



Northumberland

County Council

RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

PROPOSED PEDESTRIANISATION & ZEBRA CROSSING, CHURCH STREET/B6341, ROTHBURY

Cabinet Member: Councillor John Riddle

Purpose of Report

To consider a proposal to pedestrianise a section of Church Street and provide an associated zebra crossing on the B6341 in Rothbury.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the proposed pedestrianisation and zebra crossing are implemented.

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the following key objectives in the Corporate Plan for 2023-2026:

- 'Tackling Inequalities' - Creating places where there is equity in access to an environment that encourages physical activity and active travel.
- 'Driving Economic Growth' - Introduce measures which make sustainable travel a more attractive, greener, and easy alternative to getting around including cycling and walking.

Key Issues

- The provision of a pedestrian crossing on the B6341 in Rothbury in the vicinity of Church Street is a long-standing priority of the Parish Council.
- During Covid-19 restrictions, part of Church Street was temporarily closed to vehicles to allow social distancing. This led to calls to make the closure permanent.

Delegated decisions

Background

1. The provision of a pedestrian crossing on the B6341 in Rothbury in the vicinity of Church Street is a long-standing priority of the Parish Council who wish to create a safe crossing point in the village centre.
2. During the Covid-19 restrictions in place in 2020/21, part of Church Street was temporarily closed to vehicles to allow social distancing by pedestrians and to enable consideration to be given to the traffic implications of closing this section of road as part of a wider scheme that included provision of a new zebra crossing point.
3. During the period the road was closed to vehicles there were no adverse impacts on the ability of traffic to pass through or access this area, due to the presence of an alternative route close by. The closure created a traffic-free environment and increased space for pedestrians in the village centre, the benefits of which were maximised by being located immediately adjacent to the existing grassed area surrounding the Market Cross.
4. The success of the temporary closure has led to calls for this section of Church Street to be pedestrianised. If this were to take place, it would also allow for the proposed pedestrian crossing to be located in a position that would serve the existing pedestrian desire line and have minimal impact on the surrounding parking spaces.
5. Draft proposals were therefore drawn up, including artists' impressions, (see Appendix A), to allow consultation to take place. Surrounding properties were consulted directly, along with statutory consultees, and a public drop-in session was held in the Jubilee Institute. A summary of the consultation responses is shown in Appendix B and comments received at the drop-in session are in Appendix C.
6. Two options were presented to show how the area could look. Both options were broadly similar, though Option A proposed pedestrianising the existing road, providing a large hard surfaced area, while Option B proposed a smaller area of hard surfacing with the remainder being an extension of the adjacent grassed area around the market cross.
7. The results of the consultation were:
 - For 21 (68%)
 - Against 8 (26%)
 - Neither 2 (6%)
8. 13 individual comments were received at the drop-in session, of which 8 were in favour.

Delegated decisions

9. Of those who were in favour, the majority preferred Option A, as it allows more usable space for pedestrians and potential events, market stalls, etc.
10. In addition, a petition in support of the proposals with 123 signatures was received. The petition states *“We the undersigned give our full support to the proposed crossing point across the B6341 on Church Street in Rothbury and the associated works.”*
11. The local ward Member and Rothbury Parish Council support the proposals.
12. It is therefore recommended that the ‘Option A’ proposals should be implemented.

Delegated decisions

Implications Arising out of the Report

Policy	The proposal is in accordance with relevant guidance.
Finance and value for money	The proposal will be funded via the Local Transport Plan Programme.
Legal	Motorists will be required to comply with the Traffic Regulation Order.
Procurement	None
Human Resources	None
Property	None
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	None
Risk Assessment	None
Crime & Disorder	None
Customer Consideration	Statutory consultees and affected properties have been consulted.
Carbon reduction	None
Wards	Rothbury

Background papers:

File ref: HE233730D

Report sign off.

