



HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE - 9 MARCH 2023

RESPONSE TO PETITION:
REQUEST FOR A SCHOOL CROSSING OUTSIDE OF ST PETERS
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

Purpose of the report

1. The purpose of the report is to provide the Committee with information on the outcome of investigations following the presentation of a petition voicing concerns about road safety outside of St Peters Catholic Primary School in Hinckley.

The Petition

2. The petition, received by the County Council on 19 January 2023, contained a total of 8,850 signatures. The petition made the request to 'Provide a permanent crossing' on London Road, Hinckley.

3. The wording on the front page of the petition was as follows: -

'We the undersigned petition the Council to install a permanent crossing in London Road, Hinckley, near to St Peters school in order to make crossing safer for local children. Parents have reported several near misses at the school and are deeply concerned about child safety. Despite repeated requests for the crossing from local councillors, parents and even the children themselves the County Council has so far failed to act'.

Background

4. St Peters Catholic Primary School is located on London Road in the town of Hinckley (see Figure 1). London Road is one of many roads which provides access into the town centre and is predominantly made up of residential homes.
5. The western end of London Road leads towards Castle Street and the pedestrian zone for the town centre. Several businesses and on-street parking bays are located where London Road meets Castle Street and a pelican crossing is located further along Castle Street. Given the nature of the frontage

development on London Road, it is most likely to be a mix of residential, commuter and school traffic using the road.

6. The County Council has been in direct and ongoing contact with St Peters Catholic Primary School since 2018 regarding road safety concerns following the departure of the School Crossing Patrol (SCP) in 2017. The headteacher and parents expressed concerns over crossing the road which subsequently led to officers conducting several investigations, including the commissioning of speed, and crossing surveys, and the offer of road safety training.

