
Meeting: Traffic Management Meeting
Date: 7 January 2013
Subject: Petition for Traffic Control on Tempsford Road bridges - Blunham
Report of: Jane M. Jane Moakes, Assistant Director Community Safety and Public Protection
Summary: To report to the Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Services the receipt of a petition requesting the above and outline the response.

Contact Officer: Nick Chapman
nick.chapman@amey.co.uk
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: Sandy
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

To improve highway safety and improve the environment for residents

Financial:

The cost of introducing the signals and associated works will be in the region of £115,000 subject to detailed design and estimate and this has been included within the structures forward programme for 2013/14

Legal:

None as part of this report

Risk Management:

None as part of this report

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

None as part of this report

Equalities/Human Rights:

None as part of this report

Community Safety:

None as part of this report

Sustainability:

None as part of this report

RECOMMENDATION(S):

The Executive Member's is asked to note the contents.

Background and Information

1. In recent years there has been increasing concern at the amount of damage being caused to the structures of the twin river bridges at Tempsford Road Blunham by vehicle strikes.
2. The bridges are both scheduled ancient monuments and as such must be repaired to exacting standards. This effectively rules out the replacement of the structures to current bridge standards.
3. Each time there is a vehicle strike that requires repair there is also a need for extensive traffic management to be put in place to effect the repairs as the bridges are narrow in nature.
4. A typical cost for repairing a fairly minor vehicle strike is therefore in excess of £5k and this can happen more than once in a year. Thus the current and ongoing costs of repairs to the structure itself are considerable.
5. In addition a number of the collisions that have taken place within the confines of the twin bridges have also resulted in personal injuries to occupants of vehicles. There have been 6 collisions involving slight injury in the last five years. Quite clearly drivers travelling on or over structures or in places where visibility and width are restricted should be doing so at a speed and in a manner that suits the road conditions. The fact that all injuries have been slight is some evidence of this but clearly drivers are not driving sufficiently carefully to avoid collisions either with each other or the bridges.
6. A petition has now been received with 497 signatures requesting that Central Bedfordshire Council install traffic signals to control traffic across these bridges.
7. Additionally one of the bridges is in a fairly weak condition and without some means to control traffic over the bridge would require a reasonably swift intervention to undertake strengthening works. Control using signals would address that need.
8. The combination of collisions, bridge strikes and the requirement to control traffic for structural purposes in combination provide a reasonable case for introducing traffic control. Shuttle working by priority has been ruled out due to lack of intervisibility of opposing drivers thus formal control with signals would be the preferred option.

This will require detailed design and also some resurfacing works between the two bridges to adjust levels with the access to the mill house which is accessed from between the structures.

Conclusion and the Way Forward

8. Following the most recent incident on the bridges and the associated works to undertake repairs a scheme has been proposed for the signalisation of the bridges as part of the structures capital programme.

This is currently in the 2103/14 structures capital scheme programme for design and implementation in that financial year.

This will be communicated to the lead petitioner.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Petition wording