

Forward Plan reference number: N/A

Report title: Zebra Crossing, Springfield Green, Chelmsford	
Report to: Councillor Kevin Bentley, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure	
Report author: Andrew Cook, Director for Highways and Transportation	
Date: 26/11/2020	For: Decision
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County Divisions affected: Springfield	

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 Essex County Council (the Council) formally advertised its intention to install a Zebra Crossing on Springfield Green, Chelmsford (the Proposal). As objections to the Proposal have been received, the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure is now asked to decide whether the Proposal should be implemented.

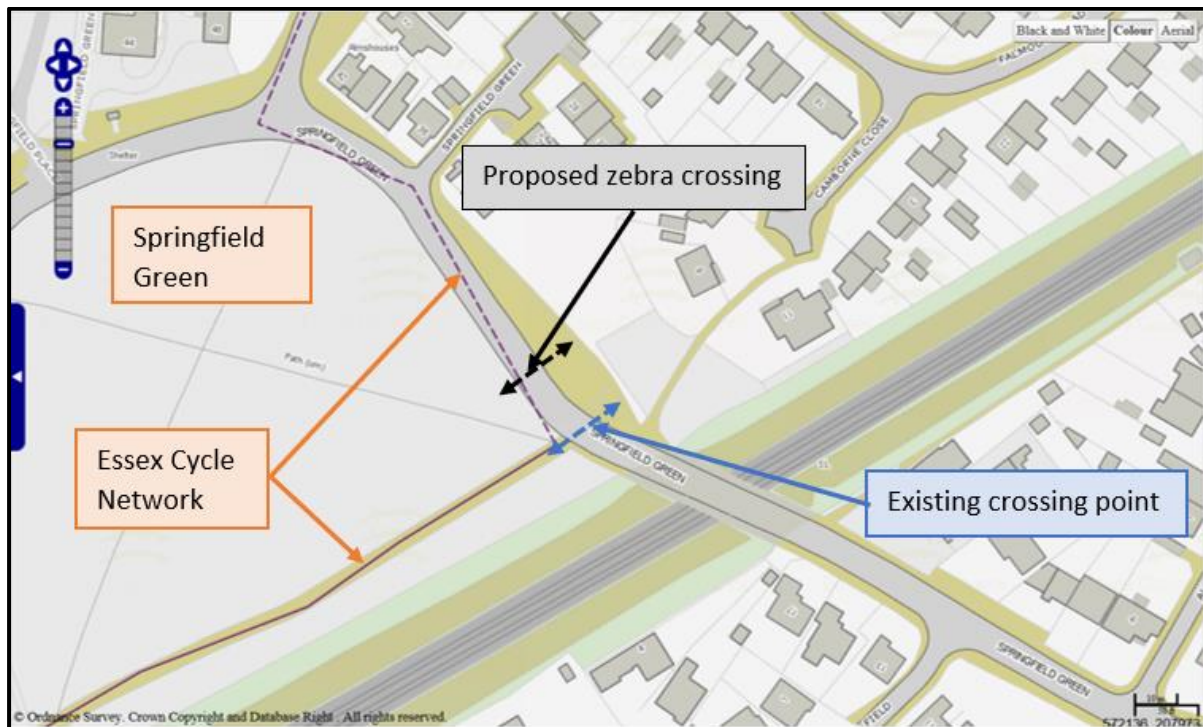
2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Approve the implementation of the Zebra Crossing on Springfield Green, Chelmsford, as advertised and as set out in Appendix 2.