Authors must ensure that relevant officers and members have agreed the content of the report:

Delegated decisions

	initials
Finance Officer	n/a
Monitoring Officer/Legal	n/a
Human Resources	n/a
Procurement	n/a
I.T.	n/a
Director	
Portfolio Holder(s)	

Author and Contact Details

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Delegated decisions

Appendix A

Consultation Visuals

Option A



Option B



Delegated decisions

Appendix B

Consultation Responses

FOR	AGAINST	NEITHER	
			Other Relevant Comments
	1		<p>Thank you for your letter. I have looked carefully at the proposal and artist's impressions. I have the following comments regarding the closing of the road. 1. This road was 'temporarily' closed during the Covid lockdowns and I believe illegally extended for a year afterwards and so I know exactly what this proposal would mean. 2. We found it to be noisy with very late nights and drunkenness, loud music on occasion and drug taking which, because we have no police presence, to be unacceptably loud and intrusive. 3. The area was covered in litter which although cleaned up the next day still blew around the area. There was also food being served at all hours (illegal) and some left, attracting vermin. I understand there are photographs of this. There were more than the permitted number of 'covers' set out. I think this will reoccur. 4. The area is fine as it is and attracts families sitting out enjoying the sun. Taking the barriers down, I can see the Newcastle extending its seating area and not sticking to the parameters. They did it before. It will continue especially as the local Councillor is one of the leading protagonists. I have seen him incapacitated sitting in front of the pub late at night, not exactly setting an example. 5. This will be a costly exercise which will have no benefit to the community only to extend the takings of the Newcastle which is not the job of the council. There are plenty of pubs in Northumberland with no outside space. I see no reason why the tax payers should pay the costs and that 5 precious parking spaces should be lost. 6. The Newcastle Hotel hosts over 60s club. Many of these people are very elderly and arrive by car to be 'delivered' outside of the main door. Shutting this road would shut off close access to these and other people for absolutely no gain. All in all the 'experiment' with this during Covid provided an insight into how it will pan out. It will not provide any improved outcomes for local people who live in the immediate vicinity just make the landlord of the Newcastle better off at the expense of his neighbours. I have no objection to a few tables being placed on the green immediately to the right of the pub (not in front) with limited hours of occupation and strict rules as to litter management and noise. The level crossing: I welcome a pedestrian crossing in Rothbury. I have been asking the local Councillor for 6 years to absolutely no avail. It must be suitable for disabled users, and I am unsure given the logistics how it can be achieved in that position. Traffic speeds along the B6341 at a rate of knots. Some see the crossing as superfluous now the Co-op has moved to Town Foot. However just putting in a crossing on a straight road is inadequate. There need to be traffic calming measures (not humps which damage cars) on either side of what is a straight road. These need to be in the form of flashing speed indicators or speed cameras) which will raise revenue). There is a good example in Long Horsley. We need extra protected parking for residents in view of the number of visitors and small numbers of parking spaces for a population with no drives etc and we need non-local traffic directed to the main car park by the river with signage and penalties. We had traffic wardens here when the Co-op was relocated but what would have happened is the bus stop should have been relocated from outside of the Co-op instead of shoppers being chased away. The things done in this village seem to suit our local officers and not the people who actually live here. Rothbury is a lovely market town in danger of succumbing to local hooligans and drug addicts. If the proposals go ahead, it will be with the help of the Highways Department and I am certain it is not what you want nor is it what Rothbury needs.</p>
1			<p>The installation of a pedestrian crossing and traffic calming measures is absolutely needed. Many people, especially elderly ones, struggle to cross that road safely. The closure of the road in front of the pub will not cause any problems as was discovered in previous experimental closure. The pedestrianisation of that road will also have the advantage of increasing the safety of people coming and going from the pub especially children.</p>

