

# Proposed decision to be made by the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Environment on or after 17 November 2017

## Proposed Puffin Crossing – Higham Lane near Ambleside Way, Nuneaton

### Recommendation

That the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Environment approves the installation of a Puffin crossing on Higham Lane near Ambleside Way, Nuneaton, in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, Section 23.

### 1.0 Key Issues

- 1.1 A request has been received from Councillor Kondakor, and local residents for the installation of a safe crossing point on Higham Lane near Ambleside Way, Nuneaton.
- 1.2 The primary purpose of the proposed Puffin crossing is to cater for the various pedestrian demands to cross Higham Lane in order to access Higham Lane School and St Nicholas C of E School. This crossing is to be delivered from the School Safety Zones and Routes programme.

### 2.0 Proposed Scheme

- 2.1 The site of the proposed Puffin crossing is located on Higham Lane near Ambleside Way, Nuneaton. Higham Lane is one of the main arterial routes into Nuneaton, and is heavily trafficked at peak times. It is also used by local residential traffic and at school times is busy with parents delivering and collecting their children, to the various schools in the vicinity. It is subject to a 30mph speed limit by virtue of street lighting and frontage development.
- 2.2 The proposed site for the Puffin crossing will be just north of the junction with Ambleside Way, as indicated on the plan in **Appendix A**. The area is predominantly residential.
- 2.3 The need for a Puffin crossing on Higham Lane near Ambleside Way is to accommodate the various demands for pedestrian movements across the road, including:
  - east-west links to access schools within the area, including links to access Higham Lane School in Higham Lane and St Nicholas C of E School in Windermere Avenue.

- 2.4 When considering the justification for a controlled crossing, standard criteria based on the numbers of vehicles and pedestrians using a location are calculated. This calculation is known as the  $PV^2$  value. To reach the required criteria for a crossing, and comply with the current WCC policy for a puffin crossing the  $PV^2$  value should exceed  $0.9 \times 10^8$ . In this location the  $PV^2$  value is  $1.53 \times 10^8$  which fully meets these criteria.

### **3.0 Consultation on the Proposal**

- 3.1 A formal consultation for the proposed Puffin crossing was carried out between 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2017 and 13<sup>th</sup> October 2017 . Advertisements were placed in the Nuneaton Evening News, on street notices were erected, and information was published on Warwickshire County Council`s website. This is the normal procedure for any proposed puffin crossing, and goes beyond the legal obligation for this type of facility.

During this period, four objections have been received relating to the proposed crossing.

#### **3.2 Objections**

##### **3.2.1 Objection (1) Resident of Higham Lane**

In response to Warwickshire County Council's letter dated 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2017 I wish to object to the scheme on behalf of myself and my wife on the grounds of noise and pollution such lights would create.

This would be particularly prevalent at night time as we have regular problems from people walking home from town in a semi drunken state who will enjoy setting the lights off.

We have lived here for 30 years and in that time I am not aware of any car accident involving school children.

There is also bollards outside our house and would you confirm that these will be removed if the crossing is installed.

##### **Response:**

The proposed crossing will be designed so that no light is directed towards residential properties. New technology in the form of LED lighting limits the spread of light from the signal heads and directs it towards oncoming traffic. Puffin crossings do not have any lit indicators on the opposite side of the road, as was the case with old style Pelican crossings. Noise in the form of an audible signal that is emitted when the lights are available for pedestrians to cross, can be switched off. It is normal practise to switch the audible signal off during the hours of darkness, however, in this location it is agreed that the audible signal can be switched off at all times.

Warwickshire Police collate injury accidents, and make the data available to the County Council. This data shows that there have been no recorded

incidents of children being injured on their way to school in this location for the last 5 years.

It is intended to remove the existing pedestrian refuge island, if this proposed crossing is approved.

### **3.2.2 Objection (2) Resident of Higham Lane**

I understand from reading your letter that it is to encourage students to walk to school, well believe me there must be a couple of hundred students that use these gates and at least 95% of them walk to school. There are the odd cars you see dropping off which has never caused a problem, but I presume those students do not live locally as the catchment area stretches quite far.

