



**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 7 SEPTEMBER 2023**

**UPDATE TO PETITION RESPONSE:
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 a further update to the Committee with information on the outcome of investigations following the presentation of a petition voicing concerns about road safety on London Road, Hinckley.

Previous Decisions

2. A petition was submitted to the County Council on 19 January 2023 containing a total of 8,850 signatures. The petition made a request to 'Provide a permanent crossing' on London Road, to make crossing safer for local children when travelling to and from St Peters Catholic Primary School in Hinckley.
3. The Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee was provided a report on 9 March 2023 responding to the petition. The report explained that the request for a pedestrian crossing had been assessed on multiple occasions since 2019 but did not meet national guidance. However, officers would conduct new assessments considering the petition and provide a further update at the September 2023 meeting.

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.

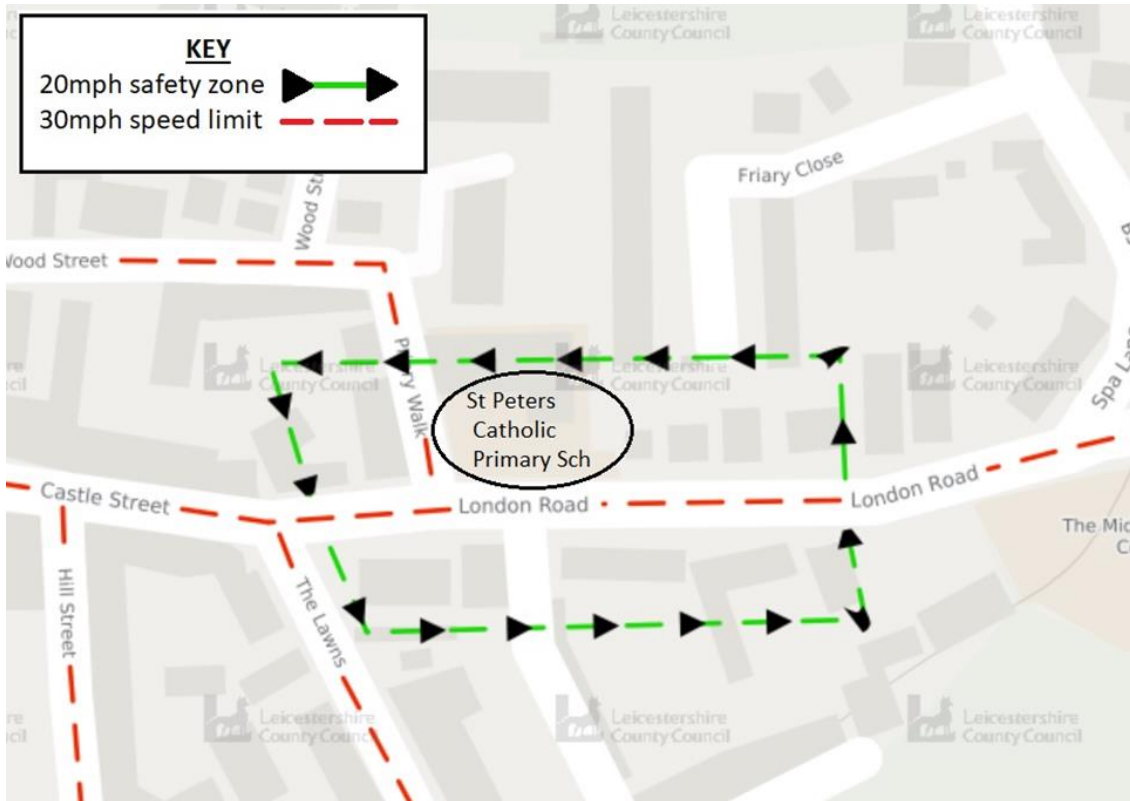


Figure 1 - Location of St Peters Catholic Primary School, Hinckley

7. The following features are present on London Road:
- Waiting restrictions in the form of single and double yellow lines to restrict parking along the road to designated locations only.
 - Mandatory School Keep Clear markings outside of the entrance to the school. These markings are enforceable between 08:00 – 16:00 Monday to Friday by Leicestershire County Council's camera enforcement vehicles.
 - 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.
 - 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.

Investigations for the assessment of a crossing

8. When considering possible network changes, Highways Authorities are required to have regard to their legal duties. One of the most important duties is set out at Section 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
9. The responsibility under that legislative provision is that the Council should secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians). In practice then, Highways officers must exercise their functions in a manner which strikes the right balance between mobility and safety.
10. Leicestershire County Council will assess the justification for a pedestrian crossing using an assessment involving both pedestrian and vehicle flows. This is a requirement outlined in Traffic Signs Manual Chapter 6¹.
11. In accordance with the above national practice, most Local Authorities use an enhanced criteria that takes into consideration the types of pedestrians, the different types of vehicles, the vulnerability of pedestrians and community links.
12. 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.
13. 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.

