

Regulatory Committee

Dorset County Council



Date of Meeting	1 June 2017
Officer	Andrew Martin, Service Director, Highways and Emergency Planning
Subject of Report	Proposed Toucan Crossing, East Road, Bridport
Executive Summary	<p>In 2008 a study was undertaken to identify a Bridport wide cycle network. Much work has been carried out over the intervening years to deliver the routes and the proposed Toucan crossing on East Road is a key link in developing the network.</p> <p>The Toucan crossing is part of a wider improvements scheme around the East Road/A35(T) roundabout to improve safety for non-motorised users. The project is being promoted by Highway England, who are funding the proposals, with the support of Bridport Town Council and Sustrans. Dorset County Council has designed the scheme and will act as contractors under licence for Highway England. Subject to approvals the works are programmed to start in September 2017.</p> <p>Following advertisement of a Public Notice in January 2017 of the intention to install a Toucan crossing a number of objections and representations have been received. This report considers the objections and representations and whether the proposed Toucan crossing should be implemented as advertised.</p>
Impact Assessment:	<p>Equalities Impact Assessment:</p> <p>An Equalities Impact Assessment for overall scheme was carried out in February 2017. This concluded that there will be no discriminatory or negative consequences for any sector of the community on the grounds of gender, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or other socially excluded groups.</p> <p>The proposals seek to introduce two new Toucan crossings and linked footway/cycleways which will positively benefit the sectors of age, disability and pregnancy and maternity.</p>

	<p>Use of Evidence:</p> <p>Non-Motorised User assessment, traffic surveys including video monitoring, public consultation and support of Local Member, Town and District Council and the Police.</p> <hr/> <p>Budget:</p> <p>£522,000.00 funding from Highways England</p> <hr/> <p>Risk Assessment:</p> <p>Having considered the risks associated with this decision using the County Council's approved risk management methodology, the level of risk has been identified as:</p> <p>Current Risk: LOW Residual Risk: LOW</p> <hr/> <p>Other implications:</p> <p>None</p>
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>That having considered the objections received, Cabinet be recommended to approve the provision of a Toucan Crossing as advertised.</p>
<p>Reason for Recommendation</p>	<p>The proposals should allow the provision of controlled Toucan crossing facilities on East Road without adversely affecting traffic flows in the vicinity of the roundabout.</p>
<p>Appendices</p>	<p>Appendix 1 - Scheme Location Plan Appendix 2 - Sea Road South, East Road and Sea Road North Routes Appendix 3 - Consultation Plan</p>
<p>Background Papers</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The responses to the advertisement of the Public Notice as outlined in section 4 of this report are available to view in the Members Room. 2. Primary consultation responses from the District and Town Councils, Dorset Police and the local County Councillor are held on file in the Environment and the Economy Directorate.
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1. Background

- 1.1 In 2008 a study was undertaken to identify new cycleway links in Bridport that could augment the existing sections of cycleway to create a more coherent cycle network in the town. Nine routes were identified and since the report several sections have been completed.
- 1.2 The proposed Toucan crossing forms part of an improvements scheme around the East Road/A35(T) roundabout. It is an integral part of a route which would link West Bay approximately 2.5km to the south and Bradpole 1.8km to the north, the longer term aspiration is to provide a trailway link northwards to the mainline railway station at Maiden Newton.
- 1.3 The route would provide a safe off-road route linking the beaches and facilities in West Bay to local businesses, shops, supermarkets, schools and residential areas. As well as providing a sustainable footway/cycleway route for residents it would also enable visitors and holiday makers the option to walk or cycle rather than use the car thus helping to reduce congestion.
- 1.4 The development of the route is a partnership project between Dorset County Council, Bridport Town Council, Highways England and the sustainable transport organisation Sustrans.

2. Information

- 2.1 The proposed Toucan crossing is situated on the B3162 East Road approximately 50m to the west of the East Road / A35 Trunk Road roundabout and as such is a busy main route into the town (See Appendix 1). At peak times the route carries around 9500 vehicles per day (combined east/west).
- 2.2 Highways England (HE), as responsible highway authority for the A35(T), have investigated safety issues associated with the roundabout where 5 casualties involving Non-Motorised Users (NMU's) were identified between January 2009 and December 2013. Discussions were held with DCC during 2016 and the HE commissioned further studies in order to identify potential improvements to the roundabout and its environs.
- 2.3 Several options were considered and the preferred option now being promoted includes (see Appendix 2):
 - (a) Upgrading the existing Pelican crossing on the A35(T) Sea Road South to a Toucan Crossing to enable shared use by pedestrians and cyclists.
 - (b) Providing a new Toucan crossing on DCC's local network on East Road, the subject of this report (See Appendix 3).
 - (c) Widening of the footway to shared use between these two Toucan crossings and the existing cycleway on Sea Road South.
 - (d) Widening the footway to the north of the proposed East Road Toucan crossing to shared use. This would link in to a proposed widened footway/cycleway on Sea Road North as far as the Co-Op supermarket where crossing facilities are proposed as part of a further package of works.
 - (e) Widening splitter island on the north arm to make crossing the road on foot much easier.

