
Report of Director of City Development

Report to Scrutiny Board (Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth)

Date: 9 January 2019

Subject: ANNUAL PEDESTRIAN CROSSING REVIEW REQUEST FOR SCRUTINY

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. The Best City ambition for Leeds is to improve life for the people of Leeds and make our city a better place to live. Improving road safety and the reduction of road collisions and injuries has an important role to play in supporting safe, sustainable and healthy travel and movement and in contributing to the Best City for Community, Best City to Grow Old In and Child Friendly City objectives and the provision of new pedestrian facilities forms an important part of this activity.
2. This report responds to a request for scrutiny concerning the process for reviewing and assembling the annual pedestrian crossing programme following recent feedback regarding measures in Horsforth Ward. An established process is in place for the evaluation of a new formal pedestrian crossing requests and this report provides the necessary background information needed for Members of the scrutiny board to consider this issue within the context of this request.
3. Each year a significant number of requests are received from Elected Members and the general public for the provision of additional measures to assist pedestrians to cross the highway. This is an issue that is recognised nationally and specific guidance is provided by the Department for Transport to assist local

highway authorities. In turn a process has been in place within the Council to assist in ensuring such requests are addressed consistently within an agreed assessment framework to assist in the evaluation of sites and the framing of recommendations for the annual highways and transportation capital programme.

4. The relevant internal documentation used to undertake the annual reviews alongside the approved report for the 2018 review are appended to this report.

Recommendations

5. Scrutiny Board members are requested to note and comment on this report.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report sets out the process for undertaking the review of new requests for new formal pedestrian crossings which is used to form an annual report and the preparation of the annual programme Integrated Transport Capital budget allocated from the West Yorkshire Transport Strategy. It responds to the request from Councillor Dawn Collins dated 13 July 2018.

2 Background information

- 2.1 Each year the Directorate receives a significant number of requests for highway improvements to assist the public in making safe and convenient crossings. All these requests are considered within the normal routine work of the service.
- 2.2 There are often a variety of potential traffic management solutions to the issues raised depending on the type of problems raised, the location and character of highway concerned, the level of pedestrian demand and any identified road safety issues and road injury collision history.
- 2.3 More specifically the solutions can range from informal measures such as the traffic calming, 20 mph speed limits and local safety scheme programmes to the provision of dedicated pedestrian facilities. Dedicated pedestrian facilities can extend from something relatively simple such as the provision of the dropped kerbs needed to provide improved mobility, through traffic islands that provide refuges for pedestrians crossing the road to more formal facilities such as Zebra crossings and traffic signal controlled crossings hitherto of the Pelican crossing type and more recently the Puffin crossing. In certain conditions the provision of a shared cycle and pedestrian crossings may be appropriate and some occasions facilities have been provided that also cater for the needs of equestrian users.
- 2.4 Rather than dealing with every new crossing request on an individual basis which would be difficult to manage equitably in terms of budget planning and management, the established practice has been investigate and prepare recommendations for the programme on an annual basis. To assist in this and ensure a consistent and sound approach to prioritisation guidelines and a site assessment framework have been adopted and were most recently reviewed in 2016 and approved by delegated decision of the Chief Officer, Highways and Transportation following discussion with the Executive Member.
- 2.5 The framework approach used for the development and prioritisation of the pedestrian crossing programme has full regard for the range of risk factors associated with the provision and cost effective funding of appropriate measures. This has due regard for the existing road safety records, traffic and pedestrian flows, the character and development of the locality and any relevant attractors for journeys. The relevant documents are included at Appendix 1.
- 2.6 It is also noted that as well as responding to general requests for improvements, within the highway and transportation service there is a

continuing monitoring process for road casualties and collision records. This process contributes directly into the assembly of the annual programmes for local safety schemes for addressing road casualty issues of concern. On occasion this may identify specific issues and locations of concern where pedestrian facilities may require consideration. Where the identified solution is a pedestrian crossing this would be included in the annual report for consideration.

