
Meeting: Delegated Decisions by the Executive Member for Community Services on Traffic Regulation Orders

Date: 18 February 2015

Subject: London Road, Biggleswade – Consider Objections to Proposed Toucan Crossing

Report of: Paul Mason, Head of Highways

Summary: This report seeks the approval of the Executive Member for Community Services for the installation of a Toucan Crossing in London Road, Biggleswade

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

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: Biggleswade South

Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

This proposal supports the following council priorities:

- Enhancing your local community – creating jobs, managing growth, protecting our countryside and enabling businesses to grow.
- Promote health and well being and protect the vulnerable
- Better infrastructure – improved roads, broadband reach and transport

Financial:

The overall cost of the scheme will be approximately £55,000 to implement the advertised TOUCAN crossing together with footway reconstruction and widening.

The budget for this comes from a number Section 106 contributions principally related to the Land East of Biggleswade development.

Legal:

A number Section 106 contributions will be used to design and construct this scheme.

Risk Management:

Should the contributions not be spent on traffic calming and sustainable transport before the claw-back dates the contributions may have to be returned to the developer. In this event this would potentially leave us with a budgetary liability for abortive costs and any money we have already spent to design and consult upon this scheme.

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, cyclists and other vulnerable road users in Biggleswade. This proposal will significantly increase the safety of pupils on the route to and from schools in the area.

Sustainability:

The proposal will support and encourage sustainable travel in line with approved CBC policy.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the proposal to install a Toucan Crossing be implemented as published.

CBC Transport and Planning Policy

1. This scheme had been developed in line and in accord with adopted Central Bedfordshire Council policies and priorities as outlined in:-

Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2026 (*Adopted April 1st, 2011*)

- a) Appendix E Walking Strategy
- b) Appendix F Cycling Strategy
- c) Appendix C Sustainable Modes of Travel to Schools and Colleges Strategy

Local Area Transport Plan – Biggleswade and Sandy (*Adopted April 1st, 2011*)

Background Information

2. The scheme has been developed to address pedestrian and cycling issues and concerns for pupils' safety on the route to Stratton Academy in Biggleswade. Additionally this crossing facility will facilitate access between the Land East of Biggleswade and the town centre facilities. All these issues have been identified as points for concern by both CBC officers and members of Biggleswade Town Council.
3. CBC officers and the Central Bedfordshire councillors have worked closely to identify issues, and potential measures to deliver this scheme. From this date regular discussions have taken place in order to develop this scheme.
4. This has resulted in this well supported proposal, which will deliver a value for money scheme which addresses many of the local concerns.

Scheme Proposal

5. The proposal is to implement a Toucan crossing on London Road on the desire line that pedestrians want to take at this location in order to traverse London Road. To see the proposed location please see Appendix C.
6. The proposed crossing is located on and close to popular walking routes to Stratton Upper School. Pedestrian and cycle activity is moderately high in the area and, as London Road forms the main route into the town from the A1 to the south of Biggleswade, traffic flows are also high at all times.
7. The Toucan crossing was formally advertised by public notice in November and December 2014. Consultations were carried out with the emergency services and other statutory bodies, Biggleswade Town Council and the Ward Members. Residents living alongside this length of road were individually consulted.

Speed and Traffic Count Data

8. In order to understand and quantify some of the issues on London Road a survey was undertaken. This measured the volume of traffic, vehicle classification and vehicle speeds.

Vehicle Count (both directions)	
7 day average	15,738 vehicles
Weekday average	16,616 vehicles
Vehicle class summary	
Cars	93%
LGVs	5%
Motorcycles/Pedal cycles	1%
Speed (both directions; 85 th percentile)	
Weekday average	34.12 mph
Percentage over speed limit	28%
Number of vehicles exceeding the speed limit per day (average weekday)	4,652

Representations and Responses

9. A total of four representations have been received; three of which have raised objections about a number of aspects of the scheme. One resident fully supports the scheme. Copies of the correspondence are included in Appendix D.

