



# Officer Guidance

## Assessing Requests for

### Minor Transport Schemes



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Transport and Engineering

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## 1. Introduction

BCP Council receives many requests from a wide range of sources for Minor Traffic Schemes including residents, Councillors and local businesses. In the context of this guidance these are defined as *minor* alterations to the highway including signage, road markings, speed limits, crossing facilities or safety measures. The guidance describes a method of assessing and, where possible, ranking these requests to ensure that any Capital Programme funding is invested at locations where it is most needed.

- ❖ Requests include safety measures to address anti-social or illegal driving behaviour such as speeding, or interventions to treat locations where collisions are occurring. The Council also receives many requests from school communities, parents and residents for measures to improve safety outside schools or on the routes to school, particularly for children wishing to walk, scoot or cycle to and from school.
- ❖ In addition to the above, the Council receives numerous requests for crossing facilities to aid people who wish to walk or cycle across the Borough. These can take the form of simple dropped kerbs to assist wheelchair users across junctions, to more formal facilities such as pedestrian refuges, zebra crossings and controlled signalised crossings.
- ❖ The Council also receives requests for alterations to parking restrictions on the highway such as yellow lines, keep clear markings, speed limit changes and other signs and road markings. These types of request will usually require Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) to be advertised, made or altered. Requests for these measures are covered under section 7.

It is appropriate to assess all these requests against the Council's Transportation aims so that schemes are only progressed if they support these aims. The officer guidelines contained within this report are designed to give officers the ability to fairly assess, rank and prioritise all these requests.

The assessment processes outlined in the report will cover the following requests:

- ❖ Dropped Kerbs/Pedestrian and Cycle Crossing Facilities
- ❖ Road Safety Improvements/Traffic Calming
- ❖ Safer Routes to School (SRTS) Improvements
- ❖ 'SLOW DOWN' signs, Speed Indicator Display (SID) and Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS)
- ❖ 20mph zones and limits
- ❖ Traffic Regulation Orders/Non-TRO

It is important that a robust assessment process is put in place for all six of these types of requests so that a clear explanation backed up with empirical evidence can be given as to why one request was ranked more highly for implementation over another. In addition, the assessments will explain the rationale behind the spending of the Local Transport Plan Funds for these measures.

## **Procedure**

On receipt of the request, a holding letter will be sent to the resident / Member and the request will be assessed under the appropriate process as outlined in the following appendices:

- Appendix A1 (Example of resident/Member request Holding Letter for crossing request)
- Appendix A2 (Example of resident/Member request Holding Letter for dropped kerb request)
- Appendix B1 (Pedestrian Crossing assessment process Part 1)
- Appendix B2 (Pedestrian Crossing assessment process Part 2)
- Appendix C (Safer Routes to School assessment process)
- Appendix D (Procedure for assessing Road Safety/Traffic Calming requests)
- Appendix E1 and E2 (Procedure for assessing static 'SLOW DOWN' signs, electronic SIDs and VAS requests)
- Appendix F1 and F2 (Procedure for assessing 20mph zone and limits requests)
- Appendix G (Procedure for Prioritising TRO requests)
- Appendix H (Procedure for Prioritising non-TRO traffic management requests)
- In addition to the above, there is officer guidance on how to issue a Road Safety Audit request/brief outlined in Appendix I1 and I2.

The purpose of the guidelines, as set out in the Appendices, is to formalise the way that minor traffic schemes are prioritised and allow officers to respond appropriately to public and Member requests for minor traffic measures. The guidelines will also allow officers to assess requests for minor traffic measures themselves and if appropriate proceed with schemes as the budget allows.

Although this guidance has been produced for officer use and (where published on the BCP website) wider public information, it is intended that assessments should only be carried out by nominated officers who are qualified and experienced in undertaking such evaluations in a consistent and standardised manner. They are not intended to be used by others not experienced in assessing schemes to gauge how a scheme might be ranked.

This procedure is to be used for all requests received into the Council for minor transport schemes regardless of where the request has come from.

**The process for assessing each of the above categories of requests is outlined in the following sections and the appropriate Appendices of this guidance**

### **1.1 Contacts**

For enquires about pedestrian crossings, safer routes to school, SID, VAS and SLOW DOWN signs, 20mph limits and zones, road safety audits and any other general road safety enquiries, please contact [roadsafety@bcpcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:roadsafety@bcpcouncil.gov.uk)

For TRO and Non-TRO related enquiries, please contact [traffic@bcpcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:traffic@bcpcouncil.gov.uk)

For Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) enquiries, please contact [activetravel@bcpcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:activetravel@bcpcouncil.gov.uk)

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## **2. Pedestrian Crossing requests - Description**

The Council receives numerous requests for road crossing facilities. These range from dropped kerbs across minor side junctions to formal crossing facilities across busy main roads. In all cases, the purpose is to aid the safe passage of vulnerable pedestrians, mobility impaired users and cyclists across the road.

