

**Name of meeting:** Cabinet Committee - Local Issues

**Date:** 19 December 2022

**Title of report:** Proposed Casualty Reduction Scheme, Saville Arms Crossroads, Mirfield

**Kirklees Council Traffic Regulation [No. 12] Order 2022 – Proposed prohibition of waiting on Kitson Hill Road, and proposed prohibition of loading on Water Royd Lane, Old Bank Road, Kitson Hill Road, and Lee Green, Mirfield**

**Proposed road humps and proposed relocation of zebra crossing, Water Royd Lane, Mirfield**

**Purpose of report:** To consider objections received the proposals

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 <a href="#">Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)</a>	No
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Yes
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	Colin Parr – 07 Dec 2022
Is it also signed off by the Service Director Finance?	Eamonn Croston – 05 Dec 2022
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	Julie Muscroft – 28 Nov 2022
Cabinet member <a href="#">portfolio</a>	Cllr Naheed Mather

**Electoral wards affected:** Mirfield

**Ward councillors consulted:** Yes

**Public or private:** Public

**Has GDPR been considered:** Yes

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 Saville Arms Crossroads is formed at the junction of Water Royd Lane, Old Bank Road, Kitson Hill Road, and Lee Green, in central Mirfield. The Personal Injury Collision [PIC] record of the crossroads has been monitored by Highway Safety over many years, and the junction has been the subject of previous improvements to reduce PIC numbers and severities. The improvements have been successful to a degree; however, PICs continue to occur at the junction involving vehicles emerging from the side roads conflicting with those in the main road. Whilst average long-term frequency of junction emergence PICs is low at 1 every 2.5 years, the proportion of Killed and Seriously Injured [KSI] Casualties remains stubbornly high at 50%. Following requests from Ward Councillors, Highway Safety agreed to revisit the site with the aim of introducing further improvements.
- 1.1 A scheme was developed for the crossroads by Highway Safety to target PICs as per Appendix A Plan 25-65869-P02. The primary aims were/are: -
- To slow vehicles down along the main road approaches to the crossroads through the introduction of road humps (one being at the nearby zebra crossing), thus reducing emergence collision likelihood and severity outcomes
  - To improve signing along the minor road junction approaches, increasing junction conspicuity and improving driver compliance with the compulsory STOP requirements (details to be finalised during detailed design, i.e., post-CCLI)
  - To improve safety for pedestrians crossing around the junction mouth via new uncontrolled crossing points
  - To discourage hazardous parking close to the junctions through the introduction of loading restrictions and extension of zigzag markings at the zebra crossing
  - To improve safety at the existing zebra crossing through minor revisions to kerblines reducing crossing width, with refreshed road markings, High Friction Surfacing, and new high intensity LED globes; and widening of the existing “half layby” to allow vehicles to park fully behind the zig zag markings outside of the crossing’s forward visibility splay
  - To target the high proportion of PICs occurring darkness through improved street lighting
- 1.2 At the time that Plan P02 was circulated to Members it was intended to carry out a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit [RSA]. However, the Team only had a small number of qualified RS Auditors available, and unfortunately the intended RS Auditor submitted his resignation, leading to reprioritisation of his outstanding workload. To avoid delaying public consultation (as the scheme programme was already constrained), it was decided to subject the scheme to a combined Stage 1-2 RSA on completion of detailed design, and to abandon the Stage 1 RSA. Nevertheless, informal discussions took place between the RS Auditor and Scheme Designer about the proposals.
- 1.3 The intention was for the RS Auditor to identify any safety problems that he would have submitted in the Stage 1 RSA report had it gone ahead, to allow changes to be made prior to public consultation, thus avoiding delays later. The RS Auditor observed that the existing loading layby on Water Royd Lane south of the crossroads had a detrimental effect upon visibility to the left for drivers waiting to emerge from Lee Green, which could increase the likelihood of junction emergence collisions, and

therefore it should be removed by the scheme if possible. The Ward Members strongly supported his viewpoint, and subsequently the layby was removed, and a revised plan produced – Appendix B Plan 25-65869-P04. This was then used for public consultation and formal advertisement. The RS Auditor had no other safety concerns.

