

# WHITLEIGH: SAFER AND SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL 2011

Consultation Report and Scheme Programme



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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The Whitleigh Safer and Sustainable Travel programme is intended to promote walking; cycling and bus travel in the local community on safer roads.

Whitleigh has a busy community of about 7,300 people, and schools that serve many other areas of Plymouth. However, Whitleigh also has the highest number of child pedestrian collisions in Plymouth, which is why the Council is looking at piloting a new approach to road safety in the community. The programme looks at making improvements on an area wide level, rather than implementing smaller, isolated schemes and measures. The scheme also looks to minimize the amount of traditional road safety features, such as speed humps, in order to reduce street clutter and improve the urban environment.

In partnership with the Whitleigh community, Neighbourhood Regeneration Team, the Police, local schools and health teams, the Council would like to encourage more children to walk and cycle to school, improve bus satisfaction and make the roads safer for everyone.

The WHITLEIGH: Safer and Sustainable programme will trial an area based approach to road safety delivery and the use of 20 mph speeds in residential areas with the intention of rolling it out citywide as part of the City's third Local Transport Plan

(<http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/homepage/transportandroads/policyandplanning/ltp/ltp2011-2026.htm>) subject to assessment of outcomes.

Historically the Council has put in place 20mph speed limits outside schools and a number of schools have had road safety measures introduced. However, the implementation of limits outside a school does not make the rest of the journey to school any safer, or provide the wider benefits for the community. The Council want to look at ways of improving road safety and local travel that benefit whole communities instead of one small area and this is what the Council will be trialling through the Whitleigh; Safer and Sustainable Travel scheme.

Between March and May 2011 the Council engaged in consultation with the Whitleigh Community in order to understand the key barriers and opportunities to safe, sustainable travel, in the Whitleigh area. This paper reports on the consultation activities and sets out the proposed programme for the scheme.

As part of the initiative between March 2011 and May 2011 local residents were asked to share their views on road safety, speeding 'hot spots' and ways of helping more people to walk, cycle and travel by bus in the local area. The comments and ideas received have been used to develop a community-led programme of improvements. The programme will be delivered by Plymouth Transport and Highways, the partnership between Plymouth City Council and Amey LG.

## **2.0 SUMMARY OF RESULTS**

To inform the forthcoming WHITLEIGH: Safer and Sustainable Travel Programme, a series of consultation activities were undertaken to understand what the residents of Whitleigh feel is needed to encourage greater use of sustainable transport and improve road safety in the local area. The consultation programme was supported by four audits of Whitleigh. The audits considered barriers and opportunities to road safety, walking, cycling and public transport in the local community.

The results show that:-

- Many residents in Whitleigh believe that reducing speed in the community is a good idea; although there is a desire amongst stakeholders and residents that Budshead Road remains a 30mph road with lower speed limits being introduced in the surrounding residential roads.
- There was some support for traditional speed reduction measures, such as speed cushions, whereas other people wanted some of the existing measures, i.e. chicanes, removed. Issues

with traditional traffic calming measures were also reported by stakeholders including local public transport providers.

- Overall the community is happy with cycling facilities in the area although it is felt that cycle storage could be improved on Whitleigh Green; this comment was echoed in the cycle audit.
- Some improvements are needed to encourage walking in the local area and there is support for the introduction of some formal pedestrian crossings, especially between the doctor's surgery and Whitleigh Green and near some of the schools.
- The majority of residents believe that the bus stops are in the right locations. However, there is a mixed opinion about whether the information provided by the bus operators is appropriate.
- A number of residents suggested making some or all of the roads in Whitleigh, including Lancaster Gardens, one way.
- Parking problems were a common theme in the consultation responses with a lack of parking in some areas and inappropriate parking in other areas often being reported.
- There is a need to look at potholes and pavements in some areas

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

Between February 2011 and July 2011 the Council engaged in a number of activities to understand barriers and opportunities to safe and sustainable travel in Whitleigh. The activities included: a walking<sup>1</sup>, cycling, public transport and road safety audit as well as public engagement and consultation events as detailed in table 3.1. For members of the public unable to attend consultation sessions participation in WHITLEIGH: Safer and Sustainable Travel was possible by; downloading a consultation leaflet and dropping it off at one of three deposit points, emailing the Council's Public Transport Team or reporting an issue through 'Plymouth on a map.'

