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**Meeting:** Traffic Management Meeting  
**Date:** 14<sup>th</sup> February 2018  
**Subject:** Shortmead Street, Biggleswade – Consider objections to a proposed Zebra Crossing  
**Report of:** Paul Mason, Assistant Director Highways  
**Summary:** This report seeks the approval of the Executive Member for Community Services for the implementation of a zebra crossing to be sited at outside number 51 & 104 Shortmead Street, Biggleswade.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):-**

**That the proposed scheme be implemented as published.**

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Contact Officer: David Huston  
[David.Huston@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:David.Huston@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)  
Public/Exempt: Public  
Wards Affected: Biggleswade North  
Function of: Council

<b>CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS</b>
<p><b>Council Priorities:</b></p> <p>The proposal supports the following Local Transport Plan objectives:</p> <p>(J) Reduce the risk of people being killed or seriously injured</p> <p><b>Financial:</b></p> <p>Funded by developer (Section 106) contributions.</p> <p><b>Legal:</b></p> <p>None from this report.</p> <p><b>Risk Management:</b></p> <p>None from this report.</p> <p><b>Staffing (including Trades Unions):</b></p>

None from this report.

**Equalities/Human Rights:**

None from this report.

**Community Safety:**

This proposal will improve the safety of people when crossing Shortmead Street in Biggleswade, particularly children travelling to local schools and residents of the nearby retirement apartments.

**Sustainability:**

None from this report.

<b>Budget and Delivery:</b>	
Estimated cost: £37,000	Budget: Developer (Section 106) contributions
Expected delivery: August – September 2018	

**Background and Information**

- 1 This proposal has been brought about by a planning obligation by deed of agreement between the developers of 67 Shortmead Street and the Council under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, which requires *“the provision of a pedestrian crossing in the vicinity of the Site.”*
- 2 This scheme takes the opportunity to provide safe crossing of Shortmead Street to serve the residents of the development. It will also benefit other vulnerable road users, particularly school children attending St Andrews Lower School.

**The Scheme Proposal**

- 3 This scheme proposal comprises:
  - Zebra crossing of Shortmead Street.
  - A build-out of the footway to accommodate a Belisha Beacon Modupost with LED Collar and Cowl with a mask to contain flashing light.
  - Provision of a red blister tactile paving to aid visually impaired pedestrians.

## Automated Traffic Count (ATC) Data

4 The authority commissioned an independent and automated count of traffic volumes and speeds at the proposed location of the crossing collected between 16<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2017. This showed:

- Weekday Average Speed

Mean Average Speed (mph)
26.30 mph
85 <sup>th</sup> Percentile Speed
30.20 mph

- Traffic Volume

7 Day Average
43,576 vehicles

## Statutory Consultation

5 The proposals were formally advertised by Public Notice on the 15th December 2017. Consultations were carried out with the emergency services and other statutory bodies, and Biggleswade ward members. Residents and businesses in the vicinity of the proposed crossing received a letter.

## **Representations**

- 6 A total of 5 representations were received in response to scheme proposals. Of these, 1 expressed support for the proposal, 1 raised a concern and 3 made objections, which are summarised as follows:
- a) That the crossing would cause vehicles to slow down, then speed up, resulting in an increase in traffic noise and noxious emissions.
  - b) That the footway at the crossing location is insufficiently wide to accommodate queuing pedestrians and will adversely impact the security, privacy and accessibility of adjacent residential properties. Further, that the flashing beacons will create a disturbance given their proximity to upstairs rooms.
  - c) That the crossing is too close to the junction with Brunts Lane, creating an issue for traffic exiting onto Shortmead Street.
- 7 One correspondent suggested that a Puffin crossing would be preferable at this location on road safety grounds. On a similar vein another respondent suggested the need for additional traffic calming features to reduce excess speeds and suggested the crossing be placed on a raised table or split through the use of a central refuge island.

## **Officer Response**

- 8 The CBC Highways Officers' response to issues of concern is as follows:
- a) There is no evidence to suggest that the installation of zebra crossings has a quantifiable negative effect on indicators of air quality. Conversely, the effect on levels of emissions will be positive where a crossing encourages a mode-shift towards walking and cycling for local journeys such as trips to schools and local services.
  - b) The footway width is comparable to crossings at other locations, including for example 34 Shortmead Street, which has a similar layout. Users of Zebra crossings are not required to queue and must focus their attention on approaching traffic. Hence, there is no need or incentive to loiter in the vicinity of the crossing and consequently, the evidence is that they have minimal impact on adjacent properties. The use of 'shields' will ensure there is no light disturbance from the beacons.