- 1.4 At the time, the Scheme Designer understood the professional concerns about retention of the loading layby and was happy to support the consensus and remove it; however, it was also pointed out to Members that its removal could be very unpopular, there being no alternative place to stop on-street nearby. It was suggested – if strong objections to removal of the layby were received – that the Council's position could be reconsidered after formal advertisement.
- 1.5 Orders associated with the scheme for loading and waiting restrictions (Kirklees Council Traffic Regulation [No. 12] Order 2022), and notices associated with proposed road humps and relocation of the zebra crossing, were then advertised between 28th July 2022 and 25th August 2022. During advertisement 5 objections to the scheme were received (Redacted copies at Appendix C).

## **2. Information Required to Take a Decision**

- 2.1 During advertisement of the proposals, five objections were received as detailed below. Objections 1 to 4 primarily relate to the removal of the loading layby and the difficulties that would cause, and Objection 5 focusses on the zebra crossing.

### **Objection 1 – Removal of Loading Layby, Water Royd Lane**

The owner of the takeaway business on Water Royd Lane located close to the layby, objects to its removal on the grounds that the loss of an essential loading facility would be severely detrimental to his long-established business. The layby is used for stock deliveries, and for takeaway meal collection by customers. The owner states that there is no reasonable alternative.

He also states that his business provides a 'counter to car-door' delivery service for mobility-impaired customers, enabling them to park in the layby and collect meals without leaving their vehicles, which could not continue if it was removed.

He alleges – whilst he has witnessed many collisions at the crossroads and been the first on scene to assist injured parties – that no collision has ever occurred whilst a vehicle was using the layby, and therefore its retention would not be detrimental to road user safety.

He further submits that traffic signalisation would be a better improvement option for the junction, and that alternatively, reversing the priorities at the junction should also be considered.

The Objector also alleges that, 20 years ago when the zebra crossing and bus stop were relocated to their current positions, during pre-scheme consultation a compromise was agreed between him and Kirklees Council whereby the layby in question was created with double yellow lines for loading, and in return he withdrew an objection to that scheme.

### **Response:**

With the layby removed, the nearest locations to the takeaway for stopping on-street would be either be on Lee Green east of the crossroads, or Water Royd Lane south of

the zebra crossing. From Water Royd Lane, depending upon other parked vehicles the distance to walk would be at least 40m, and from Lee Green at least 55m. These distances are reasonable for able-bodied customers collecting food; however, for those carrying heavy or large loads and/or having to make multiple trips, they could be considered excessive. Additionally, the footway along Lee Green is very narrow, and it would be difficult to pass other pedestrians whilst carrying loads. Walking along Water Royd Lane carrying loads could cause conflicts with pedestrians at the zebra crossing, or at shop doorways located north of it.

The car park located off Water Royd Lane south of the zebra crossing is not publicly owned, and regardless, access to and from it could be difficult for delivery vehicles.

The objection to the removal of the layby is, therefore, considered reasonable.

There is no evidence to undermine the Objector's assurance that no vehicles were parked in the loading layby when collisions occurred at the crossroads, as detailed in Paragraph 2.3 below.

The alternative suggestion of traffic signalisation is not considered viable for the reasons given in Paragraphs 2.2 below.

Reversing priorities at the crossroads is not considered appropriate. Traffic flows along Water Royd Lane – Old Bank Road are considerably higher than along Lee Green – Old Bank Road (approximately double), and the current priority layout is therefore the most representative. Whilst the Objector's statement that visibility might improve with the priorities reversed is reasonable, the change would lead to a significant increase in the number of vehicles forced to stop/give-way when travelling straight across the junction, which would be likely to significantly increase the number of collisions occurring. This is the current dominant collision scenario type, despite existing visibility being adequate. Delays along Water Royd Lane – Old Bank Road would also be considerable, and significantly greater than those currently experienced along Lee Green and Kitson Hill Road.