### **2.1 Dropped kerbs**

A dropped kerb involves installing kerbing that is flush with the carriageway on opposing sides of the carriageway and they must always be installed in pairs. The flush kerbs on either side of the road must be directly opposite each other. Buff coloured tactile paving slabs are also installed in the footway aligned with the set on the opposing path and leading up to the dropped kerb, to alert blind and partially sighted pedestrians both to the presence of the crossing point and the direction in which to cross. These crossing points are particularly beneficial to road users who are wheelchair bound and users of mobility scooters, buggies and prams. Care should be taken to ensure that residual footway gradients are DDA compliant.

### **2.2 Informal and formal crossings**

#### **2.2.1 Informal crossings - Description**

Informal crossing points are locations on the highway where there is no form of control for pedestrians to gain priority over motorised traffic although there is sometimes a central pedestrian refuge or traffic island so that the road can be crossed in stages. Dropped crossings are a simple type of informal crossing. Other examples include pedestrian refuges and traffic islands. In all cases there would be dropped kerbs and buff tactile paving as described in 2.1 above.

The presence of a pedestrian refuge or traffic island helps the pedestrians cross the road safely especially when the road is wide and traffic volumes are high because it means the pedestrians can cross one traffic lane at a time. Where these are likely to be used by cyclists then the central refuge must be wide enough to safely accommodate a cycle (typically 2 metres) but without compromising the safety of cyclists passing through the refuge on the road. The general rule is that gaps of between 2.75 metres and 3.25 metres through the narrowing should be avoided. If there is limited forward visibility for vehicles approaching the crossing point then consideration should be given to installing a pole with illuminated beacon within the central refuge.

#### **2.2.2 Formal controlled crossings - Description**

Formal controlled crossings are locations on the highway where pedestrians can exercise control over traffic thus giving them priority over motorised vehicles. Typical examples of these types of crossings include Zebras (and Parallel Crossings) and signalised crossings such as Puffins and Toucans or pedestrian facilities at traffic signal junctions. These will be provided with pink/red tactile paving covering the extent of the public footway to alert blind or partially sighted users both to their presence and the location of a pushbutton if provided.

In the case of a Zebra Crossing, if pedestrians step out onto the black and white stripes, then they have showed an intention to cross the road and the traffic must stop to allow the pedestrian to cross. In the case of Signalised Crossings, pedestrians have a push button facility or sensors, which when activated will instigate a 'demand' to the traffic signal controller which in time presents a red light to the oncoming motorised traffic, allowing the pedestrians (and, if appropriate, cyclists) to cross.

## 2.3 Crossing requests – Assessment process

Officers carrying out this assessment will log the request, separating the dropped kerb crossing requests from the others. The officer will then send the 'Requests Holding letter' response (see Appendix A1 and A2) to the Councillor, resident or business to acknowledge the request with a copy to the road safety team so that they are aware of the need for an assessment.

### 2.3.1 Crossing requests

As soon as possible after receipt of the request, the appropriate officer will carry out the required data collection for the assessment (see separate Assessment process spreadsheets Appendices B1 and B2) and calculate a final ranking score for the request from B2.

The score will then be added to the BCP Crossing requests spreadsheet, to enable the request to be ranked with all others based on the highest to lowest score. According to the funding (and design resources) available, the schemes at the top of the ranking list will be completed as soon as possible and then removed from the ranking list. Requests for crossing facility will be ordered by ranking score and not necessarily in chronological order.

### 2.3.2 Dropped kerbs

Dropped kerb requests typically need only have a general on-site confirmation that dropped kerbs are required, can be physically installed and that the facility would be safe to use. No other criteria need be assessed. If there are no other crossing facilities within a 50 metre radius of the request, approval can be given for the dropped kerbs. Once the assessment has been approved, the dropped kerb requests will simply be ranked in *chronological* order and issued to the Environment Team for implementation as and when programmes, resources and funding allows.

### 2.3.3 Request response

The appropriate officer should then respond to the resident or Councillor who made the initial request to advise them of the result of the assessment, the ranking and, if possible, an indication of when the scheme will be implemented.