We have two boys aged 15 and 9, we have never has a problem with them crossing the road in the mornings or in the evenings when its end of school. There has never been any accidents outside the school gates it seems to be further down by The Chase Pub, as I understand an incident happened further down past The Chase Pub, apparently the student was crossing over from the opposite side and was hit by a car, fortunately the student was fine. However the student did not chose to cross by the school where it was safer where the bollards are, he chose to cross further down. You cannot guarantee students will even use the Puffin Crossing.

I have lived here for 17 years and there has never been an issue as there are bollards that the students use to cross, which I feel is a lot safer than trying to cross the road all at once. To be honest the traffic is usually at a standstill anyway and once these new houses are built at the top of Higham Lane the traffic will not move at all. I am a very safety conscious parent as my children crossing this road every day, if I thought there was a concern then I would not be objecting to it.

So I am writing to you in the politest way to say that we do object to the Crossing as there is no need for it. If there are safety concerns then why not get a lollipop lady/man to watch the students over the road, because this is only needed term time. Or the teachers could maybe act as a lollipop lady/man as they are standing outside supervising the students in their hi-vis jackets everyday. This would be more cost effective and the money could definitely be put to better uses.

We personally do not want flashing and beeping lights that will be going off all hours of the day and night, especially when the youths are heading home drunk from a night out. This is a beautiful road and I am so proud to live on it. This beautiful road does not warrant a traffic light system as it is not wide enough. It will de-value our properties and to chop a tree down and stick a flashing light system directly outside 138 which is an absolutely beautiful traditional house. It will never sell with those stuck out the front.

Therefore I propose you use a lollipop lady/man to ensure students cross safely as it will only be need term time only. Then me and my fellow residents will be a lot happier and should be able to sleep without the flashing lights and

bleeping going off all hours of the night. If this crossing and traffic light system go ahead, then we will be seeking compensation for de-valuation of our property.

### **Supplementary objection from the same resident**

There are speed humps and 30 mile and hour zone, plus a speed bump on Ambleside roundabout, plus bollards which students use to help them cross the road if needed. This is quite sufficient for what is needed, as the traffic is at a standstill anyway at start of school and it is not very busy at all end of school.

I would definitely like you to do another observation and traffic count at school start time and end of school. As I think you will find that the traffic is at a standstill and is at no risk to students. I can tell you from being a neighbour to the school that I have never witnessed cars travelling above the 30 mile an hour speed limit and would struggle to get above 3 miles an hour in the mornings. I think this needs re-assessing and I would be very grateful if you would do so.

I would also like to add that our local residents are certainly not at all happy about a thriving tree being chopped down.

### **Response**

The need for this proposed puffin crossing has been established using the nationally recognised criteria adopted by the County Council. This criterion is based on the risk between pedestrians and vehicles, and is known as the PV2 calculation. This calculation is carried out using survey data collected at the proposed location. In this location the PV2 is measured at  $1.53 \times 10^8$ . For justification for a puffin crossing the PV2 value must be equal to or exceed  $0.9 \times 10^8$ . This shows that there is a need for a puffin crossing in this location.

With regard to road accidents involving children. Warwickshire Police collate injury accidents, and make the data available to the County Council. This data shows that there have been no recorded incidents of children being injured on their way to school in this location for the last 5 years.

Our survey information confirms that between 8.40 and 8.50am traffic travelling towards Nuneaton town centre is travelling at slow speed and is at times congested. However, traffic travelling towards the A5 (outbound) is in free flow conditions and is uncongested. Pedestrians wishing to cross the road may find it difficult to judge the speed on oncoming traffic when trying to make their way between stationary traffic queues. In addition, approaching drivers travelling towards the A5 may find it difficult to see pedestrians trying to cross the road due to the congestion in the opposing traffic lane. In this type of traffic conditions it would be safer for pedestrians to have the availability of a controlled crossing point, so that all traffic is required to stop when the crossing is activated.

