

Committee	Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment
Date	22 February 2010
Report By	Director of Transport and Environment
Title of Report	High Street, Wadhurst – Zebra Crossing
Purpose of Report	To (1) advise the Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment of the results of consultation on proposals for a zebra crossing in High Street, Wadhurst; and (2) to seek approval to progress the scheme through detailed design and construction.

RECOMMENDATIONS: To

- (1) approve the proposed zebra crossing scheme for High Street, Wadhurst as shown on Drawing Number E10010/020, subject to any minor modification that may be necessary at the detailed design stage; and**
(2) authorise the progression of the scheme through detailed design, for construction in 2010/11
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1. Financial Appraisal

The total scheme cost for construction is estimated at £26,500. Funding will be available in the 2010/11 Capital Programme for Minor Works.

2. Supporting Information

2.1 The 2008 Pedestrian Crossing Priority list, approved by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment in July 2008, included High Street, Wadhurst as a priority site for the provision of a pedestrian crossing facility.

2.2 A preliminary scheme has been developed to provide a zebra crossing to the west of the Washwell Lane junction. A public meeting was held at the Commemoration Hall and details of the proposals have been widely circulated by Wadhurst Parish Council, together with an online consultation, during November and December 2009. A summary of the results is attached as Appendix A.

3. Comments / Appraisal

3.1 There was a good response from the public to the consultation, with 173 people returning completed questionnaires. In addition to the returned questionnaires three individual letters have been received and a petition containing 92 signatures has been submitted stating: "I support the proposal for a zebra crossing to the west of Washwell Lane, Wadhurst". A copy of the petition is available in the Members' room

3.2 The scheme has received a mixed response. There is considerable support for a pedestrian crossing, but the proposed location west of Washwell Lane is not well supported. A great deal of concern has been raised over the loss of parking associated with the implementation of the necessary controlled zone on the approaches. In addition a number of suggested alternative proposals have been made. Appendix B sets out these issues in more detail, but it should be noted that all three alternatives have disadvantages that make

them less suitable than the proposed solution. A detailed response to the individual comments made in response to the consultation is attached at Appendix C.

3.3 The Parish Council has responded to the consultation setting out their position that they do not support the provision of a zebra crossing in the proposed location, although they recognise the importance of providing a safe place to cross the road. They have also expressed concerns regarding the loss of on-street parking associated with the scheme. However, it is not possible to mitigate this loss as there is no room to create additional parking spaces within the highway.

3.4 There is no clear majority of respondents to the questionnaire in support of the provision of a crossing. However, when considering the 92 signatures on the petition, together with the responses to the questionnaire, it is clear that the majority of people support the proposal.

4. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation

4.1 Although there are strong views regarding the loss of parking, a zebra crossing at any location in Wadhurst High Street will improve conditions for pedestrians and help to meet the County Council's key priority to improve road safety. Although other options have been considered in response to concerns raised, the proposed scheme is considered, to provide the best solution in terms of minimising loss of parking, overcoming constraints in the engineering layout, and catering for the needs of pedestrians in the village as a whole. Overall, the response to the consultation has been in favour of the provision of a crossing and it is, therefore, recommended that the scheme should proceed, subject to any minor modifications found necessary during the detailed design process.

RUPERT CLUBB
Director of Transport and Environment
22 February 2009

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Local Member: Councillor Tidy

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Lead Member Report – 28 July 2008 – Pedestrian Crossing Assessment Procedure

Questionnaire Responses

Numbers in brackets are the percentage of the questionnaires returned

Do you think there is a need for a pedestrian crossing in High Street, Wadhurst?

<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Don't know</i>	<i>No Response</i>
78 (45.1%)	87 (50.3%)	7 (4.0%)	1 (0.6%)

Do you support the proposal for a zebra crossing to the west of Washwell Lane?

