

REPORT: Environment & Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 25 November 2015

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Community & Resources

PORTFOLIO: Transportation

SUBJECT: Petition Requesting Pedestrian Crossing Facilities at Barnfield Avenue, Runcorn

WARDS: Norton South

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report on a petition comprising 25 individual letters from Year 5 pupils at Murdishaw West Community Primary School requesting the installation of pedestrian crossing facilities on Barnfield Avenue and to make recommendations about the future provision of such facilities.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

The petitioners are informed that pedestrian/traffic surveys have been carried out and that consideration will now be given to a) introducing controlled pedestrian crossing facilities into the existing traffic signals at the junction of busway with Barnfield Avenue and b) to reviewing existing signing and road markings, renewing these as necessary, with both proposals being subject to funding availability.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 A petition has been received comprising 25 individual letters from Year 5 pupils at Murdishaw West Community Primary School, requesting the installation of pedestrian crossing facilities on Barnfield Avenue adjacent to Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy (OBA)/The Hove/Brookvale Recreation Centre. A supporting video was also provided via a link to Murdishaw West School website <http://www.thelifecloud.net/schools/MurdishawWestCommunityPrimarySchool/> .
- 3.2 There are no Pelican, Puffin or zebra crossings in the area of the school at the present time. There has not been a reported road traffic collision involving personal injury in the area of Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy/The Hove/Brookvale Recreation Centre between 2008 and 2014 inclusive (2014 being the latest full period for which accident records are available).
- 3.3 There are two paths to the east of the school/Barnfield Avenue that give access to the school and that are well used at school times (approximately two 20 minute periods per school day) – one immediately adjacent to the school entrance and one next to the

traffic signals at the busway crossing (a short walk from the school entrance) which also has the benefit of tactile paving. When buses pass through on the busway at the signals, traffic is stopped on Barnfield Avenue and pedestrians can take the opportunity to cross, although without the benefit of red/green man signal indications. Due to the design of the estates, whereby walking was and still is encouraged, parking outside the school is not generally a problem.

- 3.4 As is common with most schools, especially when they close in the afternoon, children will flow out onto Barnfield Avenue and cross where they can, or where they choose, over a much longer length of road than the very limited area covered by the two paths and their respective dropped kerbs. This is simply because of the sheer volume of children who will arrive in a matter of minutes and the variety of different routes they may choose to find their way home or to their next destination.
- 3.5 If this volume of children were to be channelled into one very narrow point, to cross at a controlled pedestrian crossing immediately outside the school, for example, there would need to be suitable and extensive waiting areas. These do not currently exist and the land does not appear to be available to create such areas (especially on the school side) to accommodate such standing areas. Even if it were, it is likely to prove expensive to convert it to the standing area(s) that would be necessary. Also, if a controlled pedestrian crossing were to be provided, vehicles would have to stop at very regular intervals with queues building up at peak times and it is likely that children would be encouraged to cross in between these vehicles, which could prove dangerous.
- 3.6 In addition, experience has shown that where signals have been installed where they are generally only required for very specific and short times of the day, they can become dangerous as drivers become accustomed to passing along the road without stopping and hence they may either fail to stop when they need to or stop suddenly. Furthermore, if a Puffin crossing were installed at the path adjacent to the school entrance, it is felt that this would possibly be too close for vehicles exiting the school to have full and clear sight of the signal heads.
- 3.7 For these reasons and constraints, the installation of a controlled pedestrian crossing adjacent to the school entrance could not be recommended. However, consideration will be given to introducing pedestrian facilities (red and green men) into the traffic signals at the busway when these are next refurbished and subject to funding being available. At this point, it is difficult to say when this will be as it will need to be incorporated into a future capital programme for traffic signal works.
- 3.8 Barnfield Avenue does have physical traffic calming in place throughout its length, in the form of chicanes, speed cushions and speed tables. These physical features are supplemented with red carriageway surfacing in places although this is generally in poor condition. Consideration will, therefore, also be given to renewing or upgrading these road markings when resources become available. In addition, signs will be provided to warn of the presence of a school to help draw drivers' attention to the possibility of children crossing.
- 3.9 Surveys have been carried out to record both the volumes of traffic and the numbers of pedestrians crossing at the three locations shown on the drawing in Appendix 'A'. Such

pedestrian surveys record those people crossing within 50 metres either side of a selected point, and in the specific case of the surveys that have been conducted here, the crossing points are at greater separations than this minimum figure.

- 3.10 The Department for Transport recommended that a controlled crossing may be considered at points where the level of traffic/pedestrian crossing conflict expressed as PV^2 (where P is the number of pedestrians per hour and V the vehicles) reaches a value of 10^8 for the 4 busiest hours in a day. In the case of this location, given that the issue is that of children entering and leaving the school over short periods, the relevant value is not reached at any of the crossing points and the pedestrian flows are almost completely tidal being associated with the school.
- 3.11 The busiest of the three zones counted is the most southerly, at the Busway/Barnfield Avenue junction which is a traffic signal controlled junction. Given the footpath layout to the east of Barnfield Avenue and that crossing from this footway by the busway only adds a short extra walking distance for many of the crossing students who may currently cross close to the entrance to the school or at other points, (the exact distance depending on their home address and the location of the access door into the school), there is further justification for the possible introduction of a pedestrian-controlled crossing into the traffic signals at the Busway junction when the junction is next refurbished.
- 3.12 An alternative to a signal-controlled crossing would be the provision of a School Crossing Patrol Officer at this location. An absolute requirement of the Council's appointment criteria is that for a point to be considered for establishment there needs to be a minimum of 5 children under the age of 11 crossing at or within 50m of the proposed location. This was not achieved during the site surveys.
- 3.13 A School Crossing Patrol Officer is provided outside Murdishaw West Community Primary School, but this point is too distant, and the linking footpath provision too indirect for this service to be of any practical use to students needing to cross to and from OBA. Drawing No. 9554 in Appendix 'A' refers.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no other direct social inclusion, sustainability, value for money, legal or crime and disorder implications resulting from this report

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are currently no financial implications.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES.