School Crossing Patrols (lollipop men/women) are only provided for primary school aged children. The majority of the children crossing in this location are

attending Higham Lane School which is a secondary school. The County Council would not provide a School Crossing Patrol in this location. Teachers are not trained to act as School Crossing Patrols, and do not have the authority to stop traffic. The appropriate legislation only permits School Crossing Patrols or Police Officers to stop traffic.

The design of Puffin Crossings differs from the old style pelican crossings in that they only have a low level indicator for pedestrians situated at the kerb edge nearest the pedestrian. In addition, new system LED lights on the traffic signal heads only emit light towards the approaching traffic. There is no light overspill into neighbouring properties. The audible signal is optional; it is only ever switched on during daylight hours, and in some locations can be inactive at all times. In this location is proposed that no audible signal will be operating.

If a property depreciates in value as a result of physical factors arising from the use of public development works, then it may be possible to make a claim under the Land Compensation Act 1973. 'Physical factors' are: noise; vibration; smell; fumes; smoke; artificial light; discharge onto the land of any solid or liquid substance.

The proposed puffin crossing installation will require the removal of the existing pedestrian refuge. The existing traffic calming along the road is working well, and speed of traffic is in accordance with the 30mph speed limit, in the area where the proposed puffin crossing would be situated. The survey carried out is representative of the situation where the puffin crossing would be sited, so there is no requirement for an additional survey.

The removal of one tree is proposed, as the location of the tree would limit the visibility of the proposed crossing. This tree is planned to be replaced in the local area. The design of the crossing has been mindful of the street scene, and has been carefully considered with regard to the tree lined nature of the road.

### **3.2.3 Objection (3) local resident**

I write to object to the proposal as referenced above. I have the safety of children at heart also (my son grew up here and went to the school) but I feel the proposal is flawed for the following reasons:

1. Higham Lane is a quiet street with speed limiting measures.
2. There are also satisfactory crossing bollards for the children to use.
3. The danger is where children do not use the correct crossing point.
4. Puffin crossing will stop traffic and the kids will no doubt attempt to run across the road at this opportunity to "catch the temporary halted traffic position, away from the crossing area if the traffic is stopped, and is therefore more of a danger for them.
5. The noise of the crossing at night will be unbearable. We struggle to sleep anyway with blue lights, occasional heavy traffic and our fair share of drunks at night who kick the existing bollards for the fun of it! Activating the crossing lights and bleeps will be too much for them to resist.

6. The crossing is only used for 30 minutes twice per day and circa 200 days of the year!! Why go to the expense of a permanent crossing for this. Surely a lollipop lady/man would be a better option and would control the children crossing much more effectively. Or even a simple zebra crossing!
7. If you are prepared for the expense of a puffin crossing then surely near the shops and Brookdale Fields would be a more appropriate position as many people cross here, and not just from the school.

### **Response**

1. The traffic on Higham Lane has been surveyed using CCTV survey equipment. This survey recorded 5862 vehicles in a 12 hour (7am – 7pm) period. When compared to other routes this is a relatively high volume of traffic, particularly at peak times into Nuneaton in the morning, and away from the town centre in the evening. Traffic calming measures are in place in Higham Lane and manage traffic speeds effectively at 30mph.
2. The pedestrian refuge near the school entrance has been well used for many years. However, traffic volumes have increased, and this has resulted in concerns being raised by parents and the County Councillor for the area. Surveys have indicated that sufficient students are crossing the road in this location to access the nearby schools to consider installing a puffin crossing. Surveys conducted indicate this location meets the criteria as described above, for a puffin crossing to assist students to access Higham Lane School in safety.
3. It is accepted that adolescents may choose not to cross the road at the appropriate place. However, it is imperative that there is adequate and safe provision made for children to cross the road. Education in schools is provided at appropriate age groups and this includes the importance of selecting appropriate places where to cross busy roads.
4. As previously stated, offering appropriate facilities to enable children to cross the road is important, as is, ensuring children are fully aware of the dangers associated with crossing the road in inappropriate places.
5. The noise emitted from a crossing, that is usually associated with an audible signal may be switched off as necessary. In this location, given the location of the crossing in close proximity to residential property, the audible alert will be inactive at all times.
6. The survey conducted to determine the need for a crossing indicated that a puffin crossing is required. For a zebra crossing to be installed, there must be less than 500 vehicles per hour (peak) using the road, so that a pedestrian can step into the crossing to stop traffic. In this location the number of vehicles exceeds this limit, and a puffin crossing is the most suitable type of crossing. Warwickshire County Council does not operate School Crossing Patrols for secondary school aged children.
7. The alternative position identified has not been surveyed. This location was identified by the local County Councillor to facilitate a safer route for school children accessing Higham Lane School and other schools in the area. The survey conducted supports the need for a puffin crossing.