Delegated decisions

1		no comments
1		Safety
1		Church Street is short and narrow and often cars park on it. The right turn off the Main Road is sharp and blind and so for people crossing, especially our older residents, it's hazardous. On safety grounds alone I support the proposal to pedestrianize it. But, also, cars don't really need to use it as a few yards further along the Main Road is a much safer right turn which leads to the Church.
1		An excellent proposal for the pedestrianisation of Church Street which will greatly improve access to and from High Street. The provision of a designated crossing providing a safe place to cross the main thoroughfare has long been overdue and will benefit the village community, especially the elderly residents. The proposal will further enhance the green area around the village cross which is used for community events throughout the year and is a real focal point of the village.
1		This makes sense from a town safety perspective with the closing off this road as it's going to stop cars cutting through and will avoid any potential accidents with pedestrians leaving Newcastle House
1		Desirable change for safety reasons. There are many senior citizens who now need to cross to the new Coop store. Plus, traffic often speeds through Rothbury so a raised zebra crossing will have a significant traffic calming effect.
1		I wholeheartedly support this. It would make road crossing safer, slow traffic through the village and make the area around the village green quieter and more pleasant.
1		I am contacting you to express my strongest support for this crossing. I have mobility problems and cars are now traveling so fast through the village that it is often extremely difficult for me to cross the road. I know for sure that a great many other people feel exactly the same way-we all believe that this is long overdue. I very much hope that you WILL pass this resolution.
1		Rothbury Parish Council considered the proposals at their meeting held 14/2/24 and are in agreement with the scheme for a crossing and the closure of Church Street.
1		A pedestrian crossing is not needed at this location in Rothbury. One is needed by the new Co-op store at Town foot where an increased number of people are crossing the road from the bus stops and the first school. The area around the Newcastle House is much quieter. Perhaps two pedestrian crossings can be considered to meet the needs of both children and adults and also act as a traffic calming measures in the village.
1		Have viewed the proposal and I support the changes in the proposal.
1		I have reviewed the proposals and I'm in favour of it.
1		Regarding the crossing and pedestrianisation of Church Street Rothbury, I read the proposals and am in full agreement with them
1		I have viewed the proposals and I do support the crossing in our village
1		This is a pointless project as the main traffic problem in Rothbury now is around new Co-op and the area in question does have a large volume of traffic. To warrant taxpayers money being spent on an unnecessary scheme, may I suggest the council run a study to evaluate traffic in the proposed area as this scheme was drawn up before the new co-op.
1		I have read the proposal for pedestrianisation of Church Street in Rothbury and the crossing point, and I am in support of it.

Delegated decisions

1		I would like to share my opinions and support on the pedestrianisation for Rothbury. I think this will make shopping in Rothbury much safer for the whole community, it will mean that people of all ages can go about their business without having to constantly worry if a car, bike or lorry is going to come past. This will allow parents with pushchairs, adults in wheelchairs and people walking their dogs and kids a much safer environment and will encourage people to spend time browsing in shops and looking in their windows. Hopefully by doing this it will make the experience of visiting Rothbury a much more enjoyable and safer experience. This scheme has worked well in other areas, in particular, Narrowgate in Alnwick. Making this small space pedestrians only has allowed cafes to place some seats and encourage a much more social affairs for all concerned. This idea could benefit all the local businesses in the area as it will encourage people to stay longer and hopefully grow the economy.
1		Great idea it gave a great feel to the village in past summers when closed. Option A seems the best as it would allow access to be maintained if the pub had seating outside.
1		I refer to the above proposal and the consultation period and would confirm that after fully considering the proposals and the documentation supplied, I am fully in support. I have lived in the village for many years and think this is not only a great idea but is needed for the village. The location is ideal.
	1	Please give consideration to residents who live on Church Street and who need to park there.
1		In principle I have no objections to the new layout. However, I strongly object to the use of the newly created spaces being "gifted" to the use of the public house next to it. During & long after Covid they were allowed to use this space & it's unfair to let a private business use the public space unless all other business bring it & every member of public agrees. Any lane used by the business should be paid for by the business, not the tax payer. Not to mention a public nuisance.
	1	The initial proposal was to increase parking using some of the village green and to expand the village green at Church Street to compensate but we have no extra parking so I oppose the closing of the road. Also I see no sense in closing a road in the centre of the village.
	1	This should not go ahead until parking provisions have been made to make up the loss of parking space because of this proposal
1		I have viewed the proposals of the new crossing point in Rothbury and I am in full support for it going ahead and I think it would be beneficial for the village and the Rothbury Community. Having lived in the village all of my life, I feel the crossing point would help all residents cross the road in a safe manner and allow all traffic to slow down traveling through the village which can only be a good thing. Don't hesitate to get in touch with any other questions if needed.
	1	I am totally opposed to the proposed siting of the pedestrian crossing in Rothbury and the closure of the public highway in front of the Newcastle House. The road in front of the Newcastle House provides a natural round-a-bout in the centre of the village. Traffic wishing to return to Addycombe, Whitton View properties over the bridge B6341 and others use it. If this goes ahead traffic will have to turn right on to the High Street causing unnecessary congestion. The proposed plans will rob the village of at least 12 valuable parking spaces especially when there are weddings and funerals in the village churches. During the pandemic when the public highway in front of the Newcastle House was closed and filled with tables for eating and drinking it was a most unpleasant experience passing through en route to Church Services and to visit friends. People have crossed to and from the War Memorial for decades (more than a century) without injury or loss of life. There is provision for crossing further down the village which has proved adequate. Vehicles constantly stopping at the proposed crossing will cause a back-log of traffic the entire length of the village causing more emissions and therefore a deterioration in the air quality of the village. The proposed crossing will disrupt the flow of traffic through the village and make journey times for travellers longer and affect (especially) bus timetables. Please do not spoil the village with this unnecessary plan.