- 2.7 The annual crossing review and the use of the Crossing Assessment Framework is limited to those sites that have been requested by members of the public, elected members and other stakeholders, and take into account existing demands and conditions. Other crossing proposals such as developer funded crossings are considered initially as part of the planning process although similar factors may be applied to the reaching of planning recommendations. Also where a site has been assessed and a formal crossing is not recommend alternative forms of provision for pedestrians may be identified and as such would be brought forward for funding prioritisation independently of the pedestrian crossings programme.
- 2.8 The key decision intention for the 2018 crossing review was published in the Forward Plan on 8 May 2018 and the report was published on 26 June prior to the delegated decision report being taken on 4 July 2018. The annual pedestrian crossing review for 2018 is attached at Appendix 2.

3 Main issues

- 3.9 A number of matters pertaining to the annual review process and recommendations have been raised in the request for scrutiny following questions about the process followed with respect to a particular site at Low Lane in Horsforth Ward. This section of the report addresses these with reference to the procedures that have been established and to the learning that can be taken from this request.
- 3.10 The specifics relate to an issue which emerged during engagement relating to the a planning approval for a recent development in the Horsforth area and a request from the Local Ward Members for the introduction of pedestrian crossing facilities on Low Lane, to aid members of the public in the area. Crossing surveys were undertaken for the length of Low Lane, however, it did not demonstrate sufficient evidence to achieve funding as part of the annual Pedestrian crossing Review. Nevertheless further consideration was given to meeting the aspiration for measures to assist pedestrians and the alternative of pedestrian refuge islands was examined. However, it was found that to achieve this would impact heavily used on-street parking provision which it was considered would have a detrimental impact on residents' amenities. After further discussion the alternative of providing footway buildouts was identified as an approach to improving crossing opportunities, with a lesser and more acceptable effect on on-street parking provision.
- 3.11 During the process there were issues in relation to assembling the necessary funding package to deliver the scheme which were ultimately resolved with

the Ward Members securing a funding contribution of £20,000 to meet the scheme costs. In this regard and noting concern in the request for scrutiny about the weight given to funding contributions for such schemes, it is worth noting that in the first instance the process of site assessment is limited to a technical and site evaluation of the issues and solutions. Options for match funding contributions should be considered prior to the recommendations and decision in the circumstances where either budget constraints require prioritisation of schemes or other factors indicated additional funding is needed to unlock scheme delivery.

- 3.12 The submission for scrutiny has identified a number of factors of concern about the process and the application of the formal pedestrian crossing review process in relation to this scheme which it is considered could be of wider concern than the specific location concerned. There was a concern that the methodology and process was not sufficiently robust in terms of the data collection and wider considerations including road traffic collisions which led to further discussions.
- 3.13 Alongside the technical and process matters the submission also raises important questions about communications with Ward Members during the process of conducting and bringing forward the annual review recommendations for approval and implementation.
- 3.14 In terms of the technical process, whilst not initially considered within the formal review process the request for measures was included within the review methodology but didn't score well within the framework with key findings being that the overall volume of pedestrian activity in the length of road concerned was low including the proportions of young and elderly people. In this regard the framework is intended to focus attention to demonstrating a critical mass and focal point that could be effectively addressed by a pedestrian crossing which in this case was not identified. Such crossings are not suited to dispersed patterns of crossing because rather than making the journey to a dedicated crossing, pedestrians tend to choose their own desire lines and hence in such situations alternative measures can be a more effective means for providing improvements.
- 3.15 In terms of learning on the above point, the framework is comprehensive and covers a wide range of circumstances and can be flexed around variety of site specific issues. Nevertheless as the more lightly used locations it does not necessarily produce clear cut findings and in those circumstances further consideration and dialogue can be needed to either identify suitable alternative or to explain that the circumstances are such as to not readily lend themselves to an intervention. In this case a solution was found although it is recognised that Members were dissatisfied with the process prior to the solution being identified.
- 3.16 With respect to the process of engagement itself around the site and the preparation of the annual crossing review report. It is recognised that engagement was not perfect especially in terms of the notifications around reporting, notwithstanding that otherwise as is recognised officers did engage with Members to achieve a solution. The normal practice would be

to advise Ward Members of the intention to submit the report and the proposed recommendations in relation to any sites of specific interest to them. Subsequent to the formal decision relevant local Members should be advised accordingly and given any further information regarding the details and next steps that may be available.

