

Name of meeting: Cabinet Committee - Local Issues

Date: 08 October 2021

Title of report: Proposed PUFFIN Crossing & Traffic Calming Measures, Fenay Lane and St. Helen's Gate, Almondbury

Kirklees Council Traffic Regulation [No. 18] Order 2021 – Proposed Prohibition of Waiting, Loading and Left Turn, Fenay Lane and St. Helen's Gate, Almondbury

Kirklees Council Speed Limit [No. 108] Order 2021 – Proposed 20mph speed limits, Fenay Lane and St. Helen's Gate, Almondbury

Purpose of report: To consider objections received the above TROs and proposals

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| Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards? | No |
| Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?) | No |
| The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny? | Yes |
| Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name | Colin Parr – 23/09/2021 |
| Is it also signed off by the Service Director Finance? | Eamonn Croston – 23/09/2021 |
| Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning? | Julie Muscroft – 24/09/2021 |
| Cabinet member portfolio | Cllr Naheed Mather |

Electoral wards affected: Almondbury

Ward councillors consulted: Yes

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered: Yes

1. Summary

- 1.1 To meet planning conditions arising from an application to expand King James School and increase pupil numbers – following subsequent crossing assessments and requests from Ward Councillors – Highway Safety propose to construct a signalised ‘PUFFIN’ pedestrian crossing on Fenay Lane east of its junction with St. Helen’s Gate, and to impose a 20mph speed limit along St. Helen’s Gate between Fenay Lane and Arkenley Lane, and associated engineering works. The planning condition states that “all reasonable measures” must be taken to ensure that the PUFFIN crossing and 20mph limit are operational prior to the school reopening with increased pupil numbers, for the January 2022 term. It is clear that the planning balance in approving the development, reflected in the condition, involved the imposition of traffic calming measures for the benefit of the future occupiers/pupils of the development in terms of highway safety.
- 1.1 The overarching aim of this scheme is to provide a direct, safe route for pupils walking between the centre of Almondbury and King James School, to try and encourage pupils to walk. Roads around the school suffer from significant congestion and related problems during periods when parents drop off and pick up their children (many historical complaints have been received by the Council). Increases in pupil numbers would exacerbate these problems, and the only viable way to mitigate the problem is for more pupils to walk to school. The proposed scheme layout is shown on the plans included as **Appendix A** with this report – HS-Fenay-P01-01 & 02 Revision D – and these should be referred to for context. The blue circled numbers shown on Appendix A1 cross reference to text in Section 2 this report (“Plan Ref. XY” where included), to aid the reader in locating the features being described.
- 1.2 Orders associated with the scheme for waiting restrictions, loading restrictions and a prohibited left turn (Kirklees Council Traffic Regulation [No. 18] Order 2021) were advertised between 03rd August 2021 and 27th August 2021, and for the proposed 20mph speed limits (Kirklees Council Speed Limit [No. 108] Order 2021) and notice of providing the PUFFIN crossing facility and associated Traffic Calming Measures, between 29th July 2021 and 18th August 2021. The orders as advertised are included as **Appendix B**. During advertisement correspondence was received from 11 Objectors covering 10 individual objections to the scheme (Redacted copies at **Appendix C**), with most respondents submitting multiple objections (total count 26).
- 1.3 The Planning Team have also provided history to the current position, and views on the wider implications of not meeting the planning conditions, and a report has been provided which is included as **Appendix D**, for information.

2. Information Required to Take a Decision

Background to Measures Directly Associated with PUFFIN Crossing

- 2.1 During scheme development, measures were identified to accommodate a safe PUFFIN crossing facility on Fenay Lane. The intention was always to locate the crossing as close as possible to existing pupil desire lines, as observed during site visits, through the road hump east of the St. Helen’s Gate junction (Plan Ref. 01). However, when originally proposed, the PUFFIN was located 20m east of the hump, to maximise eastbound visibility splays. Visibility in this direction would be restricted by the bend prior to the crossing, the wall and embankment along the rear of the footway,

and overhanging vegetation, and it was feared, if the PUFFIN was located on the hump, that visibility may be inadequate and the crossing unsafe.

