

North Tyneside Council

Report to Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport

Date: 9 March 2021

Title: Proposed Parallel Crossing – The Links, Whitley Bay

Portfolio(s): Environment and Transport		Cabinet Member(s): Councillor C Johnson
Report from Service Area: Environment, Housing and Leisure		
Responsible Officer:	Phil Scott, Head of Environment, Housing and Leisure	(Tel: 0191 643 7295)
Wards affected:	St Mary's	

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

This report seeks the approval of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport to introduce a parallel crossing on The Links, Whitley Bay, and set aside three representations received in opposition to the proposal.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport:

- (1) considers the representations;
- (2) sets asides the representations in the interests of improving road safety and facilitating more sustainable travel; and
- (3) determines that the proposed parallel crossing should be introduced.

1.3 Forward Plan:

Considering objections relating to proposed Traffic Regulation Orders and road humps and representations relating to proposed pedestrian crossings is a standing item on the Forward Plan.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

The proposals in this report relate to the following priority in Our North Tyneside, the Council Plan 2020 to 2024:

- Our places will:
 - have an effective transport and physical infrastructure

1.5 Information:

1.5.1 Background

The proposal to introduce a parallel crossing on The Links was developed as part of the Authority's efforts to improve road safety. Funding has been allocated from the 2020/21 Local Transport Plan capital budget to undertake this scheme to improve the crossing provision for pedestrians and cyclists between Monkseaton Drive and Whitley Bay seafront.

The proposal was developed following requests from local residents and surveys that showed a high number of pedestrian crossing movements at this location. It is hoped that the measures will contribute to an increase in sustainable travel at the coast by providing a safe crossing facility at a location where there is currently none.

The proposal primarily consists of installing a parallel crossing on The Links between its junctions with Monkseaton Drive and St Mary's Avenue to facilitate pedestrian and cycle movements. It is acknowledged that there are plans to implement further infrastructure improvements to facilitate cycling along The Links in the future and it is envisaged that the proposed parallel crossing would be compatible with such works.

In accordance with the statutory process, a Notice of Intention for the proposal was displayed on site, in the local newspaper and on the Authority's website.

Letters were also sent to those residents on The Links who would be directly affected by the proposed scheme.

Three responses which were unfavourable to aspects of the proposals were received in response to the statutory Notice of Intention. A summary of these representations is provided below.

1.5.2 Statutory Consultation

Before establishing, altering or removing a crossing, local authorities must consult the police and give public notice of the proposal. Schemes are advertised on site, in the local press and on the Authority's website. This enables members of the public or businesses make representations in respect of the proposal. Any respondents unfavourable to aspects of the proposals are first sent a detailed response and invited to reconsider their representation. Any such representations not withdrawn are referred to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport for consideration in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation for Cabinet Members.

1.5.3 Summary of Representations

Mr W wrote to the Authority and indicated that he wished to object to the implementation of the parallel crossing on the grounds that it would have a detrimental impact on traffic flows in the area, owing primarily to its proximity to the roundabout at Monkseaton Drive. He was also of the opinion that it would cause problems for residents wishing to access and egress the adjacent driveways and raised concerns that the light emitted by the Belisha beacons associated with the crossing would be intrusive and have a negative impact on residential amenity.

An officer contacted the respondent to inform him that the proposal was intended to improve road safety in the area and that the distance of the crossing from the roundabout conforms to guidance set out in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB). It was also explained that investigations had been carried out during the design process to ensure that adequate access to the adjacent properties would be maintained once the new crossing had been installed. The officer also confirmed that the Belisha beacons could be fitted with shields to mitigate the impact of the flashing lights on the adjacent properties.

Mr W was given the opportunity to withdraw his representation in light of this information by responding to officers in writing by 21 December 2021. No response was received until after this date, when an update was requested. Officers informed Mr W at that stage that his representation would be considered by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport in due course.