- 3.17 With respect to learning as regards the above point on consultation. The process followed by the technical team is being reviewed ahead of the annual review for 2019 which is underway for the new year. As a first step the need to ensure effective management for consultation will be further recognised within the protocols for the service to strengthen processes that are already in place and to ensure that at the key stages, Members who have contributed requests being considered in the review can be kept up-to-date with progress.
- 3.18 The request also expresses concern about the transparency of the decision making. The annual review is within the delegated authority of the Chief Officer, Highways and Transportation. However, the steps additional outlined above along with the constitutional requirements for noticing on the Forward Plan of Key Decisions which this issue had generally fallen within should provide assurance of transparency before any decision is made.

4 Corporate Considerations

Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1 A process for the engagement with elected members is in place to support the annual pedestrian crossing review. Road traffic collisions and road safety continue to be a major concern for local communities as the greatest impact of a collision is its human costs to which a continuing programme of investment in facilities which assist the safety and movement of pedestrians can be a major continuing benefit to communities.
- 4.2 The opportunities and initiatives outlined in this report will further strengthen links between internal and external partners and communities.

Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.3 A copy of the EDCI screening report used for the annual review programme is included within the 2018 annual pedestrian crossing review report appended to this report.

Council policies and the Best Council Plan

- 4.4 The Best City ambition is to improve life for the people of Leeds and make our city a better place. All road safety initiatives, including the pedestrian crossing programme, contribute to this ambition by improving the safety and quality of life of Leeds residents by enabling safe pedestrian and cycling journeys in local communities and reducing traffic collisions to make a specific

contribution to the Best City for Communities and Child Friendly City ambitions.

- 4.5 Enabling safe and independent journeys was the top one of the 12 wishes expressed by children on how to make Leeds a Child Friendly city. Slower speeds and improvements in road safety to which new pedestrian crossings contribute will also help make Leeds the Best City to grow old in.

Resources and value for money

- 4.6 The provision of appropriate pedestrian crossings is prioritised as part of the Integrated Transport Block Budget which is funded by annual grant from the West Yorkshire Combined Authority as part of the wider West Yorkshire Transport Strategy programme. For those schemes associated with development proposals funding may come from section 106 agreements, the Council's own capital resource or other forms grant funding.

Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.7 There are no legal implications. The report is not eligible for Call-In.

Risk Management

- 4.8 The approach to considering and making recommendations for improved or new pedestrian crossings identified in this report is intended to ensure the delivery of appropriate and effective measures for enhancing the provision for pedestrians as part of the wide transport strategy and role of the Council as a Highway Authority. The effectiveness of new schemes in terms of road casualty impacts will be monitored. The efficiency of the general approach to prioritisation and scheme development is reviewed with Chief Officer on an annual basis as part of the general challenge at the time of decision making on the annual programme recommendations. At the time of detailed development and implementation all the standard highway engineering processes for risk management including road safety apply to schemes generated by this programme.
- 4.9 As with all capital programmes decisions and recommendations have due regard for the financial provisions available to support the recommendations.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 Improved pedestrian facilities are an established feature of the annual highways and transportation capital investment programme. In response to the request for scrutiny this report has described the process in place to ensure a consistent and sound process is used to investigate and make recommendations for new and improved infrastructure.

- 5.2 The importance of effective communications with elected members through the annual review process is recognised and the preparation of this report has shown that whilst processes are in place these could be strengthened for the future and have been identified in the report.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 Scrutiny Board members are requested to note and comment on this report.

7 Background documents¹

- 7.1 There are no specific background document relating to this report.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.