

Report to: Executive Member Environmental Services

Date: 26th February 2008

Report of: Director of Environmental Services

Report No: EMES/107/07

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Report Title: Bury Road, Bolton – Route Management Scheme – Response to Consultation

Non Confidential

This report does **not** contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press or members of the public.

Recommendations:

Having considered the comments made in response to the consultation, the Director of Environmental Services recommends the Executive Member Environmental Services to agree to the implementation of the traffic management measures referred to in the report.

Decision:

Background Doc(s):

Results of consultation with local residents held on file in Highways and Engineering Development Services.

Signed:

Leader / Executive Member

Monitoring Officer

Date:

Summary:

A proposal to introduce traffic management measures on Bury Road, Bolton between Milnthorpe Road and Bradford Street is included in the Highways Capital (Local Safety Schemes) programme. The scheme includes the provision of central hatched markings and turning pockets, advisory cycle lanes and a number of pedestrian refuges. Local residents and business people were consulted on the proposals and, although the overall response was low, a majority of those who replied were in favour of the scheme. A number of concerns have been expressed about some aspects of the scheme and these are detailed and commented upon in the report.

Having considered the concerns, the Director of Environmental Services recommends that approval is given to implement the measures referred to in the report in conjunction with the carriageway resurfacing works which are to commence towards the end of the current financial year.

Background information

1. In the period from 01/01/2001 to 31/12/2003 there were 69 reported injury accidents on Bury Road, which resulted in 90 casualties. Two of these were fatal and eleven resulted in serious injuries. Twenty four of the casualties were pedestrians, eighteen were children and six of them were pedal cyclists. Whilst the accidents occurred along the entire length of Bury Road there were clusters at its junctions with Ainsworth Lane, Blenheim Road and Stephen's Street. As a result of the accident record Bury Road was therefore identified for consideration under the Highways Capital Programme. Since that time, during the period from 01/08/2004 to 31/07/2007, there have been 60 injury accidents, resulting in 75 casualties. Seven of them resulted in serious injuries. Ten of the casualties were pedestrians and seven were children. Six were pedal cyclists. In the main, the accidents form clusters at the junctions referred to above as well as at the Cemetary Road junction.
2. A traffic management scheme was drawn up to address the issues and local residents and business people were consulted on the proposals. The overall response was low, but a majority of those who replied were in favour of the scheme. A number of concerns have been expressed about some aspects of the scheme and these are detailed and commented upon in the report.
3. The main features of the proposed scheme are:-
 - introduction of central hatched markings to give the appearance of a reduction in carriageway width,
 - creation of an advisory cycle lanes,
 - provision of a number of pedestrian refuges to assist pedestrians to cross Bury Road, and help control the speed of traffic,

Consultation with residents

4. The consultation was carried out in September 2007. Letters were sent to 415 local residents to ask for their views on the scheme. Responses were received from 92 (22%) of those consulted. Of these, 64(70%) support the proposed scheme and 20 (22%) are opposed to it. The more detailed analysis of the consultation may be summarised as follows:-

	Total replies	Yes	No	No view/ no reply
Do you support the proposed scheme?	92	64 (70%)	20 (22%)	8 (9%)
Do you support the proposed installation of pedestrian refuge islands?	92	72 (78%)	12 (13%)	8(9%)
Do you support the proposed installation of cycle lanes?	92	46 (50%)	36 (39%)	10 (11%)

5. It is clear from the responses that the majority who replied are in favour of the scheme and a number of them have positively welcomed it. Comments that have been received include:-
 - "a pedestrian refuge has been a necessity near my house for a long time..."
 - "long overdue safety measures"

- “reducing it to one lane must make an improvement on the speed of all traffic”
- “in complete agreement with slowing traffic and reducing accidents on any road”
- “wholeheartedly support the principal of traffic calming being introduced”

Observations on response to consultation

6. The concerns raised by those who are against the proposals may be summarised as follows:

6.1 By narrowing the roads and putting in pedestrian refuges you are just going to cause traffic chaos and more pollution. You are creating more obstructions which will disrupt the flow of traffic. Instead of taking 5 minutes it will take 30 minutes to travel from Somerton Road to Bromwich Street.

