
Meeting: Traffic Management Meeting
Date: 21 November 2013
Subject: Hitchin Road and Clifton Road, Shefford

Report of: Jane Moakes, Assistant Director Community Safety and Public Protection

Summary: This report seeks the approval of the Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Services for the installation of a zebra crossing and the introduction of waiting restrictions near the junction of Hitchin Road and Clifton Road, Shefford following the receipt of objections.

Contact Officer: Neil O'Leary
Neil.O'Leary@Amey.co.uk
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: Shefford
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The proposal will improve road safety and improve parking facilities.

Financial:

The funding situation is as set out in the report. Sufficient S106 funding is available to implement Option 1 including the changes to speed limit.

Legal:

None from this report

Risk Management:

Should a scheme not be delivered the S106 money will need to be refunded to the developer including the amount already spent

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

None from this report

Equalities/Human Rights:

None from this report

Community Safety:

None from this report

Sustainability:

None from this report.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Services approve the implementation of the proposals as advertised and note that an additional Traffic Regulation Order is to be advertised to extend the current 20mph limits to include the junction.

Background and Information

1. The site is on a very well-used walking route to and from schools, particularly Samuel Whitbread Academy. It is also an essential part of the pedestrian route from Shefford to the Health Centre located further south on Hitchin Road.
2. The original scheme as designed will significantly improve pedestrian facilities and road safety near to the junction of Hitchin Road and Clifton Road. This forms part of the Safer Routes to Schools element of the Highway programme as well as significantly improving the walking route to the Shefford Health Centre for the local community.
3. This scheme is funded through a S106 agreement from planning application MB/08/02093/FULL - Shefford Town Football Club, Ivel Rd, Shefford (£30,432.66)

The wording of the S106 states:

The provision of a zebra crossing, pedestrian and cycling improvements on Hitchin Road, Shefford in connection with Safer Routes to School.

4. The scheme proposal incorporates the provision of a zebra crossing, a re-design of the mini-roundabout, an informal crossing point and waiting restrictions. In addition the existing drainage system, traffic signs, road pavement, footway, verge and highways lighting in the vicinity were reviewed and improvements incorporated into the scheme.
5. The proposals were formally advertised by public notice during January and February 2013. Consultations were carried out with the emergency services and other statutory bodies, relevant Town and Parish Councils and Elected Members. Residents expected to be directly affected by the proposals were consulted individually by letter.
6. Two objections and three other representations have been received. Copies of all representations are included in the Appendix and are summarised below.

7. The main points raised by the objectors relate to the proposed waiting restrictions on Clifton Road and are as follows:-
 - a) The cottages on the north side of Clifton Road have no off-road parking and the uncontrolled crossing point and yellow lines would prohibit parking outside their homes.
 - b) One of the objector's only means of access to his home is through a narrow walkway between adjacent properties. This has to be used for all items that he wishes to take into this home. The proposal would affect his life and make the property unsellable.
 - c) Residents have restricted visibility when exiting their driveways and parked cars on the north side of Clifton Road mean that vehicles approaching from the west are more visible to residents leaving their driveways.
 - d) The proposed restrictions will increase parking in Victoria Road where space is already limited.

8. The issues raised in the other representations are as follows:-
 - a) Various issues relating to the design of the mini-roundabout, such as the removal of trees, manoeuvring space for larger vehicles, will not reduce speeds or improve safety.
 - b) Parking restrictions should also be considered on the south side of Clifton Road.
 - c) The location of the zebra crossing in relation to the mini-roundabout.

