

**Safer Routes to School  
Full Consultation Report  
August 2010**

## Queen's Park

Queen's Park Primary School  
Carlton Hill Primary School  
Tarnerland Nursery School  
Royal Spa Nursery School

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## 1. Introduction to the Safer Routes to School Project

The Safer Routes to School initiative was developed by Sustrans, a charitable organisation that promotes sustainable transport through practical projects, and is referred to in the government's Integrated Transport White Paper and the New Road Safety Strategy.

Safer Routes to School aims to make journeys to school safer and easier for children, their parents or carers and staff to walk or cycle to school.

Safer Routes to School started as a pilot project in the Brighton and Hove area in the autumn of 1997, following successful trials in Leeds and York.

The government white paper, 'A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone', identifies Safe Routes to School in 'Chapter 5 – Sharing Responsibility' as an area to be developed. It specifies the need to make it safer for children and their parents to walk and cycle to and from school.

Brighton and Hove City Council are fully committed to the Safer Routes to School project, aimed at using a data led approach to identify areas where collisions are occurring on journeys to and from school, and to address the issues in these areas.

## 2. Criteria for selection for the scheme

The criteria for selection in this project included:

- The school's geographical position in Brighton and Hove
- The type of school and the ages of the children it served. It was felt to be important to cover as diverse a range of schools as possible
- The accident records for the schools
- The concerns of parents and the school over the road safety issues in the area
- The level of success that could be expected from the project
- Whether a school has a School Travel plan in place, is developing one or has shown interest in developing one

The following information (gained from approved School Travel Plans and postcode data) was also used to help support the schools' inclusion in the project:

- the main travel routes used by children
- an audit of facilities to aid pedestrians/cyclists at or on route to the school including:
  - the presence or otherwise of formal pedestrian crossings
  - pedestrian refuge islands
  - dropped kerbs
  - guard rails
  - cycle lanes to the appropriate standard and cycle sheds/racks within the school sites

## 2.1 Development of the project

In applying the above criteria, the following schools were selected and are participating:

**Queen's Park Primary School**

**Carlton Hill Primary School**

**Turnerland Nursery School**

**Royal Spa Nursery School**

### 2.1.1 Initial consultation with school communities

The first stage of developing the project was to carry out a questionnaire survey of the pupils, parents and staff of the three schools. This was carried out in the autumn term of 2009.

The primary objectives of the survey were as follows:

- i. to identify the main mode of travel to and from school
- ii. to identify the main travel routes to the school
- iii. to obtain the views of respondents on:
  - a.) perceived dangerous locations on route to school
  - b.) ways to make the journey safer

The secondary objectives of the survey were as follows:

- i. To find out why parents/carers and pupils choose to travel by car, walk, cycle or use buses.
- ii. To understand what would need to change to alter existing modes of travel.

Queen's Park Primary has a travel plan in place, which was approved by the Department for Transport in June 2005, which provided the school with a travel plan grant, which they proposed to spend on the construction of cycle storage and a pedestrian area. Carlton Hill Primary School also has a travel plan in place, which was approved by the Department for Transport in June 2005, which provided the school

with a travel plan grant, which they proposed to spend on the construction of a pedestrian shelter. Both nursery schools have a school travel plan with Tarnerland receiving a grant in July 2006 to erect buggy storage and Royal Spa also receiving a grant in 2006 to install buggy storage.

### **2.1.2 Full public consultation**

Display cases with plans of the proposed measures were mounted outside the main gates of each of the four sites of the education establishments which are the focus of the scheme. A large map was available showing the location of four areas where changes are proposed and plans were also given showing the details of each site. A School Travel Officer and/ or Highway Engineer attended on designated afternoons to meet with parents and answer their questions.

A general public exhibition took place at Brighton Town Hall from July 7<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup>. A further exhibition attended by the scheme Coordinator and the Road Safety Engineer was held at Queen's Park Tennis Clubhouse on July 12 from 4-7pm.