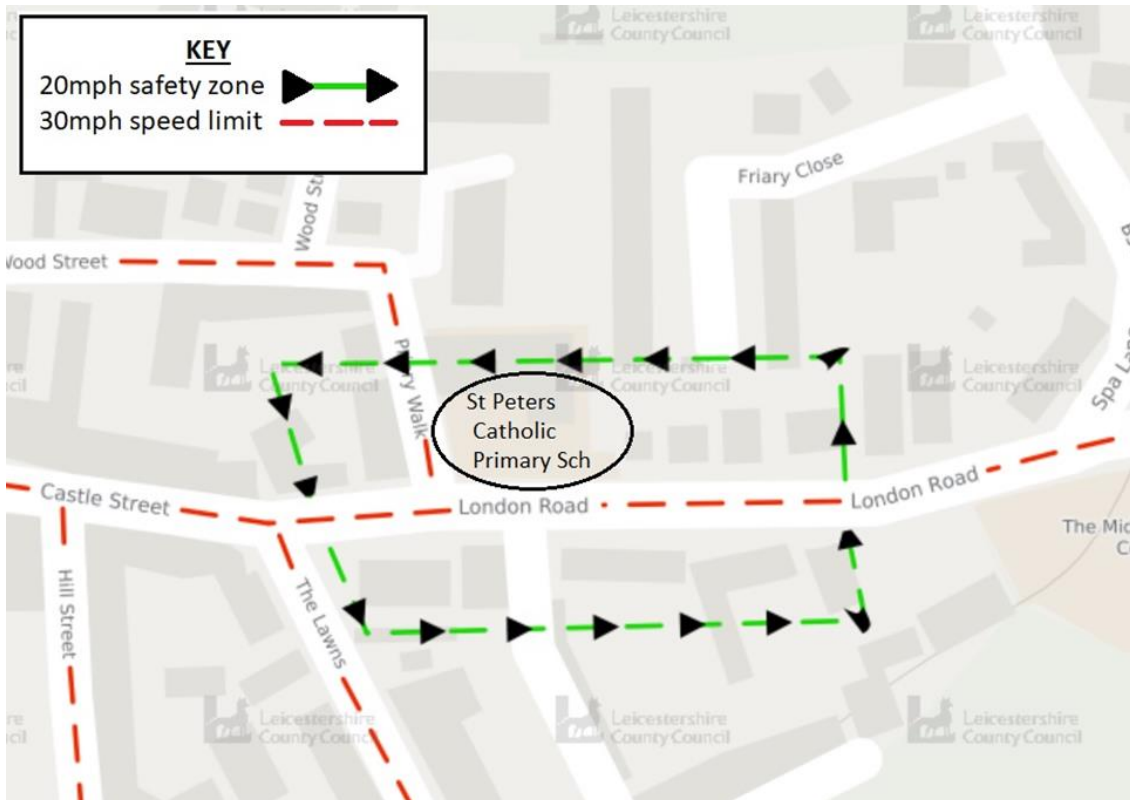


Figure 1. - Location of St Peters Catholic Primary School, Hinckley

7. The following features are present on London Road:
 - a) Waiting restrictions in the form of single and double yellow lines to restrict parking along the road to designated locations only.
 - b) Mandatory School Keep Clear markings outside of the entrance to the school. These markings are enforced between 08:00 – 16:00 Monday to Friday by Leicestershire County Council's camera enforcement vehicles.
 - c) Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) for travel in each direction on London Road. The signs are permanently illuminated between 08:00 – 09:30 and 14:30 – 16:00 Monday to Friday to warn of a school ahead and children crossing the road. Outside of these hours the sign displays a 30mph speed limit when a vehicle is captured travelling above 30mph.

- d) A safety zone encompassing an advisory 20 mph speed limit in the vicinity of the school entrance during school hours (with complementary warning signs and flashing amber lights at school entry and exit times as above).
- e) An uncontrolled crossing point directly outside of the school with tactile paving and safety barriers to prevent children running directly into the road when exiting the school
- f) The whole of London Road is street lit.

Road Accidents and Vehicle speeds

- 8. The County Council receives information regarding road traffic collisions directly from Leicestershire Police. However, information is only received where injury is sustained because of a collision, and Leicestershire Police are in attendance or informed through an adequately evidenced 'stats 19' report (the definitive source of initial information about the nature of a road traffic collision reported to the Police). 'Near misses' and non-personal injury accidents are not recorded. As such, when assessing the accident data for a site, the Council can only consider recorded personal injury accidents.
- 9. When reviewing this location's collision history, there has been no recorded personal injury accidents having occurred directly outside of the school during school drop-off and collection hours within the past five years.
- 10. Reviewing the collision history for London Road as a whole, there has been one reported collision recorded within the past five years. This incident occurred late evening, outside of the 20mph safety zone and away from the school, and speed was not considered a contributory factor.
- 11. Speed surveys were carried out in September 2019 with the 85th percentile speed (the speeds of which 85% of drivers are travelling at or lower) being recorded at 30mph.
- 12. The data indicates that during the morning and afternoon school run times, speeds are between 28mph and 29mph respectively. This demonstrates that speeds are reducing slightly at school drop off and pick up times when the flashing lights associated with the School Safety Zone are in operation.

Assessment for a crossing

- 13. It has long been accepted national practice to assess the justification for a pedestrian crossing using a calculation involving both pedestrian and vehicle flows. This is known as 'PV²' and effectively evaluates the potential for conflict between vehicles and pedestrians.
- 14. The 'PV²' formula was set out in Advice Note TA10/80 "Design Considerations for Pelican and Zebra Crossings". This was superseded by Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/95 "Assessment of Pedestrian Crossings", which introduced

additional criteria and considerations for the justification of a crossing and type. This is also outlined in Traffic Signs Manual Chapter 6¹.

15. In accordance with the above national practice, most Local Authorities use a modified version of the PV² formula, which includes additional enhanced criteria that takes into consideration the types of pedestrians, the different types of vehicles, the vulnerability of pedestrians and community links. This assessment results in a score, which in Leicestershire is called the Crossing Justification Value (CJV) and this will determine the justification for a crossing or not.
16. The possible resultant CJV outcomes are as follows:
 - a) A crossing of any type would not be justified if the CJV is less than 0.4;
 - b) A CJV between 0.4-.0.7 would justify the provision of a dropped kerb pedestrian crossing point;
 - c) A CJV between 0.7-0.9 would justify the provision of zebra crossing; and
 - d) A CJV of 0.9 and above would justify the provision of a controlled puffin crossing.
17. This location was initially surveyed and assessed for a crossing in October 2017, and this resulted in a CJV of 0.244 which was short of the benchmark required to provide any form of crossing facility. Therefore, the Council was unable to justify a crossing at the location based on the data gathered.
18. Concerns continued to arise regarding road safety, and despite having undertaken a crossing assessment in 2017, the County Council agreed to commission another survey and assessment outside of the school in 2019. This included the section of London Road that fronts the jitty that leads to Queens Park, as requests stated those walking to school used this route and crossed in that location.
19. The surveys were commissioned on 5 September 2019 and the assessment resulted in a CJV of 0.314 outside the school and 0.114 outside of the jitty. These surveys continued to reveal that crossing activity was low outside of the school and also further up the road in the vicinity of the jitty to Queens Park. The three surveys conducted over this two-year period clearly evidenced that a crossing was not justified in-line with national guidance.
20. Whilst levels of interaction can increase during the morning and afternoon school periods, a formal crossing such as a zebra or pelican is operational at all times of the day, therefore the Council must consider activity throughout the day and not just school generated trips. Failure to follow national guidance would lead to a dangerous crossing on the highway, as evidence has revealed drivers can become accustomed to underutilised crossings that they unconsciously travel through.

¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/330269/ltn-1-95_Assessment-Crossings.pdf

21. However, in light of the continued concerns and receipt of this petition requesting a crossing, the council will undertake further surveys and a crossing assessment to determine if one is now justified. The surveys that will inform the assessment will be undertaken during June 2023 when activity around the school is anticipated to be at its peak due to more conducive weather conditions for walking.

School Crossing Patrol

22. Despite no formalised crossing being present outside of St Peters Primary School, a SCP had been active for several years until the patrol resigned from the post in 2017.
23. Throughout the period that the SCP has remained vacant, advertising boards have been placed at the school entrance, including letters sent to the school. Only two expressions of interest have been shown in the post within the five years it has been advertised, but encouragingly the most recent applicant is in the process of being recruited subject to pre-employment checks being satisfied. The school is aware, and once in operation, it is expected that this will go a long way to alleviating many of the safety concerns that have been raised.

Highway Improvements

24. As a result of continued road safety concerns throughout 2019, when engaging with the school, officers identified highway improvements that could be made. This involved replacing the existing school flashing amber lights with a VAS that could perform the role of the flashing amber lights, but also provide enhanced warnings of school children crossing the road, whilst providing road safety messages regarding the posted 30mph speed limit.
25. The Council intended to install these signs during 2020 however, due to the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak the improvements had to be suspended until such a time normalised ways of working could resume. The signs were implemented in late 2021 and an example of how it operates is shown below.



Road Safety Education and Sustainable Travel Initiatives

26. The Council runs numerous educational training sessions that are open to all schools as part of the County Council's Safe and Sustainable Travel Programme for schools. Travelling actively to schools can be a great way for pupils to start the day, with research finding a link to improved behaviour and concentration, as well as contributing to the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity a day for those aged 5-18.
27. As well as this, the Safe and Sustainable Travel Team works with schools on a number of initiatives to try and reduce school gate congestion and create a safer environment for pupils, staff, families, and the wider community accessing the school. St Peters School has been contacted a number of times to discuss these initiatives and how they could take them forward, but with no take up until June 2022 when the school indicated an interest in the Junior Road Safety Officer (JRSO) scheme. Further detail of these initiatives is provided in paragraphs 28 to 37 and the Council will continue to engage with the school to encourage take up of them.

Modeshift STARS

28. Modeshift STARS is the national schools' awards scheme that has been established to recognise schools that have demonstrated excellence in supporting cycling, walking and other forms of sustainable travel. The scheme encourages schools across the country to join in a major effort to increase levels of sustainable and active travel in order to improve the health and well-being of children and young people. Every school in England (outside of London) can participate in Modeshift STARS for free. On completion of an application for Modeshift STARS, schools will automatically have a brand new national standard School Travel Plan.

School Gate Banner Competition

29. Schools will be invited to design a banner promoting safe and sustainable travel, with the winning entry being displayed outside their school gate. This is a great opportunity for pupils to get creative and promote walking, cycling, and scooting.

Street Feet

30. Street Feet is a role-playing initiative that encourages children to act responsibly on or near roads, and also helps them to choose safer routes to school, home and the park. This fun, interactive initiative is designed for foundation stage children and is delivered by a road safety professional from the Council.

Park and Stride Campaign

31. A Park and Stride scheme encourages families to park away from school and walk the last part of their journey. This is a great way to add physical exercise to their school journey.

Personalised Mapping Tool

32. Through the use of a mapping tool, schools can receive a personalised map which is centralised around their primary school. This map depicts walking routes and timed distances to the school and can be provided to parents, as well as new families starting at the school, and saved to the school website.

Bike Skills

33. An introductory bike skills session, led by a nationally accredited Bikeability trained instructor, will aim to provide the recipients with the skills and confidence for all kinds of cycling. These skills can then be put into practice to cycle to school and should enable cycling to be incorporated into P.E lessons and active lunch and break times.