9. Bedfordshire Police has no objection to any of the proposals.

Responses to the respondents from the original consultation

10. Bedfordshire Highways' response to the specific points listed in 4. above are as follows:-
 - a) It is accepted that there are properties on this length of Clifton Road that have no off-road parking. However, it is not ideal for parked cars to be positioned on the immediate approach to a mini-roundabout. In addition, as part of the re-design of the mini-roundabout, the footway on the north side of Clifton Road is being widened, so there is less road width at that point to accommodate on-street parking. There are concerns that the parked cars encourage passing traffic to move towards the centre of the road and consequently take a straight line through the junction, particularly when heading towards Hitchin Road.
 - b) Residents would still be able to stop on the proposed yellow lines to load/unload and to pick up/set down passengers. There is un-restricted parking within a short walking distance in Clifton Road and Victoria Road.
 - c) This point is acknowledged, but the footway widening on the north side of Clifton Road provides some entry deflection, which will alter the position of vehicles entering the roundabout and reduce their speed. This should go some way to addressing residents' concerns.

11. If the parking restrictions are implemented, Victoria Road is very likely to be an attractive alternative for residents unable to park outside their own home. Victoria Road does have some properties that have no off-road parking, although there is a reasonable amount of kerbside parking space available and very few parking controls.

12. Bedfordshire Highways' response to the specific points listed in 5. above are as follows:-

a) The proposed re-alignment of the mini roundabout is designed to increase vehicle entry deflection, which should help to reduce approach speeds. All approaches were modified to improve visibility, especially on the westbound carriageway of Clifton Road heading towards the town centre.

Auto track software has been used to predict vehicle paths and this has been incorporated into the detailed design. Traffic information and accident data were checked and considered in the design. The scheme will include the removal of vegetation (subject to ecological survey) to avoid the belisha beacons being obscured.

As a further safety improvement, it is intended to publish a proposal to extend the existing 20mph zone in the town centre eastwards to cover the Clifton Road/Hitchin Road junction.

This should further reduce traffic speeds at this location. The required notices should be published in the coming weeks.

b) More extensive parking restrictions could be considered for that part of Clifton Road west of the Hitchin Road mini-roundabout, but this would further reduce the amount of on-road parking available for those who need it. Given that Clifton Road is relatively straight at this location, extensive yellow lines are likely to increase vehicle speeds, which is not desirable. It is seen as peripheral to the crossing scheme and, if justified, would need to be considered as a separate exercise.

c) The zebra crossing was designed to be sited as close as possible to the desirable pedestrian crossing line and complies with all relevant design guidance. If the crossing was located further away, such that pedestrians had to deviate from their walking route, then it is likely that they would simply not use it.

13. Additionally a desire was also expressed at the meeting for the whole of the mini roundabout junction to be implemented upon a raised platform and the existing 20mph limit extended to include this whole junction.

An extension to the 20 mph limit does not require the junction to be raised and in fact so doing would incur additional costs as existing features would have to be removed.

14. As a result of this the Executive Member for Sustainable Communities-Services deferred his decision for the following reasons:
- a) Council policy prefers zebra crossings to be on platforms, but that would involve the whole junction being raised.
 - b) Officers to investigate what funding available to achieve that.

Reason for Decision: Objections Received

The executive member requested that officers re-examine these proposals with a view to incorporating some of the suggested changes and that a further report be brought to the Traffic Management meeting as a result.

Review of Options-Pedestrian crossing Hitchin Road Shefford

15. As requested officers have re-visited these proposals and have looked at alternative designs and costings. In order to reconsider this item at committee it is important to understand the rationale for the recommended proposal. This is set out below:
16. **Recommended solution A: At grade zebra crossing with 20mph speed limit extension**

Funding for the crossing proposal was sought for the Shefford town football development in Ivel road and was explicitly for a crossing "a zebra crossing on Hitchin Road Shefford in connection with Safe Routes to Schools." The crossing has therefore been positioned as close to the observed pedestrian desire line as possible in order to promote correct use of the facility and maximise its use.

The observed desire line is in the general location of the existing give-way line on the Hitchin Road arm of the mini roundabout. Guidance contained within the Local Transport Note 2/95 (design of pedestrian crossings) states a minimum of 5m should be maintained between a junction and the position of a Zebra crossing.