10. The main points of objection are summarised below:-
 - a) The crossing would be close to the Eagle Farm Road junction, so would cause congestion, particularly at busier times of the day.
 - b) There are very few cyclists in the area and those that are mainly use the footway.
 - c) The chosen location is on a slight bend, which reduces visibility for approaching drivers
 - d) The footway is quite narrow which will create an obstruction when people are waiting to cross.
 - e) A 20mph speed limit would be a more cost effective solution.
 - f) The crossing would create difficulties for residents turning into and out of their driveways and may even stop some being able to use theirs.
 - g) The audible warning would disturb nearby residents, particularly at night.
 - h) The zig-zag marking would make deliveries extremely difficult for adjacent residents.

11. Central Bedfordshire Highways' response to the points above are as follows:-
 - a) It is unlikely that the crossing will create any significant problems with congestion in the area. Breaks in the flow of traffic which area likely to be caused by the crossing could actually help drivers turning into and out of side roads and accesses. A non-signalised crossing might allow pedestrians to dominate at busier times, but a toucan crossing should not because it will be set to balance the demands of pedestrians and vehicular traffic.
 - b) The implementation of this crossing will help to support cycle traffic in this difficult area. It will also help to encourage active travel in and around Biggleswade.
 - c) As the crossing is signalised, there would be adequate forward visibility of at least one of the signal heads for approaching drivers.

- d) The footways are generally of sufficient width and in some cases are being widened to accommodate the movement of both pedestrians and cyclists. It is unlikely that there will be any shortage of space to the side of the crossing even during periods of heavy pedestrian usage.
- e) A scheme to introduce a 20mph speed limit in this area has been previously been proposed. However, in order to achieve 20mph compliance a significant amount of traffic calming would be required which when advertised proved to be particularly unpopular. This scheme was subsequently withdrawn.
- f) The proposed crossing will not prevent residents using their driveways.
- g) Although the sound levels for audible warnings will be within DfT guidance levels we can set the signals such that the audible warning would be deactivated at night.
- h) It is acknowledged that the zig-zag marking will prohibit all parking in the immediate vicinity of the crossing, but the properties affected have off-road parking available.