Dr G wrote to the Authority and indicated that he wished to object to the implementation of the parallel crossing on the grounds that the proposal would restrict access to his driveway. He also felt that the proposal was unnecessary due to there being alternative pedestrian crossings in the vicinity. He also commented that the flashing lights associated with the crossing would be intrusive.

An officer contacted the respondent to inform him that investigations had been carried out during the design process to ensure that access to adjacent properties would not be compromised by the location of the new crossing. It was also highlighted that pedestrians would have priority at the crossing and so would not need to block the footway whilst waiting to cross. It was explained that surveys had been undertaken which established the need for a crossing at this location owing to the high number of pedestrian crossing movements. It was highlighted that the nearest alternative formal crossings were 100m and 350m away from the site of the proposed crossing and would therefore not serve the new desire line adequately. The officer confirmed that the Belisha beacons could be fitted with shields to mitigate the impact of the flashing lights on adjacent properties.

Mr W was given the opportunity to withdraw his representation in light of this information by responding to officers in writing by 21 December 2021. No response was received.

Ms T wrote to the Authority and indicated that she wished to object to the implementation of the parallel crossing on the grounds that the proposal would have a detrimental impact on air quality at this location, also stating that there was a crossing previously on The Links that was removed.

An officer contacted the respondent to inform her that they had been unable to find evidence of a previous crossing at this location, but recent surveys had demonstrated a

need for the crossing due to the high number of pedestrian crossing manoeuvres. The officer also explained that the predicted impact on traffic flows was expected to be minimal and that the proposed crossing supports the Authority's aim of encouraging active travel with the associated positive impacts of reducing pollution and vehicle emissions.

Ms T was given the opportunity to withdraw her representation in light of this information by responding to officers in writing by 21 December 2021. No response was received.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport:

Option 1

Approve the recommendations set out in section 1.2.

Option 2

Not approve the recommendations set out in section 1.2.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 is recommended as the proposal will improve road safety and facilitate sustainable travel at Whitley Bay seafront.

1.8 Appendices:

Appendix 1 Details of representations and associated correspondence

Appendix 2 Notice of Intention advertised on site

Appendix 3 Copy of Proposed Plan

1.9 Contact officers:

Andrew Flynn, Integrated Transport Manager, 0191 643 6083

Nicholas Bryan, Highway Network Manager, 0191 643 6622

Nick Saunders, Senior Traffic Engineer, Capita, 0191 643 6598

Cathy Davison, Principal Accountant Investment (Capital) and Revenue, 0191 643 5727

1.10 Background information:

North Tyneside Transport Strategy

North Tyneside Travel Safety Strategy

North Tyneside Cycling Strategy

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

Funding is available from the 2020/21 (Road Safety Initiatives) Local Transport Plan capital budget.

2.2 Legal

Local authorities may introduce formal pedestrian crossings under Section 23 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Before establishing, altering or removing a crossing, local authorities must consult the police and give public notice of the proposal.

All such schemes are formally advertised and include a 21-day period for representations. Before implementing the proposed scheme, the Authority considers any representations received and can decide whether to implement the proposed scheme unchanged, to implement it with modifications or not to proceed with the scheme.

In accordance with the Authority's scheme of Delegation to Cabinet Members, if any representations unfavourable to the scheme cannot be resolved, then the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport is asked to consider these and thereafter determine if a pedestrian crossing should be established.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

2.3.1 Internal consultation

Ward members' views on the proposal were sought as described in section 1.5.1.

2.3.2 Community engagement

Local residents' views on the proposal were sought as described in section 1.5.1. The proposal was advertised in line with statutory process as described in section 1.5.2.

2.4 Human rights

The proposals within this report do not have direct implications in respect of the Human Rights Act 1998.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

There are no adverse equalities or diversity issues arising from this report.