This would be achieved by redesigning of the mini roundabout layout, which also intends to reduce the circulatory carriageway widths (through provision of deterrent paved overrun islands) and reduce vehicle speeds. A reduction of vehicle speed through the layout of the junction also negates the need to raise the crossing. This would be facilitated by extending the existing 20 mph beyond the junction.

17. **Alternative solution B: A raised zebra**

If the zebra was raised, a table of 6m minimum plateau would be required to accommodate the crossing and to minimise the level of discomfort for vehicle occupants, particularly for public service and emergency service vehicles, the ramps would then extend into the mini roundabout junction and result in vehicle traversing the ramps during a turning manoeuvre, increasing the likelihood of destabilisation.

In order therefore to accommodate this option, the crossing facility would need to be relocated off the desire line to ensure vehicles meet the ramps straight-on. Even if moved by a nominal 5-10m, the likelihood of the crossing being used correctly or at all is reduced. Additional implications to this option include removal of on-street parking currently present outside properties 3 to 11 Hitchin Road which would elicit further objections from local residents.

This option would also require additional consultation due to introducing a raised feature which could potentially introduce another 12 weeks of delay, assuming objections were received.

This option would require additional funding as there is not sufficient budget available to implement this option.

18. **Alternative solution C: Raising the whole junction**

In order to ensure that the pedestrian crossing is retained on the desire line a suggestion to raise the whole junction has been made.

This option would reduce vehicle speeds on all entries to the roundabout but would again add additional costs for a further consultation as well as the further 12 weeks delay as in the above option.

The implication of introducing another raised feature in close proximity to the existing raised table on Clifton Road means that this one would need to be removed as the recommended distance between raised tables is between 60-70 metres according to Traffic Advisory Leaflet 09/99.

This option would require additional funding as there is not sufficient budget available to implement this option.

The existing budgetary position

19. **The estimated costs of the 3 options are:**

	Option A (including 20mph extension)	Option B	Option C
	As consulted	Raised in isolation	Raised Junction
Total	£82,268.04	£88,268.04	£109,598.84
Short fall	£19,564.69	£25,564.69	£46,895.49

The budgetary deficit for the recommended solution can be met through the use of additional s106 monies available from other developments in the vicinity, subject to confirmation with the s106 monitoring team.

Conclusions and way forward

20. The conclusion is that whilst all the other suggestions have been carefully considered the preferred option remains the option originally designed. The alternatives all have benefits but also disbenefits as set out.

The proposed addition of the extension to the 20mph limit to include this junction and the presence of the junction and crossing themselves within this new limit are considered sufficient to reduce speeds. Alternatives that would move the crossing sufficiently to allow for it to be raised in isolation have been considered but they will take the crossing from the established desire line.

Due to the requirement for structural maintenance work at this location, this scheme will be implemented during the 2014/15 financial year when this budget becomes available, which will enable the consultation for the extension to the speed limit to be undertaken in 2013/14.

Recommendation

21. It is therefore recommended that Option A. is implemented which achieves the objective of implementing a crossing on the pedestrian desire line. These works taken with the proposal to reposition the mini roundabout, change the junction geometry, use the existing feature on Clifton road and extend the 20 mph speed limit, succeeds in slowing traffic sufficiently to negate the need to raise the crossing.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Drawings of Proposed Raised Zebra Crossing and No Waiting
Appendix B – Public Notice for Proposed Zebra Crossing
Appendix C – Public Notice for Proposed No Waiting
Appendix D – Objections and representations



PUBLIC NOTICE

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 – SECTION 23

PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN CROSSING – HITCHIN ROAD, SHEFFORD

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 zebra crossing in Hitchin Road near to its junction with Clifton Road. This work is part of a scheme to provide safer routes to school and includes a re-design of the nearby mini-roundabout junction.

A Zebra Crossing is proposed to be sited at the following location:

Hitchin Road, at a point approximately 7 metres south-east of its junction with Clifton Road.

Further Details of the proposal and a plan may be examined during normal opening hours at Shefford library, 1 High Street, Shefford SG17 5DD or online at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations. For more information, please contact Adrian Clothier, tel. 0845 365 6142 or e-mail adrian.clothier@amey.co.uk.

