

Southend on Sea Borough Council

Department for Place – Analysis of Members Request

Broadway and Leigh Hill, request to relocate refuge.

Background

The area is very busy with both pedestrian and vehicular traffic and a pedestrian refuge is in place assisting pedestrians to cross the road.

East of the refuge, a Tesco Express is located and for a number of years, deliveries to the store have created issues with both traffic and noise.

Colleagues in Public Protection have placed restrictions on deliveries prohibiting any activity between 7pm and 7am daily to protect local residents from noise and disturbance.

A Traffic Regulation Order has also been in place for several years and restriction on loading prohibit activity from 7.30am to 9.30am and 4.30pm to 6.30pm to ensure the most busy traffic periods are not interrupted however, the area is very busy throughout the unrestricted period. As a result, any loading activity should take place between;

7am to 7.30am

9.30am to 4.30pm

6.30pm to 7pm.

During the permitted loading period from 9.30am to 4.30pm, the area is subject to high pedestrian footfall and concerns have been raised as to potential conflict between pedestrians and vehicles due to impeded visibility caused by delivery vehicles. The excerpt from Google Maps below demonstrates the issue very clearly.

View Eastwards



View westwards



Observations

The pedestrian refuge is very well used and while stationary vehicles delivering to the store impede visibility, the island allows for a two stage crossing and pedestrians can cross without significant delay. The footway has been widened on the south side to reduce the width of the carriageway pedestrians need to negotiate and this feature also provides enhanced visibility of westbound traffic from the southern footway however, the visibility is impeded of eastbound traffic from the northern footway as traffic invariably manoeuvres around the stationary vehicle moving back into the eastbound carriageway shortly before the refuge. Pedestrians are unable to see oncoming traffic and drivers are not able to see pedestrians crossing the eastbound carriageway until they are manoeuvring past the stationary vehicle.

The accident history for the area shows no personal injury accidents have occurred in the last three years at this location.

Accidents are recorded further eastwards as shown in the excerpt from the accident map below.



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Accident details

Of the five accidents shown in the above excerpt, three involve injury to pedestrians. One accident relates to a pedestrian crossing the road when the vehicle, which was reversing into a parking space ran over the pedestrian's foot.

One accident involved a vehicle attempting to exit on to Broadway and head west. The pedestrian was crossing Broadway and was hit by the vehicle.

One accident relates to an intoxicated pedestrian who intentionally placed themselves in front of a vehicle.

Recommendation

Moving this refuge eastwards would involve the loss of parking in an area where parking availability is much needed. While there are two car parks within a five minute walk of the location, both are very busy and vehicles often wait for a space to be made available.

More importantly, there are serious concerns that the removal of this facility will not deter pedestrians from using the location as a crossing point and be required to cross both carriageways in one single movement. Accidents may occur as a result creating an issue where previously the location is evidenced as an appropriate place to cross.

Given the evidence that the location is not subject to accidents and that relocation of the pedestrian activity would require the loss of parking in a very busy local shopping area, no further action relating to the refuge is recommended at this time.

Further loading restrictions could be placed from the junction of Elm Road to West Street to prohibit deliveries however, Members are advised that while a loading restriction is managed by the creation of a Traffic Regulation Order, the general provision relating to objections differ from other restrictions. If loading activity is proposed to be prohibited between the hours which include the period from 10am to 4pm (unless the location is within 15 metres of a junction), where objections are received, consideration of objections cannot be undertaken by a local Committee and a public inquiry must be held. This is to ensure onerous restrictions are not un-necessarily placed on loading and servicing activity.

There is however, the opportunity to provide a loading bay located near to the location in West Street. Such a proposal could mitigate additional loading restrictions but regardless of mitigation, any objections would need to be scrutinized at a full public inquiry.

This would remove unrestricted parking but the loading bay could be dedicated for this activity from 7am to 7pm and reverting to unrestricted parking outside of these times.

Recommend that no further action is taken with regard to relocation of the refuge.

Propose the provision of a loading bay in West Street operational from 7am to 7pm reverting to unrestricted parking overnight.

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If agreed, officers will monitor the usage of the loading bay and activity in the area of the refuge. In the event that loading activity continues at the location, authorisation to propose loading restrictions will be sought at a future meeting.