

Chippenham and Villages Pilot Area Board

Report Update on Webbington Road, Pewsham, Chippenham

Background

The County Council received a number of requests from residents of Webbington Road expressing concern about the volume and speed of traffic using the road and requesting the provision of a pedestrian crossing and traffic calming measures.

These requests were assessed and prioritised by officers in order that they could be considered for funding from the County Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP) integrated transport block allocation. Following consideration by the County Councillors at a Members Seminar held on 6th March 2007, the Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport and Economic Development approved the LTP integrated transport programme for 2007-08.

At that time, on the basis of the assessment that had been undertaken, the Cabinet Member awarded funding to investigate options for providing pedestrian crossing facilities on Webbington Road during the 2007-08 financial year. However, the Cabinet Member decided that the provision of traffic calming on Webbington Road did not have sufficient priority to be allocated LTP funding during 2007-08.

At the Members Seminar on 11th March 2008 the project to examine pedestrian crossing options on Webbington Road was allocated further funding to identify a viable pedestrian crossing solution and undertake preliminary design work.

The request for traffic calming on Webbington Road was re-assessed and also reconsidered at the Members Seminar on 11th March 2008. Again this request was not deemed to have sufficient priority to be allocated LTP funding during 2008-09.

Current Position

As part of the project to investigate the options for providing pedestrian crossing facilities on Webbington Road, an assessment of the volume, nature and speed of traffic on Webbington Road was undertaken.

The initial findings of this work concluded that it is not appropriate to provide a formal pedestrian crossing on Webbington Road. Traffic engineers within the Environmental Services Department are now examining the options for installing informal pedestrian crossing facilities in conjunction with localised traffic management measures.

Work Undertaken Since Last Board Meeting

Since the last Pilot Area Board meeting the topographic survey has been completed and the survey report passed to the design engineer. This has enabled the engineer to further develop the options to take account of the gradients in situ and any highway drainage issues.

Options Considered

Two options for improving pedestrian crossing facilities on Webbington Road have been considered:-

Option 1 – Informal Crossing Point in Association with Localised Traffic Calming

It is considered viable to install an informal crossing point in the vicinity of Rumble Dene (where the footpath linking Pewsham Lock to Bolts Croft crosses Webbington Road – see attached plan) in association with localised traffic calming measures. This location is where the majority of pedestrian crossing movements occur. The form of traffic calming has yet to be determined but could include ‘pinch points’ and/or speed cushions with a possibility that the crossing point be raised to be level with the adjacent footways.

The provision of such a scheme would facilitate pedestrian crossing movements, reduce speeding and may have a deterrent effect on ‘rat running’ along Webbington Road. However, the measures would have the adverse affect of increasing traffic noise due to the effects of traffic negotiating the traffic calming measures. In addition, once through the traffic calming drivers may increase their speed to higher levels than exist at present.

Option 2 – Closure of Webbington Road

The option of closing Webbington Road to all traffic except for cycles and buses has been considered but discounted.

The optimum location for a road closure would be south of Rumble Dene which would be ideal for assisting pedestrian crossing movements. However, with the road closed in this location, traffic could circumvent the closure by diverting along Chivers Road and Rowe Mead. As such, Webbington Road could not be signed a ‘no through road’ and ‘rat running’ traffic may use this less suitable route.

In addition, any road closure would be particularly inconvenient to local residents whose vehicular movements would be severely restricted. Furthermore, at the point of any road closure turning heads would need to be provided in order to afford service vehicles (refuse collection lorries etc.) safe access and egress either end of Webbington Road. There is insufficient highway land available to provide such turning facilities and their provision would require the acquisition of land from third parties.

Preferred Option

The preferred option is the provision of an informal crossing point in the vicinity of Rumble Dene combined with localised traffic calming measures to reduce traffic speeds.

Future Work

Further design work will now be undertaken to establish the precise form of the crossing point and associated traffic calming to enable a preliminary design to be produced by the end of March 2008.