

Transport and Environment Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 12 January 2016

Pedestrian Crossing Upgrade – Marchmont Road

Item number	7.5
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	9 – Meadows/Morningside

Executive summary

This report provides a consultation summary for the pedestrian crossing upgrade on Marchmont Road.

Links

Coalition pledges	
Council outcomes	CO21
Single Outcome Agreement	SO4

Pedestrian Crossing Upgrade – Marchmont Road

Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that Committee:
- i) approves the construction of the proposed puffin crossing at Marchmont Road;
 - ii) notes the results of the public consultation; and
 - iii) sets aside the representations to allow construction to progress.

Background

- 2.1 In accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, before local authorities establish a pedestrian crossing they shall consult with the police and give the public notice of the proposals. With regard to this Act, a public consultation on the proposed upgrade of the zebra crossing to a puffin crossing on Marchmont Road at Warrender Park Road has recently been held. This upgrade was selected as the preferred option from an options report following a fatal collision involving a pedestrian at this locus. Those consulted include local residents, schools, Community Councils, Local Councillors, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire Service and Scottish Ambulance Service.

Main report

- 3.1 The consultation was carried out over a three week period from 16 October 2015 to 6 November 2015. A total of 219 invitations to participate in the consultation were issued.
- 3.2 In total, nine responses were received. Six of these were in favour of the proposals and three were representations. The representations and proposed responses are detailed in Appendix 1 of this report.
- 3.3 Police Scotland supported the upgrade of the zebra to a puffin crossing. Five residents also responded saying the zebra crossing was dangerous and should be upgraded.
- 3.4 Two residents responded saying the zebra crossing works well. A third resident, who felt that a zebra crossing was more pedestrian friendly than a puffin crossing, gave over 20 reasons why the zebra should be retained. These points are detailed in Appendix 1.

- 3.5 Although not reflected in the consultation results, previous correspondence and community engagement has reflected a desire for a controlled crossing at this location. The fatal collision on the zebra crossing in January 2013 again raised the local community desire for a controlled crossing.
- 3.6 Given the current number of pedestrians crossing and the amount of traffic on Marchmont Road a puffin crossing is considered to be the appropriate crossing to introduce.

Measures of success

- 4.1 Pedestrian crossing facilities are provided at locations across the city which have been assessed as having the greatest demand and difficulty experienced by pedestrians. Local consultation ensures the facilities provided meet the requirements of the local community and stakeholders and will result in a more locally acceptable crossing facility.

Financial impact

- 5.1 Funding of up to £80,000 has been made available, from the 2015/16 Road Safety capital budget of £900,000, to upgrade the pedestrian crossing facilities at this location.

Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 The Edinburgh Road Safety Plan puts forward the vision that the Council and its partners will work towards Vision Zero, which aims to achieve a road system that allows for human error but without it leading to serious injury, and is based on the premise that human life cannot be balanced against cost through providing a modern road network where all users are safe from the risk of being killed or seriously injured. In the plan, a number of interventions have been developed for pedestrians, including the provision of new crossings, to enable more people to walk greater distances safely and reduce conflict at key points. If the proposal is not progressed there is a risk that the plan objectives would not be met.

Equalities impact

- 7.1 The new pedestrian crossing will take into account the road safety needs of all users. Due regard will be given to the protected characteristics (Age and Disability) through the process by carrying out an Equality and Rights Impact Assessment.
- **Disability:** By installing/improving pedestrian crossing facilities this will improve accessibility when crossing roads for disabled pedestrians and will encourage participation by people from this equality group in public life.
 - **Age:** By installing/improving pedestrian crossing facilities this will improve accessibility and increase safety when crossing roads for elderly pedestrians and will encourage children to walk to school etc unaccompanied. This should encourage participation by the identified people from this equality group in public life.

Sustainability impact

- 8.1 Potential for positive impact on the environment by providing improved pedestrian facilities. This should encourage walking, reduce vehicle use and lower carbon emissions.

Background reading/external references

Appendix 1 – Consultation Responses

Paul Lawrence

Executive Director of Place

Contact: Caroline Burwell, Road Safety Manager

E-mail: caroline.burwell@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 0131 469 3668

Links

Coalition pledges

Council outcomes **CO21:** Safe – Residents, visitors and businesses feel that Edinburgh is a safe city.

Single Outcome Agreement **SO4:** Edinburgh’s communities are safer and have improved physical and social fabric.

Appendices Appendix 1 – Consultation Responses

APPENDIX 1 – CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Summary	In favour	Representation	Comments	Response to Representation
Police Scotland	Yes	No	Support the replacement crossing, has reservations regarding the proximity to the junction.	The side road junction has been surveyed and found to have a very low flow hence the new crossing has been located on the existing crossing footprint.
Resident	Yes	No	Has always been a dangerous crossing and have seen many near misses. Wholeheartedly support the proposal.	
Resident	Yes	No	Surprised it has taken so long.	
Resident	Yes	No	Thinks it is a good idea, would also like lights at Melville Drive Junction	
Resident	Yes	No	A good idea, will prevent people driving across the crossing when pedestrians are trying to cross.	
Resident	Yes	No	A much needed change, two people have been killed here in recent years	
Resident	No	Yes	The zebra crossing works perfectly well and the money being wasted here could be spent elsewhere.	There has been a long term local desire for a signalled controlled crossing at this location. This improvement was identified and will be funded through the Accident Investigation and Prevention (AIP) process for which the Road Safety Team has a specific budget. A recent assessment was undertaken and the locus met the criteria for a controlled crossing.
Resident	No	Yes	The zebra crossing works well and the signalised crossing will make the street more cluttered.	There has been a long term local desire for the zebra crossing to be replaced with a signalled controlled crossing. A recent assessment was undertaken and the locus met the criteria for a controlled crossing.
Resident	No	Yes	Pedestrians will have to wait longer to cross the road. The extra waiting time created by a light-controlled crossing may tempt pedestrians to cross outwith the 'green man', putting them at serious risk of injury.	Due to the nature of traffic flows on Marchmont Road, it is likely that in the main the lights will change to allow pedestrians to cross with little delay. The longest a pedestrian will have to wait is 20 seconds if the lights have just changed back to green.
			Pedestrians will have to stand by the road inhaling traffic fumes for longer while waiting for lights to change.	It is not considered that pedestrians will be exposed to additional levels of pollution by using the crossing.