- 2.2 However, Ordnance Survey base plans used for the original design are not detailed enough to accurately assess visibility splays with any degree of confidence, therefore a topographical survey was commissioned, along with vehicle speed surveys. When the design was reassessed using this information, based upon measured speeds it was found that eastbound visibility requirements could, in fact, be met with the PUFFIN located on the existing road hump, if a small reduction in eastbound speeds could confidently be predicted (85th percentile speeds reduced from 26mph as surveyed, to 22.6mph target – a 3.4mph reduction).
- 2.3 To achieve a reduction in speeds of at least 3.4mph, an extension to the existing 20mph speed limit on Fenay Lane was proposed (Plan Ref. 02) to encompass the PUFFIN. Additionally, a new traffic calming feature was proposed to the west of the PUFFIN. This was originally a set of three speed cushions (scheme advertised on this basis), however, an independent Stage 2 Road Safety Audit considered after advertisement included a problem with the cushions, that could lead to collisions and injuries. The concern was that westbound vehicles parked on Fenay Lane close to the cushions, would force other westbound vehicles to pass over the central speed cushion when overtaking, rather than the nearside one. In doing this, they would straddle the centre line of Fenay Lane, conflicting with oncoming eastbound traffic. For this reason, the cushions have now been replaced with a flat-topped road hump (Plan Ref. 03). The hump would have chamfered edges (i.e., would not run kerb-to-kerb), and a section of pedestrian guardrail would be installed in the northern footway alongside it (Plan Ref. 04) to discourage pedestrians from using it to cross Fenay Lane, away from the new PUFFIN.
- 2.4 Although this represents a departure from the advertised layout as the road hump would be longer than the speed cushions, fundamentally it has not changed the scheme, therefore readvertisement is not envisaged (and is not legally required). The scheme was advertised with a new traffic calming feature in the same location for the same reasons, and no reservations about this feature were received. There would be no new implications for access, or for on-street parking. There is also now inadequate time to readvertise the proposals whilst meeting the delivery programme for the scheme (if approved) within the planning condition timescales. Cabinet is requested to approve this minor revision, in the interests of road safety and delivery (if approved).
- 2.5 With the PUFFIN crossing located upon the existing road hump, it would no longer be possible to allow vehicles to park along the paved verge along the southern side of Fenay Lane, east of the St. Helen's Gate junction (Plan Ref. 05). Parked vehicles would block drivers' views to pedestrians waiting to cross, and to traffic signals apparatus. Additionally, when manoeuvring into spaces close to the crossing, vehicles would place pedestrians at risk. Bollards have been proposed along the edge of carriageway to physically prevent parking. It is also the case that parking along this verge is inherently dangerous, regardless of this scheme. Highway Authorities should not accommodate parking that blocks junction visibility splays. Drivers emerging from St. Helen's Gate cannot see traffic approaching from the right along Fenay Lane when vehicles are parked in this verge. The fact that the junction angle is very acute, and the minor road approach is uphill, exacerbates the problem.
- 2.6 The proposed PUFFIN crossing would be located only 12m from the St. Helen's Gate junction and this resulted in further road safety concerns. Drivers turning left into St. Helen's Gate from Fenay Lane, must negotiate an extremely acute angle when

entering the junction mouth and turn through a total angle of 180° (Plan Ref. 06). St. Helen's Gate is less than 5m wide at the junction but accommodates two-way traffic. The eastern junction radius is only 2m. Due to these geometric restrictions and level differences, there is almost no inter-visibility between westbound drivers approaching the junction along Fenay Lane, and westbound drivers approaching along St. Helen's Gate. The geometric restrictions make it impossible for vehicles to turn left into St. Helen's Gate without overrunning the opposing traffic lane in the St. Helen's Gate junction mouth, and/or swinging out into the opposing traffic lane on Fenay Lane before turning left, and the visibility restrictions make it extremely difficult to react to oncoming vehicles in the junction mouth, before confronting them. This causes congestion. With the PUFFIN crossing in-situ, if a vehicle stopped on Fenay Lane unable to complete the left turn causing following traffic to be held up, the crossing could quickly become blocked. This would be inherently dangerous for pedestrians using it. For this reason, a proposal to ban the left turn into St. Helen's Gate from Fenay Lane was added to the scheme, and a build-out was added to the eastern side of the junction mouth to make the movement difficult to execute (Plan Ref. 07).