- (f) A new modern system of lighting on the roundabout reducing the need for ongoing maintenance.
 - (g) Generally improving and rationalising the footways around the junction.
 - (h) Removal of the overgrown shrubs on the roundabout to improve visibility.
- 2.4 The budget for the scheme is £522,000.00 which the HE will fully fund with DCC delivering the scheme under agreements. Subject to approvals the works are programmed to start in September 2017.
- 2.5 Other sections of this route that link into the proposal are being developed concurrently;
- (a) The widening of the footway on the west side of Sea Road North (See Appendix 2) to the Co-Op store where it is proposed that a new Toucan crossing will replace a pedestrian refuge. This link provides a safe route to Bridport Primary school and an onward link to the existing footway/cycleway through the open space at Happy Island to Bradpole. This proposal is being funded with £235,000.00 funds from the Local Transport Plan. This proposed Toucan crossing is programmed to go to public Advert in May/June 2017.
 - (b) A new shared use facility from the Crown Roundabout at the southern end of Sea Road South along the B3157 Burton Road to link in with the existing bridleway to West Bay which will also be improved. This proposal was subject to a successful Coastal Communities bid and secured £270,624.38 in funding. The proposal is at detailed design stage.
 - (c) A new shared footway/cycleway through Riverside Gardens (See Appendix 2) is being developed in partnership with Bridport Town Council. It is situated to the north of East Road Bridge and would link the proposed Toucan crossing to the upgraded route along Sea Road North.
 - (d) There is an existing cycle-route from East Road Bridge following the River Asker to Morrisons superstore approximately 800m to the south. As a part of the development of this route a new bridge was constructed over the river which links in to the town centre and residential areas.

3. Law

- 3.1 Under Section 23 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 it allows the provision of pedestrian crossings subject to first carrying out the prescribed consultation and publicity. The Toucan crossing proposal was advertised between 5 and 27 January 2017 as part of the public consultation process. Copies of the Public Notice were placed on lighting columns at the proposed site and also hand delivered, together with a scheme plan, to approximately 20 residential properties and businesses in the immediate vicinity.

4. Consultation Responses

- 4.1 Under Dorset County Council's procedure, primary consultation was carried out on the proposed scheme and it is supported by the Local Member, by West Dorset District Council, by Bridport Town Council and by the Police.
- 4.2 As a consequence of the public consultation representations were received from 4 of the properties bordering the proposed crossing; 1 in broad support, with a query relating to the form of the crossing, and 3 objections.

- 4.3 The resident in support thought that the crossing was required and would help children, young families and the elderly cross the road and to gain access to Bridport Primary School. The query they had related to the visual impact of a Toucan crossing on the Listed Regency houses and wondered if a Zebra crossing would not be less visually intrusive, less expensive and more effective. The reasoning for the Toucan was set out in an email and the resident responded that they were happy with the explanation and looked forward to the crossing being built. A copy of the email is available on project files.
- 4.4 The principle of proposal for a crossing was supported by all the residents but the main reasons for raising concerns in writing was the view that the position of the crossing is too close to the roundabout; thus causing tailbacks, associated pollution, and potentially blocking their private road access to their garages. The suggestion was made to move the crossing closer to the bridge which it was felt would prevent the perceived backing-up issue. During discussions and a site meeting with one resident the visual impact on the Listed Regency properties and the Bridport Conservation Area was also raised. Officers acknowledge that the introduction of modern street furniture (signal poles and heads) would not enhance the Conservation Area. However it is felt that the benefit of providing a safe crossing facility outweighs any negative visual impact.
- 4.5 Following discussion with the lead resident a number of possible concessions were investigated, these are:
- (a) Move the crossing marginally towards the bridge by around 1m. This is subject to establishing the position and extent of buried services which have the potential to dictate the final position. This can only be established on-site at the start of construction should the scheme go ahead.
 - (b) Move the control box from the footway in front of numbers 4 and 6 to the north side of the road. Again this is in part reliant on the buried services but also the necessity to provide a safe area for maintenance of the equipment.
 - (c) Introduce a "KEEP CLEAR" marking to protect their private access road; this is not technically possible as it would conflict with the zig-zag markings on the run in to the crossing. These markings make parking or loading in the area illegal and are enforceable. However the combination of the crossing with associated signals, and the presence of the zig-zag markings, should help with exiting from the layby as drivers will be inclined to slow within the area of the crossing.
- 4.6 The residents have agreed that the compromise is the best that can be achieved and as such have withdrawn their opposition. However it should be noted that officers cannot guarantee the concessions due to the potential constraints.
- 4.7 One further objection was also received from The Bridport and District Tourism Association (BDTA) which states it represents around 60 local tourism businesses including holiday parks, hotels, B&B's, pubs and taxi companies.
- 4.8 The objection reads, in italics below, with officer comments after each bullet point objection:

The Association objects to the installation of a toucan crossing in East Road, Bridport for the following reasons:

- *East Road is already very congested at weekends and during school holidays.*

- (a) Comment: East Road can be congested due to the sheer volume of traffic on the Trunk Road, it is not unusual at busy summer periods to have westbound queues trailing back from the roundabout for more than 1km. This traffic extends along Sea Road South to the Crown Roundabout. The same can be said for East Road and East Street which can be bumper to bumper through the town all the way to the Town Hall. During these times the Toucan crossing would only be a short physical gap in stationary traffic and would not extend journey times or cause additional congestion.
- *Installing a crossing at this point will cause tailbacks onto the roundabout.*

(b) Comment: This was the common perception in the representations received and the theory was tested to assess the effects. To get a more accurate picture at busy times video monitoring was undertaken around the busy May Bank Holiday this year. It showed that the highest number of recorded westbound vehicles was on 28 April in the morning peak (08:30 to 09:30) at 508 vehicles (approximately 1 vehicle every seven seconds entering East Road). The time the lights are on red, including the amber phase and allowing for clearing of traffic is 23 seconds. This has been mathematically tested and, even with a 50% additional safety loading, it equates to a maximum traffic queue of 36m. The distance from the stop line for the crossing and the exit from the roundabout is 41m. This indicates that there will be no backing up of traffic through the roundabout during these periods. As commented point 4.8 a) above, at extremely busy summer periods when the network can be overwhelmed the crossing would only be a short physical gap, about a cars length, in the queuing traffic whilst causing no negative impact.

 - *The roundabout already blocks up when the pedestrian crossing in Sea Road South is in use.*

(c) Comment: currently this can be the case for traffic entering Sea Road South. However as part of the scheme the crossing on Sea Road South is also being upgraded to a Toucan Crossing. The detection equipment will be more reliable and accurate in detecting, thus reducing delays to traffic. The same system is also proposed for the crossing on East Road. As set out in the comment on point 2 the crossing on East Road will not cause traffic to back up onto the roundabout.

 - *The toucan crossing will make a bad situation worse.*

(d) Comment: The congestion is caused by the sheer volumes of traffic on the Trunk Road and not as a result of the crossing on Sea Road South. Our research has shown that there will be no negative impact on journey times and no traffic tailing back through the junction.

 - *The need for a toucan crossing in this location is highly questionable.*

(e) Comment: a Non-Motorised User audit was undertaken by DCC in January 2017. It identified the following existing pedestrian or cycle trip generators:

 - Sir John Colfox Academy
 - Bridport County Primary School

- Town centre shops and businesses
- Shops and businesses along St. Andrews Road and Sea Road North.
- Co-op, Lidl and Travis Perkins stores
- Existing cycle routes at Bradpole and Askers Meadow.

The audit also identified the existing level of traffic flow and the existing usage by pedestrians and other NMU's.

A count of cyclists was undertaken at the site of the proposed toucan crossing in East Road between 07:00 and 19:00 on Friday 15 January 2016. A total of 12 cyclists were observed crossing at this location. At the roundabout, a total of 42 cyclists were observed on road whilst 40 cyclists were observed using the footways. However, it should be noted that these counts were undertaken on cold wet days in January which may account for the figures being quite low.

The reasons stated by cyclists for cycling this route in a January 2016 traffic survey (as a percentage) were as follows: 35% commuting; 20% recreational; 15% business; 15% school and 15% shopping.

This study was submitted to Highways England as part of the evidence to support the successful funding bid.

- *What usage statistics justify the expense and the negative impact on town and A35 traffic circulation?*

(f) Comment: please see responses to b) and e) above.

4.9 An email outlining the wider project, including the potential benefits to tourism and sustainable transport was sent to the association but they have asked that their objection stands with particular reference to the queueing back of traffic.

5. Conclusion

5.1 The Toucan crossing is an integral part of a wider scheme to improve safety around the busy Trunk Road roundabout for non-motorised users. The proposals are being promoted and funded by Highways England in partnership with the County Council, Bridport Town Council and Sustrans.

5.2 Having considered the representations submitted some concerns may be addressed subject to further investigations on site. The main concern was that of the potential queueing of traffic back through the roundabout when the crossing was in use. Having assessed the impact using data collected on the Friday before the May Bank Holiday officers are confident that no such queueing will occur.

5.3 It is recommended that the Committee recommend to Cabinet that the Toucan crossing be implemented as advertised.