Previous assessments

14. The 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.
15. 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

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

also 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.

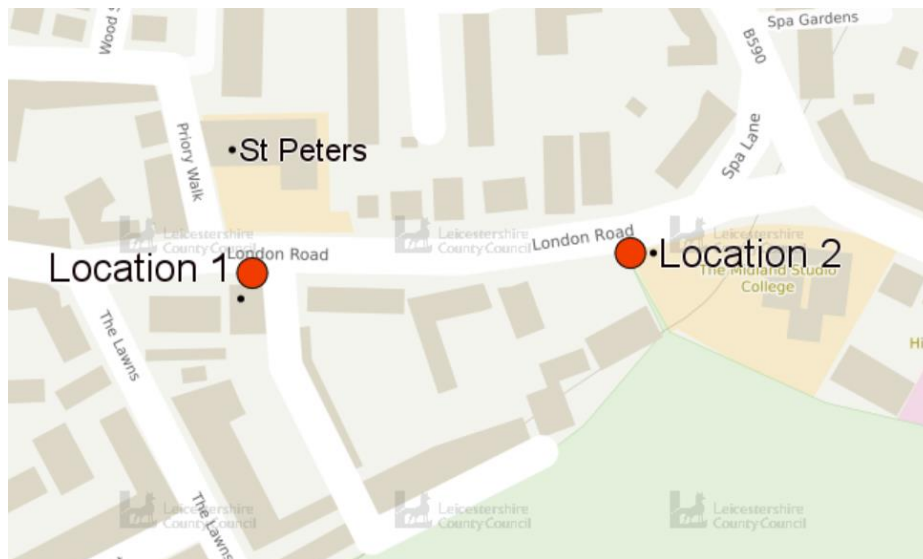


Figure 2 - Location of assessments undertaken for a pedestrian crossing

16. 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 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

Pedestrian crossing assessments - 2023

17. Both locations had assessments undertaken for a 24-hour period between Tuesday 13 June and Wednesday 14 June 2023. In addition to the crossing assessments, speed surveys were commissioned at both locations to assess vehicular speeds.
18. The assessment undertaken at Location 1 directly outside of the school entrance, was reviewed and resulted in a CJV of 0.56. This continues to evidence that a zebra or signal crossing is not justified, but firmly meets the recommendation of a dropped kerb which is already in situ as shown below.



Figure 3 – Current highway layout outside of St Peters Primary, 20 August 2023

19. The assessment undertaken at Location 2 opposite the jitty to Queens Park, was reviewed and resulted in a CJV of 0.08. This continues to evidence that there is no requirement to consider any type of crossing facility.
20. It is pertinent to highlight that assessments were conducted prior to the school term concluding for the summer holidays, and days where weather conditions averaged 25 degrees (06:00-18:00). Sunny and dry conditions can lead to increased sustainable activity thus showing that even on favourable walking conditions, pedestrian traffic at the location does not justify the consideration of a zebra or signal crossing.