- 2.7 The removal of verge parking and addition of the footway build-out also facilitated further improvement to the layout. It had been pointed out during consultation by residents, that the steps linking the proposed PUFFIN to St. Helen's Gate were narrow and steep, slippery during winter, and therefore too dangerous for all but fully able pedestrians to use (Plan Ref. 08). As the steps would have been the only way to access the southern side of the PUFFIN under previous scheme versions, this represented discrimination against mobility-impaired pedestrians, and non-compliance with the Equality Act 2010. Whilst improvements to the steps were being investigated at the time (but see Paragraph 2.17 below), it was not considered viable to replace the steps with ramps, therefore wheelchair users (for example) would still not be able to access the PUFFIN crossing.
- 2.8 However, the proposed build-out on the eastern side of the St. Helen's Gate junction mouth would allow an uncontrolled crossing to be provided, facilitating north-south movements across St. Helen's Gate at-grade (Plan Ref. 09). Although this crossing would be close to the junction mouth and the retaining wall, visibility would be adequate. Banning the left-turn into St. Helen's Gate would remove by far the most dangerous traffic stream for crossing pedestrians. Visibility along St. Helen's Gate across the wall has been assessed and, with the proposed traffic calming features in-situ, would be adequate for predicted speeds this close to the junction mouth and traffic calming features.
- 2.9 Furthermore, the removal of parking from the verge would provide an unobstructed pedestrian route along it, linking the junction mouth crossing to the proposed PUFFIN crossing. Pedestrians would then be able to travel between the southern side of St. Helen's Gate and the PUFFIN, without negotiating the steps. This route would also be far more direct than the steps for pedestrians travelling between western Almondbury (e.g., via Westgate) and eastern Almondbury (e.g., Almondbury Close / Jessop Avenue etc.) who needed to cross Fenay Lane, providing wider benefits.
- 2.10 Prohibition of waiting and loading was also considered necessary to protect the St. Helen's Gate / Fenay Lane junction mouth, ensuring free movement of traffic through this restricted junction.

Background to Measures Associated with Improving Routes Accessing PUFFIN

- 2.11 Pedestrian routes between the proposed PUFFIN and school site were assessed, with Highway Safety officers observing pupil movements a number of times. On journeys towards the school, the most popular route involved pupils crossing from the northern side of Fenay Lane east of the St. Helen's Gate junction (i.e., through the existing road hump where the PUFFIN is being proposed), before walking down the steps to the northern side of St. Helen's Gate, crossing to the southern footway from the foot of the steps, before continuing along the southern / southwestern footway to King James School (Plan Ref. 10).
- 2.12 On journeys away from the school, however, this route is less well used. Many pupils continue walking west along the southern footway of St. Helen's Gate past the steps towards the Fenay Lane / Westgate / Northgate junction, and cross Fenay Lane and/or Westgate and/or Northgate at various locations. It is considered that this behaviour is a direct result of the poor layout of the crossing of St. Helen's Gate at the foot of the steps, when travelling away from the school crossing northwards.
- 2.13 There is no footway on the northern side of St. Helen's Gate where the steps meet the road, and the road is on a sharp bend. When crossing southwards away from the bottom of the steps, pedestrians feel safe standing between the walls and have very good views of traffic approaching from both directions, being close to the outside apex of the bend. However, when crossing northwards towards the steps, views of approaching traffic are extremely poor due to being on the inside apex of the bend (Plan Ref. 11). The footway is narrow, and pedestrians cannot stand far enough forwards away from the building line to see past it, and to be seen by approaching drivers. Furthermore, there is no footway on the northern side to shelter in prior to accessing the steps, therefore unless the steps are clear, crossing the road is unsafe and unattractive. For these reasons, improvements to the uncontrolled crossing of St. Helens Gate at the foot of the steps were proposed.
- 2.14 The only viable way to improve visibility between westbound drivers approaching the crossing point, and pedestrians waiting to cross from the southern footway towards the steps, is to build-out the footway on the southern side of St. Helen's Gate (Plan Ref. 12). Similarly, the lack of a footway on the northern side of the crossing at the bottom of the steps must be addressed, therefore a northern footway build-out is also proposed (Plan Ref. 13). This would create a 'pinch-point' at the crossing point which, whilst advantageous for pedestrians, would not be wide enough to accommodate two-way vehicular traffic. Consequently, a westbound one-way system was proposed along St Helen's Gate as this was (and remains) by far the safest way to install the feature. However, due to large numbers of residents objecting to the one-way system during consultation (supported by Ward Members), this proposal was dropped.
- 2.15 The latest version of the proposals, therefore, maintains two-way traffic movements along St. Helen's Gate. However, to accommodate the pinch point, a priority give-way layout is now proposed. In advance of the pinch-point and crossing, drivers travelling westbound / uphill would be required to give-way to drivers travelling eastbound / downhill (Plan Ref. 14). A system of round-topped road humps has also been included along St. Helen's Gate, to physically restrain vehicle speeds approaching the pinch point. Visibility requirements for the crossing and give-way feature are already met for vehicle speeds, notwithstanding speed reductions likely to be realised from the new road humps and 20mph speed limit. Prohibition of waiting was also provided to protect the give-way pinch-point, crossing, and related visibility splays, ensuring free and safe movement of traffic and pedestrians through the feature.