<i>strongly support</i>	<i>support</i>	<i>Neither</i>	<i>oppose</i>	<i>strongly oppose</i>	<i>No response</i>
41 (23.7%)	23 (13.3%)	3 (1.7%)	26 (15.0%)	79 (45.7%)	1 (0.6%)

APPRAISAL

1 A number of alternatives have been suggested by those who do not support the current proposal.

- High Street east of Washwell Lane – this location has been put forward as there is already a long section where parking is already prohibited. This suggestion has been investigated but has considerable disadvantages compared to the proposed location. The presence of vehicle accesses makes it unsafe to locate a crossing within the area of restricted parking; as a result locating a crossing to the east of Washwell Lane would result in a greater loss of parking than the current proposal, some 12 spaces. In addition, the northern footway is extremely narrow and has very high kerbs at road crossings, these engineering difficulties cannot be satisfactorily overcome and any crossing in this location would therefore not serve those with limited mobility.
- High Street west of Church Street (east) – this proposal has been consulted on in the past. To implement a crossing at this location would require the removal of the existing small area of parking between Church Street and High Street. The proposal attracted very strong objections because of the significant impact on parking and was not pursued.
- Pinch point – it has been suggested that the proposed crossing be replaced by a simple pinch point. Whilst pinch points do reduce the width of road that pedestrians need to cross they do not require drivers to give precedence. The High Street is already narrow and there is little scope for a pinch point at this location. In addition, the existing parking restricts visibility for pedestrians and any uncontrolled crossing point would still require parking restrictions to ensure pedestrians could see and be seen. It is considered that a controlled crossing provides the safest form of crossing at this location.

Taking the difficulties of the alternative suggestions into consideration the proposal to implement a controlled crossing to the west of Washwell Lane provides the best solution for a safe crossing point in Wadhurst.

2 The key concern associated with the provision of a crossing is the loss of on street parking. It is not possible to implement a controlled crossing without the necessary parking restrictions to ensure that it operates safely. Even if the installation is downgraded to a pinch point there would still be significant loss of parking. It is acknowledged that the loss of parking will have an impact on the village but a balance needs to be struck between the conflicting needs for a safe crossing point and parking provision. The Parish Council are working towards improving parking provision in the village and, should their aspirations be achieved, this will go a considerable way to offsetting the impact of the crossing. However, it is likely to be some time before this issue is resolved and the safety benefits of providing a crossing in the short term are considered to outweigh the loss of parking provision.

APPENDIX C

No of Responses	Comment	Response
30	Comments on parking provision and enforcement in the village	The level of parking provision and enforcement are matters outside the control of the County Council
29	Loss of parking will be detrimental to local businesses	See detailed commentary in the Lead Member report
28	The existing parking reduces traffic speeds allowing pedestrians to cross	Noted
28	Suggestions for alternative locations for a crossing	See detailed commentary in the Lead Member report
22	Comments in support the provision of a crossing	Noted
22	Parking is already limited in the village	Noted
21	Comments giving reasons why the crossing is not needed	Noted
21	Loss of parking will increase vehicle speeds	Any increase in vehicle speeds is likely to be minimal and will be offset by the safety improvement provided by the crossing
17	The proposal is not the best use of funding or resources	Noted
14	A crossing is out of keeping with the village	A zebra crossing would not be out of keeping with a village centre
14	Pedestrians will not use the crossing if they are at the opposite end of the village	Agreed, pedestrians will not walk long distances to use a crossing
12	Disabled or elderly do not have problems crossing the High Street	A number of comments have been received setting out the difficulties disabled or elderly have crossing the road
12	The crossing will cause congestion	The existing parking already causes congestion in this area, the crossing is not likely to significantly change this situation
11	Very few people will use the proposed crossing	Noted
11	Requests for additional crossings at other locations	Noted - these requests will be considered under the County Council's current policy on crossing provision
10	The crossing location is wrong	See detailed commentary in the Lead Member report