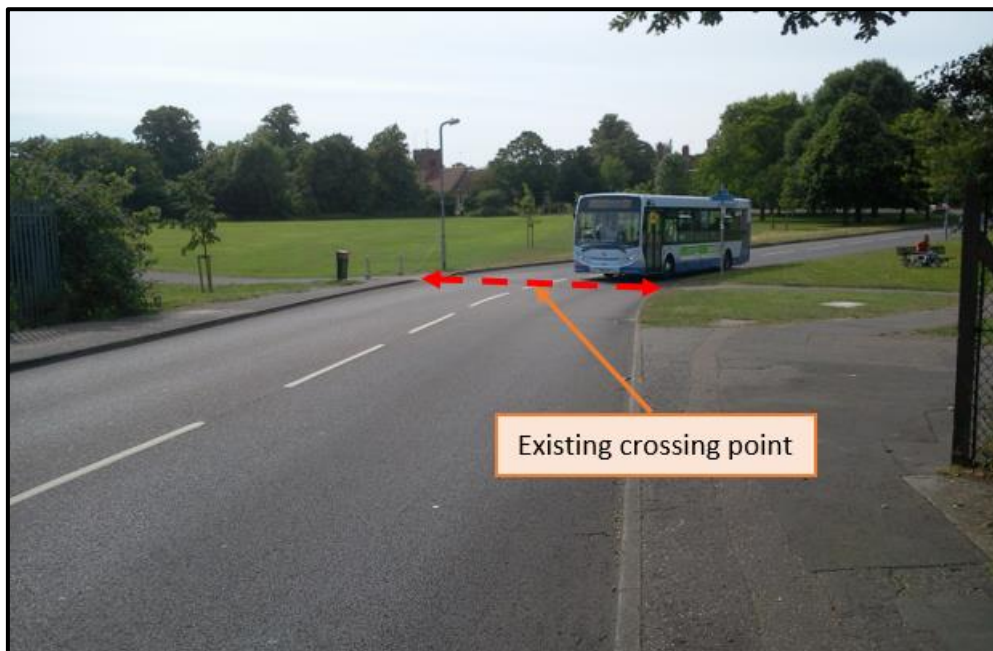
3. Summary of Issue

- 3.1 The Proposal has been agreed by the Chelmsford Local Highway Panel, the panel responsible for making recommendations and setting priorities for highway improvement schemes in the area.
- 3.2 Springfield Green is classified as a Priority 2 road within the Essex Functional Route Hierarchy, which carries a high flow of vehicles within the existing 30mph speed limit. It has a high footfall of pedestrians crossing a busy road to access The Priory Hospital and cycleway/footway links. In the three years prior to July 2020 there has been one personal injury accidents in the vicinity of the proposed crossing which was as a result of the driver losing control in wet conditions and no pedestrians were involved.

Plan showing existing crossing point and proposed zebra crossing



View looking at existing crossing point north-west along Springfield Green.



- 3.4 The existing crossing point is used by local residents walking to town or The Priory and schools. These pedestrian movements would be encouraged as an alternative to driving. Providing a zebra crossing facility could encourage others to start walking.

- 3.6 The crossing point is well used accommodating some 631 pedestrian movements during the 13-hour survey period. A Zebra crossing will provide a suitable crossing point for pedestrians, particularly vulnerable road users e.g. children wishing to access the infant school and elderly residents accessing the nearby amenities during and outside of school times.
- 3.7 Although residents currently cross at the informal dropped crossing seen in the photo above, the proposed zebra crossing could not be installed at this location due to the lack of forward visibility, as laid out in Chapter 6 of The Traffic Signs Manual.
- 3.8 The visibility guidelines state that there is a minimum visibility requirement based upon the 85thile speed. At the proposed crossing location the 85thile speeds of 31.6mph, would require an absolute minimum forward visibility of 50m.
- 3.9 To ensure the crossing was clearly visible and to reduce the likelihood of any nose to tail collisions, the decision was made to move the crossing point further away from the bridge. The visibility distances for the proposed crossing location are between 51m and 89m depend at which point the pedestrian is standing/crossing. A design can be found in Appendix 2.

Consultation

- 3.10 From 15 October 2020 to 6 November 2020, the Council formally advertised the Proposal (TRAF/7396), whereby members of the public were invited to comment on the Proposal. During this period three objections were received from three members of the public. Each objector was written to with the Councils response and this has been detailed within Appendix 1.
- 3.11 Objector One stated that the proposal fell short of what was needed and raised concerns that cyclists would be required to cross at the existing informal crossing. They stated that it does not include a cycle path or include a crossing facility for cycles, and that the proposal should meet the needs of both walkers and cyclists. In response to this, ECC informed the consultee that the location of the informal crossing that was currently used could not have a zebra crossing due to the lack of visibility, as this raised safety concerns, so the location needed to be moved further away from the original informal crossing, and that ECC planned to install wooden post and rail fencing to guide people, including cyclists, to the new crossing. With regards to the existing cycleway, the route is for cyclists to travel along the existing cycleway to then join the carriageway to continue their journey, ECC informed the consultee that it would make this clear to cyclists via amendments to the existing signage and carriageway road markings to indicate where cyclists should join the carriageway.
- 3.12 Objector two stated the scheme was a waste of money due to the lack of people crossing at this location. In response to this, ECC informed the

consultee that it undertook an assessment to determine the type of crossing facility for the location, which found that 631 pedestrians use the informal crossing during the twelve hour pedestrian count undertaken, so the Proposal is needed.

