improve the area outside Harlington Lower School to make walking and particularly crossing the road directly outside the school safe." As I see it, the proposed structure does nothing to help the children cross the road at all. Traffic still has priority, not the children. If a Pedestrian Crossing were to be installed, this would give children priority. Not only would children of the Lower School benefit, but so would children of Parkfields Middle School, Toddington, who are collected and returned by 'bus to the pavement outside the Lower School. Also to benefit from a Pedestrian Crossing would be the Mothers and Toddlers Group who meet next to the Lower School. Incidentally, I have lived here for 21 years and there has, as far as I am aware, never been a serious accident outside the School.

At peak times Westoning Road is quite a busy road, and I do agree some calming measures are needed. May I suggest traffic bumps (preferably the 2 metre square type) are placed at strategic points along the length of the road, rather than one outside the school. This would tend to have a calming effect over the whole road and would not reduce the usable road width. In conjunction with these road bumps a Pedestrian Crossing would solve all our problems.

In closing, if money is being spent in this way it would be better to repair the pavements in this road and others in the village. My Wife is in a wheelchair and a journey to the surgery further up the road, and indeed to the shops in Lincoln Way, is very dangerous, to put it mildly.

I once again stress my objection to the structure described to me

Yours faithfully

Objection 5

Objection to plan BH/300060/DR/TRO/001 for Westoning Road Harlington

Dear Sirs

The part of the proposal for a "half width carriageway build out" with flat top road hump will not help to teach pupils to safely cross a standard width carriageway road which will be the "normal" situation in other aspects of their lives. The plan will not of itself improve the safety of the children. It will still be possible for a child to run out in front of a moving vehicle in the vicinity of the school or indeed anywhere. I suggest that the money proposed for the scheme be better spent in educating the children in greater depth about the safe use of roads and pavements. The parents should also be involved in this so as to re-inforce the safety messages. I do not believe that a half width carriageway will "promote healthier lifestyles by walking and cycling to school rather than car use" as stated in the proposal. The half width carriageway will of itself promote nothing of the sort. I agree that the "no waiting at any time" put forward in another proposal may force some parents to walk their children to school thus promoting a healthier lifestyle.

As a possibly more soundly based proposal I believe that the council should investigate variable speed limit signs that flash "20MPH" at the busy times of the school day and are otherwise "off". I am told that such signs are currently in use on school roads in Scotland. Can I ask that the council check the effectiveness of these signs and their cost relative to the proposed scheme.

Will the council also note that the half width carriageway will have an unnecessary impact on road traffic for twenty four hours a day seven days a week.

Why does the Notice state "...reduce the risk and severity of pedestrian, particularly child, injuries". I would rather have no injuries to any pedestrian adult or child, and this will be made far more likely by teaching parents and children how to correctly use the existing infrastructure.

Yours Sincerely