

Division: Abingdon (South)

## **PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 3 NOVEMBER 2014**

### **CALL-IN OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT'S DECISION RE: PROPOSED PELICAN CROSSINGS – A415 MARCHAM ROAD AND OCK STREET ABINGDON – RE-CONSULTATION**

**Report by Deputy Director of Environment & Economy  
(Commercial)**

1. This report provides additional information to assist the Committee in its consideration of the points raised by the Members seeking the Call-in of the decision by the Cabinet Member for Environment's decision made on 9 October 2014 in relation to 'Proposed Pelican Crossing – A415 Marcham Road & Ock Street, Abingdon'.
2. The reasons given for the request are below, along with officer comments:
3. "The Cabinet Member visited the site on a Saturday when the main objection to moving the crossing was because of the current crossing's convenience for school children walking from South Abingdon to Larkmead School. Saturday lunchtime is clearly an inappropriate time to have visited."

The Cabinet Member's visit was an opportunity for him to familiarise himself with the site of the crossings, their surroundings and the general issues. He was able to rely on the evidence of others for assessment of traffic impacts and safety implications particularly in respect of schoolchildren as the officers who compiled the report did visit the site during a morning in term-time.

4. "Neither the officer's report nor the Cabinet Member's decision appeared to be based on the Department of Transport guidance into the assessment of pedestrian crossing sites."

The Department for Transport guidance that is applicable to this situation is 'The assessment of Pedestrian Crossings' (known as LTN 1/95). The most relevant sections of LTN 1/95 (along with officer comments) are set out below:-

1.1.5 states "The assessment method uses a framework to encourage informed decisions to be made as to whether a crossing is necessary and if so which type should be used"

The proposals are for signalled crossings, and clearly this is not being questioned by any party.

## PSC5(c)

3.1.1 states "It is recommended that a site survey and record of all relevant local and traffic factors is made by an experienced traffic engineer"

This has been done by Brookbanks (consultants to Hallam Land Management) who were aware of the Planning Inspector's Decision.

3.1.2 states "If only one crossing is to be provided great care must be taken to select the site likely to attract the most pedestrians"

The proposals are for two crossings on the A415, with the Drayton Road toucan providing a direct link with minimal diversion to the Ock Street crossing for those on the west side of the Drayton Road wishing to continue on Spring Road, to then use the zebra crossing at the north end. It is accepted that local opinion is very much against the proposals, but this is on the premise that the level of service offered by the proposals is significantly less good for students travelling to / from the west side of Drayton Road. Officers views are that the diversions required are minimal and it would be reasonable to expect pedestrians to use the alternative provision.

4.1.4 states "The source of a request and any supporting correspondence should be recorded. This is not only to enable the correspondents to be informed of the decision but incoming correspondence may often give detailed local knowledge of problems"

The proposals have been the subject of extensive local consultation which has provided local information. However it is the view of officers that the proposed changes to the crossing will continue to provide an acceptably safe level of pedestrian amenity.

5. "The Cabinet Member did not take due account of the impact of the changes on the wider local traffic network."

The impacts of the proposed changes on the wider local traffic network were considered in detail by the Planning Inspector. The Planning Inspector's conclusions on the traffic implications of the proposed crossings are a compelling consideration, for two reasons: firstly because of his expertise and role as an independent planning inspector used to assessing technical evidence and secondly because he was presented with a large amount of evidence on the subject, tested in cross examination. His conclusions could only be put aside if there was a significant and manifest flaw in his reasoning or a change of circumstances such as compelling new technical evidence made available after his decision. As stated in paragraphs 20-25 of the October report to the Cabinet Member there is no additional evidence to contradict this conclusion.

MARK KEMP  
Deputy Director of Environment & Economy  
(Commercial)