We have no record of the events pertaining to the zebra / bus-stop / layby scheme introduced 20 years ago and the Objector's involvement (if any), and so we cannot comment on the validity of the agreement alleged to have been made with the Council at that time.

## **Objection 2 – Removal of Loading Layby, Water Royd Lane**

The Objector is a resident living close to the takeaway on Water Royd Lane. She objects to the removal of the layby, on the grounds that she works from home and often takes deliveries of heavy project materials via the layby, and furthermore uses it to drop off shopping and other loads before parking up on Lee Green. She argues that there is no viable alternative for loading, as she has declining health and mobility, and carrying loads over distance is not possible for her.

She also states that to her knowledge no collision has ever occurred at the crossroads whilst a vehicle was using the layby, and that traffic signals should be considered as an alternative solution.

## **Response:**

The alternatives for this resident in terms of loading with the layby removed are almost identical to those for the takeaway owner, detailed above. Therefore, considering this Objector's health and mobility problems, the grounds that her business and personal health would be damaged by removal of the layby are considered reasonable.

Removal of the layby may also constitute non-compliance with our obligations under the Equality Act 2010, in terms of discrimination against mobility impaired users.

There is no evidence to undermine the Objector's assurances that no vehicles were parked in the loading layby when collisions occurred at the crossroads, as detailed in Paragraph 2.3 below.

The alternative suggestion of traffic signalisation is not considered viable for the reasons given in Paragraph 2.2 below.

### **Objection 3 – Removal of Loading Layby, Water Royd Lane**

This Objector is a close relative of the above resident of Water Royd Lane, living remote to the area in southern England. He objects on the grounds that he suffers severe mobility impairment, can only walk very short distances using walking sticks, and uses the layby to be dropped off by taxis when he visits, travelling by train. He states that removal of the layby would prevent him from visiting his relative, as there is no alternative.

#### **Response:**

With the layby removed there would be no viable alternative means of access to this Objector's relative's property frontage, and therefore this objection is considered reasonable.

Removal of the layby could also constitute non-compliance with our obligations under the Equality Act 2010, in terms of discrimination against a mobility impaired user.

### **Objection 4 – Removal of Loading Layby, Water Royd Lane**

A resident living to the south of the zebra crossing Water Royd Lane objects on the grounds that removing the loading layby would displace parking, with a likelihood that parked vehicles would block his driveway, preventing access to his property.

The Objector also states that traffic signals should be considered as an alternative solution.

#### **Response:**

The Objector's driveway is protected by double yellow lines; however, these are faded (but will be renewed by the scheme). That said, drivers are permitted to park on these restrictions for loading. This would be the first location encountered by southbound drivers after passing the takeaway where stopping on-street would be permitted for loading. Therefore, if other vehicles were already parked in the unrestricted section south of the driveway (i.e., longer term parking by residents) the location could be attractive. On that basis, the grounds for objection could be considered reasonable.

The alternative suggestion of traffic signalisation is not considered viable for the reasons given in Paragraph 2.2 below.

### **Objection 5 – Relocation of Zebra Crossing**

This Objector is a resident of Water Royd Lane, who lives close to the crossroads. The main basis of their objection is that the zebra crossing is positioned dangerously close to the crossroads. Additionally, the Objector suggests that traffic signals should be provided at the crossroads to replace the current scheme proposals.

## Response:

During the past 15 years there have been only two injury collisions in the vicinity of the zebra crossing. Whilst both resulted in pedestrian injuries, neither occurred on the crossing itself, but 10m to 15m south of it i.e., the injured parties were not using the crossing. One of these collisions yielded a fatal casualty, the other slight. In neither case did the Police records infer that the zebra crossing was a factor in terms of its layout or its location, or that inappropriate driver behaviour played a part. The crossing, therefore, has an exemplary safety record, meets current guidance in terms of its location and layout, and the safety of pedestrians using it could only improve with the measures currently being proposed – conversion to a humped crossing, re-marking, new high-intensity LED crossing globes, and new High Friction Surfacing.