In the length of Bury Road under consideration, between Milnthorpe Road and Bradford Street, the existing refuge near Girton Street is to be upgraded and four new refuges will be introduced. The introduction of pedestrian refuges will assist pedestrians in crossing the road and will also reduce traffic speeds and thereby enhance the safety of all road users.

The capacity of the road is dictated by the junctions. The proposals should not adversely affect those.

6.2 What is the point of cycle lanes when they all ride on the footpath anyway? The road is not wide enough for refuge islands and certainly not for cycle lanes. Cycle lanes cause congestion for many for the benefit of the few. There are three cycles at most in a week using Bury Road. Responsible cyclists have the sense to manage Bury Road without the added clutter of cycle lanes and signs on the pavement. Cars will use the back street even more than they do at present which will be dangerous for the children that play there. It's a waste of money. Put the money to better use by repairing the road and footways.

Riding on the footway is an illegal activity when on a footway that has not been designated for use by cyclists. With regard to carriageway widths the road is wide enough to accommodate the proposals contained within the scheme.

Most of the proposed cycle lanes are located in road space not currently used by the majority of traffic; consequently no additional congestion is anticipated by allocating this “unused” space for a vulnerable road user. Narrowing the road in this way will however reduce traffic speeds to reflect both the prevailing speed limits and enhance the safety of all road users.

It is recognised that many of the cyclists on A58 and A579 are competent cyclists. However cycle lanes do increase cyclist safety at side road junctions, which are numerous, and give priority access at traffic signals and in congested traffic. Cycle lanes also have wider road safety benefits by acting as speed management devices through narrowing the visible road space and thus these are not purely aimed at providing for cyclists.

There is no reason to expect cars to transfer to the back streets. However once the scheme is in place and conditions have settled down, the situation will be reviewed. Any reported issues will be considered for resolution at that time.

Finance for the proposals is derived from Government allocations aimed purely at road safety improvements. Maintenance cannot be undertaken using this finance. However resurfacing work is scheduled to take place as part of other programmed works, prior to the road safety scheme taking place. This will bring about an improvement in the condition of the carriageway surface

6.3 Having a cycle lane outside the row of shops (655/661 Bury Road) will cause further problems for trade. We are already struggling because of the waiting restrictions in the area. I would gladly accept a cycle lane if we could have a lay by.

The current waiting restrictions would remain and would be unchanged. The cycle lane will be advisory in nature with no explicit parking restrictions attached to it. There will be no restriction on parking in either Gregory Avenue or Roscow Avenue adjacent to the shops within the scheme. There is no funding available in this scheme for the construction of a lay by which could involve expenditure on the diversion of statutory undertakers' plant and cables.

6.4 The back street at the rear of 393 Bury Road is already very dangerous and it's not safe for children to cross now because of speeding traffic. It will be even more dangerous if traffic is slowed down on Bury Road. I am concerned that traffic will start to use the unadopted back streets to cut through at every opportunity. This is both dangerous and unfair to local house owners. The Council should take over these streets.

As mentioned in paragraph 6.2 there is no reason to expect cars to transfer to the back streets. However once the scheme is in place and traffic conditions have settled down, the situation will be reviewed. Any reported issues will be considered at that time. The question of un-adopted streets is referred to in paragraph 7.

6.5 I would like to see traffic signals installed at the junction of Ainsworth Lane and Bury Road to help traffic get out.

There are no proposals at present to introduce traffic signals at this junction. If there is a significant change in the traffic situation consideration will be given to including the provision of signals in a future Capital Programme.

6.6 Not sure why the road needs to be reduced to one lane as the traffic is travelling slowly enough at times. This scheme will lead to longer delays if there is only one lane of traffic at the Crompton Way junction instead of two as at present. I suggest a three lane tidal flow system and more controlled crossing points. Opposed to any alterations to Bury Road. The proposal will disrupt the flow of traffic. I do not want a pedestrian refuge outside my house.