2.16 It is also proposed to promote a 20mph speed limit along St. Helen's Gate between its junctions with Arkenley Lane and Fenay Lane, to encourage safe driving speeds along the entire walking route between the crossings and King James School.

2.17 Improvements to the steps between St. Helen's Gate and Fenay Lane were also investigated, including widening and reorientation. However, the wall is a retaining structure of significant height, and the improvements would require external structural design expertise, and would carry high costs. With limited timescales and funds available, this was not considered viable. However, the steps would be treated with high friction surfacing to alleviate concerns about slipping.

Objection 1 – Proposed Traffic Calming Measures, St. Helen's Gate

An objection was received from a resident of St. Helen's Gate, because a road hump located on St. Helen's Gate 200m southeast of the Fenay Lane junction would have been positioned within 5m of an active badger sett in the objector's garden, close to the highway boundary. The issue is that vibration and noise caused by vehicles travelling over the hump would disturb the badgers, which are a protected species.

Response:

The designer was not aware of the badger sett, and its presence has since been confirmed by Kirklees Conservation and Design Team. Whilst The Badger Protection Act 1992 places a legal duty on The Council to ensure that badger setts are not disturbed or destroyed during civil engineering construction works, there is no indication that the hump would cause problems once installed. However, the hump is only one of a series of four proposed along the northwest bound approach to the uncontrolled crossing of St. Helen's Gate, and is some 150m+ in advance of it. Removal of this hump would not, therefore, have any discernible effect upon the crossing, and the drawing has already been amended to remove the hump.

Objection 2 – Proposed PUFFIN Crossing, Fenay Lane

A total of seven objections were received including all three Ward Councillors, stating that parking is very limited in Almondbury Centre, particularly in the area around the proposed PUFFIN crossing. Existing parking along the southern verge of Fenay Lane could not be accommodated with the PUFFIN in-situ, and parking on-street close to the PUFFIN would also be prevented by zigzag markings. The objectors state that reducing parking here would significantly inconvenience residents living close to the PUFFIN location and their visitors, also commuters / visitors to business on Fenay Lane, and other visitors to the area. It is known that some residents of Fenay Lane living close to the crossing are mobility-impaired and rely heavily upon visitors.

Response:

Whilst the Objectors concerns are understood, unfortunately it would not be possible to accommodate parking and provide a safe PUFFIN crossing in this location, as the two needs are in direct conflict with each other. Regarding mobility-impaired residents living close the crossing, it should be noted that originally the crossing was located further east, with the zigzag markings extending past the gates of numbers 1 to 5 Fenay Lane. However, the current layout accommodates on-street parking up to the steps, and one of the considerations in relocating it was the reduced impact on parking for these residents. There are no restrictions to parking along Fenay Lane east of the crossing's zigzags.