#### NOTE:

***If there are absolutely no obvious provisions for disabled people the request should be issued for completion asap, without the need for any assessment except for a site visit to confirm the location is suitable and determine a genuine need for the crossing.***

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### **3. Safer Routes to School (SRTS) – Description and Process**

The purpose of the SRTS programme is not primarily casualty reduction-led, although there are obvious benefits in for safety. It is directed by the School Travel Plan (STP) process as well as used for improvements to safety at School Crossing Patroller (SCP) sites. Projects which sit under the SRTS programme 'umbrella' will often overlap with other Minor Transport Scheme Request categories and are as follows:

- the installation of a 20mph, or School Zone, or School Streets around a school
- the installation of a Signalised or Zebra Crossing
- installation of additional warning signage, including flashing wig-wag signs at SCP sites
- the installation of coloured road surfacing and hatching to demarcate SCP and other sites
- installing parking restrictions and markings such as 'School Keep Clear' zig-zag markings
- other minor measures to improve access or safety.

The engineering works will be enhanced by education. Once the works are complete the education team will visit the nearby schools to teach the children about the improvements and how to use the features safely. Parking and traffic congestion is a problem around all schools as parking restrictions are often ignored and driveways blocked, but irresponsible behaviour can increase the risk of a child being injured. Leaflets are provided informing parents why they should only park where permitted and the possible effect it can have if they do not.

A priority ranking list has been produced for SRTS schemes. See Appendix C. This is based on several factors and fairly evaluates all locations through a seven stage process. Throughout the year, requests are made to the Council for measures outside schools. These requests might come from the school itself, parents, local residents or Councillors. The requests are initially discussed at regular SRTS meetings. If the members of the SRTS agree on the principle/practicality of the request, it is then put onto a request list for assessment and ranking against all other SRTS requests. A written response will be sent to the originator of the request explaining the outcome of the initial assessment.

Once a request has been approved for ranking, it will be added to the priority ranking list awaiting formal assessment. This process involves an assessment of how engaged the school have been in adopting and implementing a school travel plan, an analysis of the collision record near the school, an assessment of how many children currently walk or cycle to the school, an audit of the existing traffic calming measures outside the school, a record of specific requests from the school, the willingness of Councillors, parents and the school to participate in the road safety training such as STEPS and Bikeability offered by the Council. Once all this data has been gathered, each school is assessed, scored and a ranking list is drawn up. The only exception to this process is where a request is received, and the value of the request is below £5000. In these cases, the request will still be discussed by the SRTS group. If the request is approved in principle by the group it will not need to go through the formal assessment and ranking process and will be implemented as soon as possible.

School Streets are a relatively new way of managing access to the school and involves the temporary physical closure of the public highway to motorised traffic at the school gate at drop off or pick up times by either school staff, teachers or volunteers. This can be using collapsible bollards or barriers but must be capable of allowing people with a legitimate exemption through such as blue badge holders or those who live on the school street. These are at the development stage but will still follow the same general principles as all SRTS projects.

If the request is valid, it will be added it to the SRTS List. All requests on this list are assessed, scored and ranked for implementation. The assessment process for the SRTS schemes can be viewed in Appendix C.

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#### **4. Road safety improvement requests - Description**

The Council frequently receives requests for physical measures to improve road safety and to reduce or calm traffic speeds or to stop crashes. Some of these requests relate to specific issues such as requests for a facility to enable pedestrians or cyclists to cross the road safely, or requests to travel sustainably to and from a workplace or school safely, or requests for lower speeds such as through the introduction of a 20mph zone / limit. The Council also receives requests for low traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs) (see Section 9) which can be considered as an option when developing a road safety scheme.

In this guidance these specific requests are dealt with in sections 2, 3, 5 and 9 of this officer guidance respectively. Other less specific road safety concerns include requests for measures to tackle anti-social driving behaviour or requests for traffic calming measures to reduce collisions. These are considered by the road safety team.

##### **4.1 Road safety improvement requests – Assessment process**

The request should be considered in line with the road safety team's collision analysis and investigation procedure which is outlined in Appendix D.

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## **5. 'SLOW DOWN' signs, Speed Indicator Display (SIDs) and Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) – Description**

The Council sometimes receives requests for measures to directly respond to areas where there is a speeding issue or perceived speeding issue. There are many options for tackling speeding traffic including traffic calming, and Police enforcement. Traffic calming can be expensive to install and maintain, and Police resources mean enforcement is not always available. Another option involves the use of signage to either remind motorists of the posted speed limit, or to alert them to the speed they are travelling at. Three options are available as discussed below.

The first involves using a sign which simply reads SLOW DOWN and is fixed to a lamp column. These can easily be moved around the borough to locations where there are speeding concerns or they can be fixed signs.