- c) The crossing is sited to serve the desire line along Brunts Lane to St. Andrew Lower School and optimally located within the surrounding environment. Alternative locations to the north and south were considered but discounted. Moving the crossing to the south would bring it into close proximity with an existing Zebra. Moving it to the north would shift it too far away from the main desire line, making it significantly less advantageous to potential users and raising the risk it would be underutilised.

The 'straight across' crossing design will not adversely impact vehicles when exiting onto Shortmead Street from Brunts Lane.

### **Other considerations and conclusions**

- 9 The provision of the crossing is a condition of the planning permission for the adjacent development. It was mandated by the authority as part of a package of works designed to encourage residents to walk when travelling to local services.
- 10 The optimal location for the crossing has been carefully researched by the highway design team. This has taken into account pedestrian desire lines and local site constraints, including side roads, residential crossovers and position of utility services within the footway and carriageway.
- 11 The selection of a Zebra crossing in preference to a light-controlled Puffin crossing was determined on the grounds of safety, cost and convenience. Research evidence shows no discernible difference in safety performance between the different types of crossing. Zebras are typically less expensive to install and maintain. They are also the preference of most pedestrians.
- 12 Zebra crossings are a common feature within Biggleswade and typically enjoy high levels of driver compliance. The potential disturbance to adjacent properties from the call signal was also a consideration in the design choice.
- 13 Data on average and 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds are below the threshold where measures are needed to reduce the speed of approaching vehicles. The option to place the crossing on a raised table was considered but discounted on technical and cost grounds. Constructing a table would require additional works to kerbs, drainage and services. Also, there is also insufficient space at the preferred location to construct a table of sufficient length to accommodate buses. This could be accommodated by extending the table across the full extent of Brunts Lane junction, but at a substantial additional cost that would make the scheme unaffordable.
- 14 The authority has installed many similar crossings and believes the facility will be widely welcomed and appreciated.

**Appendices:**

Appendix A – Public Notice of proposal

Appendix B – Scheme consultation drawing

Appendix C – Representations

# PUBLIC NOTICE

## **CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL PROPOSES TO INSTALL A ZEBRA CROSSING IN SHORTMEAD STREET, 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 Zebra crossing in Shortmead Street, Biggleswade. The reason is to improve pedestrian access to schools and local amenities and also safer crossing for vulnerable road users, such as elderly from the retirement home living. These works are being promoted as part of a highway improvement scheme associated with an adjacent residential development.

**A Zebra Crossing is proposed to be sited at the following location in Place: Outside Numbers 51&104 Shortmead, Street, Biggleswade SG18 0DB, at a point approximately 5 meters north of its junction with Brunts Lane.**

Further Details may be examined during normal office hours at the address shown below, viewed online at [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/publicstatutorynotices](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/publicstatutorynotices) or tel. 0300 300 5003.