Technology House
239 Ampthill Road
Bedford MK42 9BD

Gary Alderson
Director of Sustainable Communities

18th January 2013



PUBLIC NOTICE

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL PROPOSES TO INTRODUCE NO WAITING AT ANY TIME IN CLIFTON ROAD, SHEFFORD

Reason for the proposal: The proposed Order is considered necessary on the grounds of promoting road safety. More specifically, the Order would introduce No Waiting at any time on lengths of road near the junction of Clifton Road and Hitchin Road. These changes are required as a result of the proposed re-design of the mini-roundabout, including the construction of a zebra crossing on the Hitchin Road leg of the junction and an informal crossing point to the west of the junction.

Effect of the Order:

To introduce No Waiting at any time on the following lengths of road in Shefford:-

Clifton Road, north side, from a point approximately 1 metre west of the property boundary of nos.53 and 55 Clifton Road in an easterly direction to a point in line with the west flank wall of no.73 Clifton Road.

Clifton Road, south side, from a point approximately 1 metre west of the property boundary of nos.61 and 63 Clifton Road in an easterly direction for a distance of approximately 23 metres.

Further Details of the proposal and plans may be examined during normal opening hours at Shefford Library, High Street, Shefford SG17 5DD or online at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations. 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. For more information please contact Adrian Clothier, tel. 0845 365 6142 or e-mail adrian.clothier@amey.co.uk.

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 12th February 2013.

Order Title: If made will be "Central Bedfordshire Council (Bedfordshire County Council (District of Mid Bedfordshire) (Civil Enforcement Area and Special Enforcement Area) (Waiting Restrictions and Street Parking Places) (Consolidation) Order 2008) (Variation No.*) Order 201**"

Technology House
Amphill Road
Communities
Bedford MK42 9BD

Gary Alderson
Director of Sustainable

18th January 2013

Appendix D

Mr. Xxxx Xxxx
xx Clifton Road
Shefford
Bedfordshire
SG17 5AE

22nd January 2013

F.A.O. Transportation Manager
Bedfordshire Highways
Woodlands Annex
Manton Lane
Bedford
MK41 7NU

Your reference: GPB/53362/6006724/3.12

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find below my objection re your proposed 'No waiting and zebra crossing – Hitchin Road and Clifton Road, Shefford'.

As you may be aware, parking for cottages that are on Clifton Road is next to none and the proposed, uncontrolled pedestrian crossing would be taking parking away from numbers 57, 59, 61, and 63 Clifton Road. I live at xx Clifton Road and the only access I have is a 3 foot wide walk way between number 55 and 61. This is the only access to my property, I have to get my trailer on its side down this alley and I also have to take my motorbike down this alley. Also any furniture I may need to bring in or out of my home, is only possible from the road as there is not a big enough angle on the pavement to turn left or right, you can only get things in to the alley way from the road. If the proposed uncontrolled pedestrian crossing were to be put there it would not only affect my life in many ways it would, in my opinion make my home unsellable. I would be happy to meet you any time on Clifton Road so you may get a better understanding of what I am trying to explain, I look forward to hearing from you to arrange this. My contact telephone number is xxxxxxxx and my e-mail address is xxxxxxx

You are unlikely to get a response from 63 Clifton Road as this property is currently empty and up to let. Also the lady that lives in number 61 is elderly and has to use a frame to get about. No. 61 does not have a vehicle of her own, she depends on family and friends picking her up from outside her home to go to the supermarket etc... I am sure they would have the same concerns as I do.

Yours faithfully

Mr. Xxxx Xxxxx

Dear Sirs

Regarding the proposed parking restrictions outside my house, 67 Clifton Road, Shefford.

