

OPEN

Highways and Transport Committee

23 November 2023

Pedestrian Crossing Strategy

Report of: Thomas Moody, Director of Infrastructure and Highways

Report Reference No: HTC/06/23-25

Ward(s) Affected: All Wards

Purpose of Report

1. This report seeks approval to consult on the draft Crossing Facilities Strategy (Appendix 1).
2. The Strategy aims to enhance active travel and promote high-quality asset management principles within the Boroughs highway network.

Executive Summary

3. Consulting on the draft Crossing Facilities Strategy supports key Council objectives by:

Open – updating and clarifying procedures for deciding on pedestrian crossings, including the role of external agencies.

Fair – Prioritising the needs of all road users and the wider community, with a focus on pedestrians and cyclists.

Green – aligning road safety with sustainable and active travel, encouraging healthier choices and reducing carbon emissions.

4. The Draft Strategy helps the Council improve the way it manages and maintains the local highway network.

5. A Notice of Motion proposed at Council in October 2022 requested changes to the pedestrian crossing process. A report outlining actions required to address the issues was provided in January 2023.
6. A draft Crossing Facilities Strategy has been written which sets out a consistent approach which the Council will take to managing new and existing pedestrian crossings on the highway network.
7. The draft Strategy provides a process for handling requests and the assessment procedure for determining the priority for funding.
8. The draft Strategy will contribute to the Council's priority of a transport network that is safe and promotes active travel.
9. The current pedestrian crossing approach was approved by the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services in December 2011. The approach is based around advice in the Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/95: The Design of Pedestrian Crossings which was withdrawn in December 2019.
10. The report recommends that the Strategy is published for consultation purposes and a further report comes back to committee on the outcome of the consultation prior to formal adoption of the Strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Highways and Transport Committee is recommended to:

1. Approve the publication of the Draft Crossing Facilities Strategy for a 6-week consultation process.
2. Note that a report on the outcome of the consultation process which will seek approval for the adoption of an updated Crossing Facilities Strategy will be presented to this committee at a future date.

Background

11. The current Pedestrian Crossing Policy, approved in December 2011, serves as the foundation for selecting controlled crossings.
12. This policy is based around advice in the Local Transport Note 1/95 and uses the PV2 method as to the degree of conflict between vehicles and pedestrians.

13. Utilising the PV2 method to measure conflict between vehicles and pedestrians, the policy has limitations.
14. Due to high demand for pedestrian crossings and limited funding, a more considered prioritisation approach is required.
15. The current criterion for selecting a controlled crossing is based around the existing Pedestrian Crossing Policy that was approved by the Cabinet Member for Environment Services in December 2011.
16. This means that pedestrian crossing assessments are currently based on a numerical score that measures the degree of conflict between vehicles and pedestrians. PV2 where P is the number of pedestrians crossing per hour over 100m section and V is the number of vehicles per hour.
17. Currently, following initial request, sites are assessed through a manual count to calculate the site specific PV2. Sites with low values are not taken forward for further consideration.
18. Other factors including feasibility of construction, local representations, local interest groups and relative priority with other sites are considered at this initial stage. However, the PV2 calculation is the overriding factor. This approach is a somewhat quantitative only taking into account existing site demand.
19. The demand for pedestrian crossings exceeds the Council's available funding each year resulting in a need for a consistent approach to the prioritisation of locations to be put forward for funding.
20. A new approach and priority matrix has been produced to change the criteria for prioritisation. It also includes a formalised qualitative assessment and informal consultation with the ward Councillor/s and relevant Town or Parish Council. This new approach will also enable greater consideration to trip generators such as shop locations, schools and other community facilities. Developing a scoring matrix to prioritise sites and identify latent demand.
21. The aim of this approach is to identify suppressed demand for crossings and to factor in local support for the proposals. It is considered that this information will help give wider consideration at an earlier stage in the assessment, determination to the type of crossing and help establish relative priority with other sites.
22. The Traffic Signs Manual – Chapter 6 – Traffic Control (2019) supersedes the previous advice given in documents such as Local Transport Note 1/95 and promotes a more qualitative approach to assessing potential controlled pedestrian crossing points.

23. In the past, nationally, the approach to traffic signal design has tended to prioritise vehicular movement over that of pedestrians. With the advent of design documents such as Manual for Streets and Manual for Streets 2 focus has shifted to considering the wider street scape and the types of users in an area.
24. The setting of traffic signal timings is intrinsically linked to traffic conditions and pedestrian movements, as such timings are outlined in the Traffic Signal Manual – Chapter 6 – Traffic Control (2019). Any future amendments to traffic signal timing in the Borough must be linked to this.

Consultation and Engagement

25. Consulting the below identified stakeholders on key issues within the Strategy should help to deliver the outcomes of the Corporate Plan with regards to:

Open

Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making.

Listen, learn and respond to our residents, promoting opportunities for a two-way conversation.