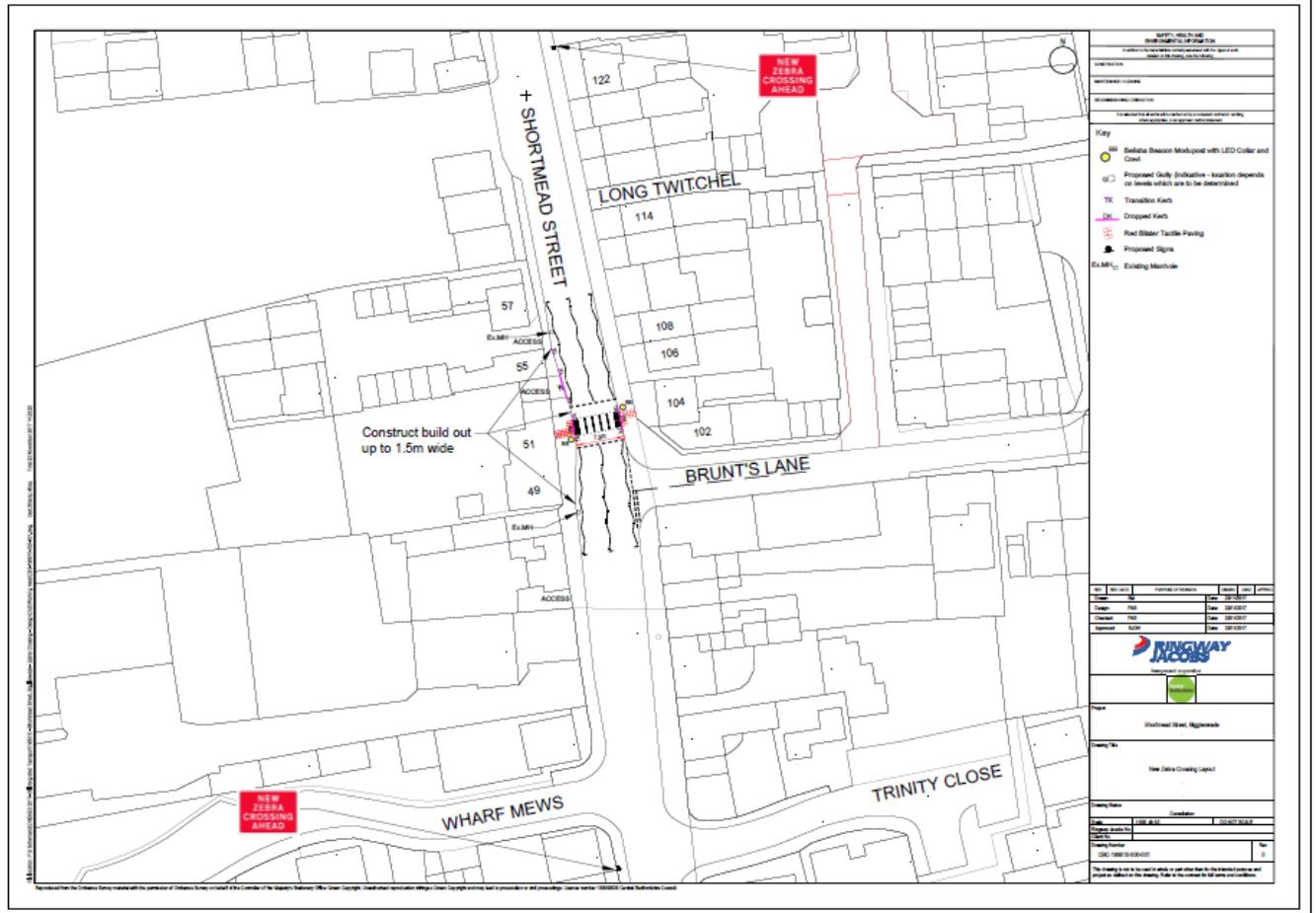
Comments should be sent in writing to the Traffic Management team at the address below or e-mail [traffic.consultation@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:traffic.consultation@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk) by 13 JANUARY 2018.

Central Bedfordshire Council  
Priory House  
Chicksands  
Shefford SG17 5TQ

Marcel Coiffait  
Director of Community Services

15<sup>th</sup> December 2017

# Appendix B: Scheme Drawing



## Appendix C: Representations

Mr Huston as a resident of Shortmead Street I welcome the proposed siting of an additional Zebra crossing in Shortmead Street my only concern as a user of the existing crossing is the several near misses I have seen and experienced myself where some drivers seem to be oblivious to the crossing and fail to even slow down let alone stop. Owing to the proximity of the new crossing to the local school and retirement flats I think a Pelican crossing would be more suitable as the traffic light system would ensure that traffic would stop on red making the crossing a lot safer for children and people in general

Kind regards,

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02.01.18

Dear Sir/Madam

Your ref: GPB/171215, Proposed Zebra Crossing

Following your recent correspondence, I have a number of significant concerns I have about placing a zebra crossing directly outside my property.

