

Report to: Lead Member for Transport & Environment

Date of meeting: 18 July 2022

By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Title: Sea Road, Bexhill: zebra crossing relocation

Purpose: To consider responses to the stakeholder and public consultations on the proposed relocation of the zebra crossing on Sea Road in Bexhill and seek approval to progress the scheme to detailed design and construction.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Lead Member is recommended to:

- (1) Note the comments of the local consultation; and**
 - (2) Approve the proposal for the relocation of the pedestrian crossing in Sea Road, Bexhill as set out in this report with the scheme to be taken forward to detailed design and construction as part of the 2022/23 Capital Programme for Local Transport Improvements**
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1 Background Information

1.1. Through the County Council's capital programme of local transport improvements, proposals have been developed to improve pedestrian safety on Sea Road in Bexhill. The proposals focus on the relocation of the existing zebra crossing near the entrance to Bexhill rail station to improve the environment for vulnerable users crossing Sea Road and encourage a shift towards more sustainable modes of transport.

1.2. The scheme will contribute to the County Council's priorities relating to reducing carbon emissions, supporting sustainable economic growth and recovery, and improving health and wellbeing.

2 Supporting Information

2.1. The existing zebra crossing is located 5 metres south of the junction of Endwell Road with the B2182 Sea Road, a route that provides a north-south corridor from the A269 in Sidley village on the northern outskirts of Bexhill-on-Sea to the seafront.

2.2. Following inclusion in the capital programme of local transport improvements in March 2019, a feasibility study was undertaken to identify an appropriate location at which to relocate and improve the current zebra crossing facility along Sea Road. The study was informed by traffic, non-motorised user crossing movement and speed data alongside a review of personal injury collisions in the area to provide a detailed understanding of traffic and pedestrian issues along the local highway network.

2.3. The results of a study and pedestrian crossing assessment against Government guidance fully supported the need for a controlled pedestrian crossing at the site. However, safety concerns have been highlighted regarding the close proximity of the crossing to the Sea Road / Endwell Road junction. Accordingly, proposals were developed to address these concerns which comprised;

- Reposition the existing Sea Road zebra crossing further south to be halfway between Endwell Road and Jameson Road including dropped kerbs, tactile parking and pedestrian

guard rail on the eastern footpath. The repositioned crossing would allow drivers exiting Endwell Road to carry out a full turn manoeuvre before stopping (if required) at the crossing, which is frequently utilised by pupils as they walk to and from St. Richard's Catholic College;

- The loss of approximately three 'Pay & Display' car parking bays south of the crossing to necessitate the repositioning of the crossing.

2.4. A plan showing the proposed design options is included within Appendix 1.

Future conversion to parallel zebra crossing as part of Bexhill Cycle Network proposals

2.5. Through the capital programme of local transport improvements, the County Council is currently developing proposals for a new cycle route between Bexhill Station and the existing National Cycle Network Route 2 (NCN2) along the seafront linking to the Ravenside Retail and Leisure Park.

2.6. The cycle route proposals are at an early stage of development and would utilise the proposed relocated zebra crossing. In doing so, the repositioned crossing would be constructed to enable its future conversion to a parallel zebra crossing which will incorporate a running lane for cyclists, to be used in parallel with the zebra crossing. The proposed cycle route (including the section which utilises the zebra crossing) is currently programmed for consultation in late Winter 2022. The outcomes of the consultation on the cycle route proposal and the recommended way forward will be reported to a subsequent Lead Member decision making meeting.

Equalities Impact Assessment

2.7. An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was carried out for the proposed design option in order to consider the impact on groups with protected characteristics. By carrying out the EqIA and seeking feedback from stakeholder groups, potential impacts have been identified and all potential actions to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination and foster good relationships have been documented.

2.8. These impacts include overall benefits for pedestrians through the improved crossing facilities. The relocated crossing will also be positioned within a location which benefits from an extensive footway, thus providing further assistance to wheelchair users. This will allow wheelchair users to pass pedestrians in areas where they previously could not.

2.9. The EqIA also identified that people who are less mobile, have balance problems, have hearing or visual impairments will be encouraged and have more opportunities to walk and feel safer when travelling within Bexhill town centre due to the proposed public realm improvements, crossing facilities and widened footways. The EqIA will remain a living document which will be updated at key stages throughout the life of the scheme.

Stakeholder Engagement

2.10. Stakeholder consultation was undertaken between 19 May and 26 June 2020 with key stakeholder groups, which comprised the emergency services, local cycle groups, disability groups, walking groups, local bus company (Stagecoach), and members & officers of both Rother District Council and East Sussex County Council. Of the nine responses received, 78% supported or strongly supported the proposals, with the remainder neither supporting or opposing the scheme. The local County Council member, Councillor Hollidge, has also confirmed his support for the scheme. A copy of the County Council Stakeholder Engagement Response Report is attached for further reference within Appendix 2.

Public Consultation

2.11. A local public consultation was carried out between 25 February and 25 March 2022. As is standard practice, East Sussex Highways ensured that people living and working within the area affected by the relocation of the zebra crossing were aware of the proposals. Leaflets were distributed to over 400 addresses in the vicinity of the proposed scheme, with the consultation material made available on the County Council's Citizen Space webpage and promoted through

the local media, posters, letters/emails to ward members, and to disability and access groups. A copy of the consultation letter, plan and a map showing the extent of the consultation, is contained in Appendix 3.

2.12. A copy of the consultation summary report is provided in Appendix 4. There were a total of 31 direct responses, which equates to an 8% response rate. Typical survey response rates can lie anywhere in the region between the 5% to 30% range, this response rate could be classed as low however, given the nature of this type of scheme, it is not unexpected.

2.13. Overall, the responses received were generally positive with 67% of respondents in favour of the proposed scheme. However, a total of 33% respondents opposed the design option. Those who did not support the scheme felt that the zebra crossing should remain at its current location given concerns for pedestrian safety based upon how certain businesses currently operate in terms of their delivery operations. In addition, other respondents highlighted the loss of parking was also deemed unacceptable given the current demand for spaces.

2.14. As the proposals will necessitate changes to the parking restrictions in the area, amendments will need to be made to the current Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). These would be advertised at a future date following the detailed design and prior to construction. Any unresolved objections will need to be presented to the County Council's Planning Committee for their determination.

3 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1. The results from both the stakeholder and public consultation show that there is overall support for the repositioning of the existing Sea Road zebra crossing situated just south of Endwell Road to further south, halfway between Endwell Road and Jameson Road.

3.2. The loss of any on street parking, as a result of the relocation of the zebra crossing would be subject to the advertisement of a change to the existing Traffic Regulation Order and any unresolved objections would need to be reported and considered by the County Council's Planning Committee. The repositioned crossing would also be constructed to enable its future conversion to a parallel zebra crossing which will incorporate a running lane for cyclists, to be used in parallel with the zebra crossing as part of proposals being developed for a cycle route between Bexhill station and the existing NCN2 route as well as the Ravenside Retail and Leisure Park.

3.3. Therefore, the Lead Member is recommended to approve the detailed design and construction for the repositioning of the existing Sea Road zebra crossing as part of the 2022/2023 Capital Programme for Local Transport Improvements.

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LOCAL MEMBERS

Councillor Hollidge

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None