The second involves the use of SID signs. These tend to be portable, battery operated signs that alert a motorist to the speed they are travelling at (by using LEDs to indicate their speed electronically on the sign face). The signs notify the motorist of their speed when they are travelling in excess of the posted speed limit - the aim being that the motorist will then slow down to below the speed limit. They are fixed to lamp columns or posts installed for them, and can therefore be moved around the Borough in a similar way as the SLOW DOWN signs.

The third involves the use of VAS signs. These can be either portable, battery operated and moved around like the SLOW DOWN and SID signs, or are permanent, mains or solar powered. In either case they can flash up a variety of approved messages, typically a speed roundel indicating the posted speed limit on the road or sometimes a warning message or image such as crossroads ahead or pedestrians crossing. The electronic message will be triggered when a vehicle approaches the sign exceeding a set speed threshold. The permanent signs tend to be bigger than the portable signs, and are more expensive, and are therefore used at locations where there is a consistent speeding problem and usually where there is evidence of speed related collisions and injury.

### **5.1 'SLOW DOWN' signs, Speed Indicator Display (SIDs) and Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) – Assessment process**

Appendices E1 and E2 shows how the assessment should be carried out for any requests for these signs.

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## **6. 20mph zone and 20mph limits - Description**

Changing the speed limit to 20mph on roads around the Authority is another request the Council receives quite regularly. The Department for Transport (DfT) issued revised guidance on Setting Local Speed Limits in January 2013, with the aim of increasing flexibility for local authorities in the area of implementing 20mph zones and limits. The only situations in which 20mph zones are likely to be considered in future is if there is a casualty hotspot and if a 20mph zone is the only appropriate solution to the road safety issues being experienced here. This is because there is insufficient evidence or research available to prove a definitive link between the introduction of 20mph limits and casualty reduction.

As a general rule, where free flowing average speeds are 24mph or less then it is confirmed that no physical traffic calming features are required; conversely if average speeds are above or significantly above this threshold then calming features must be installed prior to the limit being lowered.

If, however, speed surveys indicate that the recorded average speed is borderline compliant, say no more than 25/26 mph, then it may be possible to consider introducing a lower limit. That would depend if there are existing potentially speed-reducing characteristics such as junctions, bends or narrow carriageways, potentially introducing staggered vehicle parking bays, or perhaps evidence of a high proportion of vulnerable road users in the vicinity that would tend to indicate a lower limit would be beneficial and would not be abused. This would need to be agreed on a case by case basis and would also need the agreement of the Police with the aim of achieving an arrangement that was largely self enforcing.

### **6.1 20mph zone and 20mph limits – Assessment process**

The assessment process to identify whether a location is suitable for a 20mph zone or limit is outlined in Appendix F.

It is crucial that as part of this process speed surveys are carried out to determine average speeds and also that the Police are consulted about the proposals before any TRO is advertised.

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## **7. Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) - Description**

Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) are statutory instruments that place restrictions on the movement or parking of traffic using moving or static Orders. BCP Council is responsible for creating, maintaining and enforcing certain TROs within its boundaries and has developed this guidance to aid in this function.

The process of introducing or removing TROs is regulated through acts of highway and traffic law. The Traffic Management Team receives requests for TROs from various sources. The number of requests far outweighs the resources and budgets available and therefore a ranking criteria has been developed to enable the Council to prioritise those requests which have most benefits to the community.

### **7.1 Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) – Assessment process**

All requests for TROs should be emailed in to the Traffic Team using the following email address [traffic@bcpcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:traffic@bcpcouncil.gov.uk). Appendix G outlines the assessment process that should be followed where a request for a new (or change of existing) restriction requiring a TRO is made to the Council.

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## **8. Non-TRO traffic management requests - Description**

In addition to the TRO process outlined in section 7 above, the Traffic Team manage various other requests that do not require a TRO including:

- Traffic route direction signs
- Private signs
- Tourist destination signs
- Temporary event signs
- Temporary Development Signs
- Access protection markings
- Traffic restrictions that do not require a traffic regulation order

### **8.1 Non-TRO traffic management requests – Assessment process**

Appendix H outlines the qualifying criteria for the non-TRO traffic management requests explained in Section 8 above.

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## **9. Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) – Description and assessment process**

The aim of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods is to alter the character of residential streets such that they become more pleasant, inclusive and safer places for people to walk and cycle. The key to creating LTNs is to reduce motor traffic in the area, and in so doing reduce air pollution, noise and road collisions.

Traffic volumes can be reduced by introducing temporary or permanent barriers such as bollards or planters. Residents and businesses in the area still have access by motor vehicle, but through traffic is greatly reduced.

