

**CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, STREET SCENE & FLOODING –
CLLR CAROLINE THOMAS**

HIGHWAYS ASSET MANAGEMENT AND COMMISSIONING

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REFERENCE:

**PROPOSED INTRODUCTION OF TOUCAN CROSSING
A345 COUNTESS ROAD, AMESBURY**

Purpose of Report

1. To:
 - (i) Consider the comments received following the formal advertisement of the proposed introduction of a Toucan Crossing on the A345 Countess Road, Amesbury.
 - (ii) Recommend proceeding with the introduction of the Toucan Crossing as advertised.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. The proposal contributes to three of the themes set out in the Council's Business Plan 2022- 2032.

Theme 1: Empowered People

- Help the people of Wiltshire to increase activity levels and improve their health.

Theme 3: Thriving Economy

- Deliver infrastructure to enable local communities to live, work and play locally, businesses to invest and everyone to have responsibility for the environment.
- Help build and efficient and effective transport network, including viable alternatives to the car.
- Maintain and improve the existing transport infrastructure.
- Investment in cycle routes, as part of the strategic solution aimed at connecting all our communities.

Theme 4: Sustainable Environment

- Support decarbonisation of existing transport and increased use of public transport options as well as walking and cycling.

Background

3. The scheme was identified in the 2013 Local Transport Plan Cycling Strategy as part of the Town Cycle Network for Amesbury. It is also shown in the updated network published as part of the draft Wiltshire Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan (LCWIP). It forms a key route for the Amesbury area and as part of a strategic route linking Salisbury and National Cycle Network Route 45 to Stonehenge.
4. As part of the development of the Stonehenge tunnel project, National Highways undertook a “Connected Communities” study. The study proposed a cycle link from Amesbury to Larkhill and then on to Stonehenge. The proposal is supported by the Benefits Steering Group for the tunnel project, which includes Wiltshire Council.
5. The scheme aims to improve cycle accessibility for residents of Larkhill to access amenities, employment and education in Amesbury. Equally, it would improve accessibility for residents of Amesbury to access amenities or employment in Larkhill. It also forms part of a proposed circular route around the World Heritage Site that National Highways and Wiltshire Council are working together to deliver. This will help encourage tourists to explore the wider area and bring more economic benefit from Stonehenge to the Amesbury area.
6. The Council recently submitted a bid to the Active Travel Fund for a number of schemes across Wiltshire. Active Travel England, who were judging the bids, felt this scheme met their aims so offered funding for it. The funding is to undertake the detailed design of the route itself and to design and implement a crossing on Countess Road. The funding is available in the 2023/2024 financial year. Implementation of the remainder of the route would be funded by National Highways as part of the Stonehenge tunnel project.
7. It should be noted that the new crossing element of the route is to be delivered in the 2023/2024 financial year; however, the timescale for delivery of the remainder of the route is yet to be determined.

Summary of Proposals

8. The proposed introduction of the Toucan Crossing was subject to formal consultation between 8 February 2024 and 4 March 2024.
9. Plans showing the Council’s advertised proposals are attached as **Appendix 1**. The proposals listed below are those consulted upon that were subject to the receipt of comments:
 - The installation of a “TOUCAN” Crossing (an un-segregated crossing for pedestrians and cyclists) in A345 Countess Road, Amesbury, at a point approximately 62 metres north of the junction with Countess Road spur leading to Nos. 45 to 59 Countess Road, as shown on the plan.

Summary of Responses

10. During the consultation period a total of four items of correspondence were received in response to the Council’s proposals. Of those four items, one expressed support for the Council’s proposals, and three objected to the Council’s proposals.
11. A summary of the correspondents who wrote in support of the Council’s proposals is attached as **Appendix 2**. A summary of the correspondents who outlined opposition to, or made general comment on, the Council’s proposals is attached as **Appendix 3**. A full copy of the comments raised by objectors and those correspondents who offered

comments on the proposals without specifically supporting or opposing them, together with officer responses, is attached as **Appendix 4**.

Main considerations for the Council

12. Consideration needs to be given to the comments received to the Council's advertised proposals and whether changes should be made to them. The Council must balance meeting its statutory obligations as the local highway authority against the wishes of residents. It is important to consider the comments received in the context of what both highway law and the Highway Code states on the provision of infrastructure to improve active travel.
13. Wiltshire Council has an obligation to improve the health, wellbeing and the environment in which our residents reside. As noted in the LCWIP we all need to build regular activity into our daily routine and the most effective way to do this is to walk or cycle for short trips. People will choose to walk and cycle if these are the most attractive options for them. This means making walking and cycling use more convenient, pleasant and appealing than private car use.

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

14. There is none required as part of this scheme.

Safeguarding Implications

15. There are no safeguarding implications.

Public Health Implications

16. There are no public health implications.

Procurement Implications

17. There are no procurement implications.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

18. There is no impact upon people who share protected characteristics.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

19. The Council's proposals would require the laying of road markings and the erection of traffic signals, controllers and tactile paving on the public highway. Doing so could be considered to have an impact on the visual aspect of the areas where they are to be introduced. The impact would vary on a location-by-location basis.
20. The position of the Toucan Crossing has been carefully considered in order to reduce the impact on local residents, whilst having the lowest visual effect on the landscape. Any street furniture required for the crossing will be painted black and faced in parallel with the existing road, the signals will also be covered with hoods to prevent any lighting spilling out.
21. It should also be noted that a site meeting took place with representatives of the National Trust on the 28 February 2024 to discuss the visual impact of the provision of the Toucan Crossing on the setting of the Stonehenge World Heritage Site. The

representatives of the National Trust were content with the siting of the crossing and chose not to submit an objection to the Council's proposals.

22. The provision of the proposal would seek to encourage active travel, and consequently this may aid traffic flow and improve air quality.

Risk Assessment

23. Not proceeding with the Council's proposals would result in the Council failing to meet its objectives of encouraging more people to use active travel methods for short to medium length journeys. Doing so would risk undermining the Council's reputation.

Financial Implications

24. There is an allocation provided by National Highways and Active Travel England for the design and construction of new cycle routes in and around the Stonehenge Heritage Site. Should this scheme not progress, the funding would be returned to those organisations.

Legal Implications

25. The implementation of the "Toucan" Crossing requires the processing of a TRO. The process of introducing TROs is governed by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and associated procedural regulations. Failure to adhere to the statutory processes could result in the TROs being successfully challenged in the High Court.

Options Considered

26. To:
 - (i) Implement the introduction of proposed Toucan Crossing as advertised.
 - (ii) Amend the proposals in consideration of the comments received.
 - (iii) Abandon the proposals.

Reason for Proposal

27. The scheme was identified in the 2013 Local Transport Plan Cycling Strategy as part of the Town Cycle Network for Amesbury. It is also shown in the updated network published as part of the draft Wiltshire Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan (LCWIP). It forms a key route for the Amesbury area and as part of a strategic route linking Salisbury and National Cycle Network Route 45 to Stonehenge. One of the main purposes of the proposed route is to provide a safe and convenient walking and cycling route linking the Larkhill community to the services and facilities in Amesbury Town Centre. To achieve this route there is a need for pedestrians and cyclists to be able to safely cross Countess Road to access Fargo Road. As such the provision crossing is integral to the overall delivery of the route.

Proposal

28. That:

- (i) The proposed Toucan Crossing be introduced as advertised.
 - (ii) The correspondents who commented on the Council's proposals be informed accordingly.
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The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report:

None