Central Bedfordshire Council (Bedfordshire County Council (District of Mid Bedfordshire) (Civil Enforcement Area and Special Enforcement Area) (Waiting Restrictions and Street Parking Places) (Consolidation) Order 2008) (Variation No. *) Order 201**

This is indeed a dangerous location. People coming from the West along Clifton Rd from Shefford look to their right for traffic coming onto the roundabout from the Hitchin Road and if clear they speed up to get across the roundabout. Also, drivers coming from the West don't have a good view of the road slightly ahead across the roundabout as it curves away. Drivers like me pulling out of the shared access road beside nr 71 can't see cars coming along from Shefford because of the same curve. We can't see each other until too late if they have not slowed down for the roundabout.

More careful drivers slow down, but those less careful really, really speed through. I can't see them and they can't see me. I have had 3 near misses where the other car swerved across the carriageway. I was hit by one of them in at 50 mph 2011 as I pulled out of my shared drive (to the side of nr 71). The force of the crash carried my car some way across the road. Please see the attached photo.

I was glad to see that you were attempting to improve safety here, but the plans look likely to **decrease** safety.

1. The cars currently parked on the North side of the road force drivers to move to their right, which means they have a better view over the roundabout and pose less of a threat to those pulling out of drives or crossing on foot. The proposed parking restrictions will remove these cars, which are actually making things **safer** right now.

3. The notes describe freeing up road space to allow free flow across the roundabout. Why? So they can go even faster and hit some school children? Surely this is the opposite approach to that taken back along the road by the river, where the road has been deliberately narrowed to great effect.

4. Your note describes cars heading west into Shefford backing up onto the roundabout. This does happen at peak times and has probably saved some lives by slowing things down. but it is not caused by parking where you propose to ban it - because the road is wide enough by the roundabout for cars to pass each other in both directions even when cars are parked there.

5. Congestion is actually caused by cars parked on the south side of the road outside the funeral directors. Your proposal does nothing about this blockage.

Effects of parking ban

There is little or no off-road parking for the houses on the North side of your proposed restricted zone, nor for the pub. Removing on-street parking will greatly affect the people, including me, living here, so I object.

The only other place people could be able to park is to the South in Victoria Road. There are already disagreements there between residents arguing over the few available spaces. How will they react to 8 more residents of Clifton Rd parking there too? We residents have been talking to each other and have discovered that the those in Victoria Road, who will impacted by these changes, have not received any notification. Why is this?

The Occupier of:- x Digswell Close, Shefford.

23rd January 2013

With reference to:-

Proposed Zebra Crossing and No Waiting at anytime (Hitchin Road, Shefford)

Having lived at the above address for nearly 30 years, we have seen various changes to the road layout in front of our property and therefore believe we have a reasonable input to your proposed changes to the current roundabout & road junctions.

CONCERNS

The actual positioning of the Zebra crossing and its amber flashing lights on your diagram. From your diagram of the proposed layout of the Zebra crossing, we have assumed the beacon on our side of the road will be placed so that the high wall separating us with 2 Hitchin Road will shadow the light emitted from it. If this is not the case then we would certainly not want amber flashing lights, lighting up our front windows.

Currently close the area you propose to change is a medium size Lime tree, which has not been mentioned in the changes, we have assumed this would be removed to aid with the proposed changes. There are a row of these tree's which are over grown and should be dealt with in the near future as at the moment the School Double Decker Buses each day brush by the overhanging branches and branches fall off into the road.

Each working and School day very large oil tankers and Double Decker Buses approach the roundabout from Hitchin road direction and cut round the corner heading towards Clifton.

None of the above vehicles go round the current roundabout, because it is very awkward with the space to get round. Your revised roundabout layout doesn't make the situation for large vehicles any easier. Quite often very large double trailer juggernauts' that have lost their way have to mount the kerbs to get round and back up the Hitchin Road.

On the diagram we noticed an area shaded green indicating grass verge, this may seem like a good idea on paper but practically this area would end up with tyre ruts from large vehicles trying to get round the roundabout. Surely a solid base area would be more practical for the over steering of large vehicles.