2.6 Risk management

There are no risk management implications directly arising from this report.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications directly arising from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

It is hoped that the measures contained in this report will contribute to an increase in sustainable travel at the coast by providing a safe crossing facility at a location where there is currently none.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive ☐
- Head of Service ☐
- Mayor/Cabinet Member ☐
- Chief Finance Officer ☐
- Monitoring Officer ☐
- Head of Corporate Strategy and Customer Service ☐

Details of Representation – Mr W (Dated 25th October 2020)

We would like to comment on the proposals for the new crossing and register our objections to them.

Before going into our specific concerns, I would first of all point out that despite the proposed crossing being 10 meters from our lounge window, we received no letters or other direct information from the Council about this. We did see the tiny paper notices on 2 lamp posts near the location which will probably be soaked to invisibility by rain or blown away very soon by the wind, given where we are on the Sea Front.

We live [near] St Mary's Avenue and The Links and would question if this lack of personal notification is a breach of regulations and whether the Council had a duty to approach us directly about this.

Our objections revolve around

- 1) The crossing will be 10 metres immediately after the roundabout for traffic travelling North along The Links and immediately upon turning left from Monkseaton Drive. We think this is far too close to the existing roundabout and that vehicles will have committed to manoeuvres and not be able to stop safely in time. The existing pedestrian islands on the roundabout are clearly visible as you approach from all directions and you expect them to be there. We are not aware of significant accidents or problems taking place, with the current set up.
- 2) There will almost certainly be Northbound vehicles stuck on the roundabout blocking further access for Southbound Traffic turning right off The Links, or wanting to turn right onto The Links from Monkseaton Drive, or accessing the roundabout from the Dukes Walk carpark. The inevitable stationary vehicles, stuck with engines running, cuts right across the Council's recent aims to be reducing pollution and vehicle emissions in general. We also think there will be noise from these vehicles and bound to be horns blown and tensions raised in general by obstructed traffic.
- 3) There are already pedestrian islands for crossing the roundabout on either side on The Links and at the bottom of Monkseaton Drive. We cannot see why these islands could not be enlarged and properly aligned with dropped curves for wheel-chair, pram and cycle access. The pavement on the East side of The Links was recently expanded and angled more into the Highway (probably traffic calming for the roundabout approach) and we understand a more permanent cycle path along the whole stretch of coast is now also being planned. Why not wait until those plans are finalised, widen the pavement and provide both a pavement and a cycle lane a little further out on to the grass and then blend in a sufficiently wide access at the roundabout itself for cycles and pedestrian wanting to cross The Links West/East or East/West?
- 4) The plans seem to suggest a Belisha Beacon light or something stronger at the crossing. There is a pedestrian crossing 100 meters south of the roundabout, immediately outside the Leisure Pool, so with no impact on nearby residential properties. This proposed crossing and any lights will loom above the existing houses causing intrusive and unhealthy flashing light for all 4 houses on that part of The Links (including our own of course).
- 5) Finally, our 2 neighbours whose driveways front on to The Links itself will have tremendous difficulty accessing or leaving their homes by car. Elderly residents and visitors who drive will be severely impacted by this and risk damage to their personal independence.

We would ask that a proper site inspection is carried out by Senior Council officials, Elected Councillors, Police and emergency services and would extend our invitation to meet residents and neighbours impacted for further discussion, which we are willing to arrange or co-ordinate.

Officer Response (Dated 3rd December 2020)

I am emailing following your objection to the proposal to install a parallel crossing on the Links, Whitley Bay to the north of its junction with Monkseaton Drive. To respond to your enquiry about the consultation process, I can confirm that before introducing a pedestrian crossing there is a statutory requirement simply to give public notice of the proposal. Exactly how this is done is open to interpretation but in North Tyneside our policy is to send letters to properties immediately adjacent to the proposed crossing and then formally advertise the proposal on site, in the local press and on North Tyneside Council's website. Whilst we are not obliged to invite objections to proposals involving the introduction of pedestrian crossings, we believe it is good practice to allow residents to make representations and to take their views into consideration. I can confirm that letters were sent to 41 and 42 The Links as these properties will be most affected by the proposal but acknowledge that in this case, it may have been beneficial to include your property in the letter drop as well.

