

DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, STREETSCENE AND BROADBAND – COUNCILLOR JOHN THOMSON

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SERVICE

OFFICER CONTACT: Julie Cleave 01225 713463 Email: Julie.cleave@wiltshire.gov.uk

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PROPOSED 'PUFFIN' CROSSING – WYNSOME STREET, SOUTHWICK

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the objections received following the formal advertisement of a PUFFIN Crossing (Pedestrian User Friendly Intelligent) at Wynsome Street, Southwick.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. Key point number 10 of Wiltshire Council's 12 key points of the Business Plan aims to "integrate public health at the heart of all public services". The introduction of a secure crossing place will help to encourage an increase in walking in the locality and will lead to an overall health benefit to those using the crossing.

Background

3. In 2009, planning permission was sought by the Greensquare Group for the residential re-development of the former Mowlem's site, Church Street, Southwick. The application was refused by Wiltshire Council on 7 October 2009 and was eventually granted permission on appeal in August 2010. At the time of permission a Grampian Condition was applied (Condition No. 9), requiring the developer to implement a signal controlled 'Puffin' Crossing at the location of a currently uncontrolled crossing point on Wynsome Street. The proposal was duly advertised in accordance with the requirements of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Upon conclusion of the advertisement, six objections were received, including one from the Parish Council (see **Appendix 2**).
4. A single objection related to the effect the proposed crossing would have on the availability of on-street parking space. As a result, subsequent discussions took place with Council Traffic Engineers whereby consideration was given to reduce the overall length of zig-zag markings. This issue is addressed in paragraph 9 of this report.
5. Of those who made formal objections, all indicated support for the premise of a formal crossing on Wynsome Street, but had concerns that the chosen location was not best suited to accommodate the majority of pedestrians. In response to the concerns raised, extended negotiations were undertaken between Wiltshire Council officers and representatives from Southwick Parish Council. It was subsequently agreed by the then Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, Councillor Richard Tonge, to undertake a full pedestrian survey, once the occupancy level for the new development was sufficiently high to enable pedestrian crossing movement on Wynsome Street to be accurately assessed.

6. A pedestrian survey was undertaken on Wynsome Street on 7 November 2013 between the hours of 7.00 am and 7.00 pm. The survey encompassed five individual zones, between the junctions of Frome Road (A361) and a point 60 metres east of the junction with Blind Lane. Each zone was approximately 60 metres in length. A plan of the survey area and respective zones is shown at **Appendix 3**. A summary table of the survey results is shown at Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 - Wynsome Street Pedestrian Survey results

| ZONE | Pedestrians - North to South | Pedestrians - South to North | Total No. Pedestrians |
|------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| A | 27 | 40 | 67 |
| B | 116 | 126 | 242 |
| C | 17 | 8 | 25 |
| D | 12 | 12 | 24 |
| E | 17 | 36 | 53 |

The survey result clearly indentifies Zone B as the most frequently location for pedestrians crossing Wynsome Street. It should be noted Zone B includes the informal dropped kerb crossing point which was the location of the original 'Puffin' Crossing advertisement.

7. The pedestrian survey results were forwarded to Southwick Parish Council on 27 November, 2013 for comment. A subsequent reply, by means of email, was received on 14 January, 2013 whereby the Parish Council acknowledged the decision of Wiltshire Council to promote the location of the original crossing proposal.
8. Concern has been expressed by the residents on the north-east side of Wynsome Street regarding the impact the crossing and zig-zag markings will have on the residual space available for parking. Whilst the concerns are understood, it should be remembered that statue states the highway is for the passage and re-passage of persons and goods and, consequently, any parking on the highway is an obstruction of that right of passage. There are no rights to park on the highway but parking is condoned providing the right of passage along the highway is not impeded. It must also be noted the controlled zone formed by the zig-zag markings is essential in ensuring visibility is maintained for both pedestrians and drivers and in the absence of suitable markings, highway safety may be impeded.
9. Whilst there is some scope within the current crossing regulations to reduce the number of zig-zag markings, it should not be done so where visibility remains a concern or to simply accommodate the desire for kerbside parking. In the case of Wynsome Street, the advertised number of zig-zag markings should be maintained on the nearside approaches to the crossing. On the exit sides of the crossing the markings could be reduced; however, given the proximity to the nearby Church Street junction and the existing lay-by on the south-west side, any benefit accrued in terms of additional space is likely to be limited. As such, the overall number of zig-zag markings should remain as advertised.

Main Considerations for the Council

10. The initial concerns raised by Southwick Parish Council regarding the proposed location for the Puffin Crossing appear to have been addressed following the pedestrian survey. As such, the originally advertised location is considered the most suitable. Residents' comments relating to the zig-zag markings and the resultant loss of kerbside parking cannot be suitably addressed due to the likely adverse impact on visibility and road safety. As such, the overall number of markings should remain as advertised.

Safeguarding Considerations

11. None.

Public Health Implications

12. The introduction of a suitably placed Puffin Crossing facility will provide a safe and convenient place to cross. Improved crossing provision may encourage increased walking activity and reduce overall reliance on the motor vehicle as a form of transport. This is particularly relevant with regard to travelling to and from the local primary school. Any increase in walking activity is proven to provide positive health benefits to the public, especially school children.

Environmental Impact of the Proposal

13. The introduction of a Puffin Crossing facility will involve the introduction of traffic signals, upgraded street lighting and the installation of road markings, which could be considered detrimental to the adjacent street scene. A controlled crossing will also result in vehicles having to stop when required, which may lead to minor delays in travel time. In this instance, the change to the physical surroundings and travel delay has to be balanced against the needs of pedestrians and overall improvement to road safety.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

14. The existing crossing point could remain as an informal facility; however, in the light of the increased pedestrian demand resulting from the new development, a Puffin Crossing will offer improved provision which will in turn help the village be further accessible to the local community.

Risk Assessment

15. A full survey and assessment has been undertaken to ensure that the chosen location is the most appropriate for a Puffin Crossing. Installation is to be undertaken by Wiltshire Council's appointed works and traffic signal contractors.

Financial Implications

16. All costs related to the implementation, including advertisements, consultation, survey and physical works, are being met in full by the developer.

Legal Implications

17. The procedure for the statutory advertisement and formal consultation has been followed, including pre-consultation involving the local Wiltshire Council Member, Parish Council Members and other interested parties.

Options Considered

18. To:
 - (i) Implement the proposal as advertised.
 - (ii) Not implement the proposal.
 - (iii) Implement the proposal with amendments.

Reason for Proposal

19. To provide improved crossing provision for pedestrians using Wynsome Street, Southwick.

Proposal

20. To implement the proposal as advertised.

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report:

None