The Objection, therefore, has no reasonable grounds.

The alternative suggestion of traffic signalisation is not considered viable for the reasons given in Paragraph 2.2 below.

- 2.2 **Objections 1, 2, 4 and 5** all submit that traffic signalisation would be a more effective improvement option for the crossroads, a position that the Ward Councillors have also taken in the past. However, traffic flows along Water Royd Lane–Old Bank Road are approximately double those across the side roads, and repeatedly interrupting these flows with red traffic signals every few minutes would give rise to a high likelihood of shunt collisions, and of driver frustration, and red-light running collisions. When introducing traffic signals at priority junctions, the risk of future collisions of new types like these must be considered. The collision record at the existing junction, whilst concerning in terms of severities, has a low overall frequency. We could, therefore, have more collisions occurring here with traffic signals than with priority control. Traffic signals would also incur substantial new delays to traffic. Furthermore, traffic signals would be problematic to install due to limited footway widths to house equipment (on Lee Green in particular), the extensive amounts of statutory undertakers apparatus located around the site, and the proximity of accesses. It would also be a considerably more expensive scheme than currently proposed, and we could not justify these costs against the limited collision reduction benefits available here.
- 2.3 **Objections 1 and 2** state the residents have witnessed the aftermath of many collisions at the crossroads, but that vehicles have never been parked in the loading layby on Water Royd Lane at the times that they occurred. On that basis, they argue that removal of the layby cannot be justified on road safety grounds. This led Highway Safety to carry out additional collision analysis of long-term Police STATS19 data to identify whether parked vehicles blocking side road visibility had ever been a factor, particularly vehicles parked in the loading layby. Our standard historical investigation period of 5 years was extended to 15 years, during which period there were 8 injury collisions, 6 of which involved vehicles emerging from the side roads colliding with through traffic. None of these collision records cited parked vehicles blocking visibility as a contributory factor (in any location). Whilst it is acknowledged that parked vehicles *may* have been present but not recorded by the Police, it should be noted that in only 25% of the collisions would it have even been *possible* for a vehicle parked in the layby to have contributed, due to circumstances (i.e., where a vehicle emerged from Lee Green into the path of another heading north along Water Royd Lane). The Police data, therefore, supports the Objectors' argument.

- 2.4 Considering the results of our further investigations, Highway Safety revisited the design to ascertain whether a loading facility could be retained without causing significant collision risk, and to establish what the implications of doing so would be. This resulted in the production of **Appendix D Plan 25-65869-P05**.
- 2.5 The **P05** version of the scheme retains a loading layby designed for vehicles up to 7.5t (as used for deliveries to the takeaway). It is, however, important to note that its layout is materially different to that of the existing layby, and for that matter the layby originally proposed in the first version of the scheme (Plan **P02**). The changes were made to attempt to address the RS Auditor's and Members' concerns about visibility blockage by loading vehicles.
- 2.6 The differences are that the (Plan **P05**) layby would be much deeper than the existing layby allowing vehicles to park further back into the footway, and that vehicles parked at the rear/northern end of the layby would be significantly further away from the Lee Green junction, namely some 6.5m further. The effect would be to significantly reduce the degree to which vehicles in the layby would restrict visibility to the left, for drivers emerging from Lee Green, compared to the existing facility. **Appendix E – Plan "Visibility Splays"** shows visibility splay comparisons between the existing loading layby, and the proposed **P05** loading layby (this plan was provided to Members).
- 2.7 Visibility splays for side roads at junctions would normally be measured across the full width of the carriageway. In this case – for drivers' looking left from Lee Green across the layby – visibility across both the northbound and southbound lanes of Water Royd Lane would normally be measured. The southbound lane would be included only to make allowance for any northbound vehicles overtaking along the junction approach. However, the splay shown only extends across the northbound lane (i.e., the lane in which traffic approaches the Lee Green conflict point), and there are good reasons pertaining to this site which led to this relaxation.
- 2.8 There is a zebra crossing with zigzag markings which extend southwards away from the Lee Green junction for some 55m, legally prohibiting northbound overtaking along the junction approach. The requirement not to overtake through zebra crossings is generally very well adhered to, but a road hump would also be installed at this crossing, so the likelihood of overtaking would be exceptionally low. The only scenarios where a northbound vehicle might overtake here would likely be rare and/or extreme – for example an emergency services vehicle on call, or a Police car chasing a stolen vehicle. Under such circumstances drivers would be warned by approaching sirens, and visibility splays would be highly unlikely to have any significant effect upon the outcomes of these incidents.
- 2.9 For the **P05** layout, the visibility splay plan clearly evidences significant improvements in views to the left for drivers emerging from Lee Green over the existing layout. Visibility across the width of the approaching northbound traffic lane would meet Manual for Streets requirements for 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds of between 25.3mph and 27.3mph, depending upon where the vehicle was positioned within the layby. With road humps in-situ, it is entirely realistic to expect speeds at these levels. Under the current layout, speeds would have to be between 14mph and 19.8mph for visibility to be considered adequately safe; however, current speeds will be much higher.