Postcards were sent to 1194 addresses in the area inviting people to attend the public exhibitions to view plans of the proposed layouts. Survey forms were available at the exhibitions and at school/ nursery receptions for people to give feedback. An on-line survey incorporating the individual site plans was also available on the council website. People were asked to look at plans and indicate their preferred options and make any suggestions for improvements. Open text boxes were given after each question for people to make these additional comments. Headline results from the consultation and Officer responses to the comments are detailed below.

Local Ward Councillors for Queen's Park visited the four sites on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July with Council officers and participated directly in some of the consultation events. They very much welcomed all the measures, and noted they have been lobbied by residents over the past few years for an improvement in safety at the S-bend at Egremont Gate and for an upgrade of the crossing on the junction of Queen's Park Road and Albion Hill. They would also like to see more proposals for improvements around Carlton Hill primary school, particularly around the junction of Sussex St and John St and on Carlton Hill itself, which many residents feel is unsafe, and understand that these needs are expected to be met through Section 106 money from the Amex development. They observed that the Eastern Road crossing upgrade was potentially the

least beneficial of the four options to the schools and nurseries directly involved in the scheme. They also felt that the repositioned motorcycle bay on Freshfield Road could still obscure visibility, especially where children were trying to cross.

Colleagues in Environment Improvements and in Development Control, Transport Planning have been consulted regarding existing plans for Carlton Hill and Sussex Street. A summary of the proposed scheme has been sent to The Children and Young People's Trust (School Transport and Admissions) for information.

The Parking Team were consulted over the specific issue of losing one pay and display parking space on Freshfield Road. They reported that there are 101 bays in the vicinity, (Controlled Parking Zone C) but that the spaces are not operating at maximum capacity. Therefore the loss of one space is likely to have minimal financial impact.

A full list of external consultees, both statutory and non statutory, were invited to make submissions. Statutory bodies included the Emergency Services, the Road Haulage Association and Bus Companies. Non statutory organisations such as the taxi companies and Brighton Chamber of commerce were also contacted. The Deputy Head Teacher of Brighton College also made a submission with a further letter of support from the Local MP Mr Simon Kirby.

### **3. Main findings**

#### **3.1 Public consultation results**

51 people responded, giving a low response rate of 4%, but this is a similar result to previous Safer Routes Consultations. 13 replies came from the exhibitions, 35 from the on-line survey and 3 in the post. Some respondents chose not to comment on every measure.

##### **3.1.1 Measure One**

Proposed changes to the Freshfield Road/ Freshfield Place junction

Option two: (move the motorcycle bay uphill to create a clear space to the south) supported by 58% of respondents

##### **3.1.2 Measure Two**

Proposed changes to the pedestrian crossing at Brighton College and the junction at College Road/ Eastern Road

Option one: (Upgrade crossing to light-controlled Puffin crossing) supported by 84% of respondents.

### **3.1.3 Measure Three**

Proposed changes to the pedestrian crossing on Queen's Park Road (south of junction with Albion Hill).

Option one: Upgrade crossing to light-controlled Puffin crossing supported by 90% of respondents

### **3.1.4 Measure four**

Proposal to install a pedestrian refuge on Egremont Place near Park Gate/ West Drive

Option Four: Install pedestrian refuge (crossing place) in the middle of Egremont Place opposite the 'Home Café', extend pavement on the corner of West Drive and improve signage on the approaches to the bend. Supported by 82% of respondents

## **3.2 Public comments**

The questionnaire also provided space for comments. The key points raised by local residents are summarised as follows:

### **3.2.1 Measure One**

Comments reflected dissatisfaction over existing speed table at the junction. One person assumed it gave pedestrians right of way crossing the road. Four comments mentioned the high speeds of vehicles on Freshfield Road, suggesting the existing speed table is not slowing traffic. Six respondents suggested a pedestrian crossing on Freshfield Road near this junction was a better option, either with a School crossing patrol officer in attendance at School journey times or as a light controlled Puffin crossing.