The accidents that have taken place relate to vehicle speeds and volumes conflicting with turning movements from side roads and crossing activity by pedestrians. The introduction of right turning 'pockets' and pedestrian refuges will reduce conflict between road users. Narrowing the carriageway will lead to a reduction in the number of accidents. The introduction of a tidal flow arrangement, as referred to by the objector, would require extensive signing to control the opposing traffic streams, which would be very expensive. Controlled crossing points in the form of Puffin Crossings would result in delays to traffic.

Receipt of Petition

7. A petition containing 261 signatures has also been received from residents in the area who are calling for Pretoria Road to be adopted by the Council. The residents have referred to the fact that Pretoria Road became a through road when the Council extended the road to provide access to Council houses that it built on land beyond Back Bury Road on Toronto Street. They have expressed concern that the use of Pretoria Road will increase when the cycle lanes and refuges are introduced on Bury Road as part of the Route Management Scheme and traffic uses the side roads as a 'rat run'. A similar request has been made by residents of Mafeking Street.

8. Pretoria Road and Makeking Street are private streets and could only be made up under the Private Street Works Code. The cost of making up these streets would normally be apportioned between the frontagers. The Council could elect to make up the streets but there is currently no funding allocation for making up private streets. Unless special provision were to be made, no further action can be taken to comply with the residents' wishes and make up these street for adoption.

Other consultation

9. Representatives of the Chief Constable, County Fire and Ambulance Officers and Director General of the Passenger Transport Executive were all consulted as part of the consultation. The representatives of the Chief Constable, County Fire Officer and Director General of the Passenger Transport Executive have no objection to the scheme. The representative of the Director General of the Passenger Transport Executive has however asked that the features do not interfere with the existing bus stops such that they will have to be re-located.
10. The representative of the County Ambulance Officer has a long standing concern about the potential delays caused by build-outs, refuges and central hatched markings on the basis that they affect the operation of ambulances by causing delays in reaching sick patients or in transferring them to hospital. It is acknowledged that these features may affect the ability of traffic, including ambulances, to form an additional lane by driving down the middle of the road. In other locations where these features have been introduced it has been noted that road users move over to allow ambulances and other emergency vehicles to pass. It is considered that on balance, the obvious benefits to the local community in providing safer crossing points for pedestrians and also achieving a reduction in the speed of traffic, outweigh any minor potential delays to ambulances that could occur.

Views of Ward Members

11. Ward Members were consulted on the proposals at the same time as the residents. Councillor R Wilkinson is opposed to the scheme pointing out that Bury Road is very congested at peak periods. He states that, in his opinion it must be kept open from Milnthorpe Road to Crompton Way to allow the flow of traffic to continue. The views of Ward Members have been requested on this report and recommendation. In reply, Councillor Wilkinson has stated that, in his view, in order to keep the flow of traffic turning into Crompton Way, the need for two lanes of traffic from Milnthorpe Road downwards is essential. In this regard it is not intended to make any changes to the centre line markings on Bury Road between Blenheim Road and Crompton Way. The current arrangement for two lanes of traffic on the approach to Crompton Way will remain as it is at present. The arrangement whereby traffic currently forms two informal lanes between Milnthorpe Road and Blenheim Road will however be affected. This frequently leads to situations where opposing flows of traffic are in conflict which is both unsafe and a cause of congestion. As mentioned previously the capacity of this road is dictated by the junctions. The proposals should not adversely affect these.
12. As mentioned previously the scheme is intended to reduce traffic speeds to reflect the prevailing speed limit and enhance the safety of all road users. It is acknowledged that there may be some congestion during the peak periods due to the volume of traffic but overall there is expected to be an improvement in the current situation.

Financial implications and Implementation

13. The total estimated cost of the scheme is £60,000 which will be funded from the Highways Capital (Local Safety Scheme) budget. If approved the scheme will be implemented in conjunction with the major resurfacing scheme on Bury Road, which is programmed to begin towards the end of the current financial year.

Recommendation

14. Having considered the comments made in response to the consultation, the Director of Environmental Services recommends the Executive Member Environmental Services to agree to the implementation of the traffic management measures referred to.

ES/HEDev/CRH/MJH/DLT/937025

8th November 2007