12. Bedfordshire Police have raised no objection to the proposals.

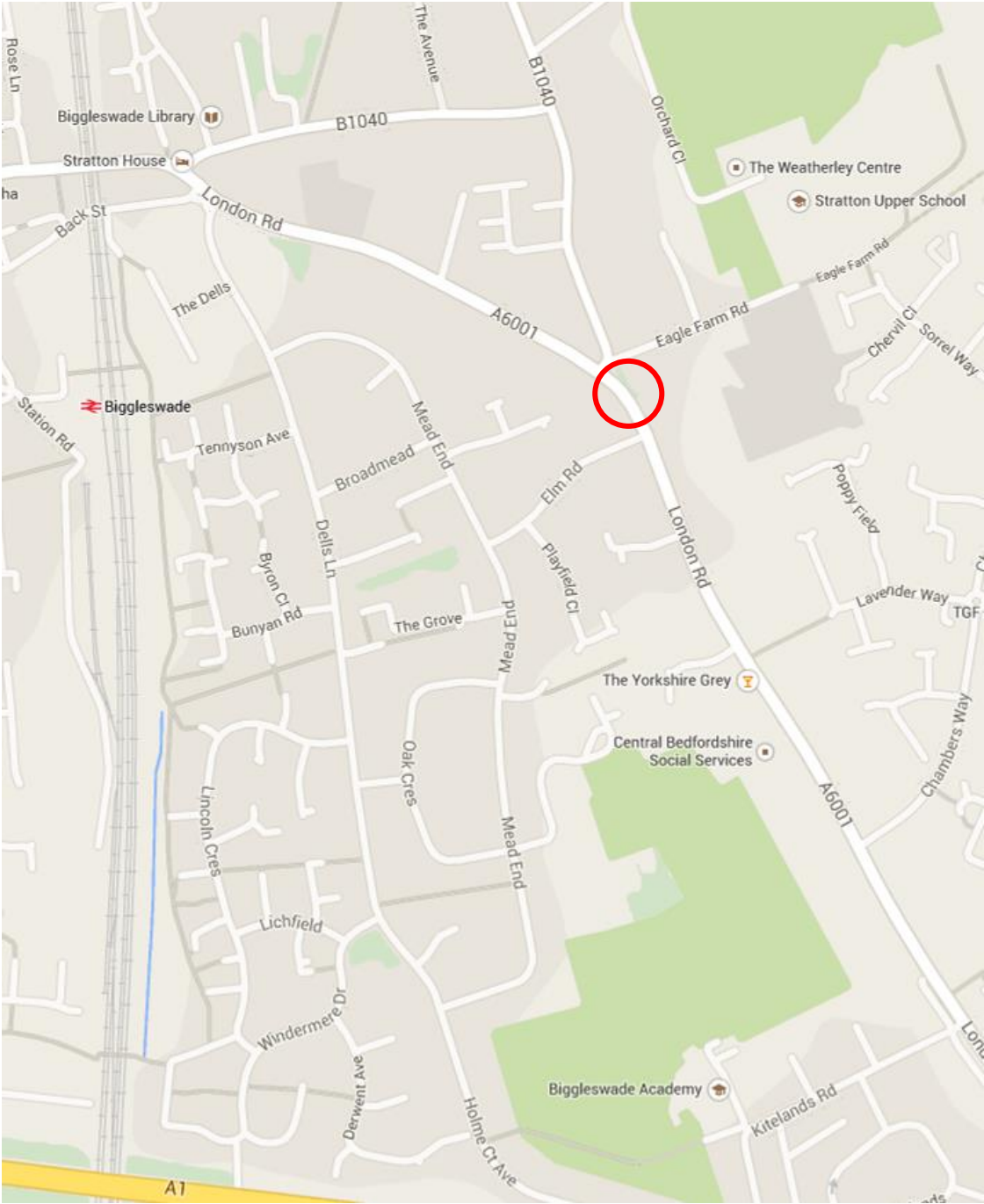
Conclusion

- 13. It is considered that the Toucan crossing is needed and will improve road safety and access for vulnerable road users. It is considered that the proposal will have no significant negatives impacts on the area or those living nearby. It is therefore recommended that the proposal should be implemented as published.
- 14. Subject to approval the works are expected to take place within the current financial year.

Appendices:

- Appendix A – Location plan
- Appendix B – Public Notices of Proposals
- Appendix C – Drawing of Proposals
- Appendix D – Representations

Appendix A





PUBLIC NOTICE

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 – SECTION 23

PROPOSED TOUCAN CROSSING – LONDON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE

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 signalised pedestrian and cycle crossing, including its associated zig-zag markings, in London Road, Biggleswade. These works are intended to improve pedestrian and cycling facilities, particularly for those travelling to and from schools in the area.

A Signalised (Toucan) Crossing is proposed to be sited at the following location in Biggleswade:-

London Road, at a point approximately 38 metres north of its junction with Elm Road.

Further Details a drawing may be examined during normal office hours at the address shown below; viewed online at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/publicstatutorynotices or tel. 0845 3656116.

