

Individual Executive Member Decision

Title of Report:	Petition - Church Street, Theale
Report to be considered by:	Individual Executive Member Decision
Date on which Decision is to be taken:	27 February 2015
Forward Plan Ref:	ID2953

Purpose of Report: To respond to a petition that has been submitted to the Council requesting measures to improve road safety for school children crossing Church Street and Englefield Road, Theale and to seek approval of officer recommendations.

Recommended Action: That the Executive Member for Emergency Planning acting on behalf of the Executive Member for Highways, Transport (Operations), Newbury Vision resolves to approve the recommendations as set out in section 5 of this report.

Reason for decision to be taken: To provide a response to the petitioners.

Other options considered: N/A

Portfolio Member Details	
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Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Andrew Garratt
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Implications

Policy:	The recommendations within this report accord with existing Council policy.
Financial:	None arising from this report.
Personnel:	None arising from this report.
Legal/Procurement:	None arising from this report.
Property:	None arising from this report.
Risk Management:	None arising from this report.

Is this item relevant to equality?	Please tick relevant boxes	Yes	No
Does the policy affect service users, employees or the wider community and:			
• Is it likely to affect people with particular protected characteristics differently?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Is it a major policy, significantly affecting how functions are delivered?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Will the policy have a significant impact on how other organisations operate in terms of equality?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Does the policy relate to functions that engagement has identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Does the policy relate to an area with known inequalities?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Outcome (Where one or more 'Yes' boxes are ticked, the item is relevant to equality)			
Relevant to equality - Complete an EIA available at http://intranet/EqIA			<input type="checkbox"/>
Not relevant to equality			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Consultation Responses

Members:

Leader of Council:	To date no response has been received from Councillor Gordon Lundie, however any comments will be verbally reported at the Individual Decision meeting.
Overview & Scrutiny Management Commission Chairman:	Councillor Brian Bedwell agrees with the recommendations.
Ward Members:	To date no response has been received from Councillor Alan Macro, however any comments will be verbally reported at the Individual Decision meeting.
Opposition Spokesperson:	To date no response has been received from Councillor Keith Woodhams, however any comments will be verbally reported at the Individual Decision meeting.
Local Stakeholders:	N/A
Officers Consulted:	Mark Edwards, Mark Cole and Caroline Cocoran
Trade Union:	N/A

Is this item subject to call-in?	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:</p> <p>The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Item is Urgent Key Decision <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Report is to note only <input type="checkbox"/></p>		

Supporting Information

1. Background

- 1.1 A petition containing 138 signatures was submitted at a meeting of the Executive on 18th December 2014. The petition states:

We, the undersigned, call upon West Berkshire Council to improve road safety for school children crossing Church Street and Englefield Road to get to and from Theale C of E Primary School by imposing 20MPH limits past the school accesses and:

- *Install speed tables on the crossings, and*
- *Employ school crossing patrols (lollipop persons) or*
- *Install traffic-light controlled crossings*

- 1.2 Church Street is the main route between the A4/A340 roundabout and the High Street. There are two zebra crossings, which are located outside Theale Green School and Theale Primary School.
- 1.3 The zebra crossing by Theale Primary School was subject to a petition in 2011 as parents were concerned about safety when using the crossing. As a result of this petition improvements to the Zebra crossing were undertaken and completed in November 2013. The improvements consisted of narrowing the width of the crossing by widening the footway, which also improved visibility for pedestrians using the crossing.
- 1.4 As part of the School Safety Programme two School warning signs with flashing lights were installed on Church Street during November 2008 to cover both Theale Primary School and Theale Green School. Another two School warning signs with flashing lights were installed on Englefield Road during November 2008 to cover the rear access to the Primary School.
- 1.5 Within the latest five year period, to the end of November 2014, there have been no recorded injury accidents in the vicinity of the Primary School.
- 1.6 A traffic survey undertaken during June 2011 on Church Street opposite the Church showed that average speed was 28mph with an 85th percentile speed of 32mph and 33mph for eastbound and westbound traffic respectively. An average two way total of 3,769 vehicles was recorded during the survey period.

2. Response to the petition

- 2.1 20MPH limits past the school
It is not currently Council Policy to introduce blanket 20mph speed limits outside schools as many locations would require physical measures to be introduced, which would prove to be expensive. The Executive considered a report (EX1539) on 20mph speed limits outside schools on 24th April 2008 and resolved that the introduction of such a limit should be considered as an option for schemes identified in the School Safety Programme and implemented where appropriate. It was further agreed that the school warning signs with flashing lights be introduced on the approaches to all schools.

2.2 Install speed tables on the crossings

The introduction of a raised crossing is often expensive as it requires additional drainage to be installed. A vertical feature such as a raised table should not be introduced without a speed reducing feature on its approaches.

2.3 Employ school crossing patrols (lollipop persons)

School crossing patrols (SCP) are introduced where a high number of primary school aged children with an adult cross the road on the way to and from school.

However due to the working hours of the job school crossing patrollers are difficult to recruit and retain. Therefore other measures are often considered to assist pedestrian movements across the road, which are designed in accordance with the number of pedestrian and vehicle movements. These can include narrowings, buildouts and zebra crossings.

Observations during the end of a school day showed that the zebra crossing was well used and worked well.

2.4 Install traffic-light controlled crossings

When a crossing location is assessed the type of facility recommended needs to be appropriate to the circumstances of the site and the demands and behaviour of road users.

Vehicles and pedestrians are positively controlled by signal-controlled crossings, whereas pedestrians are given precedence over vehicles at Zebra crossings. However caution should be exercised where pedestrian flows are generally light or light for long periods of the day as drivers who become accustomed to not being stopped at the crossing may begin to ignore its existence, with dangerous consequences.

3. Equalities Impact Assessment Outcomes

3.1 Surveys carried out have identified that speeds are appropriate for the nature of the road and 30mph speed limit.

3.2 There have been no recorded injury accidents in the last five years and the existing zebra crossing is appropriate for children and parents to use when walking to and from school.

4. Conclusions

4.1 Improvements were made to the zebra crossing in November 2013 following a previous petition.

4.2 The zebra crossing is mainly used at the start and end of a school day by children who are accompanied by an adult.

4.3 Drivers are aware of the school due to the presence of the school flashing signs. A 20mph speed limit should not be introduced without physical features, however this can be considered when all schools including Theale Primary School are listed in the School Safety Programme, which the priority order for investigation is currently being updated.

- 4.4 Given the difficulties in recruiting and retaining SCP's other measures are often considered. Given that there is an existing zebra crossing, which is mainly used at the start and end of a school day by children who are accompanied by an adult, a SCP would not be necessary.
- 4.5 It is considered that the existing zebra crossing is the most appropriate facility in this location given the number of pedestrian movements, the results of the traffic survey and the recorded injury accident record.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 That a 20mph speed limit and raised crossing be considered when Theale Primary School is listed for investigation in the School Safety Programme, where the priority listing is currently being updated.
- 5.2 That the existing zebra crossing is an appropriate crossing facility for the location and a signal crossing facility or SCP are not introduced.
- 5.3 That the petition organiser be informed of the decision.

Appendices

There are no Appendices to this report.