Please find responses to your remaining points below:

- 1) The proposed parallel crossing is located 20 metres north of the roundabout connecting to Monkseaton Drive. This conforms to guidance set out in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) relating to the location of pedestrian crossings in relation to junctions. If the crossing were to be installed further north, it would allow vehicles time to accelerate which may create a road safety issue. In addition, it would not be in the desire line for pedestrians and would consequently be less likely to be used. Although there is not a significant accident history at this location, we have undertaken pedestrian and traffic surveys which have demonstrated a requirement for a formal crossing.
- 2) We appreciate that the implementation of a crossing will cause vehicles to be stationary when waiting for pedestrians to cross, however this will be for a short amount of time and is not expected to significantly impact traffic flows. We also believe that the proposed crossing supports the Council's aim of encouraging active travel with the associated positive impacts of reducing pollution and vehicle emissions.
- 3) Prior to the proposed scheme being designed, surveys were carried out at this location to determine traffic flows and pedestrian movements. These demonstrated a need for a formal zebra crossing rather than an informal crossing with a pedestrian island as per the existing arrangement. Given that a formal crossing is required, this must be installed in accordance with the guidance referenced in point 1 for road safety reasons. It could not therefore be installed where the existing island is located. I can also confirm, following internal discussions, that the proposed crossing would not adversely affect any future measures to improve cycling infrastructure along the coast.
- 4) I can confirm that if installed, the belisha beacons (lighting) used at the crossing could be fitted with shields to mitigate any impact the flashing lights may have on your property. This measure has proven to be effective at other locations.
- 5) With regard to your comments about the position of the crossing in relation to the driveways, our investigations have established that access to the properties will not be compromised by the crossing as it has been designed to fit between the accesses to 41 and 42 The Links. As previously mentioned, residents from these properties have been given the opportunity to express their views about the proposed crossing.

In relation to your final point, I can confirm that officers have carried out site visits as part of the design process and consultations with residents, ward councillors and statutory consultees (including all emergency services) have been undertaken.

If you would like to withdraw your objection in light of the information provided above, I would be grateful if you could let me know in writing by 21st December. If I do not hear from you before then, I will assume that you still object to the proposed scheme and your objection will be included in a report to be presented to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport for consideration in the near future. You will be notified of the Cabinet Member's decision with regard to this scheme in due course.

Mr W response (Dated 29th December 2020)

I would be grateful if you could confirm the latest information as regards this proposal and whether any further formal consideration has been given.

Can you also confirm who the cabinet member responsible is?

Our thanks in anticipation.

Officer response (Dated 4th January 2021)

As no formal representations against the proposed parallel crossing have been withdrawn, we now intend to progress the scheme to the cabinet member. The Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport is Councillor Carl Johnson.

Details of Representation – Dr G (Dated 27th October 2020)

This is in reference to the proposed parallel crossing on the Links.

I wish to strongly object to the location of this crossing for the following reasons:

The crossing is too close to the entrance of the driveway to my property. Pedestrians and cyclists who are waiting to cross will invariably create a dangerous obstacle for access to my property. This is not only an access issue but also a serious safety issue for those pedestrians and myself.

Also this will cause congestion in the immediate vicinity from traffic turning onto the Links thus adding to the risks.

From the plans it looks like there are flashing light systems which will also be extremely intrusive to my property.

An extra pedestrian crossing in this immediate area is also unnecessary as there are already 2 very close by towards the Briardene and also near the Leisure Pool.

Officer Response (Dated 3rd December 2020)

I am emailing following your formal objection to the proposal to install a parallel crossing on the Links, Whitley Bay to the north of its junction with Monkseaton Drive. This proposal has arisen following requests from residents and pedestrian surveys undertaken at this location which demonstrated a requirement for a formal crossing.