Objection 3 – Proposed Waiting and Loading Restrictions, Fenay Lane and St. Helen’s Gate (Kirklees Council Traffic Regulation [No. 18] Order 2021)

Three objections were received to the proposed waiting/loading restrictions around the St. Helen’s Gate / Fenay Lane junction mouth, and waiting restrictions further east along St. Helen’s Gate. Again, it was stated that parking is very limited in this area, and that its removal would significantly inconvenience residents living nearby.

Response:

Whilst the Objectors concerns are understood, unfortunately it would not be possible to accommodate parking close to the Fenay Lane / St. Helen’s Gate junction, or the crossing / priority give-way pinch-point near the steps on St. Helen’s Gate. Parked vehicles in these locations would block the pedestrian crossings, cause congestion at the junction and the pinch-point, and block visibility splays leading to serious road safety concerns. There are no restrictions to parking along St. Helen’s Gate east of those associated with the pinch-point.

Objection 4 – Proposed PUFFIN Crossing, Fenay Lane

Four objections were received to the PUFFIN crossing on the basis that its introduction would cause congestion and inconvenience, possibly impinging upon traffic movements at the busy Fenay Lane/Northgate/Westgate junction.

Response:

The crossing would be located some 60m away from the main junction. Traffic flows along Fenay Lane are relatively light, and the ‘green man’ time for the crossing would not be excessive, as the road is relatively narrow. Congestion is, therefore, highly unlikely to occur. The crossing is primarily aimed at school pupils on journeys to and from school, so the only time that it is likely to strike repeatedly is during two short time periods on school days only. If problems did arise at these times, they could be investigated, and appropriate action taken to mitigate for them.

Objection 5 – Proposed PUFFIN Crossing, Fenay Lane

Three objections were received to the PUFFIN crossing, on the basis that it would be dangerous being located too close to the bend, where speeds are high, and visibility is poor, for eastbound drivers.

Response:

The designer has fully considered surveyed speeds and visibility as explained in detail under paragraphs 2.1 to 2.3 above, and there are no safety concerns.

Objection 6 – Proposed PUFFIN Crossing, Fenay Lane

Two objections were received stating that the PUFFIN crossing would be dangerous for pedestrians, as it could only be accessed by negotiating the steps between Fenay Lane and St. Helen’s Gate. These steps are considered dangerous by the objectors because they are

too steep, too narrow, and end near a bend in the road where the footway area would not be large enough to accommodate pedestrians.

Response:

Substantial improvements to the steps were considered but are not viable (para 2.17). However, high friction surfacing will be applied to them, to prevent slipping. The proposed new footway area at the bottom of the steps would be large enough to accommodate multiple pedestrians and represents a significant improvement over the existing situation. Visibility splays are adequate for speeds (para 2.14, 2.15). Pedestrians exiting the bottom of the steps would be prevented from walking straight out into traffic by a section of guardrail (Plan HS-Fenay-P01-01).

Objection 7 – Proposed PUFFIN Crossing, Fenay Lane

One objection was received on the basis that the relocation of the westbound bus-stop caused by the PUFFIN crossing would be dangerous. Currently the stop is located at the top of the steps on Fenay Lane, however, under the original proposals it was proposed to move the stop eastwards beyond property number 13, because the zigzag markings associated with the PUFFIN would prevent buses from stopping. The objection states that the narrow southern footway between the steps and proposed bus stop location would be difficult and dangerous to negotiate, particularly for mobility impaired passengers.

Response:

The current version of the scheme no longer necessitates relocating the bus stop, as the PUFFIN crossing and its zigzag markings have been relocated westwards. The bus-stop will now be retained in its current position, with buses stopping immediately prior to the start of the zigzag markings.

