

Leicester
City Council

**WARDS AFFECTED
AYLESTONE**

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:

Cabinet

7th November 2002

Advance Direction Sign, Lutterworth Road

Report of the Corporate Director of Environment, Regeneration and Development

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report is regarding a petition on the siting of a proposed traffic sign on the A426 Lutterworth Road adjacent to Monsell Drive. The petition was sent to the Traffic Group by a member of the public, Mr Nigel Porter.
- 1.2 Previous reports on this have been considered by Scrutiny Committee on 9th January 2002, Cabinet on 29th July 2002 and Council on 26th September 2002.
- 1.3 At Council on 26th September 2002, an objection was moved by Cllr Middleton who believes that the advance direction sign should be erected closer to Aylestone Village, between Plantation Avenue and Monsell Drive. This report addresses that objection, and reaffirms previous recommendations on this issue.

2. Summary

- 2.1 In order to reduce occurrences of high vehicles striking the low bridge over the A426 at Blaby, Railtrack have requested that a sign be provided on the southbound approach to the Lutterworth Road/Soar Valley Way junction in order to warn drivers of its proximity and advise them of an alternative route. In addition, there are outstanding requests from the late Cllr Bryant, Cllrs Chambers and Holden, and local residents to relocate the existing southbound advance direction sign at the junction further north of its existing location.
- 2.2 It is proposed to remove the existing advance direction sign from outside no. 62 Lutterworth Road and replace it with a sign warning of the low bridge. In addition, a new southbound advance direction sign would be provided at the junction of Lutterworth Road and Monsell Drive.

- 2.3 Local residents have raised a petition asking for an immediate halt to the erection of the sign at the junction of Lutterworth Road and Monsell Drive and measures to improve the safety of pedestrians crossing Lutterworth Road.
- 2.4 Officers have considered the concerns of the local residents as raised in the petition. It is deemed that the proposed position of the sign at the junction of Monsell Drive and Lutterworth Road is the optimum location in terms of road safety and environmental concerns. Consideration has also been made of the petitioners' request to install traffic management that would improve pedestrian safety on Lutterworth Road. Officers believe that the installation of a refuge will be of benefit to pedestrians wishing to cross the A426 at this point.
- 2.5 The Director of Environment, Development and Commercial Services on the 6th December 2001 approved a report outlining the actions of officers taken in consideration of this petition. The action proposed in the report is that the sign is sited on the A426 Lutterworth Road at the junction with Monsell Drive. Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 9th January 2002, suggested that officers undertake a further review to include full consultation with Ward Councillors and local residents. A further report would then be referred to Cabinet with the review findings. A site meeting between officers, the two Ward Councillors and local residents took place on 14th May 2002. At that meeting, the issue of the advance direction sign was fully discussed.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That the petitioners' concerns are noted.
- 3.2 It is recommended that Cabinet approve the proposed actions of the Director to site an advance direction sign on the A426 Lutterworth Road adjacent to the junction with Monsell Drive.
- 3.3 That the proposed refuge will be prioritised in accordance with the approved procedure and implemented when funds are available.
- 3.4 That the petitioners be informed accordingly.

4. Financial and Legal Implications

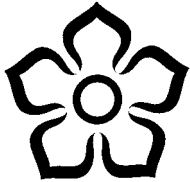
- 4.1 The advance direction sign will be funded from the supplementary credit approval for integrated transport. Railtrack have funded all signs relating to warning of the low bridge and its alternative route.