Junior Road Safety Officer (JRSO)

34. The JRSO scheme is operated in schools whereby children selected by the school become road safety and active travel champions. The children become role models within the school, helping to deliver sessions and assemblies to other pupils, participating within the construction of the school travel plan, and supporting the delivery of initiatives. Schools participating within the JRSO scheme will be provided with equipment and prizes that can be distributed throughout the school as the JRSO's see fit.

School Streets

35. In 2022 the Council invited all schools in Leicestershire to be part of a School Streets trial and a total of 57 schools expressed an interest to take part in the trial. St Peters Catholic Primary School did not express an interest to take part in this initiative.
36. The School Streets trial provided a congestion free zone during school drop off and pick up times. This initiative prioritises pedestrians, including parents and children, by providing a safe space for people to walk and cycle in the vicinity of the school through a soft closure of the road or street.
37. It involves the introduction of temporary measures through an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order. The concept is that a road(s) is closed to traffic through the use of temporary signage and extendable barriers. These orders are relatively low cost, easy to install and are easily retractable to allow for passage of vehicles that are exempt from the closure, which would include residents within the closure point, blue badge holders, Special Education Needs children, emergency vehicles and delivery vehicles.

Parking Changes

38. Along with the signage improvements detailed in paragraphs 24 and 25, opportunities to improve the general road layout around the school has been identified. On-street parking bays are located near to the school which can generate more vehicular traffic during school hours. Plans to relocate these bays to Castle Street to create a general, keep clear zone in the vicinity of the school (where no vehicles will be permitted to park), have been developed.
39. These proposals involve changes in Traffic Regulation Orders and will be subject to a statutory consultation exercise. It is estimated that these works will cost approximately £15,000 with the formal consultation anticipated to start in the Spring. An example of these changes, alongside existing crossing facilities, are shown on the draft plan appended to this report.

Conclusion

40. Since the initial concerns about pedestrian safety were raised in 2017, multiple surveys have been undertaken to assess the justification for a crossing facility in the vicinity of the school. On each occasion, the Council has evidenced and explained why, in accordance with national guidance, a pedestrian crossing is not justified.
41. Despite being unable to introduce a formal crossing, engagement with the school continued by extending the offer for specialist officers to come into the school and work with pupils and staff directly. This offer has been made on many occasions since 2019 and would allow officers to work with the school on many of the initiatives listed in paragraphs 28 to 37. These offers were not taken up until June 2022 when the school indicated an interest in the JRSO scheme. Since that time officers have been trying to agree a convenient date to deliver this training with the school.
42. In addition to offering the support on these road safety education and sustainable travel initiatives, the Council has introduced alternating school warning and speed limit VAS to warn of children crossing at school times and encourage appropriate driver behaviour. The Council is also proposing to introduce parking changes to provide a clear environment around the school and will be consulting on those plans in the Spring.
43. As outlined in paragraph 23, a SCP officer has been recruited for St Peters Catholic Primary School and pre-employment checks are ongoing. The Council is confident that many concerns will be alleviated through the presence of a SCP officer. The school is aware of this appointment and has been kept up to date throughout the recruitment process.
44. Notwithstanding the appointment of a new SCP officer, the request for a formal crossing facility will be re-considered, with new surveys commissioned in June 2023 at a time where it is anticipated that activity around the school will be at its peak due to the more conducive weather conditions for walking. The Lead Petitioner, local members and other interested parties will be informed of the

outcome of this crossing assessment along with any implications of those updated survey results.

45. Whilst investigations and assessments take place, an uncontrolled crossing point is situated outside of the pedestrian entrance to the school, and where vehicles are not permitted to park due to the mandatory keep clear zig-zag markings. This is the point where the SCP officer will assist parents and children crossing to and from the school in due course. In addition, a pelican crossing is situated approximately 170 metres away from the school, should parents be approaching or leaving the school in a westerly direction.

Resource and Legal Implications

46. It is estimated that the cost of undertaking the further surveys and crossing assessment will be in the region of £2,000.
47. The proposed changes to the parking restrictions to create a clear zone around the school, including the statutory consultation exercise, are anticipated to cost approximately £15,000.
48. These costs are to be funded from the Department's Traffic and Safety revenue budget.
49. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the content of this report.

Background Papers

22 November 2017 – Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 'Parking near schools'

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=1044&MIId=5168&Ver=4>

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

50. This report has been circulated to Members representing the electoral divisions in the Hinckley area: Mr S. Bray CC, Mr M. Mullaney CC and Mr D. Bill MBE CC.

Equality Implications

51. There are no equality implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Human Rights Implications

52. There are no human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Appendix

Draft plan, Parking changes on Castle Street, Hinckley

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