Objection 8 – Proposed PUFFIN Crossing and Traffic Calming Measures, Proposed Waiting and Loading Restrictions and Prohibited Left-turn, Fenay Lane and St. Helen's Gate (Kirklees Traffic Regulation [No. 18] Order 2021)

A general objection was received from one of the Ward Members and a resident, that inconveniences caused by the scheme would disproportionately affect the residents of Almondbury. The basis was that residents would be continuously affected, despite the measures only being proposed to target pupils on school journeys, for limited time periods, on limited days of the week.

Response:

The objector's viewpoint is understood; however, the situation is unavoidable. Regardless, the PUFFIN crossing could be used by anyone at any time, and therefore provides wider benefits for the community. Similarly, the 20mph speed limits and traffic calming measures will permanently reduce speeds, continuously giving road safety benefits for all road users.

Objection 9 – Proposed Prohibited Left-turn, Fenay Lane to St. Helen's Gate (Kirklees Traffic Regulation [No. 18] Order 2021)

An objection was received from a resident of Dark Lane. The resident states that banning left turns from Fenay Lane into St. Helen's Gate would significantly increase traffic flows along Dark Lane and Birks Lane, both during and outside of school changeover times, and that these roads are too narrow and dangerous to accommodate traffic, therefore drivers and

pedestrians (including pupils walking to and from St. James School) would be placed at risk. The objector specifically refers to difficulties he would experience accessing his own driveway, with increased traffic in-situ. It was also stated that the left turn ban would lead to much higher volumes of traffic turning right from Birks Lane into Dark Lane.

Response:

Flows may increase along Dark Lane and Birks Lane; however, not significantly. Eastbound flows along the upper section of St. Helen's Gate are low at approximately 700 vehicles per day, and only a proportion of these that currently turn left in from Fenay Lane, would be displaced to Dark Lane. The left-in manoeuvre is restricted and difficult to execute, and only likely to be made by those who have no viable alternative. There is no logical basis for the suggestion that banning the left turn into Fenay Lane would increase traffic turning right out of Birks Lane. However, the Objector's concerns are noted. Highway Safety will carry out traffic surveys at strategic locations around the road network affected by the proposed scheme, both before and after scheme construction, if approved. If these surveys identified problems associated with increased traffic flows, mitigation would be considered at that time.

Objection 10 – Proposed Prohibition of Waiting, Fenay Lane, St. Helen's Gate and Northgate (Kirklees Traffic Regulation [No. 18] Order 2021)

Two objections were received on the basis that the advertised schedule incorrectly stated "Northgate", rather than "Fenay Lane". This related to Prohibition of Waiting, Schedule Item 2 – "...*prohibit waiting and loading at any time on Northgate on its south-west side from...*"

Response:

The extents of where Fenay Lane and Northgate start, and finish, have been checked with our Registry Team and are correct as per the wording in the advertised TRO. Northgate extends down to and past the junction of St Helen's Gate, where Fenay Lane then immediately starts on the eastern side of the junction.

3. Implications for the Council

- 3.1 **Working with people** - The PUFFIN crossing, 20mph speed limits, traffic calming, and other, related measures, are considered necessary to improve walking routes for pupils travelling between King James School and the centre of Almondbury. This is required to meet planning conditions placed upon the school to mitigate for increased numbers of pupils anticipated from January 2022.
- 3.2 **Working with Partners** – Highway Safety are already working with King James School and the Education Department on the impact of home to school travel with the aim of reducing the reliance on travel by car, targeting related traffic congestion problems in the vicinity of the school which could increase due to increased pupil numbers. The pedestrian improvements being proposed under this scheme would support this work, furthermore, it would be inappropriate for The Council to encourage pupils to walk along routes which are known to be unsafe.
- 3.3 **Place based Working** - The Traffic Regulation Orders are intended to prevent parking close to proposed crossing points, and to minimise congestion at an already restricted junction, including banning a difficult left-turn movement. Implementation of the orders would improve road safety, and they are considered essential to the safe operation of the network with the proposed scheme in-situ.