5. Report Author/Officer to contact:

Steve Warrington, Traffic Client Officer (Direction Signs), Traffic Operations, Ext 6549

DECISION STATUS

Key Decision	No
Reason	N/A
Appeared in Forward Plan	No
Executive or Council Decision	Executive (Cabinet)



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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. Report

- 1.1 In August 1998, a letter from a resident of Whetstone was received who requested that the advance direction sign be moved further away from the junction. It was suggested that the sign be relocated to the Baptist Church on Lutterworth Road.
- 1.2 Cllr Chambers requested in March 1999 that the existing advance direction sign on Lutterworth Road be moved further away from the junction to enable lorries adequate time to see it.
- 1.3 In February 2000, the late Cllr Bryant acting on complaints from constituents asked that the existing advance direction sign be moved to Plantation Avenue to enable drivers to move into the correct lane.
- 1.4 In November 1999, Railtrack wrote to Leicester City Council asking that signs indicating the low bridge on the A426 at Blaby and alternative route signing be located at the junction of the A426 and A563. At that time, the position of Direction Signing Officer was vacant, so it was not until December 2000 that an officer was able to meet with Railtrack to discuss their requirements.
- 1.5 It was agreed at that meeting that Leicester City Council would undertake to design a signing scheme for Railtrack. In order to take account of local concerns and improve traffic management, it was considered appropriate that the advance direction signing on Lutterworth Road be amended as part of the low bridge scheme. Once details were agreed, Railtrack were provided with an estimate of the cost of the work.
- 1.6 The signing proposals on Lutterworth Road are:-
 - to remove the existing advance direction sign from outside No. 62 Lutterworth Road (a point some 90m north of Soar Valley Way) and replace it with a new sign to indicate the low bridge and the alternative route.
 - to provide a new advance direction sign and lane dedication sign at the junction of Monsell Drive and Lutterworth Road, around 150m from the junction.

- 1.7 On 22nd June 2001, a letter was received from Nigel Porter enclosing a petition signed by 42 residents of Monsell Drive and Magnolia Close requesting that Cllrs Chambers and Middleton call an immediate halt to the erection of a new traffic sign at the corner of Monsell Drive. The residents consider that the proposals will have a detrimental impact on the entrance to Monsell Drive and that they will have little or no impact on traffic management as the sign is sited in the wrong place. They think that the City Council should install traffic management that would make it possible to safely cross Lutterworth Road to the bus stop.
- 1.8 On 25th June 2001 a site meeting was held with Cllrs Chambers and Middleton, and a number of residents of Monsell Drive and Magnolia Close. They are strongly of the opinion that the signs should be located nearer to Aylestone and suggested that somewhere in the vicinity of Plantation Avenue would be suitable.
- 1.9 The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 1994 and the Traffic Signs Manual provide the rules and guidance concerning the design, size and positioning of all types of traffic signs. The size and siting distances of direction signs relates to the traffic speeds and the nature of road. For this section of Lutterworth Road, 60-150m is the recommended distance of an advance direction sign from the intersection with a minimum clear visibility distance of 105m. These distances allow drivers adequate time to safely comply with the messages conveyed in the sign. Because signs are designed for the legends to be recognisable and legible from distances depending on their type and road speed, it is essential that the signs are visible from these distances and not obscured by intervening obstructions. As the distance from Monsell Drive to Soar Valley Way is 150m, the proposed location is at the highest end of the range of siting distances recommended. This location also ensures that the minimum clear visibility distance can be achieved.
- 1.10 It has been suggested that the sign be located in the vicinity of the junction of Lutterworth Road and Plantation Avenue or the Baptist Church. Both of these locations are over 500m away from the junction and are far in excess of the distances recommended in the Traffic Signs Manual. It is considered that an advance direction sign positioned in this vicinity would give rise to a great deal of confusion for motorists, which could compromise road safety.
- 1.11 Road safety is an important factor in proposing to locate the advance direction sign on the southern side on Monsell Drive. The proposed location would ensure that visibility for and of vehicles exiting Monsell Drive or any private access is not compromised.
- 1.12 At no other junction between a major radial route and the ring road in the city is the advance direction sign more than 150m from the junction (the maximum recommended in the Traffic Signs Manual for a road of this type). All sites lie within the range of distances recommended in national guidance.
- 1.13 The petitioners request the installation of traffic management to aid pedestrians crossing Lutterworth Road. On the length of the road that concerns the petitioners, there have been two recorded personal injury accidents since the 1st January 1998. Given the low number of accidents, it would not be possible to justify funding for a scheme from the Local Safety Scheme budget. However, as with all sites, accidents

will continue to be monitored and, if appropriate, measures will be introduced in the future.