Delegated decisions

1	<p>Church Street pedestrianisation and Zebra Crossing Rothbury. I should like to make the following comments on these proposals. I support option B, extend the grass area to narrow the roadway to half its width, however I would like to add these amendments. The existing stone kerbs which form the path around this memorial be used to form the new edge of the grassed area. These were originally installed as part of the Armstrong Memorial (unveiled 1902) and I believe are the same stone as the memorial which was quarried from Cragend quarry part of the Armstrong family estate of Cragside. This memorial is a scheduled monument, as is the War Memorial and forms part of the historic heritage of the village and if these kerbs can be re-used they should be. Double yellow road lines that surround this cross should be extended at the junction of the B6341, east to join with the zig zag crossing markings. This will provide a better sight view of any motorist joining the B6341. Area to the east of the crossing adjacent the Newcastle House zig zag markings. The space between the footpath and these markings to have hatched lines applied to stop vehicles parking on this area. In interest of pedestrian safety. Pedestrian Crossing-Caps fitted over the orange globes to prevent light pollution annoying residential properties. War Memorial - Extend the pedestrian area to the North to include the steps, this will prevent any vehicles parking there as they often do. Apply double yellow lines around the pedestrianised area as vehicles are constantly parking in front of the war memorial at present. Failing to provide these will make it impossible for pedestrians to access this area safely, which is surely the whole purpose of this scheme. Like many others in the village. I have waited years for a crossing in this area and hope at long last it will be installed.</p>
1	<p>Proposed Pedestrianisation of Church Street Rothbury. Having studied the proposals for changes to the road system in Rothbury I would like to submit the following comments. I have been a witness to all the complications of the traffic system in Rothbury. It has been a concern for me watching pedestrians navigate between moving cars and parked cars. The current proposals do not offer a comprehensive solution to the dangers of facing pedestrians, especially the elderly, of whom there are many living here, children and disabled. For this reason I totally reject both options of the proposal. It does not address the safety of residents and visitors only the interests of the Newcastle House Hotel. The dangers exist throughout the village owing to the erratic provision of footpaths and speed of traffic. There is no secure path that does not require crossing a road after a short distance. Continuity of paths is limited. 1. Children walking up to the Middle School have to change from one side to the other in order to progress up the hill on footpaths. 2. School Children and the many people who walk along Bridge Street have to cross the road and even find that the one path in one place is only inches wide. 3. Walking to Witton View or the tennis courts, the footpath is very dangerous, not only changing form one side of the road to the other in two places, but again being very narrow, only one person wide with heavy lorries and buses risking brushing alongside pedestrians. It is an accident waiting to happen. 4. The footpath up to Beggars Rigg disappears for part of the way having been closed off as it passes a house beyond RAF Rothbury House. Another dangerous place is the junction of Bridge Street at Townfoot. It is a very wide place for pedestrians to cross. I have had to wait standing in the middle of the road with no protection as cars swing around the corner which were unseen when I started to cross. The closure of Church Street with the loss of at least six parking spaces leaves it susceptible to being used as an extension to the pub which was last year was rejected by the population. The majority of the population live up the steep hills surrounding the village centre and need to access shops and facilities by car. Parking space are scarce during busy times. An increase in delivery vehicles with more people on-line shopping creates double parking and tradesmen find it difficult to park near where they are working. The current triangle of the grassed area around the cross in front of the Newcastle House Hotel is often used as a roundabout. Without that access drivers may attempt a three point turn on Front Street when looking for a parking space. The road from Townfoot to the first school has recently been given 20mph status, very welcome. But not enough. We need 20mph through the whole of the village to increase safety, and also keep and even enhance the historic character of the village. I would think it would be also much cheaper and in line with villages like Longframlington which has less complications with traffic. Front Street is the main road through the village up the Coquet Valley used by many heavy goods vehicles and buses going through what is basically a car park. I suggest creating a 20mph limit through the whole of Rothbury in the first instance and see if that improves safety for all throughout the village before any expensive physical changes are made to the road structure.</p>