*Officer action: The Road safety engineer and a School travel officer carried out a speed check between the hours of 10am and 11am (a non peak time when maximum speeds are achievable) on the morning of 6<sup>th</sup> August 2010. The result showed that 85% of drivers were doing 30mph or less and the average speed was 26mph. Drivers approaching the speed table from the North were observed consistently applying their brakes, suggesting the table is effective in slowing speeds.*

### 3.2.2 Measure two

Three respondents commented that putting a School Crossing Patrol Officer on the site would not address the problem because students at Brighton College use the crossing throughout the day. Four said the only viable solution to stop cars was a light controlled puffin crossing. Two felt the resources spent on the upgrade would be better spent elsewhere.

*Officer action: An initial pedestrian footfall count conducted in term time indicated that the crossing had sufficient use to warrant appointing a School Crossing Patrol officer, but not an upgrade to a light controlled crossing. This upgrade is also being considered as part of the coastal transport scheme. Unless the scheme is halted for financial reasons, a full speed and footfall survey will be commissioned by PBA, the consultants running the scheme. Safer Routes to School has been asked to find 50% savings from the current budget, so it was decided not to commission a full survey and not to pursue this measure. The public, statutory and non-statutory responses to this proposal will be forwarded to PBA.*

### 3.2.3 Measure Three

Two respondents felt a light controlled puffin crossing was unnecessary and would just slow traffic. Two felt that a Puffin Controlled crossing would put a stop to pedestrians taking risks on the crossing because they assume their right of way will be adhered to. Three felt the issue was poor visibility meaning that drivers do not see the crossing in time to stop. Speed was also mentioned as a problem.

*Officer Action: An initial footfall survey at peak times confirmed that the crossing was sufficiently busy to warrant an upgrade. A subsequent 12 hour speed and footfall count was commissioned, and this confirmed that while the crossing was widely enough used to justify the upgrade, 85% of cars travelling in both directions on Queens Park Road were travelling within the 30mph speed limit.*

### 3.2.4 Measure Four

Respondents noted the traffic calming benefits of the refuge and footway realignments with approval. All felt there was an urgent need for action on this site. Drivers trying to get from Egremont Place to West Drive or Park Hill (marked as no entry) were identified by one as causing an extra hazard here. Two respondents mentioned the specific

problem of crossing between Egremont Place and Park Hill, where the pavement is only on the south side of the road. This street leads directly down the hill to Queen's Park Primary. One resident wrote to suggest a refuge would put pedestrians in danger because many drivers travelling south on Queen's Park Rd take the corner unsafely.

*Officer Action: Traffic calming benefits were noted during the test conducted with the Bus co at this site (see 3.3.1 for details). No significant volume of pedestrians crossing to use Park Hill was observed but this may need to be revisited in school term time.*

### **3.3 Response by statutory and non-statutory consultees**

#### **3.3.1 Statutory**

Mike Best of Brighton & Hove Buses was concerned that the Eastern Road crossing would delay buses on this route. He felt that College pupils would not necessarily wait for signals to cross. He observed that raised tables can cause discomfort to passengers as they cannot anticipate them. Up to 18 buses an hour in each direction use this route so delays to services could also result. He was also concerned that the refuge in Egremont place would make it difficult for buses to negotiate the bend, and encourage pedestrians to cross at a location which is less than ideal for them.

Mark Dunn of Sussex Road Policing Unit expressed concern that a speed table on Eastern Road would hamper ambulance movement, though he felt the crossing should be made more conspicuous. He did not support retaining the motorcycle bay to the north of the Freshfield pavement realignment as bikes would still obscure the view. He suggested that a left turn ban out of the upper section of Albion hill may need additional engineering measures to make infringements difficult. He fully supported option 3 for Egremont Place.