#### **3.2.4 Objection (4) Resident**

1. We have a daughter who has autism and the noise from the bleeps distresses her. She sleeps at the front of the house, which is not double glazed due to

- the high cost involved, and is usually in her bedroom at about 6pm. Even when we are outside the shrill beeping from these crossings distresses her and we feel this one outside the house will isolate her due to its proximity.
2. We live in one of the houses that will be most effected by the crossing. It is impossible now I the mornings to get out of our drive between the hours of 08.15 and 09.15 due to the volume of traffic, which will be made worse with all of the new buildings going up in the areas, and now you propose to make it even worse with this crossing.
  3. The youngsters who go to Higham Lane school arrive in the morning between 08.30 and 08.50 and then leave between 15.15 and by 15.30 they have all gone, this means that the crossing is going to be used for about one hour a day during term time and then the lights will be on green for most of the rest of the time and when the school holidays are here it will hardly ever be used.
  4. The tree outside was pruned last autumn to save it at some cost no doubt and now you are going to fell it, what a waste of money. The building of this crossing will undoubtedly devalue our property and as there has never been an accident in the 40 years we have lived here we feel this crossing is a waste of money. With our daughter being autistic the beeping will bring on stress and other symptoms including behavioural problems. If we do not receive a satisfactory conclusion to this matter I will engage the services of the psychologist at the loft.
  5. We already have problems with people who are drunk coming home from the town causing nuisance i.e. creaking the newly planted trees in half and knocking over the existing bollards, who will take great delight in pressing the buttons just to create a nuisance. This received problems could be solved by the use of a crossing warden who would be required term time only and at the moment the staff from the school supervise the youngsters who some of which do not use the existing facility.

## **Response**

1. With the permission of the resident, the social worker allocated to this resident's daughter has contacted the Engineers involved. Assurances that the audible signal for the crossing will be disabled have been given. The social worker was comfortable that this met the requirements of the resident's daughter's condition.
2. Traffic is busy on this road at peak times. A crossing situated near the school, when activated, may help to break up traffic flow and give opportunities for residents to pull out of driveways.
3. A full traffic and pedestrian survey has been conducted in the location of the proposed crossing. This survey concluded that this location fully meets the criteria for a crossing, as detailed above.
4. The tree was pruned during a routine maintenance regime. At the time of the pruning, the most suitable location for the proposed crossing had not been fully established, and various locations were considered. However, the most appropriate location, where only one tree would need to be felled has been selected, and forms the basis of this proposal. This issue of the noise from the crossing has been considered, and resolved, in that the audible signal will be disabled at all times.
5. School Crossing Patrols are only used to assist Primary School Children in accordance with the County Council's currently policy. This proposed crossing

will provide a safe and suitable place for students to cross the road to assess the school.

#### **4.0 SUPPORT**

- 4.1 Local County Councillor Cllr Kondakor fully supports the installation of a Puffin crossing at this location.
- 4.2 The Head Teachers of Higham Lane School and St Nicholas C of E School are in full support of the proposed Puffin crossing.