- 2.10 Plan **P05** and our related findings about visibility were then shared with Ward Members. In view of these findings – and considering the strength of objection to the removal of the loading layby and the significant problems that could cause – Highway Safety requested that Members reconsidered their positions, and that a loading layby be retained. Whilst Members’ concerns are understood, Highway Safety do not believe that this layby would result in any significant risk to road users. We reiterated that this would be a significant improvement over the existing layby, the use of which has not contributed to any injury collisions over the past 15 years. It was hoped that with Members’ support, Highway Safety could then contact the Objectors with the revised plan **P05** leading to the objections being withdrawn.
- 2.11 There has been concern expressed by two of the three ward Councillors that the most recent proposal is contrary, or indeed contradicts recommendations arising from Stage 1 Road Safety audit on the original scheme. (but this is not the case – see Para 1.2 / 1.3) The latest proposal, however, is a solution that the design team believes is one that will resolve objections without creating additional road safety issues, and would in fact improve existing visibility at this junction, which is the concern that was raised by Councillors on the original concept.
- 2.12 Officers are now in a position where there are two potential schemes at this location, that will achieve the aims as set out in the original brief, and do so in a safe manner, namely .:
- one layout as formally advertised, with no loading layby (**Appendix B Plan 25-65869-P04**)
  - one layout, retaining a loading layby with improvements over the existing facility (**Appendix D Plan 25-65869-P05**)

### **3. Implications for the Council**

- 3.1 **Working with people** - The improved Zebra crossing, new uncontrolled crossings, improved street lighting, traffic calming and other traffic signing measures would improve safety for residents and other road users in this area.
- 3.2 **Working with Partners** – No partnerships under this scheme.
- 3.3 **Place based Working** - The Traffic Regulation Orders are intended to prevent parking close to junctions and crossings. Implementation of the orders would improve road safety in this area.
- 3.4 **Climate Change and Air Quality** - The scheme would be unlikely to have any significant effect upon Climate Change or Air Quality, however, street lighting upgrades would provide much more efficient/better illumination.
- 3.5 **Improving outcomes for children** - The measures would provide new crossings and reduce vehicle speeds, reducing the future likelihood of children being injured in road traffic collisions when crossing the roads on journeys to and from school. The crossroads junction lies along local walking routes to and from Crossley Fields J & I school
- 3.6 **Other implications** (HR/Legal/Financial etc) - The costs to the Council of the scheme are currently estimated to be £50,000, pending completion of detailed design work and a commercial cost estimate. This would be covered by The Safer Roads (Casualty Reduction Schemes) Capital Budget, carried over from the 2021-22 financial year.