- 1.14 With regard to pedestrian crossing facilities, following a request from a member of the public, a traffic survey was carried out on Lutterworth Road in the vicinity of Monsell Drive. (Survey date Tuesday 13 February 2001) City Consultants subsequently completed a Standard Pedestrian Assessment. The key results are summarised below:

Pedestrian Flows: Total 12 hr flow = 45 pedestrians.
Average peak hour ped. flow = 6.25 / hour.

Vehicle Flows: Total 12 hr flow = 15024 vehicles
Average Peak Hour Flow = 1322 veh / hr.

$$PV^2 = 0.111 \times 10^8.$$

PV² is a numerical criteria used for the justification of pedestrian crossing facilities. Under the current assessment criteria, a PV² value of 0.7×10^8 is required to justify a controlled crossing facility. On this basis, a pelican crossing cannot be justified at the Lutterworth Road / Monsell Drive site. However, a pedestrian refuge is recommended subject to a satisfactory detailed design. This will provide assistance for pedestrians crossing to and from the nearby bus stops and, in addition, will provide some protection to vehicles turning entering or exiting Monsell Drive. The proposed refuge will be prioritised in accordance with the approved procedure and implemented when funds are available.

- 1.15 Attached are Drawing Nos. CD/TF/SRW/09431/S0007/001, which shows the extent of the proposals and CD/TF/SRW/09544/001. This shows the location of the low bridge on the A426 at Blaby. The bridge is signed at a height of 4.4m/14'9". Also shown is the alternative route for high vehicles along A563 Soar Valley Way, B4114 St John's and B582 Blaby Road and vice versa
- 1.15 On 5th February 2002, a site meeting was held with Cllrs Chambers and Middleton to discuss the proposed location of the sign. Whilst both Members were in agreement over the principle of the direction sign, they considered that the proposed location of the sign at the junction of Monsell Drive and Lutterworth Road was too close to Soar Valley Way and asked that a site further away from the junction be found.
- 1.16 The site meeting of 14th May 2002 was attended by officers, the two Ward Councillors and eleven local residents. With regard to the proposed location of the sign, Councillors and residents remain of the opinion that it should be sited further north of Monsell Drive. In addition, a number of other issues were raised at the meeting.
- It was asked how often high vehicles have hit the low bridge at Blaby. Railtrack have informed the City Council that there have been six reported incidents of vehicles striking the bridge since November 2000.
 - Residents reported that new street name plates for Monsell Drive have recently been installed. The previous plates included the legend 'leading to Magnolia Close' and a 'no through road' symbol, whereas the new ones refer solely to Monsell Drive. They would like to see the full legend reinstated. This matter has been referred to the officers responsible for street name plates for their consideration.

- It was proposed that the existing 30mph speed limit on Lutterworth Road be extended from Plantation Avenue to its junction with the A563 Soar Valley Way/Glenhills Way. All speed restrictions within the city are currently under review by the Traffic Group. This request will form part of that review.
- Residents would like to see additional markings on the carriageway to indicated lane destinations. There are already three sets of lane destination markings on the approach to the junction. Should additional markings be provided, motorists may be confused as to which junction they refer to. This could result in motorists turning into Monsell Drive or Buckingham Drive believing they are turning onto the A563 ring road.
- The issue of a 'Welcome to Aylestone' sign was promoted by a number of residents at the meeting. It is not current City Council policy to sign areas and suburbs within the city.
- The proposed advance direction sign has a panel on the top of the sign indicating 'Soar Valley Way'. Some residents suggested that this could lead some motorists into believing that Monsell Drive was Soar Valley Way. The use of local place names or junction names can be a useful navigational aid for drivers negotiating their way around the road network, and their use is becoming more prevalent throughout Local Authorities around the country.

1.17 Further correspondence regarding the visibility for heavy goods vehicles turning from Middleton Street into Lutterworth Road has been received from Councillor Chambers. She has requested that this could be resolved by relocating the sign nearer to the Baptist Church.