			Electronic beeps from a puffin crossing will create noise pollution and disturb occupants of nearby tenements.	The audible beeps will be set to as low a volume as practically possible at the site. The audibles will be switched off between 11pm and 7am. This is standard practice across the city.
			It is undemocratic to base the choice of crossing on the opinion of Community Councils. A Community Council may be composed of a small group of people not elected by the community as a whole, and who therefore do not represent the views of many residents.	This project was not initiated by the Community Council. The location was recently assessed and met the criteria for a controlled crossing in terms of vehicle and pedestrian flow; hence this option was taken forward.
			Road safety at the existing zebra crossing could be improved by introducing traffic calming measures on Marchmont Road which is a residential street with a high number of pedestrians and cyclists. For example, why does Marchmont Road not have sleeping policemen speed bumps like those on other residential streets like Mountcastle Drive and Northfield Broadway in EH8?	Marchmont Road is part of the strategic road network of Edinburgh for use by HGVs, buses and general traffic, so is unsuitable for physical traffic calming features.
			It may appear that the road engineers have already decided that this crossing will be changed to a puffin, before alternative points of view have even been submitted.	The recommendation of the designers is that a puffin controlled crossing is the most suitable facility at this location. The final decision however will be made by the Transport and Environment Committee.
			It is unfair to talk about the 'bad behaviour' of pedestrians. People crossing from one pavement to another are merely trying to navigate an urban terrain where motorists are given preferential treatment. It is motor vehicles who create the danger simply because of their speed and weight. Removing the zebra crossing penalises pedestrians for the irresponsible behaviour of some motorists. Motorists should be educated about stopping at zebra crossings, rather than imposing further restrictions on pedestrians. Pedestrians are not the cause of the road safety problem - it is the speed of motor vehicles which creates the risk.	The proposed signalised crossing is seen as a positive by the local community, and as it is a new facility, will hopefully encourage more pedestrians to cross at this point. The facility will be seen as a positive step for pedestrians, rather than penalising them.

			Removing the zebra crossing gives a message that pedestrians are not entitled to stop the traffic by using the crossing, and shifts the balance of power away from the most vulnerable road users (pedestrians) towards those who already dominate the roads (motor vehicles).	
			Installing lights to prevent people walking across the road punishes pedestrians and treats them like sheep to be herded and segregated as if they are at fault, rather than the motorist who fails to stop at a zebra crossing.	The proposed crossing will be slightly wider than the current zebra and will be constructed on the footprint of the existing facilities. It is not reducing pedestrian crossing space. Unfortunately on a zebra if a pedestrian crossing the road is expecting a driver to stop and they fail to do so, there could be a collision.
			'Amber gamblers' who drive through amber traffic lights may endanger pedestrians crossing on the puffin.	This is a traffic offence enforceable by the Police and can occur at any set of traffic signals. It is not considered a reason not to introduce a puffin crossing
			The introduction of the 20mph speed limit next year will make the zebra crossing safer. Even if some vehicles ignore the 20mph speed limit, average speeds will decrease as some motorists will slow down. Changing to a light-controlled crossing will then be a red herring. Changing the zebra to a light-controlled crossing fails to address the main cause of danger on this crossing which is excessive speed of traffic, and vehicles breaking the 30mph speed limit on Marchmont Road.	The speed limit on Marchmont Road will be lowered to 20mph as part of the current policy to introduce 20mph speed limits city wide.

			<p>Examples of changes that could make the existing zebra crossing safer: Extend pavement width at each side to make roadway narrower at crossing; Raise level of road surface at zebra crossing to slow down traffic; Install warning signs at a distance from crossing. These could be speed-activated signs that light up with a message such as 'Slow Down - Zebra Crossing'; Re-paint white stripes at crossing. They have faded through lack of maintenance; Increase prominence of Belisha beacons; Increase illumination of zebra crossing; Build an island in the middle of the road. This would be a safe haven for pedestrians and would have the added benefit of traffic calming; Marchmont Road is a residential street and should have sleeping policemen speed bumps to encourage motorists to drive more slowly. Speed bumps also serve to remind motorists of the dangers motor vehicles pose to pedestrians; Run a publicity campaign aimed at all road users, motorists and pedestrians, to increase awareness of the Highway Code, responsible behaviour, and how to use zebra crossings; Advertise and enforce the new 20mph speed limit when it starts in 2016.</p>	<p>The signalisation of the crossing is the recommended option for this location given the existing pedestrian numbers and traffic volumes.</p>
			<p>Summary, changing from a zebra to a puffin crossing would be a backward step and reduce road safety in the whole of Marchmont Road. A light-controlled crossing here would endanger pedestrians by condoning irresponsible driver behaviour. The existing zebra crossing has a beneficial influence on motorists and could be upgraded by various traffic calming measures, lighting and signage.</p>	<p>The upgrade of the zebra crossing to a puffin crossing has widespread public support and is being installed to improve road safety for pedestrians.</p>