Irrecoverable costs have already been incurred for staff time and surveys, TRO processing, and Street Lighting upgrades already carried out on site. Funding for this scheme was carried over from Safer Roads LTP settlement, carried over from 2021-22. If this scheme cannot be agreed and constructed during this financial year, the funding will be lost since the criteria now used for prioritising funding of Casualty Prevention schemes are more stringent, via City Regions Sustainable Transport Schemes ('CRSTS') fund. This scheme would be highly unlikely to be ranked highly enough against others to be funded under said criteria.

#### 4. Consultees and their opinions

Statutory consultees were approached, and no concerns were raised.

All affected residents were consulted by Highway Safety, since which time the original scheme has been revised numerous times to try and alleviate concerns raised both prior to, and after advertisement.

All three Mirfield Ward Councillors support a scheme, on condition that it does not include retention of a loading layby on Water Royd Lane (**Appendix B - Plan P04**).

Cllr Bolt has not committed to comment on the revised scheme and is concerned officers are "changing their minds"— See Appendix G for correspondence  
Cllr Lee- Hamilton feels unable to support the scheme developed to address objections to the advertised scheme – See Appendix H for correspondence

#### 5. Next steps and timelines

The proposed loading/waiting restrictions and the proposed road humps received no objections and should be implemented.

The proposed relocation of the Zebra Crossing received one objection (**Objection 5**); however, Highway Safety consider this has no grounds. If CCLI chooses to uphold this Objection, neither of the current scheme options could be progressed; if they overrule it, either scheme could be progressed.

Regarding the unresolved related issue of the loading layby. CCLI to consider **Objections 1 to 4** and other related information provided, to reach a decision on whether a scheme is implemented without a loading layby as supported by the Ward Members (**25-65869-P04**), or a scheme is implemented including a loading layby in support of the Objectors (**25-65869-P05**).

If CCLI chooses to overrule **Objections 1 to 4** the scheme will be implemented on site as per Plan **25-65869-P04** provided.

If CCLI chooses to uphold **Objections 1 to 4** the scheme will be implemented on site as per Plan **25-65869-P05** provided.

#### 6. Officer recommendations and reasons

Officers recommendation:

Based upon the information provided the Officer recommendation is that **Objections 1 to 4** are upheld, and **Objection 5** is overruled, to enable the zebra crossing relocation, traffic calming measures and associated Traffic Regulation Orders to be implemented as advertised alongside the physical layout changes (including retention of a loading layby) as per **Appendix D Plan 25-65869-P05** provided, allowing the expected benefits of reduced injury collision frequency/severity to be realised.

#### Reasons:

The proposed scheme aims to improve safety for all road users as far as reasonably practicable. Highway Safety understands Ward Members' concerns that allowing vehicles to load from a layby on Water Royd Lane limits visibility to the left from Lee Green, and the potential for that to negatively impact road user safety. However, considering the specific site conditions here, the collision history, and the significant problems that removing the layby could cause the Objectors, on balance, the negligible risks associated with retaining a loading layby are considered entirely justifiable.

A summary of considerations informing the recommendation and its reasoning are: -

- The only part of the visibility splay to the left for Lee Green drivers that could be blocked by a vehicle loading in the layby, would be views to vehicles in the southbound lane, which should be travelling away from the crossroads
- Visibility to vehicles approaching Lee Green along the northbound lane would meet criteria and be safe for predicted 85<sup>th</sup> percentile approach vehicle speeds, as would forward visibility to the zebra crossing
- The only potential problem for Lee Green drivers would be blocked visibility of northbound vehicles overtaking through the southbound lane along the junction approach, *however*, the likelihood of overtaking through this humped zebra crossing is extremely low, and therefore resulting risk is considered negligible
- In the past 15 years no injury collision has occurred at the crossroads involving a parked vehicle (according to Police records), and in only two of the eight injury collisions would it have even been *possible* for a vehicle in the layby to have contributed
- Vehicles using the layby for loading would only be present for short periods of time
- Proposed significant improvements to visibility past the layby combined with the other proposed improvements, could only make the junction much safer than it currently is

## 7. Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendations

The Cabinet portfolio holder supports the officer recommendations.

## 8. Contact officer

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## **9. Service Director responsible**

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