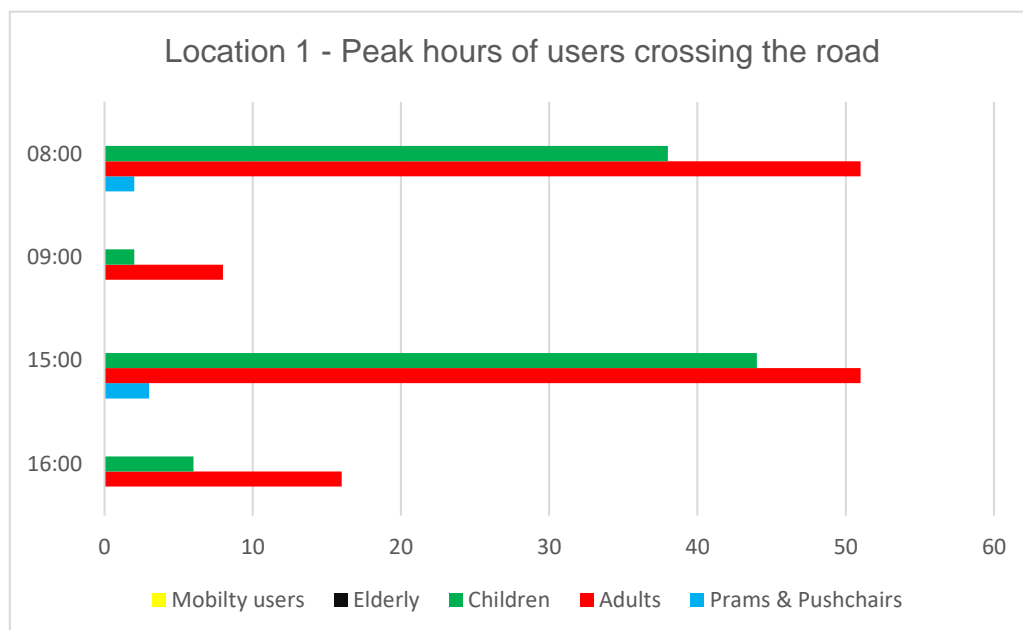


Figure 4 – Core hours of pedestrian movements outside of St Peters Primary School

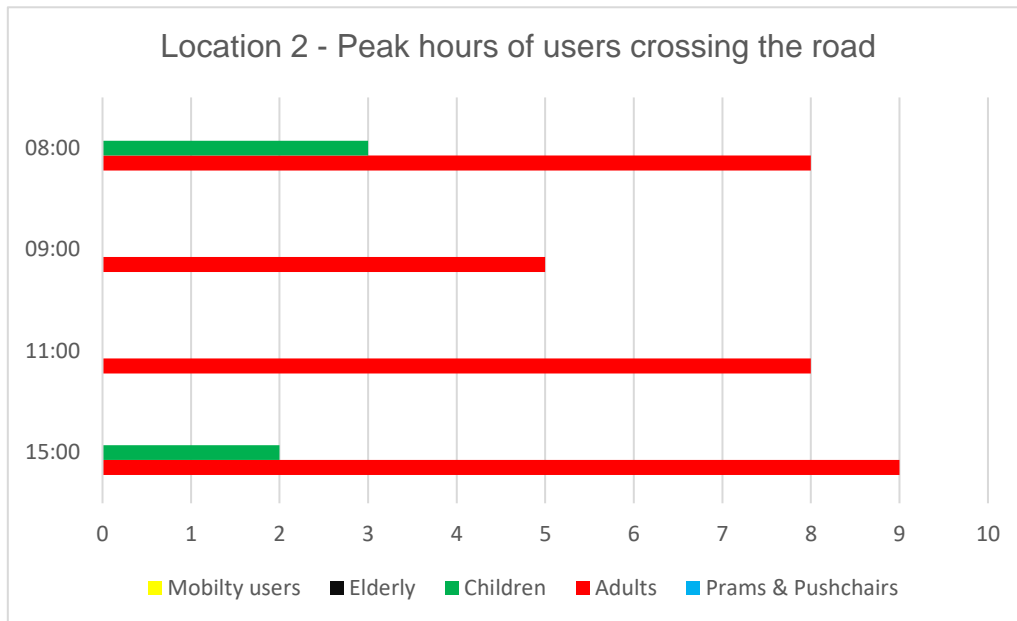


Figure 5 – Core hours of pedestrian movements via travel to/from Queens Park

21. The above tables demonstrates that the Council's assessments have considered all activity from a variety of user groups attempting to cross the road adjacent to St Peters. The Council's evidence shows that key demand is only during school hours, and that outside of those hours there is no demand nor high levels of pedestrian activity occurring. Whilst it is necessary to consider all activity, the tables highlight the Council's particular focus on school related trips and that there is no justification for a pedestrian crossing.
22. Failure to follow national guidance when undertaking crossing assessments is likely to lead to a dangerous crossing on the highway, as evidence has revealed drivers can become accustomed to underutilised crossings that they unconsciously travel through.

School Crossing Patrol

23. As part of the Council's update in March, it was explained that the SCP had been active for several years until the patrol resigned from the post in 2017. Throughout the period that the SCP has remained vacant, only two expressions of interest had been shown in the five years it had been advertised.
24. Notwithstanding the above, an applicant expressed interest in the post in early 2023 and at the time of the Committee report they were undergoing pre-employment checks for recruitment into the post. That recruitment was successful, and a SCP has been active since 6 June 2023.
25. The School Crossing Patrol was in situ at the time of the survey taking place and further re-enforces the evidence that there is no justification to provide any additional infrastructure for pedestrian movements.