OBSERVATIONS

The busiest time to observe how the traffic and pedestrians (mainly school children) negotiate the road junction and roundabout week days is from 7.45 to 8.45 in the morning. The large oil tankers arrive much earlier.

The other major issue is on the approach to the roundabout from Shefford Town centre there are parked vehicles along one side of the road. The traffic flow is particularly halted a great deal during the start of the working day and then at the end of the working day.

With the stop start traffic flow, the roundabout, roads to Clifton and Hitchin are at a stand still with stationary vehicles. To ease this daily occurrence and to make the roads safer, surely a single yellow line along both sides of the road down to the fire station road junction from the roundabout would alleviate this situation. (No parking from 7.00am to 7.00pm Monday to Friday). This would then allow residents to park their vehicles on the road at night.

Currently emergency vehicles struggle to get through that section of road with park cars blocking half of it. Likewise on Wednesday's when the refuse collection takes place again the road comes to a stand still with parked cars blocking the traffic flow. This situation will only get worse as more and more houses are built in Shefford and Clifton.

It was not shown on your plan to reduce the speed limit to 20mph as it is in the town, up to the roundabout and Zebra crossing. Currently vehicles drive through the roundabout in excess of 30mph. Along with this letter please find attached a folder with photographs of traffic and school busses on the existing roundabout. These photos were taken on 23rd January around 8.00am. These photos show the stationary traffic and how the double decker busses fail to negotiate the roundabout.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Xxxx & Xxx Xxxx

Whilst having no specific objections to the proposed work, perhaps you would allow me to make some observations.

The location of the Zebra crossing.

Is this not too close to the junction? Surely vehicles coming down Clifton Road, to turn into Hitchin road, would not see anyone on the crossing until after they have started to go round the corner?

And once a vehicle is stopped, they then prevent any more vehicles from accessing Hitchin road. This would then stop any vehicle coming East along Clifton Road, thereby holding up subsequent traffic from proceeding along Clifton Road, adding to the congestion.

Moving the crossing a few metres up the Hitchin Road would remove this potential hazard to pedestrians, and alleviate the congestion.

I notice the No waiting restriction is only on the North side of Clifton road. Should this not also be mirrored on the South side, to the same point as on the North?

And finally, will this work have any impact upon the speed of vehicles coming from the town, going East along Clifton road? Currently, vehicles speed along this road, not slowing down for the junction! It would seem that the proposed work will do little to slow this traffic. With this work being undertaken, now would be an ideal time to take action, before a serious accident occurs.

Xxxx Xxxx

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Proposed No Waiting and Zebra Crossing – Hitchin Road and Clifton Road, Shefford

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the proposed changes at the junction of Clifton Road and Hitchin Road, Shefford. I am writing to raise some concerns which may assist in the decision on the above proposed changes.

1. The drop kerb giving access to the lane between 71 and 73 Clifton Road also extends to give access to off road parking to the front of No 71, effectively making this a double drop kerb. Please can you ensure that the resurfacing of the pavement be extended to include both the drop kerb in front of 71 Clifton Road **and** the track so that there is a consistent pavement surface.
2. The track between 71 and 73 Clifton Road gives access to off-road parking for nine council taxed properties. The proposed changes should make little difference to access down the track.
3. There is a need for crossings to be installed. However, I am not sure that the location of the crossing just off the proposed roundabout in Hitchin Road is the best location. As vehicles leave Shefford, a number accelerate and cross the junction at speed (not always under 30mph!). Should the crossing be located further up Hitchin Road or the Clifton Road towards Shefford to give better visibility and away from the junction?
4. The proposals reduce the angle turning from/into Hitchin Road to go to Clifton to around sixty degrees. This acute turn will slow vehicles turning, particularly school buses and lorries, and affect traffic flow.
5. Although infrequent, when the by-pass is closed heavy vehicles go through this junction. The road narrowing, the bollards and the angles, particularly if the section closed is between the Airman and Henlow roundabouts on the A507, could create major traffic problems.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Xxxx Xxxxx