Geoff Borthwick of Brighton Ambulance service ( Newhaven) commented that from the point of view of an ambulance driver, the proposed refuge Egremont Place and West Drive could be safer positioned out of the bends and junction. He also commented that a speed table on Eastern Road would not be suitable and would hinder ambulance movement.

*Officer action: (Egremont Place) An engineer and a school travel officer attended a site test on 3 August 2010 with staff with Mr Best and other colleagues from Brighton & Hove Buses.. The refuge was marked*

out and coned and a 12m bus (the longest in the fleet) was driven in both directions through the location. Adjustments were made to the footway realignment on the south side to make the uphill turn easier, and officers observed no danger from buses travelling downhill to pedestrians on the pavement on the eastern side. Mr Best was satisfied the adjustments were workable.

### 3.3.2. Non-statutory

Mark Beard, Deputy Head at Brighton College, responded regarding the zebra crossing upgrade on Eastern Road. He would prefer the crossing itself be put on a raised speed table with enhanced road marking, lighting and signage to warn drivers. He does not feel that his pupils will always be patient enough to wait for the green man to cross, and that as drivers will not expect them to cross when the lights are green more casualties will result. Mr Beard also pointed out that his students use this crossing when moving between lessons on different sites, noting that a School crossing patrol officer hours would not cover the whole school day.

*Officer action: The speed table option has not been supported by the bus company, the police or the Ambulance service .The School crossing patrol manager currently has several vacant positions which she advises are difficult to fill, particularly where a school does not support such a measure. As detailed above, the measure has been deferred for consideration as part of the Coastal Transport Scheme.*

## 4. Recommended Measures

See Site location map (Appendix 2).The amended measures are outlined as follows:

- **Extend and upgrade build-out on eastern side of Freshfield Road (north of junction with Freshfield Place) removing the parking bay to the north and the motorcycle bay to the south.**
- **Upgrade Zebra crossing on Queen's Park Road (south of junction with Albion Hill) into light-controlled Puffin crossing**
- **Install pedestrian refuge on Egremont Place and extend pavement n/e of junction with West Drive with signage warning approaching drivers in both directions**

Work will also be carried out on Carlton Hill. Using Section 106 funding the developers of the new American Express building will be improving the entrance to Carlton Hill School and moving their playground.

Upon the receipt of further Section 106 funds from the same developers, work by the Environment Improvements Team will also be carried out at the junctions of Sussex Street and John Street and Carlton Hill and John Street. Crossing points here will be improved.

## **5. Timescale and Build**

### **Autumn Term 2010**

- report to Cabinet Member's Meeting with final recommendation

### **Autumn 2010**

- Construction of scheme measures affordable within current budget

### **Spring 2011**

- Construction of scheme measures still outstanding in new financial year

### **Summer 2011**

- Post scheme monitoring

## **6. Conclusions and final remarks**

- The results of public consultation indicate measures at Egremont Place and Queen's Park Road are both strongly supported. A vast majority would like some action taken at the Freshfield Road site but are divided over whether the issue here is speed or pedestrian visibility. Subsequent officer observations indicate speeding is not occurring. 42% of respondents thought moving the motorcycle bay to the north would still cause visibility problems. Councillors and Sussex RPU agreed.
- The Eastern Road zebra crossing upgrade is not only the most expensive of the measures initially proposed, but is also the subject of some controversy. Residents would like to see a light controlled crossing but both statutory and non statutory consultees have raised conflicting concerns. As this measure is also being covered by another scheme (the Coastal Transport Scheme or CTS) it has been decided not to implement this measure under the reduced Safer Routes budget. Comments from all concerned will be passed to the PBA consultancy who will run their own consultation on the first phase of the CTS (which includes this measure) if given approval.
- Given the growing number of children who travel to school on foot or who require good access to their school, the schools and

local community has the potential to gain much from the scheme.