- 3.13 Objector three stated that the location was incorrect and that people will not use it, instead chose to continue to cross at the existing pedestrian desire line. A pedestrian desire line is the preferred route a person would take in order to travel from A to B, often the quickest and straightest route. The objector suggested railings would be required to stop them doing this manoeuvre. ECC informed the consultee that a crossing at the existing desire line had a lack of visibility, so had safety issues, and that wooden post and rail fencing would be installed to guide people to the proposed crossing.
- 3.14 It is required that Highways Officers should apply a transparent/rigorous test against safety criteria/policy, including calculation on requests for pedestrian crossing facilities as outlined in the Highways Practice Notice (HPN) 033. The calculation is a numerical measure designed to assess the degree of conflict between vehicles and pedestrian or in order to determine the type of pedestrian crossing facility for a specific location. The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016, were adopted by Essex County Council in order to have an open and transparent selection criteria for the introduction of pedestrian crossings. In conjunction with the general principles of the national guidance, a formula is used in Essex in order to ensure that each site is treated according to its own individual characteristics and site location, taking full account of vehicle flow, pedestrian flow, vulnerable road users, site characteristics and collisions.
- 3.15 This calculation was applied to the Proposal and it determined that the installation of a zebra crossing is warranted at this site. Site observations also highlighted that the crossing should be located on the busiest pedestrian desire line.
- 3.16 The existing crossing location desire line gives a visibility splay, which is under the requirements set in the guidance and concerns have been raised by our Road Safety Team. We therefore needed to move the proposed crossing further away from this point. We will though, as part of the scheme, install a post and rail fence to encourage pedestrians to use the zebra crossing.
- 3.17 Unfortunately the existing cycleway is not on both sides of the road, the route is for cyclists to travel along the existing cycleway, to then join the carriageway to continue their journey. We will ensure this is made clear to them.
- 3.18 An objection report can be found in Appendix 1.

3.19 During the consultation, other key stakeholders were consulted and as a result of this the following comments were received.

3.19.1 Essex Police did not want to comment, but raised no objection to the Proposal.

3.19.2 County Councillor Mike Mackrory responded as follows:

- I fully support the proposal as do the two City councillors, Cllr Natacha Dudley & Cllr Richard Lee and the traffic survey data from the degree of pedestrian/vehicle conflict survey justifies the need.

4. Options

Option A – Continue with the Proposal as advertised

4.1 This option would support the views of all the local Councillors and the Chelmsford Local Highway Panel. The Proposal met the criteria for a Zebra Crossing and gives pedestrians the right of way over traffic. However the crossing will not be installed on the desire line and will not satisfy the concerns of the residents who have objected.

Option B – Abandon the scheme

4.2 This would not achieve any additional highway benefits. This option would allow pedestrians to cross when they feel is safe to do so. It would not encourage pedestrians, such as those less able and unaccompanied school children to cross here.

Option C – Amend the location

4.3 To amend the location will appease the objectors, it will bring the crossing closer to the desire line and it would also result in taking slightly less land from the area of common land. However it would mean reconsulting with the secretary of state, redesigning the scheme and reducing the visibility to the crossing. The crossing could be brought approximately 15m closer to the desire line however not at the existing crossing path due to the safety concerns.

5 Issues for consideration

5.1 Financial Implications

5.1.1 If option A is chosen then the £122,000 cost of the implementation of the zebra crossing would come from the Chelmsford Local Highway Panel

2020/21 Capital Budget. If option C was chosen the scheme would be higher by another £10,000.

- 5.1.2 If option B was chosen, then there could be abortive scheme cost from the works already undertaken, including design and advertising.

5.2 Legal Implications

- 5.2.1 The request for the zebra crossing is covered by the results from the degree of pedestrian/vehicle conflict survey, which showed that a zebra crossing was warranted.

- 5.2.2 The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 gives the Council a statutory duty to exercise its traffic functions to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of traffic of all kinds, including pedestrians and to provide suitable and adequate parking facilities. So far as practical the council is also required to have regard to

- (a) the desirability of securing and maintaining reasonable access to premises;
- (b) the effect on the amenities of any locality affected so as to preserve or improve the amenities of the areas through which the roads run;
- (c) the importance of facilitating the passage of buses and their passengers.

- 5.2.3 Specifically S23 of the Road Traffic Act 1984 gives the local traffic authority (ECC) the power to establish crossings for pedestrians on roads for which they are the traffic authority. Pedestrian crossings assist with the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of traffic and pedestrians.

6 Equality and Diversity implications

- 6.1 The public sector equality duty applies to the council when it makes decisions, and this is covered by the equality impact assessment dated.

The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:

- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

- 6.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil

partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

- 6.3 The equality impact assessment indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

7. List of appendices –

- 7.1 Appendix 1 – Objection Report
- 7.2 Appendix 2 – Design of crossing location
- 7.3 Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment

8. List of Background papers – LHP Scheme Request Forms, LHP Proposal Scheme Lists, Highway Practice Note 033 Criteria on Selection of Pedestrian Facilities

I approve Option ____ as set out in Section 4 of the report for the reasons set out in the report.	Date
Councillor Kevin Bentley, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure	20/02/21

In consultation with:

Role	Date
ECC Director for Highways and Transportation Andrew Cook	13/01/2021
ECC Executive Director for Corporate and Customer Services (S151 Officer) Nicole Wood	CONSENT NOT REQUIRED
ECC Director, Legal and Assurance (Monitoring Officer) Susan Moussa on behalf of Paul Turner	12/01/2021
Essex Highways Head of Network and Safety/Traffic Manager Liz Burr	03/12/2020
Essex Highways Head of Design Vicky Presland	30/11/2020