

Our Ref: DR/IB/1/59/21
Your Ref:
Contact: Ian Bishop
Direct Dial: 01224-522702
Direct Fax: 01224-522816
E-Mail: ibishop@aberdeencity.gov.uk

22 February 2010

Mile End Parent Council

**Enterprise, Planning and
Infrastructure**

Aberdeen City Council
2nd Floor
St Nicholas House
Broad Street
Aberdeen AB10 1BY

Tel 01224 52200
Minicom 01224 522381
DX 529451, Aberdeen 9
www.aberdeencity.gov.uk

Dear Ms Maclver

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHILDREN ATTENDING MILE END SCHOOL

Thank you for your letter dated 8th February 2010. I would firstly like to clarify the Road Safety and Traffic Management Team's position in this project. We are acting on behalf of the developer, Pihl, to purify their planning conditions so that a safe solution for children going to and from school is provided to the satisfaction of the roads authority.

Our team are not leading the project and are only responsible for carrying out any necessary statutory consultation as part of the promotion of the traffic regulation orders to support legislation such as waiting restrictions and speed limits.

We are disappointed that the parent council is of the view that officers were unwilling to discuss concerns and suggested improvements in a constructive manner. At the meeting on the 28th January 2010, we provided reasoning for the current design based on professional standards and experience and consider that the crossings proposed by Pihl and their consultants are both a realistic and safe solution.

While we noted at the meeting that a signalised junction would have been a preferred option, at no point did any officer indicate that Pihl's current proposal is not as safe.

Having reviewed your concerns, I would respond to the points raised as follows, however I would reiterate that the provision and location of the school crossing patrollers are arranged by the Facilities Management Team who have been kept informed of the concerns raised.

Mid Stocket Road

When the planning approval was given and the safer routes to school condition applied, officers within the Council indicated to Pihl that Mid Stocket Road and Raeden Park Road were key locations that required to be addressed. To purify the condition, Pihl requested that Buro Happold conduct a transport study to include the development of a traffic signals model of the junction. As part of the study, junction turning counts and parking surveys were carried out to gain an understanding of traffic conditions within the immediate vicinity.

GORDON McINTOSH – CORPORATE DIRECTOR
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The data collected during the surveys was then coded into two separate junction models. One model was created in a program called PICADY which is used to simulate traffic flow through unsignalised junctions and the other model was created in LinSig, a program used to model signalised junctions and optimise signal times. The report found that the junctions could be signalised although this would significantly increase queues on Cairnaquheen Gardens and Raeden Park Road as well as an increase in delays to vehicles.

Safety however was a key priority than how well the junction would perform when measured against traffic flow criteria. The report therefore also examined site specific considerations such as on street parking and the location of the garages relative to the junction. The key risk of the garages is that drivers would egress in the middle of a signalised junction. They may therefore drive in to the junction not expecting pedestrians to be crossing, as there would be no signal head for the garages. This was highlighted in the stage one Road Safety Audit carried out by independent consultants Crashnot Solutions LLP. Additionally, drivers travelling between east and west on Mid Stocket Road who see a green signal will not be expecting any vehicles to emerge from the garages. Motorists turning left from Cairnaquheen Gardens will have a tendency to look right while making the manoeuvre and will be afforded very little time to react should a vehicle emerge from or try to enter the garages. The report therefore recommended that the proposal for a signalised junction be abandoned and that a safe alternative is the provision of the pedestrian crossings, as currently proposed.

Unfortunately ownership of the reports remain with Pihl and as such we are unable to release copies in to the public domain however anyone wishing to review the report are welcome to do so by appointment at St Nicholas House.

Prior to the last MEPC meeting that officers attended, the option of compulsory purchase of the garages was not explored as it was viewed by all that that it is not a viable option. After the meeting, officers consulted our legal department who confirmed that compulsory purchase can not proceed unless no further safe alternative options exist which in this instance is not the case.

Kings Gate

At the previous meeting, officers did not say that we would not provide a pedestrian crossing over Kings Gate because there is insufficient children in the area to cross the road. We indicated the importance of the PV2 survey results; previous surveys carried out by the team have shown that a signalised crossing point was not justified. If there is insufficient pedestrian flow, drivers become accustomed to the lights showing green most of the time with the result that when the crossing is called, there is a higher likelihood that drivers may fail to notice the signal to stop.

We agreed at the meeting that although the previous survey did not warrant a crossing, we would review the situation once the new school opens. It is for sites such as this that the concept of the school crossing patroller was developed. School crossing patrollers should be used to aid pupils travelling to and from school where numbers are low and the peak volume occurs during school times outwith which, the volume of pedestrians remain very low. The Road Safety and Traffic Management have recommended to the Facilities Management Team that a patroller is located east of the Atholl Hotel in the medium term between Richmondhill Road and Richmondhill Place. This will encourage pupils to select this as a route and give a more accurate indication in our surveys of the potential crossing usage.

Footpaths

Pihl's Consultant, Buro Happold have measured the width of the footpath on the north side of Midstocket Road between Woodstock Road and Raeden Park Road and found the width of be 1.56 metres at its narrowest section. While the requirement for any new footpaths being constructed are 2 metres, footpaths within the city can be as narrow as 1 metre for short lengths however this would be more critical if located within a city centre location where the footfall can be considerably greater.

We have consulted our road maintenance department who are of the opinion that the condition of the footpath is satisfactory. This will however continue to be monitored and any required maintenance will be added to future maintenance schedules. Unfortunately we are unable to widen the footpath further due to minimum carriageway restrictions, particularly since the new footpath to the crossing east of Woodstock Road has already reduced the carriageway by 1.5 metres.

I can assure you that the Road Safety & Traffic Management Team will ensure that the developer's design proposals will not compromise safety for pupils going to and from the school.

I trust this answers your query however if you have any further queries, I would ask that you continue to forward them through Dawn Haggerty so that they may be collated centrally.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Bishop
Consultant
Road Safety & Traffic Management