#### **5.0 Financial Implications**

- 5.1 Capital funding for School Safety Zones and Routes was originally agreed at the full council meeting in February 2015 and was re-approved by Council when it set the 2017/18 budget in February 2017. This scheme will be fully funded from this budget at an approximate cost of £65,000.

#### **6.0 Conclusion**

- 6.1 The proposed Puffin crossing will not only benefit parents and pupils who cross to and from school, it will benefit the whole community throughout the day.
- 6.2 Pedestrian surveys have shown that over 1000 people cross this road during the day, of which around 850 are children attending nearby schools. Puffin crossings contribute to an integrated pedestrian network and help reduce conflict between traffic and pedestrians, encouraging feelings of pedestrian safety. These factors are important in the encouragement of walking within a community and the maintenance of a healthy weight environment.
- 6.3 Puffin crossings contribute to an integrated pedestrian network and help reduce conflict between traffic and pedestrians encouraging feelings of pedestrian safety. These factors are important in the encouragement of walking within a community and the maintenance of a healthy weight environment.
- 6.4 The overall benefits in terms of pedestrian safety for the community, especially school children outweigh the negative impacts of a puffin crossing and minor noise and light disturbance.
- 6.5 This proposed puffin crossing will be constructed in accordance with LTN1/95 Assessment of Pedestrian Crossings and the design complies with Design Note 2/95 Design of Pedestrian Crossings, published by the Department for Transport.



- 6.6 It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder for Transport & Planning approves the installation of a Puffin crossing, funded by the School Safety Zones and Routes capital allocation.

## Background papers

Letter of objections to the proposal

Letters of support to the proposal

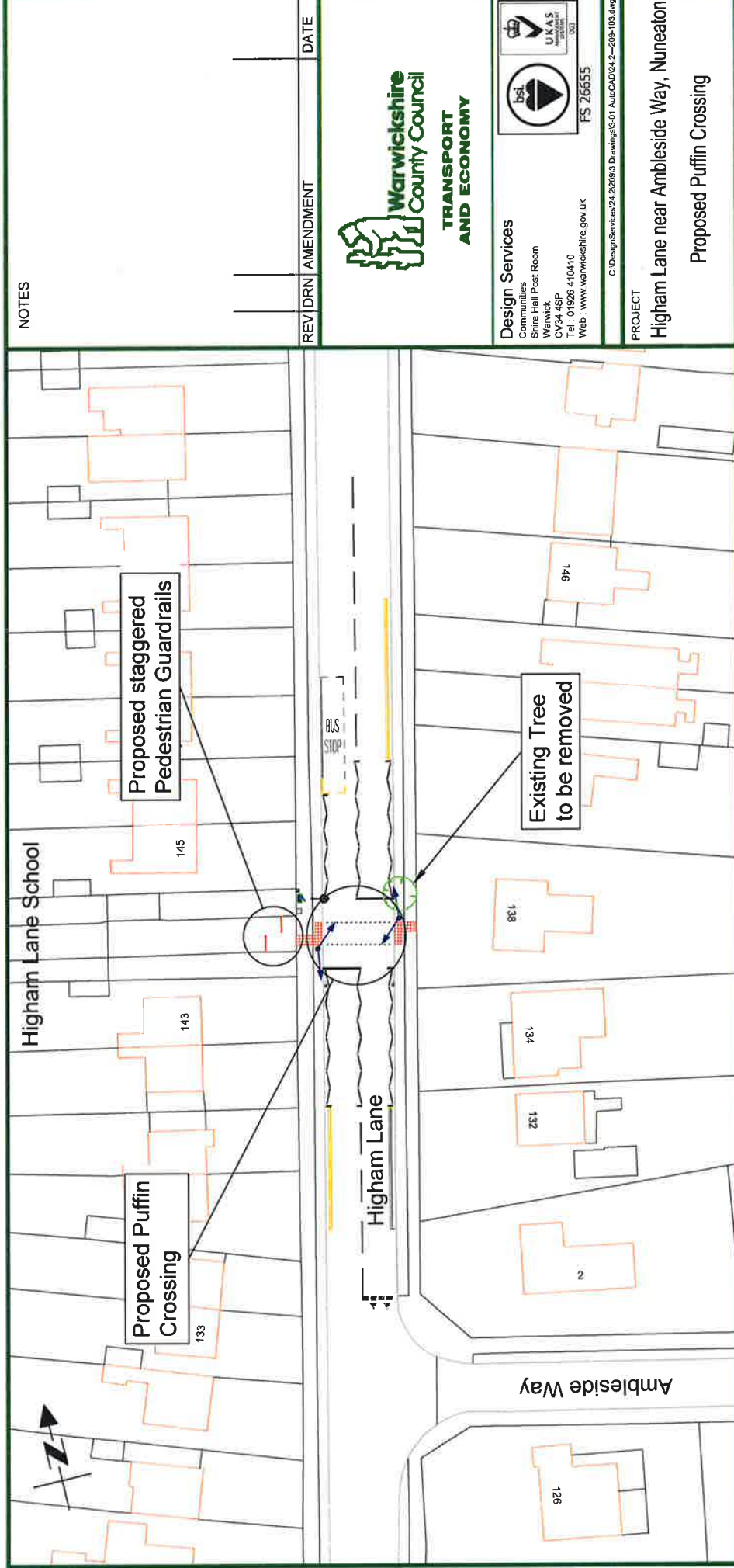
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This report was circulated to the following elected members prior to publication