Green

A transport network that is safe and promotes active travel.

26. The intention is to undertake a Public Consultation following approval being given; this is currently expected to be from 05/02/24; however, may vary slightly to account for other Council consultations.
27. A 6-week consultation period is proposed.
28. The plan is to engage with the following key stakeholders alongside the public:
 - Members
 - Town and Parish Councils
 - Emergency Services
 - Cycling Groups
 - Schools
 - Cheshire Road Safety Group
 - Bus Operators
 - Road Haulage Association
 - AA

- RAC
 - Internal Departments – Planning, Highways, Development Management, Passenger Transport and Air Quality
29. An online questionnaire with a background information page will be set up. The questionnaire and background information are being developed with input from members of the Council’s Research and Consultation Team. The questionnaire will have a link from the Council’s consultation webpage.
 30. A dedicated email address will be set up to communicate with key stakeholders this will allow responses and comments to be submitted.
 31. A press statement is to be prepared to advertise the launch of the consultation period to encourage participation.
 32. Social media will be used throughout the consultation period to ensure the profile is maintained.

Reasons for Recommendations

33. To inform members about the pedestrian crossing strategy and gather initial feedback before the formal consultation.
34. To align with the Council’s strategic aims and objectives, emphasising transparency, equity, and sustainability.

Other Options Considered

35. An options appraisal was conducted, and it is strongly recommended not to maintain the status quo. A consistent and inclusive approach is imperative.

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing	The Council will continue to discount pedestrian crossing locations where there may be latent demand	Prevent the Council from being an enabling authority.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

36. There is no statutory duty to consult on proposals to change or amend the Council’s Pedestrian Crossing Strategy.

37. Two of the principles that the Council adheres to when decision making is to carry out appropriate consultation and approach decision-making on a transparent and open basis. Where there is no statutory duty to carry out consultation and the Council chooses to consult, they must ensure that any consultation is adequate and fair and takes into account the responses from stakeholders and members of the public when final proposals are being formed for decision.
38. Consultation should follow the Gunning Principles (consultation must be at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage, adequate information must be given to those consulted, adequate time given for response, the product of consultation must be taken into account when decision making) and should involve those directly affected by such changes together with the relevant representative groups. The responses to the consultation will need to be considered when the Highways and Transport Committee makes any future decisions on the Strategy.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

39. The development work and consultation are being funded through existing highway revenue budgets. The application of the Strategy will also be funded through the existing highway budgets. The schemes identified would be managed through a prioritisation process to ensure existing highway budgets aren't exceeded.
40. It is necessary to evaluate and prioritise requests for new installations as the whole life costs of crossings needs to be considered. The Councils budget constraints can limit the number of crossing facilities being provided and maintained.

Policy

41. This Strategy aligns with the following strategic aims and priorities in the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25:

<p>An open and enabling organisation. Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making. Listen, learn and respond to our residents, promoting opportunities for a two-way conversation.</p>	<p>A council which empowers and cares about people Work together with residents and partners to support people and communities to be strong and resilient. Reduce health inequalities across the borough.</p>	<p>A thriving and sustainable place A transport network that is safe and promotes active travel</p>
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Promote and develop the services of the council through regular communication and engagement with all residents	Increase opportunities for all children and young adults with additional needs	
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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 42. An Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix 2) has been conducted to ensure that the policy considers the needs of all community members and avoids discrimination. This assessment will guide policy development and implementation.
- 43. Where pedestrian crossings are to be considered, this will benefit vulnerable road users with protected characteristics such as children, the elderly and those with disabilities, both visible and non-visible.

Human Resources

- 44. There are no HR implications of this paper.

Risk Management

- 45. Completing a public consultation will help shape the Strategy reducing the risk of the Council being seen as non-transparent.

Rural Communities

- 46. There are no specific rural community impacts arising from the strategies reported in this paper.
- 47. The Committee should note that the strategies related to the whole of the local roads network in Cheshire East, recognising the differences between urban and rural roads.

Children and Young People/Cared for Children

- 48. There are no specific children and young people/cared for children impacts associated with the implementation of the Crossing Facilities Strategy. Committee should note that children and young people are a recognised group of vulnerable road users. As such, this group is expected to benefit from improved pedestrian crossings in Cheshire East.

Public Health

49. There are no specific Public Health impacts associated with the proposed consultation.
50. Improved pedestrian crossings can positively contribute to public health improvements by reducing road accidents and encouraging active travel.

Climate Change

51. There are no specific Climate Change impacts associated with the implementation of these strategies. Improved pedestrian crossings can encourage greater levels of active travel, as an alternative to motorised travel, thereby contributing to the Council's objectives for reducing transport-related carbon emissions.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Simon Wallace/Matt Davenhill/Richard Hibbert Simon.Wallace@cheshireeast.gov.uk 01260 371026
Appendices:	Appendix 1 Draft Crossing Facilities Strategy
Background Papers:	None