

Recommendation from Regulatory Committee – 24 January 2019

Proposed Puffin Pedestrian Crossing - Bristol Road, Sherborne

- 8 The Committee considered a report by the Planning and Regulation Manager on the on the advertisement of a proposal for the implementation of a Puffin pedestrian crossing on B3145 Bristol Road, at the northern end of Sherborne, in facilitating the crossing of the road by a controlled means, across the main route to Wincanton and the A303 trunk road.

The proposed Puffin crossing had been requested and supported by Sherborne Town Council following representation from the Gryphon School with the aim of providing a safe crossing facility on Bristol Road, near the Blackberry Lane/Quarr Lane junction, for school pupils and parents going to and from local schools, as well as providing a benefit for the wider community. The crossing was seen to be necessary in the absence of any school crossing patrol, which had previously existed but had been unable to be replaced during the previous 3 years despite numerous attempts to do so. Assessments made of pedestrian accessibility need had clearly demonstrated that the criteria for a Puffin crossing had been met and its installation justified.

Following the advertisement of the proposals, two representations had been received, on the basis that the crossing would erode already limited on street limited parking provision and adversely impact the amenity of properties in the vicinity of where it was being proposed to be located. On that basis, and having met with those involved on site, these issues had been addressed as far as practicable, so that the, slightly revised, proposed location for the crossing was now seen to be more acceptable whilst still being able to serve the purpose for which it was designed. In accommodating this, this amended design now formed the basis of the recommendation by officers and the basis upon which any decision would be made. The Committee acknowledged and accepted this.

In practice, mitigation provided for a marginal relocation of the apparatus so that it would no longer be sited in the line of vision of a residential property's windows; consideration of the crossing's activation audibility during night-time and use of efficient LED lighting so as to avoid extraneous light pollution. The lights could be partially cowled if deemed necessary too.

With the proposed crossing being requested by Sherborne Town Council on that basis and, along with West Dorset District Council, Dorset Police and the County Councillor for Sherborne as primary consultees, all agreed the proposals should be advertised. However, as a consequence of the objection which remained outstanding, the Committee was now being asked to consider whether the proposals should be recommended to Cabinet for implementation, as amended in the plan in Appendix 3 to the report.

With the aid of a visual presentation, officers showed where the crossing was advertised to be sited, the characteristics and configuration of Bristol Road; how the crossing would benefit access local schools and amenities; its relationship with other roads in the surrounding road network; what parking could be retained; the setting of the crossing within the townscape and what amenities and facilities would be served by the crossing.

Effectively the only point at which the crossing could be situated to meet the needs of users - at a place where it was seen to be the natural place to cross -

and in meeting the engineering practicalities of doing so to ensure the necessary regulations were complied with, was where it was being proposed.

The Committee heard from public speakers. Nicki Edwards, Headteacher at the Gryphon School considered the crossing to be essential on road safety grounds, in ensuring there was a controlled means of being able to cross such a busy road and in allowing as safe access as possible to the schools and other amenities in the vicinity. Whilst there may have been no recorded accidents, she was aware of an accident in December 2017 where a pedestrian had to cross between parked cars. She considered that all should be done to avoid incidents or accidents occurring and the crossing would go a considerable way to achieving this.

Councillor Jill Warburton - representing Sherborne Children's Services (The Rendezvous) of Sherborne Town Council and the lead with parents in the community for the Sherborne Area Roadsafe Project - spoke in favour of the proposal, with her participation in Roadsafe and The Rendezvous giving her a good insight into the needs of vulnerable road users. She too considered the crossing to be essential given the absence now of any other means of aided crossing, all the amenities it served and the prospect of a new housing development nearby, it would be a welcome asset to the town. The Puffin crossing also provided the capability for those more vulnerable road users to be able cross in the knowledge that their needs were being accounted for.

The Committee were then provided with the opportunity to ask questions of the officer's presentation and about what they had heard and officer's provided clarification in respect of the points raised. In particular officers explained why the crossing proposed was a Puffin rather than a Toucan, given that those assessed to be crossing were predominately pedestrians and that Toucan crossing were used where there was a cycling network to which to link.

The County Councillor for Sherborne Town advocated the installation of the crossing considering that it would most beneficial on road safety grounds and necessary given how it would serve the Gryphon and other schools. He was particularly appreciative of the considerable efforts made to ensure that an acceptable solution could be found to meet the needs of all. He asked that if there was a means to be able to partially cowl the lights, this should be done. The Committee agreed that this should be an integral part of the installation.

The practicalities of siting the crossing where it was proposed was understood and the efforts made to realise a compromise to accommodate the representations received, as far as practicable, was acknowledged. The Committee considered that the way in which this process had been managed was exemplary and demonstrated what benefits could be gained from a collaborative and cooperative approach to achieve a successful outcome for a local issue. In that regard the Committee asked that the Town Council and the Gryphon School be commended on the part they had played in this achievement.

Given this, the Committee considered that they had a responsibility to ensure that every opportunity was taken to improve road safety where practicable and that the introduction of a Puffin crossing would go some considerable way to achieving this. Having heard what they had from those addressing the Committee, and in having a clear understanding the reasons for the officer's recommendation, and the basis on which the amendments to the advertised proposals had been made, on being put to the vote, the Committee considered the crossing to be necessary on road safety grounds and recognised the benefits this would bring in facilitating

pedestrian movements by a controlled means and, on that basis, considered that Cabinet be asked to endorse their recommendation on the basis of the amended proposals - shown on drawing number HI 1178-08-01-Orig at Appendix 3 to the report - to the original advertisement.

Recommended

That Cabinet be asked to support the provision of a Puffin pedestrian crossing in Bristol Road, Sherborne, on the basis of the amended scheme shown on drawing number HI 1178-08-01-Orig at Appendix 3 to the report and taking account of the observations made by the Committee.

Reason for Recommendation

To provide a crossing point by a controlled means to facilitate pedestrian movements and improve road safety following requests from local schools and support by Sherborne Town Council.