Local Councillor: Councillor Kondakor

Other members: Councillor Chattaway, Shilton, Clarke, Fradgley, Horner

# APPENDIX A



NOTES

REV	DRN	AMENDMENT	DATE

**Warwickshire County Council**  
**TRANSPORT AND ECONOMY**

**Design Services**  
 Communities  
 Shire Hall Post Room  
 Warwick  
 CV34 4SP  
 Tel : 01926 410410  
 Web : www.warwickshire.gov.uk

UKAS  
 QUALITY ASSURANCE  
 ISO 9001  
 FS 26655

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**PROJECT**  
 Higham Lane near Ambleside Way, Nuneaton  
 Proposed Puffin Crossing

**TITLE**  
 School Safety Zones and Routes Programme

Drawn	LM	ICcd	DAM	App'd	DAM
Date	07-09-17	Date	07-09-17	Date	07-09-17

**Status**  
 Approved (Level 3)

Scale  
 1:500  
 Sheet size  
 A3

DRG. NO.  
 24.2---209-103  
 Rev  
 -

**Key**

- Zig-Zag markings
- Traffic signal equipment mounted on pole
- Red Tactile Paving
- Traffic Signal Controller and Feeder Pillar
- Existing road markings shown grey

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 2017. Ordnance Survey 100019520.

0mm 50mm 100mm 150mm This plot was produced from a digital source so may not be at true scale. It is the recipient's responsibility to confirm its accuracy.

## APPENDIX B

### The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984

In deciding whether or not to make any order, the Council is required to have regard to the matters set out in section 122 of the 1984 Act. Section 122(1) requires the Council to exercise the functions conferred on it by the 1984 Act as (so far as practicable having regard to the matters specified in section 122(2)) to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians), and the provision of suitable and adequate parking facilities on and off the highway.

The matters to which the Council must have regard are:-

- the desirability of securing and maintaining reasonable access to premises
- the effect on the amenities of any locality affected and the importance of regulating and restricting the use of roads by heavy commercial vehicles so as to preserve or improve the amenities of the areas through which the roads run
- the national air quality strategy prepared under section 80 of the Environmental Protection Act 1995
- the importance of facilitating the passage of public service vehicles and of securing the safety and convenience of persons using or desiring to use such vehicles
- and any other matters appearing to the Council to be relevant

Therefore whilst the overall objective of the Council must be to secure the expeditious convenient and safe movement of vehicular traffic this will sometimes need to give way to the objectives in section 122(2) and a balance has to be achieved between the overall objective and the matters set out in section 122(2).