1. My son has asthma; his bedroom is above your proposed site. The slowing down and speeding up of cars is what generates the most fumes and dangerous emissions from vehicles. This crossing would therefore have a detrimental impact on his health.
2. I am unaware of any other zebra crossing placed directly adjacent to the front door of a domestic dwelling, especially one where the pavement is so narrow and there is little room for normal pedestrian access, let alone a gathering of members of the public, or indeed on refuse bin collection day when the bins currently create a major obstruction for pedestrians.
3. Pedestrians regularly peer into the property as the pavement is so narrow, encouraging people to be waiting outside to cross, will only invade our privacy further.
4. My neighbour at 49 and I, both have vehicular rear access to our properties and park at the rear. A group of people stood on the pavement waiting to cross will block our vision, making the exit of our driveway by car, hazardous and potentially dangerous.
5. When attempting to enter and exit via the front door I will be required to ask people to move out of the way. This also presents a security risk as having people so close to my entrance gives them a good chance to look around inside. I will feel vulnerable as a single parent.
6. My son and I sleep above the proposed crossing at the front of the property and therefore any Belisha beacon lighting will disturb our sleep.

Finally, why place a crossing where pedestrians would then have to further negotiate another street, Brunts Lane? Why not place it where there is a wider pavement and where it maximises safety for pedestrians and drivers, rather than increase it? I would normally support the citing of zebra crossings, however, I am confused as to why this would be considered viable, or indeed sensible. I respectfully request that you attend a site visit so that I can explain my concerns further and you have the opportunity to review your plans.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully

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Dear Sir/Madam.

Ref:GPB/171215.

I would like to voice my opinion on the proposed crossing in Shortmead Street. Traffic noise is already a problem as the pavement is narrow and the traffic is only a few feet from my property. Stationary traffic will only add to this. Access to the rear of the property is difficult already and a crossing would not make this any better. I would also prefer not to have people standing in front of my property while waiting to cross.

Yours faithfully

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Sirs,

I note the proposal and, whilst I welcome some form of protected crossing, I have the following comments.

1. I would suggest that further traffic calming measures will be required on Shortmead Street at that point. At times this short stretch can be compared to a race track. If the crossing by Ivel Gardens is taken as a comparator, too many drivers either do not see the crossing and/or ignore it. So I would further suggest that a raised and appropriately marked crossing, perhaps together with a central island, would represent a deterrent to speeding and ensure drivers pay attention to the crossing.
2. It may also be of benefit to add extra solar LED based lighting around the yellow beacons for clarity during daylight hours.
3. The argument may be made that a Zebra crossing is safe if motorists obey the rules. Unfortunately in this day and age too many do not obey the rules. As my old university traffic engineering lecturer told us "Assume the worst of drivers rather than hope for the best, and you can't go wrong".

I would urge you to add more protection to the proposed crossing.

Sincerely,

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To whom it may concern,

We are writing in response to the proposal to site a Zebra Crossing outside numbers 51 + 104 Shortmead Street, Biggleswade.

It is our consideration that the proposed location of a new Zebra Crossing is not ideal or appropriate.

The volume of traffic that regularly use Brunts Lane (for drop off at / collection from St Andrew's Lower School in addition to the residential use by homeowners in Brunts Lane, Watkin Walk, Chapel Fields and Fairlands) is substantial. We believe this may not have been adequately considered by yourselves.

Additionally, sufficient thought may not have been given in regards the speed at which traffic frequently needs to exit Brunts Lane to travel northwards onto Shortmead Street. The high level of traffic on Shortmead Street, most days, requires drivers to 'put their foot down' in order to safely make a right hand turn out of Brunts Lane.

Having a Zebra Crossing approximately 5 metres away from the Brunts Lane junction could lead to a number of accidents caused by those drivers who need to exit Brunts Lane at pace and who may not have been able to assess both pedestrians at the Crossing and vehicles on Shortmead Street.

We consider a more appropriate location for a Crossing to be sited is at the end of Long Twitchell (a pedestrian alleyway rather than a road) next to 114 Shortmead Street.

This alternative location would, in our opinion, significantly reduce the likelihood of accidents resulting from vehicles exiting Brunts Lane to travel northwards onto Shortmead Street. Drivers would have more time to be aware of pedestrians at the Crossing as they would not simultaneously be needing to assess whether they had sufficient time to exit Brunts Lane ahead of vehicles on Shortmead Street.

In addition, the alternative location would benefit those pedestrians who frequently walk along Chapel Fields, turn left onto Brunts Lane, then right onto Watkin Walk, then turn left onto Long Twitchell and right onto Shortmead Street (i.e. those who wish to cut the corner off - a shortcut used by those wishing to head north along Shortmead Street).

The alternative location would also benefit those individuals residing at properties in the new McCarthy & Stone development, as it would be almost directly opposite.

We would be grateful if you could give consideration to the points we raise.

Kind regards,