No of Responses	Comment	Response
6	There have been no accidents on the High Street	At the time this location was assess for priority there had been one serious pedestrian casualty on the High Street.
6	Consider a pinch point	See detailed commentary in the Lead Member report
5	Comments regarding the difficulty of crossing the High Street	Noted
5	Safety is more important than parking provision	Noted
5	Parked cars restrict visibility for pedestrians	Noted
5	Parking problems should be resolved before a crossing is implemented	There is a need for improved crossing facilities, parking provision in the village is unlikely to be resolved for some years.
5	Introduce a 20mph speed limit	The Government is currently consulting on new guidance on the provision of 20mph speed limits, this issue will be considered once that guidance has been published
4	The needs of the village have changed and a compromise should be made	Noted
3	The need for parking outweighs the need for a crossing	Noted
3	Loss of parking will cause operational difficulties for businesses	See detailed commentary in the Lead Member report
3	Comments on encouraging sustainable travel	Noted
3	Comments on the consultation process	Noted
2	Parking close to the shops is needed for some purposes	Noted
2	The crossing will increase danger for pedestrians in other parts of the High Street	It is unlikely that the crossing will have a detrimental impact on safety of pedestrians in other parts of the High Street
2	Belisha beacons are a distraction for drivers	Belisha beacons are widely used and are not considered to be a distraction
2	A light controlled crossing would help traffic flow	A light controlled crossing would be out of keeping with the village

No of Responses	Comment	Response
1	A crossing at the proposed location is preferable to not having a crossing	Noted
1	The crossing will encourage a more integrated way of dealing with car use	Noted
1	Dropped kerbs are required so people can cross safely	Dropped kerbs will be provided as part of any scheme
1	Traffic speeds cause concern	Noted
1	Removal of parking spaces will ease congestion	Noted
1	The road narrowing at the proposed site will assist	Noted
1	High traffic volumes makes pedestrians take care	High traffic volumes cause difficulties for
1	Drivers and pedestrians should take more care	Noted
1	Pedestrians may be less aware of traffic if the crossing is provided	A zebra crossing still requires pedestrians to be aware of traffic
1	Unaccompanied children never cross in this section of the High Street	Unaccompanied children have been observed crossing at this location
1	Tactile paving is a hazard for pedestrians	Tactile paving is widely used and considered safe for all users
1	The belisha beacons will obstruct the northern footway	The design will be prepared to minimise any obstruction
1	Remove the street furniture	There is limited street furniture in the High Street or associated with the scheme
1	Parking will move to other areas causing congestion	Noted
1	There is no safe location for a crossing	The proposed location does provide a safe place for a crossing
1	The proposed location is too far from the car park	Noted
1	The road alongside Natwest should be closed	Dropped kerbs will be provided as part of any scheme
1	Church Street could be made one way	It is not possible to make Church Street one way because of the need for access

No of Responses	Comment	Response
1	A20mph speed limit at Uplands together with the crossing would improve safety	The Government is currently consulting on new guidance on the provision of 20mph speed limits, this issue will be considered once that guidance has been published
1	The car park should be extended to compensate for the loss of parking	Extending the car park is outside the control of the County Council
1	More positive closure of the existing parking should be considered	Agreed, the design has been amended
1	The crossing would be supported if more parking were provided	Noted
1	Funding would be better used to resolve parking issues	Noted
1	Funding would be better used to address fatalities on Frant Road	A separate scheme is being developed to address safety issues on this road
1	Prohibit large vehicles during school hours	The prohibition of large vehicles would be impracticable as the High Street is part of the distributor network
1	Install priority working features	Priority working features are not appropriate on this class of road
1	Extend the build out and provide planters to enhance village streetscape	This will be considered at the detailed design stage but may be prohibitively expensive.
1	The crossing should be part of an overall assessment of access in the village	The need for a wider assessment of the village will be referred to the Transport Strategy Team for consideration
1	A crossing has been petitioned for 10 years ago but funding was not available	Noted
1	Existing congestion is a concern	Noted