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

The provision of a controlled crossing as part of the traffic signal installation at the busway would improve the facilities for children and young people, however, a separate facility outside of the school entrance cannot be recommended.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

There are no direct implications on the Council's 'Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton' priority.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

There are no direct implications on the Council's 'A Healthy Halton' priority.

6.4 A Safer Halton

The provision of a controlled crossing as part of the busway signals would provide greater protection for children crossing in the area.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

There are no direct implications on the Council's 'Halton's Urban Renewal'.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

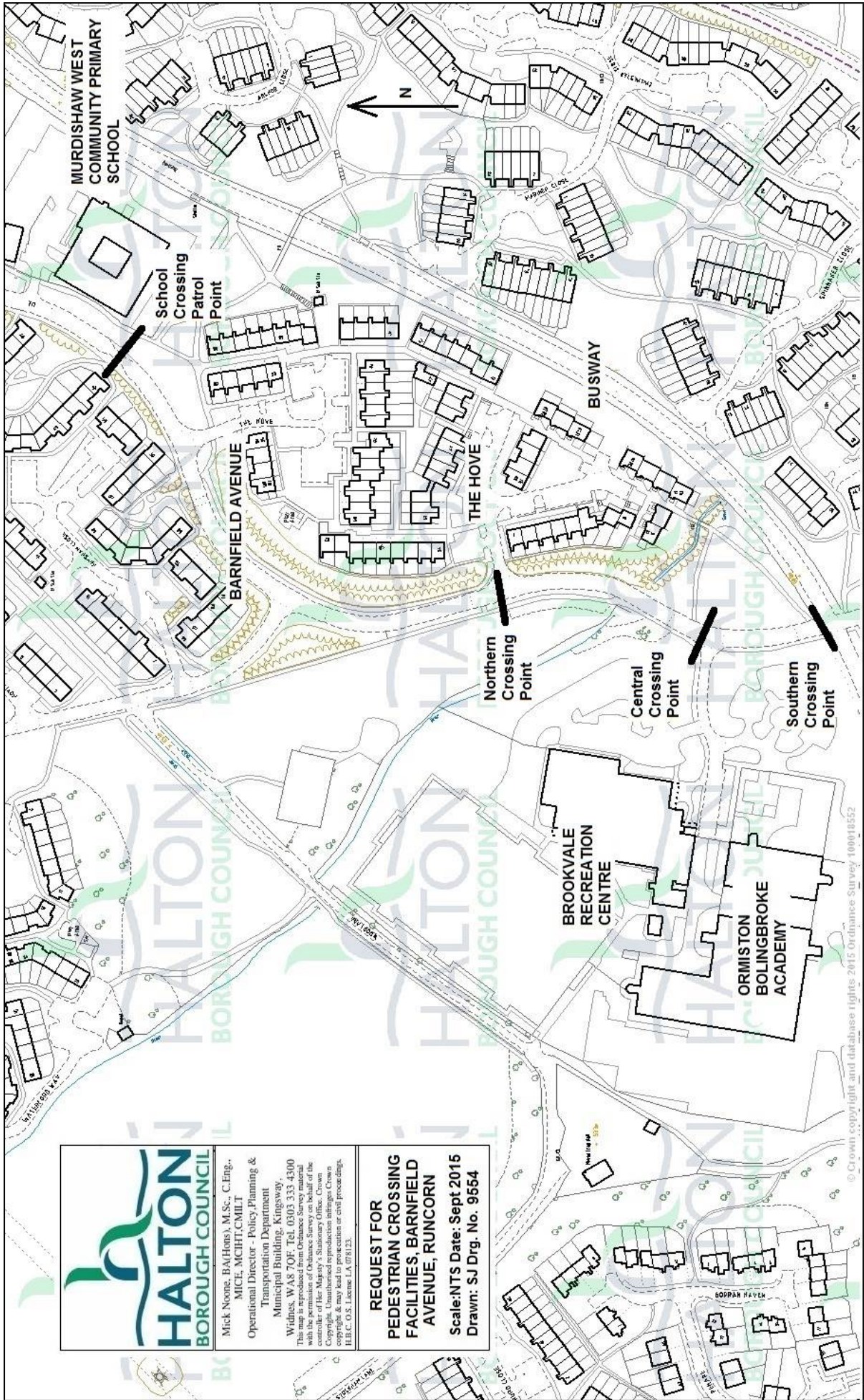
7.1 No full risk assessment is required.

8.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 There are no direct equality and diversity issues associated with this report.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

9.1 There are no background papers under section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.



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**REQUEST FOR
PEDESTRIAN CROSSING
FACILITIES, BARNFIELD
AVENUE, RUNCORN**
Scale: NTS Date: Sept 2015
Drawn: SJ Drg. No. 9554

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