Delegated decisions

	1	20 miles per hour, please. Rothbury desperately needs a limit of 20mph through the village. Rothbury was designed for horse and carts not motor vehicles but we have to live with it. The traffic needs to slow down 20mph. The fellow residents I have spoken to agree. Other villages in the county have it. Why not Rothbury. The proposed closure of Church Street Rothbury does not improve the whole of the village in planning for safety of pedestrians and vehicles. It only benefits the Newcastle House Pub leaving space for outside tables and chairs. It would harm village life reducing the number of parking spaces which are already under pressure at busy times by six in front of the pub and possibly more. Residents from periphery of the village need access to park their cars near to facilities. Church Street is a vital asset for the village with weddings and funerals needing access and parking near the two churches there. A 20mph speed limit would give pedestrians and drivers more time to make good decisions to avoid accidents and be more enjoyable destination for the many visitors who come to Rothbury and support the shops, restaurants and pubs. My suggestion of 20mph would be cheaper and more effective generally across all the village. If it is found that this is not enough other ideas could follow.
	1	Since the Co-op has been relocated, I can't see why the village should have a pedestrian crossing at this particular location.
21	8	2

Delegated decisions

Appendix C

Comments Received at the Public Drop-in Event 7th Feb 2024

1	<p>Hopefully zebra crossing will control speed of vehicles going through the village.</p> <p>Either scheme represents an enhancement. Losing the railings as shown in Option B would be sad.</p> <p>Concerns about loss of parking on high street and outside Newcastle House, plus side of zebra crossing to west.</p>
2	<p>All looks good and should work well!</p> <p>My suggestion is do away with the railings between the two lots of bollards, so the village green becomes a family friendly area with less barriers.</p> <p>Option B is my favourite giving a bigger village green.</p>
3	<p>I disagree with all options.</p>
4	<p>1) For the pedestrian crossing.</p> <p>2) Option A preferred.</p> <p>Comments:</p> <p>1) No need for fencing facing the Newcastle House Inn.</p> <p>2) With restricted parking, parking control is essential. Can we have disc parking or similar.</p> <p>3) 20mph limit on main road through village.</p>
5	<p>Although I think the village centre looks attractive, my personal feeling is that the money would be better spent on improving the access to and from Rodsley Court, i.e. a ramp.</p> <p>At the moment residents who are infirm or have low mobility have a difficult journey to reach the only supermarket in Rothbury.</p>
6	<p>Prefer Option A if Newcastle House is allowed to use the space outside to put out tables and chairs. This would still allow space for pedestrians to pass by.</p> <p>Overall, happy with the proposal.</p>
7	<p>Option B would look better and be more green.</p> <p>Although parking spaces would be lost, hopefully this would be addressed by phase 2.</p> <p>A zebra crossing would be of benefit to the elderly of the village, although as someone who comes from somewhere with loads of speed bumps I would prefer it not to be raised.</p> <p>Phase 2 needs to follow quickly, otherwise there will be some very unhappy residents.</p>