Any requests for Low Traffic Neighbourhoods are dealt with by BCP Walking and Cycling Officers as part of the Council's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). These requests shall be forwarded to [activetravel@bcpcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:activetravel@bcpcouncil.gov.uk) for consideration.

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## 10. Road Safety Audits (RSAs) - Description

The objective of the RSA process is to provide an effective, independent review of the road safety implications of engineering interventions for all road users. The Audit should be carried out by a minimum of two, qualified and experienced road safety engineers in the form of a Team Leader and Team member. There can be additions to this team such as an additional team member or observer. An audit should be carried out where physical changes to the highway have been carried out or are planned that will impact on road user behaviour or where a collision reduction scheme has been installed. A brief/request form should be prepared by the designer of the scheme and issued to the audit team leader before the audit is carried out. An example brief / request form template is attached in Appendix I1. Some guidance notes for designers requesting a Road Safety Audit is also attached in Appendix I2.

The audit process consists of four stages. The first stage is a review of the feasibility design of a scheme, which involves a check of feasibility drawings and a site visit. The second stage is a review of the detailed designs of the scheme, which involves a check of detailed drawings and a site visit. The third stage takes place once the scheme has been built (as soon as possible after the opening of the scheme). This is a review of the as built drawings and a site visit to which the Police should be invited. A night time visit should also be carried out. The fourth stage takes place 12 months after the scheme has been completed and is an investigation of any collisions that have occurred at the location of the scheme over the first 12 months. This may involve a site visit as well depending on the number (and pattern) of collisions that have occurred.

A final stage 4(a) audit may also be undertaken after 36 months if there were any identified issues at the first stage 4 audit. At the end of each stage a report should be prepared by the audit team and issued to the designer. The report should identify any safety concerns the audit team have identified. Once the audit has been completed and the report issued to the designer, the designer has 28 days to respond to the report findings.

The terms of reference of the Road Safety Audit are as described in [GG 119](#). The Overseeing Organisation considers this audit process to be applicable to BCP Council highway schemes where there are physical changes on all-purpose roads (i.e. not Motorways or Trunk Roads) with the following relaxations for locally adopted audit procedures:

An audit team may consist of:

- one trained/experienced auditor with a trained but inexperienced auditor;
- one trained/experienced auditor with an experienced designer with relevant specialisations (who is independent of the design team for the scheme being audited);
- a single, trained and experienced auditor (only recommended for small value, simple, minor improvements or safety checks);
- at the initial design stage, a site visit may not be required for minor schemes if current, internet streetview information is available (only recommended for small value, simple, minor improvements) and to help with social distancing;
- a night-time site visit may not be required if, during the daytime, site visit the auditors are satisfied that the street lighting arrangement is satisfactory and permission is sought from the Scheme Manager to omit the night visit;
- the post-construction (stage 3) audit may be carried out without representatives from the Police and maintenance representatives;
- the audit report may be presented using a spreadsheet format so that similar problems and recommendations can be grouped for convenience
- each problem and recommendation may be risk assessed using a suitable risk table
- only the audit team leader is required to sign the audit report via electronic signature;

- the audit report will be sent as a final version to the Scheme Manager rather than as a draft version;
- the audit team can consult directly with the design team during the audit rather than reporting through the Scheme Manager;
- the Scheme Manager is only sent the final version of the report once the audit team and design team have agreed on modifications required as a result of the audit, the Scheme Manager only then having to consider any outstanding problems and recommendations;
- an Exception Report is not required provided the Scheme Manager records on file the reasons for not accepting the auditor's recommendations.

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## **10. Appendices**

10.1 Appendix A1 (Example of resident/Member request Holding Letter for crossing request)

10.2 Appendix A2 (Example of resident/Member request Holding Letter for dropped kerb request)

10.3 Appendix B1 (Pedestrian Crossing assessment process Part 1)

10.4 Appendix B2 (Pedestrian Crossing assessment process Part 2)

10.5 Appendix C (Safer Routes to School assessment process)

10.6 Appendix D (Procedure for assessing road safety improvement and traffic calming requests)

10.7 Appendix E1 and E2 (Procedure for assessing static 'SLOW DOWN' signs, electronic SIDs and VAS requests)

10.8 Appendix F1 (Procedure for assessing 20mph zone and limit requests)

10.9 Appendix G (Procedure for prioritising TRO requests)

10.10 Appendix H (Procedure for prioritising non-TRO traffic management requests)

10.11 Appendix I1 and I2 (Procedure for issuing a Road Safety Audit request)

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