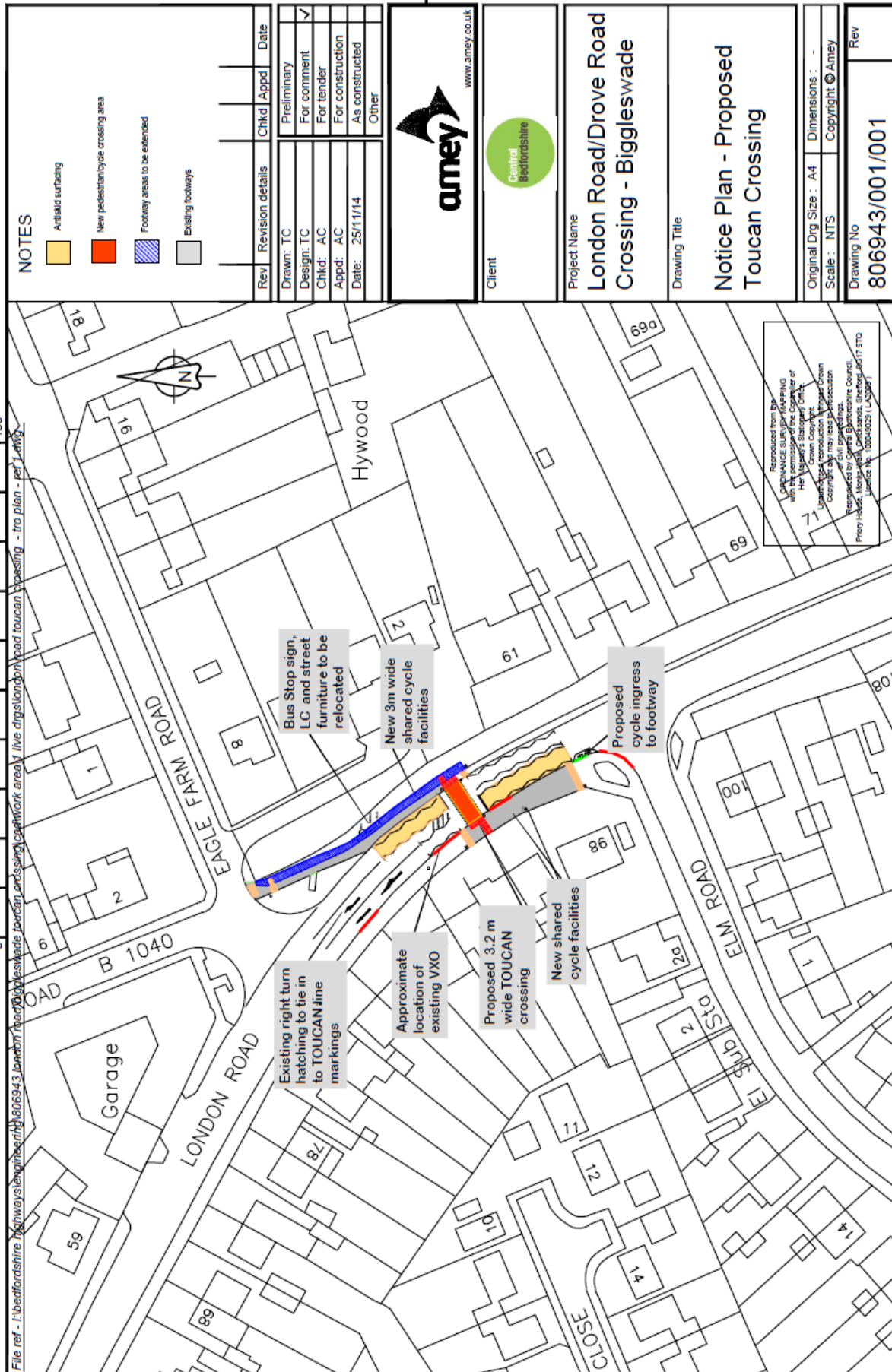
Comments should be sent in writing to the Transportation Manager, Central Bedfordshire Highways, Woodlands Annex, Manton Lane, Bedford MK41 7NU or e-mail centralbedsconsultation@amey.co.uk by 19 December 2014.

Central Bedfordshire Council
Priory House
Chicksands
Shefford SG17 5TQ

Marcel Coiffait
Director of Community Services

28 November 2014

Appendix C



Appendix D

Devs Sus

I am writing to express my concerns to your proposed Toucan crossing in London road Biggleswade. The crossing will be 40 m away from the junction of Eagle farm road which in the mornings and the afternoon is already very congested. With this crossing in place the already busy traffic will come to a standstill and will make getting out of Eaglefarm and Potten road impossible. Would it be possible for you to contact me so we could discuss this.