8	<p>Having looked at both options, we believe Option A to be the most suitable. It creates a larger area for people with prams and children to walk in, together with those with dogs.</p> <p>The loss of the garden portion is minimal to the benefits of the larger and wider pedestrian walkway.</p> <p>The zebra crossing in itself is a much needed safety precaution as non villagers seem to speed excessively through the village, much to the anxiety of all trying to cross the road. It goes without saying that the safety of our older village population will have some peace of mind knowing that crossing will be there.</p> <p>Also, a mirror opposite the end of Haw Hill would assist those turning onto the bridge.</p>
9	<p>The crossing should be further down the village, further to Co-op being relocated.</p> <p>Do not agree with closure of Church Street, would go against the heritage of the village.</p> <p>When the road was temporarily closed during covid to assist the Newcastle Hotel I found it intimidating walking past the pub with noise (I am a drinker myself) and large groups of unruly people, this is more suited to Benidorm.</p>

Delegated decisions

	<p>If the closure is to support the Newcastle Hotel I believe this unfair on other hostelry/eating out businesses in the Parish.</p> <p>I can see no benefit in closing the street for pedestrians as there are footpaths on either side.</p> <p>Too many parking spaces will be lost. It will cause problems to vehicles unable to turn by the pub, likely forcing them to Jubilee Well and up Haw Hill.</p> <p>I trust the proposals will not be decided via Bridgetts Facebook consultation.</p>
10	<p>Please consider moving zebra crossing further west to be opposite steps to west of war memorial. Currently you are showing a now pedestrianised area to the east of the Memorial – this would involve losing at least two parking spaces, in what is already a busy and much used parking space. This would be poor for traders, already under pressure from the economic climate.</p> <p>Apart from that – great!</p>
11	<p>The removal of the parking space in front of Newcastle House would exacerbate the problem of parking in Rothbury.</p> <p>Access from the main street to Haw Hill would not be so easy as a view to the road in front of the church would be impossible, indeed xxxxx, (illegible).</p> <p>At present in front of the church there is parking on both sides which does not make travelling along easy and may require xxxxx (illegible).</p> <p>Consideration needs to be given to accessibility for hearses, wedding cars.</p> <p>Heavy traffic using Haw Hill from the bridge caused cracking so a one-way system would not be appropriate.</p> <p>Re: bus service for Garleigh Road has been mooted by our Councillor, noted no further action proposed. This suggestion needs to ...(illegible)... Planning department of Highways some months ago.</p>
12	<p>In favour of the two schemes.</p> <p>Unfortunate to lose parking spaces.</p> <p>Prefer the smaller grassed area for mobility scooters etc. Option A.</p> <p>Conditions needed on use of Newcastle House use of open spaces.</p>
13	<p>My preference is option A.</p>

DECISION TAKEN

**Title of Officer(s) and
Portfolio Holder (where
appropriate):**

Paul Jones - Director of Environment & Transport

Subject:

**PROPOSED PEDESTRIANISATION & ZEBRA
CROSSING, CHURCH STREET/B6341, ROTHBURY**

Consultation

- For 21 (68%)
- Against 8 (26%)
- Neither 2 (6%)

123 signature petition in favour.

Decision Taken:

The 'Option A' proposals should be implemented.

Signature of Director



Date

8th July 2024