- 3.4 **Climate Change and Air Quality** - The scheme would safely facilitate walking trips to the school encouraging increased sustainable travel, which would in turn, help improve Air Quality and reduce Climate Change. This would be particularly beneficial in and around school access points and road routes to them, where currently congestion occurs due to large numbers of parents taking children by car.
- 3.5 **Improving outcomes for children** - The measures would provide safe crossings and links to them, reducing the future likelihood of children being injured in road traffic collisions when crossing the roads on journeys to and from school. The proposals could also increase the numbers of pupils walking to and from the school, yielding health benefits for children.
- 3.6 **Other implications** (HR/Legal/Financial etc) - The costs to the Council of the scheme are currently estimated to be £80,000, pending completion of detailed design work and a commercial cost estimate. A contribution of £50,000 has been allocated in the Education Department's Capital Budget. The remaining £30,000 would be covered by The Safer Roads (Community Traffic Schemes) Capital Budget. Irrecoverable costs have already been incurred by Highway Safety for staff time, and TRO processing.

4. Consultees and their opinions

Statutory consultees were consulted, and no concerns were raised.

All affected residents were consulted and engaged with over a period of months by Highway Safety, during which time the original scheme was revised numerous times to try and alleviate concerns raised prior to advertisement.

All three Almondbury Ward Councillors have objected to the proposals.

5. Next steps and timelines

Cabinet Committee Local Issues to consider the objections raised during the formal advertising period and reach a decision on whether the PUFFIN crossing, associated Traffic Regulation Orders and Traffic Calming measures are to be implemented as advertised. The proposed 20mph speed limits received no objections and should be implemented forthwith.

If Cabinet Committee Local Issues chooses to overrule the objections the scheme will be implemented on site as per the plans provided, with works planned to commence in November 2021.

If Cabinet Committee Local Issues choose to uphold the objections the PUFFIN crossing, associated Traffic Regulation Orders and Traffic Calming measures will not be implemented, the planning conditions associated with the expansion of King James School would not be met, and the proposed benefits for school pupils (and the wider community of Almondbury pedestrians) would not be realised.

6. Officer recommendations and reasons

During extensive scheme development over a period of months numerous options have been considered for the design of this scheme, the overarching aim being to provide safe pedestrian routes between the southern side of St. Helen's Gate and the centre of Almondbury. Highway Safety consider the current scheme version to be the most viable, safe compromise on the original design for this, having made numerous

revisions to allay residents' concerns. Whatever changes have been made to the scheme throughout this process, some objectors have maintained their rejection of the scheme, often changing their reasons for doing so. Highway Safety do not, therefore, believe that further development work and/or consultation would be beneficial. Significant amounts of Council resources have already been expended in terms of staff time, survey costs, and other costs.

The majority basis for objecting to the scheme now centres around the loss of on-street parking. Whilst some objectors who live on Fenay Lane have genuine (mobility-related) reasons for being concerned, unfortunately the crossing and related infrastructure could not be introduced without seriously compromising road user safety, unless parking is removed. However, it should be noted that on-street parking directly outside residents' homes on Fenay Lane would remain unaffected.

Permitting on-street parking is fundamentally in direct conflict with providing safe pedestrian crossings and free moving, safe trafficked junctions, and therefore the decision must be taken as to which highway function is given the highest priority here.

The proposed scheme would provide safe pedestrian routes encouraging more journeys to be made on foot. This reflects International, National, and Local policies to promote green travel modes as a proven method of reducing community impacts upon climate change. Reducing the numbers of journeys being made by vehicles yields environmental, health and road safety benefits for Almondbury. It could also help mitigate historical congestion problems experienced around King James School, caused by parents taking pupils to school by car. The only solution to these problems is to encourage more pupils to walk, and as Highway Authority, Kirklees Council have a responsibility to make promoted walking routes as safe as practicable.

It is also noted that some residents appear to believe that the scheme is only being promoted to provide benefits to pupils of King James School on journeys to and from the school, however, this is not the case. The scheme would provide safe routes for pedestrian journeys for all residents of Almondbury, at all times.

The Officer recommendations are that the objections be overruled, to enable the PUFFIN Crossing, traffic calming measures and associated Traffic Regulation Orders to be implemented as advertised alongside the 20mph speed limits, allowing the predicted benefits to be realised.

7. Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendations

TBD

8. Contact officer

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