1.18 Although it is recognised that should the sign be sited north of Monsell Drive it would fall outside the governments recommended siting distances, there are a number of additional reasons as to why the sign should not be located north of Monsell Drive. Immediately north of the junction there is a wide verge where the sign could be accommodated. There are, however, a number of accesses to houses on this section of Lutterworth Road. The sign would interfere with visibility for and of vehicles exiting these driveways as well as vehicles exiting Monsell Drive. This would compromise road safety on Lutterworth Road.

1.19 It was suggested that the sign could be located further north towards Aylestone, either in the central reservation, or in the nearside verge. The central reserve is less than 2m wide at this point, which is inadequate to accommodate a sign of this size. Furthermore, the footway is approximately 2.0m wide and is located at the bottom of a cutting, which is covered in heavy vegetation. It would therefore not be possible to site the sign with enough lateral clearance from the carriageway without vegetation obstructing the clear visibility distance of the sign. Cutting back the vegetation may resolve the problem temporarily, but would result in an ongoing maintenance problem for the Authority.

1.20 The photograph on the final page shows the existing advance direction sign at the junction as well as the proposed location of the new sign. In view of all the available information, officers consider that the proposed location of the sign at the junction of Lutterworth Road and Monsell Drive lies at the maximum point of the range of distances recommended by Government guidance, and that the site in question is the optimum location in terms of both traffic management and all environmental considerations.

- 1.21 At its meeting on 26th September 2002, Council agreed to an amendment moved by Cllr Middleton concerning the siting on the sign. In so doing, the matter is being referred back to Cabinet for further consideration and decision in the light of the amendment and associated professional advice from relevant officers.
- 1.22 Officers have reconsidered that matter in the light of the actions of Council. The proposed location of the sign at the junction on Monsell Drive and Lutterworth Road is considered to be the optimum position. It falls within the range of siting distances issued by The Department for Transport for a road of this type. The distance from the junction and the clear visibility distance ensures that vehicles are able to undertake any required manoeuvres prior to the junction. In addition, there is no question that the position of the sign would in any way affect visibility for and of vehicles in the vicinity. Any other position except for the one proposed would compromise visibility which could have serious road safety consequences.
- 1.23 Furthermore, the proposed location is also considered to be the most favourable from an environmental point of view. Positioned against vegetation means that the rear of the sign is not visible. The sign face itself can only be seen by the users of the highway for which it is intended and a number of properties on Lutterworth Road. It cannot be seen from properties on Monsell Drive. An alternative location would have a much greater environmental impact upon residents living in the vicinity.
- 1.24 An issue has been raised about the distance of the proposed location of the sign from the junction of Soar Valley Way. Officers have been out on site to measure the distance and reaffirmed that the proposed location is 141m from the stop line at the traffic signals. The maximum distance of 150m would place the sign in the carriageway of Monsell Drive.

FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

1. Financial Implications

The advance direction sign will be funded from the supplementary credit approval for integrated transport. Railtrack have funded all signs relating to warning of the low bridge and its alternative route.

2. Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising out of this report.

3. Other Implications

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph Within Supporting References information
Equal Opportunities	NO	
Policy	NO	
Sustainable and Environmental	NO	
Crime and Disorder	NO	
Human Rights Act	NO	
Elderly/People on Low Income	NO	

4. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

- 4.1 The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 1994.
- 4.2 Traffic Signs Manual.

5. Consultations

- 5.1 Correspondence with Ward Councillors, Railtrack and members of the public, file CD/TF/SRW/09431/S0007.
- 5.2 Meeting between Council Officer, Councillors Chambers and Middleton, and residents of Monsell Drive and Magnolia Close held on 25th June 2001.
- 5.3 Meeting between Council Officer and Councillors Chambers and Middleton held on 5th February 2002.
- 5.4 Meeting between Council Officers, Councillors Chambers and Middleton, and local residents held on 14th May 2002.

5. Report Author/Officer to contact:

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