With regard to your comments about the position of the crossing in relation to your driveway, our investigations have established that access to your property will not be compromised by the crossing as it has been designed to fit between the accesses to 41 and 42 The Links. Pedestrians and cyclists using the facility will be at least 3 metres from the boundary of your

driveway and will have priority over traffic using The Links. As a result, they will not be required to wait at the crossing which will help to ensure that adequate visibility for vehicles leaving your driveway will be maintained.

The proposed parallel crossing is located 20 metres north of the roundabout connecting to Monkseaton Drive. This conforms to guidance set out in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) relating to the distance of pedestrian crossings from junctions. If the crossing were to be installed to the north of the junction with St Mary's Avenue, it would allow vehicles time to accelerate which may create a road safety issue. It would therefore need to be installed further north, at a location that is not in the desire line for pedestrians and would consequently be less likely to be used. With regard to your comments concerning the existing pedestrian crossings, as these are located 100m south and 350m north of the roundabout respectively they would not be suitable for the use of pedestrians and cyclists crossing to and from Monkseaton Drive.

I can confirm that if installed, the belisha beacons (lighting) used at the crossing could be fitted with shields to mitigate any impact the flashing lights may have on your property. This measure has proven to be effective at other locations.

If you would like to withdraw your objection in light of the information provided above, I would be grateful if you could let me know in writing by 21st December. If I do not hear from you before then, I will assume that you still object to the proposed scheme and your objection will be included in a report to be presented to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport for consideration in the near future. You will be notified of the Cabinet Member's decision with regard to this scheme in due course.

Details of Representation – Ms T (Dated 2nd November 2020)

I wish to publicly object to the placement of this crossing outside of my house. I have already emailed you with my objections following the letter you sent us. There was a crossing there many years ago which was removed. Can you tell me why it was removed? I also feel that traffic stopped at the crossing will cause increased air pollution and be detrimental to the two asthmatics who live in my house. It would be grateful for a discussion about this proposal but don't seem to be able to get a reply .

Officer Response (Dated 3rd December 2020)

I am emailing following your formal objection to the proposal to install a parallel crossing on the Links, to the north of its junction with Monkseaton Drive.

Unfortunately we have been unable to find a record of a previous crossing at this location and are therefore unable to assist with your query regarding this. The current proposal has arisen as a result of requests from residents and following pedestrian and traffic surveys undertaken at this location which demonstrated a requirement for a formal crossing. The proposed location of the crossing is in accordance with the relevant design standards in terms of its distance from the roundabout at Monkseaton Drive and our investigations have established that access to the properties adjacent to the proposed crossing would not be compromised by this facility.

We appreciate that the implementation of a crossing will cause vehicles to be stationary when waiting for pedestrians to cross, however this will be for a short amount of time and is not expected to significantly impact traffic flows. We also believe that the proposed crossing supports the Council's aim of encouraging active travel with the associated positive impacts of reducing pollution and vehicle emissions.

If you would like to withdraw your objection in light of the information provided above, I would be grateful if you could let me know in writing by 21st December. If I do not hear from you before then, I will assume that you still object to the proposed scheme and your representation will be included in a report to be presented to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport for consideration in the near future. You will be notified of the Cabinet Member's decision with regard to this scheme in due course.

**NORTH TYNESIDE COUNCIL
PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN CROSSING**

North Tyneside Council gives notice under Section 23 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, and after consultation with the Chief Officer of Police, that it proposes to establish a Parallel crossing at The Links, Whitley Bay at a point 20 metres north of its junction with Monkseaton Drive. The purpose of the scheme is to improve the safety of pedestrians and cyclists crossing at this point.

Further details may be examined on the Councils website www.northtyneside.gov.uk (Statutory Notices). If you wish to object to the proposals, you should send the grounds for your objection in writing to the undersigned or via email to democraticsupport@northtyneside.gov.uk by 3 November 2020. Any objections received may be published as part of any reports to councillors on the matter.

20 October 2020

Head of Law & Governance, Quadrant, Silverlink North, Cobalt Business Park, NE27 0BY