Kind regards

158403
RECEIVED 10 DEC 2014

As a very long standing resident at the above address we would like to make the following objections / comments and observations to the above proposal;

- 1) We have been a resident at the above address for more than 45 years we have never heard or been made aware of a single accident between a pedestrian/cyclist either minor or major.
- 2) From PERSONAL observation there are very few cyclists in this area and by counting those that are some 90% already use the footpath (although I THOUGHT this was against the law).
- 3) Positioning the crossing in the proposed sight would result in a VERY SEVERE bottle neck especially during rush hour as there is already quite severe tailbacks of vehicles caused both by cars waiting to turn right into Elm road and those waiting to turn right into Drove road Eagle Farm road by putting the crossing in between these two streams will cause total gridlock as the tailbacks will stop cars being able to turn.
- 4) I understand that the total cost of the entire ridiculous scheme would be in excess £100000 to cure a problem that does not exist and I find it inconceivable that there are not enough real hazards in the surrounding area that could better utilise some of these funds.
- 5) The crossing would be dangerous at the proposed sight as it is on a bend and between two corners thus reducing driver visibility and lulling the individual into a false sense of security and reducing their need to be traffic aware when crossing in this area.
- 6) The pathway is not overly wide in this location and with people waiting to cross will cause obstructions especially to people with prams etc.
- 7) Historically there was a lollipop crossing in this location but it was discontinued as being not needed.

8) A far cheaper and more effective solution would appear to me to be a localised lower speed limit I,e, 20 mph.

As a resident of one of the houses outside which the proposed crossing would be located I would like to make the additional comments:~

the area outside our houses 92/94 is too small and would not allow sufficient space for householders to get into,out of our drives safely especially at peak times. We have historically been allowed access to our drives this crossing would effectively remove this.

As a disabled person whom frequently is forced to spend long periods in bed the noise from the beepers and traffic both day and night would be virtually impossible to live with especially when it seems to be mandatory for both children and drunks to press the buttons even when they have no intention of crossing the road (THIS I HAVE OBSERVED FIRST HAND IN THE TOWN CENTRE).

Lastly collections from and deliveries to our houses would be extremely difficult as larger vehicles and lorries could no longer stop I,e, when bringing our coal.

As residents of Biggleswade where the planned crossing is to take place we have the following objections/comments to make:

- The road should be made with a 20 mph speed limit before a crossing is considered. The junction near Eagle Farm Road is often gridlocked and a crossing would exacerbate the problem whereas reducing the speed limit would not have this negative impact.
- It would be dangerous on the proposed site to have a crossing, it is near a corner and visibility is not great, this would reduce the responsibility on the individual to be aware of traffic when crossing that particular area.
- This is a wasteful use of the town's money – I understand that the cost would be in excess of £100k...
- The pathway is not wide enough to accommodate many people waiting – how do you propose prams will get past at peak times?

Also, as residents of the house outside which the planned crossing is to take place we have the following additional objections/comments to make:

- The area between our house (92) and number 88 where the crossing is proposed is too small and would not allow sufficient space for householders to get out/into drive. We have historically been allowed access to our drives via VXO which the crossing would effectively take away.
 - Deliveries – we would no longer be able to have larger vehicles stop on the drive.
 - Visibility – due to the location and our driveway being narrow the lights would be close to our living space and would have so would have an adverse effect.
 - There is potential for misuse through the night and cars stopping with loud music are going to cause great disruption to our quality of life.
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I fully support the proposed crossing on London Rd, It would be fantastic in my view to extend the 3m cycle path all the way up London Rd in my view. This would allow a safe route to industrial estate and also the new retail Pk. It would also provide a safer route to school.

There needs to also be a crossing just up from the junction with Dell Lane in London Rd. This is currently where the crossing lady stands in the morning and evening.

Also a blanket 20 MPH on all side roads in Biggleswade.
