

Report to: Lead Member for Transport and Environment

Date of Meeting: 17 January 2022

By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Title: A259 Denmark Place/A2101 Albert Road, Hastings, pedestrian crossing improvements.

Purpose: To consider responses to the stakeholder consultation & public information exercise and seek approval to progress the scheme to detailed design and construction.

RECOMMENDATION: The Lead Member is recommended to:

- (1) Note the responses to the stakeholder consultation and public information exercise on the proposed pedestrian crossing improvements set out in this report; and**
 - (2) Approve the proposed changes to the pedestrian crossing facilities at the junction of the A259 Denmark Place/A2101 Albert Road to improve accessibility to the seafront and encourage more active travel and progress the scheme to detailed design and construction**
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1. Background Information

1.1 The Bexhill and Hastings Movement and Access Package (BHMAP) comprises a package of pedestrian, cycle and public transport improvement schemes across Bexhill, Hastings and St Leonards which is being funded by the Local Growth Fund, secured through the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP). The objectives of the BHMAP are to:

- Support economic growth by reducing traffic congestion and improving safety
- Support accessibility and enhance social inclusion with access to improved integrated public transport provision and infrastructure
- Improve health and wellbeing by supporting connectivity between key services, enabling an increase in cycling and walking for everyday journeys
- Support greater inward investment, particularly the growing cultural and tourism sectors within the town centres, by improving the physical environment and enhancing permeability
- Ensure integration of the programme with related key infrastructure projects being delivered to support future sustainable growth and smart mobility

1.2 A key element of the package is focussed on various improvements to movement and access between the rail station, the town centre and the seafront in Hastings; this includes the pedestrian connectivity across the A259 Denmark Place/A2101 Albert Road junction.

2. Detailed Information

2.1 Existing junction layout

2.1.1 The junction of the A259 Denmark Place/A2101 Albert Road is located on the seafront in Hastings and currently has one staggered signalised pedestrian crossing which is on the eastern side of Albert Road, across Denmark Place. There are no facilities for pedestrians crossing Albert Road although dropped kerbs are in place. There is a signal pole island in the middle of Albert Road, however the island is not wide enough to accommodate pedestrians with buggies or those pushing wheelchairs. There are no pedestrian crossing facilities on the western side of the junction.

2.2 Proposed layout

2.2.1 The proposed scheme is to change the existing staggered crossing on Denmark Place to the east of the junction to a straight-across crossing. New straight-across crossings would also be provided over Albert Road and over Denmark Place on the western side of the junction outside 'The Carlisle' public house. The footways on the northern side of the junction would be widened slightly to bring the crossings within the recommended maximum width for straight-across pedestrian crossings (15m). A plan of the proposals can be found in Appendix 1.

2.2.2 Traffic modelling has been undertaken to determine the impact of the proposal on traffic using the junction. This predicts that all arms of the junction will be within capacity during the weekday AM peak, interpeak and PM peak, and on Saturdays to 2028. In 2040 the modelling predicts that the junction will be slightly over capacity in the weekday AM peak and interpeak however the work is based on the worst-case scenario where the traffic signal sequencing is on a 96 second cycle and the pedestrian-only phase is called in every cycle. Traffic signal cycles can be extended to an upper threshold of 120 seconds which would provide more time for traffic although pedestrians would wait longer. In addition, as a worst-case scenario, the modelling assumes that only two vehicles which are turning right from Denmark Place westbound wait in front of the stop line. In some cycles, there may be three or four vehicles that wait to turn right in front of the stop line.

2.2.3 The construction cost of the scheme is estimated at £456,000. Preliminary and detailed design costs are estimated to be £111,000. Ongoing maintenance costs will be included in the Council's future maintenance programme.

2.3 Stakeholder consultation and public information on proposals

2.3.1 An initial stakeholder consultation was undertaken in June 2021 on the proposals to create a new staggered crossing on the western side of the Albert Road/Denmark Place junction to mirror the existing staggered crossing on the eastern side of the junction. Following feedback from stakeholders, the design was reviewed, and alterations were made which allowed straight-across crossings, as set out in section 2.2, to be accommodated within the design.

2.3.2 Details of the new proposal were sent to over 30 stakeholders by email on 6 September 2021. The stakeholders included the County Councillor for this area, Hastings Borough Councillors, County and Hastings Borough Council officers, the emergency services, the bus operator, walking, cycling and disability groups, transport and business groups and the Environment Agency. A list of stakeholders can be found in Appendix 2. The email to stakeholders can be found in Appendix 3.

2.3.3 Five stakeholder responses were received with no objections to the proposed scheme, however there were several requests for additional facilities or alternative aesthetic designs. This included a request for zebra crossings instead of the new signalised crossings, toucan crossings, a left-turn only lane eastbound on Denmark Place, colourful crossings and to soften car dominant aesthetics. Copies of the full correspondence received have been made available to the Lead Member and the Local Member.

2.3.4 In response to the initial stakeholder consultation the Local Member indicated he was very supportive of improvements to the pedestrian crossing facilities in this location.

2.3.5 The safest crossing type for this junction is a pedestrian phase within the signalised junction which will hold the traffic for pedestrians to cross the carriageway. There is no cycle route on the northern side of the seafront towards the town centre at present, however, the crossings have been designed to a width of 4m on all arms which will allow them to be upgraded to toucans at a later date if required. A left turn only filter lane into Albert Road would negatively affect traffic flows making the junction over capacity in the 2028 PM peak and significantly over capacity in all weekday time periods in 2040. Consideration will be given to the type of street furniture that will be implemented during the detailed design stage. More details on the comments received and the responses can be found in Appendix 4.

2.3.6 500 letters with plans advising of the proposed changes to the crossing facilities at the junction were hand delivered to residents and businesses in the surrounding area on 5 October 2021.

2.3.7 One response was received which was raised on behalf of the residents of a nearby block of flats. The response included queries on whether there would be any changes to the subway on Denmark Place, to the gardens outside the flats and whether the pedestrian crossings would be silent. The residents were advised that there would be no changes to the subway or the gardens outside the flats and that the crossings would be fitted with audibles (bleepers) to assist visually impaired pedestrians to cross safely. The audibles would only operate between 7am-10pm, and, to reduce disturbance to residents, would be set to the minimum volume. No further issues were raised. A copy of the public information letter advising of the proposed changes to the junction crossing facilities can be found in Appendix 5 and subsequent queries and responses in Appendix 6.

2.3.8 The proposals aim to improve accessibility to the seafront especially for more vulnerable user groups. The design of the scheme has considered equalities characteristics and an Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been carried out for the proposals. The EQIA was updated after the stakeholder engagement and public information exercises to ensure that any issues raised were addressed.

3. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation

3.1 Improvements to the pedestrian crossing facilities at the A259 Denmark Place/A2101 Albert Road junction in Hastings town centre will help to improve accessibility to the seafront and encourage more active travel. In turn, this will contribute towards the County Council's commitment of net zero carbon emissions by 2050 or earlier if possible, and the Government's decarbonising transport agenda.

3.2 No objections have been received following the stakeholder consultation and public information on the proposals although requests for additional provisions have been received which will be considered and incorporated where possible as part of the detailed design. It is therefore recommended that comments received from the stakeholder consultation and public information exercise are noted and that the proposed changes to the pedestrian crossing facilities at the A259 Denmark Place/A2101 Albert Road junction are approved and progressed to detailed design and construction.

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LOCAL MEMBERS
Councillor Godfrey Daniel

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None