Road accidents and vehicle speeds

26. 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.
27. 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.
28. As part of assessments for a pedestrian crossing, vehicular speed surveys were also commissioned to review the speeds at both locations. The following data was retrieved:

Location	Mean speed	85th Percentile
Opposite the school (Location 1)	All lanes – 23.9mph Eastbound – 24.7mph Westbound – 23.2mph	All lanes – 28.4mph Eastbound – 29.3mph Westbound – 27.4mph
Opposite the jitty (Location 2)	All lanes – 23.4mph Eastbound – 22.9mph Westbound – 23.8mph	All lanes – 27.1mph Eastbound – 26.7mph Westbound – 27.4mph

29. Speeds collated between 12 June and 19 June 2023 show a clear and consistent compliance with the posted 30mph speed limit. Whilst the County Council promotes an advisory 20mph speed limit outside of all schools county-wide, as above this is only advisory and cannot be enforced. Notwithstanding, the Council is aware that signs are not currently on-site advising of the advisory limit. These will be replaced in due course.

Parking changes

30. As part of the review of this area, opportunities to improve the general road layout around the school have been identified and will be consulted upon with Local Members prior to a public consultation.
31. On-street parking bays are located near to the school which can generate more vehicular traffic during school hours, including the potential to disregard the waiting restrictions surrounding the school. These bays will be removed and additional bays further along Castle Street extended to compensate for removed parking.
32. A second mandatory School Keep Clear marking on the southern side carriageway adjacent to where the existing keep clear marking resides is also proposed. This will ensure both sides of the carriageway remain clear of vehicles directly outside of the school whilst giving maximum visibility to those utilising the existing uncontrolled crossing point and giving additional sightlines for the SCP. This will be subject to a formal consultation with the Local Member and feedback retrieved from any comments received during the consultation.

Road Safety Education and Sustainable Travel Initiatives

33. 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.
34. As well as this, the Safe and Sustainable Travel Team works with schools on several 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 several 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 35 to 41 of this report, and the Council will continue to engage with the school to encourage take up of them.

Modeshift STARS

35. 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 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

36. 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

37. 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

38. 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

39. Using 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

40. 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)

41. 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.

Conclusion

42. 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.
43. The most recently collected data (2023) shows that more people are crossing at the identified locations and justifies a dropped crossing facility, of which one already exists outside the school. Whilst there are many possible reasons for these increased numbers, the new School Crossing Patrol at the school is likely to have had an effect as our experience is that the presence of a SCP often encourages walking to school and crossing at an appropriate point.
44. Despite being unable to introduce a formal crossing, there are other measures that have been identified that will be implemented. The Council will be reinstating the missing advisory 20mph speed limit signage as outlined in paragraph 27 of this report and parking layout changes and additional

mandatory school keep clear markings are proposed as explained in paragraphs 30 to 32 of this report.

45. In addition to these measures, engagement with the school has 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 33 to 41 of this report. In June 2022 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.
46. The Council has also continued to raise road safety awareness at the location by introducing highway improvements such as replacing the existing school flashing amber units with a VAS that would perform the same role, whilst providing enhanced warnings of children crossing the road, with road safety messages regarding the posted 30mph speed limit.
47. Whilst the evidence does not support the introduction of a formal pedestrian crossing at St Peters as requested via the petition, the introduction of the SCP along with the additional highway and parking measures proposed and ongoing work to engage the school on road safety matters, should help alleviate many parents/guardians' concerns. The Lead Petitioner will be informed directly of the decision making.

Resource and Legal Implications

48. It is estimated that the cost of undertaking further surveys and crossing assessments was in the region of £2,000.
49. 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.
50. The above costs are covered under the Department's Traffic and Safety revenue budget.
51. 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?CId=1044&MId=5168&Ver=4>

9 March 2023 – Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 'Response to Petition: Request for a School Crossing Outside of St Peters Catholic Primary School'

<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1293&MId=7172&Ver=4> (item 52)

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

52. 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

53. The requests for a permanent crossing are for the most part intended to facilitate safer access to a school. The group most likely to benefit from the requested safety measure is children (because they have a recurring need to gain access to and egress from the school and because they lack the same safety awareness as adults).
54. Since age is a protected characteristic (per Sec. 4 of the Equality Act 2010), children do require consideration from an equalities point of view. The impact on other groups (elderly and persons with sight impairments) also needs to be considered. Highways officers consider that they have, in exercise of their functions, sought to reconcile material considerations including mobility and safety issues (including the needs of different groups). Most notably, the Council's provision of a School Crossing Patrol and mandatory school keep clear marking is considered to give enhanced provision for those groups.
55. In evaluating the recommendations within this report, decision makers should give due consideration to the criteria contained within the public sector equality duty (per Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010).

Human Rights Implications

56. 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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