**Table 3.1. Consultation undertaken in Whitleigh**

Consultation Activity	Dates
Woodfield Primary School Playground Surgery	15 March 2011
Whitleigh Primary School Playground Surgery	17 March 2011
Whitleigh Green	16 March 2011
Whitleigh Neighbourhood Meeting	23 March 2011 and 20 July 2011
Whitleigh Green Fitness Festival	7 April 2011
Leaflet consultation	Copies of the leaflet were available from Wednesday 20 April until Friday 6 May at the Whitleigh Plymouth Community Homes Housing Office, St Chad's Church, the Albemarle pub, local businesses/ facilities and online.  Some house to house leaflet drops were also made in the Whitleigh area.

<sup>1</sup> The walking audit was undertaken by members of the Plymouth Local Access Forum

## **4.0 RESULTS**

### **4.1 Leaflet Consultation**

The Whitleigh: Safer and Sustainable travel leaflet asked a number of questions about walking, cycling and road safety. Thirty two responses were received and the results are recorded below.

#### **4.1.1 Speed reduction**

##### **Qu. Do you think reducing speed in Whitleigh is a good idea?**

10 out of 32 respondents answered this question. All 10 respondents thought it was a good idea to reduce speed in Whitleigh with one respondent adding that they agreed “as long as it’s policed”.

#### **4.1.2 Walking**

##### **Qu. Are there any areas that could be improved to make it easier or safer to walk?**

Suggestions received for improving areas to make it easier or safer to walk included:

- Pavement upkeep / replacement of flagstones
- Better signage (the junction of Milford Lane and Budshead Road was mentioned as a specific location)
- Encouraging cyclists (especially young cyclists) to use a bell to warn pedestrians when they will be passing them, as many areas of footways are shared use and often pedestrians are unaware of cyclists until they have passed them. It was suggested that providing school children who cycle with a free bell for their bikes may act as an incentive.

##### **Qu. Would a map of the local area encourage you to walk more?**

7 out of 32 respondents answered this question with 2 respondents saying that a map would encourage them to walk more, but 5 respondents saying that it would not.

#### **4.1.3 Cycling**

##### **Qu. Do you think more local cycling facilities are needed?**

2 people answered this question. One person felt that more local cycling facilities were needed. A second person commented that marked areas for cycling were needed.

#### **4.1.4 Public transport**

##### **Qu. Are the bus stops in the right place?**

One person answered this question. They were happy that the bus stops were in the right places.

A survey was carried out by Plymouth Citybus in conjunction with Council consultation asking whether the bus route through Whitleigh should be changed to a one way service. The response to this survey was a clear “keep it as it is”. It would seem that residents are reasonably satisfied with the current bus service.

#### **Qu. Do the operators provide you with information that is easy to understand?**

Two respondents answered this question, I answered yes, and I answered no. It remains unclear, therefore, as to whether the bus companies provide understandable information in the area or not.

#### **4.1.5 Map suggestions**

Residents were also asked to write or draw their comments on a map of Whitleigh provided in a consultation leaflet. All of the comments received are listed below.

- Resurface Budshead Road
- Remove some of the chicanes - they present hazards where none existed before
- 30 mph limit Budshead Road, 20 mph limit all other roads
- Speed bumps near St Peter's RC School are needed
- [A] crossing patrol for Woodfield Primary School [is needed]
- Zebra crossing to the doctor's surgery near Whitleigh Green is needed
- No. 46/47 is needed to return for hospital and St Budeaux Clinic to and from Whitleigh
- Create more off road parking as at the end of Lancaster Gardens (use the grassed areas!)
- Make all roads one way
- Make all roads 20 mph
- Put in chicanes / sleeping policemen
- Take away lay-by [at Whitleigh Green] to allow you to see the road when leaving the shops and if you cannot do the lay-by then make [the] road out of the Green [Trowbridge Close] the way in and one way
- Make [Shrewsbury Road] one way

#### **4.2 Other consultation events**

During the consultation period Council Officers spoke to residents and Members about the proposed scheme and collated their comments. A summary of the community feedback is included below:

- There is a need for pedestrian crossings, especially near community facilities.
- There is a need for cycle parking at Whitleigh Green.
- In some areas buses are finding it difficult to pass each other due to parked cars.
- Some bus stops are thought to be in the wrong location due to their proximity to junctions.
- Some people have suggested introducing one ways on roads in Whitleigh such as Taunton Avenue and Lancaster Gardens.
- There are concerns about speeding traffic especially on Taunton Avenue, Budshead Road, Shrewsbury Road and Brentford Avenue.
- Issues with parking have been raised including concerns about poor visibility when exiting Whitleigh Green due to vehicles parked in the lay-by.
- There is a need to address potholes, particularly on Taunton Avenue and Budshead Road.

### 4.3 Cycle audit

The cycle audit for Whitleigh considered the barriers and opportunities for cycling in Whitleigh and measures which could be introduced, both physical and behavioural, to overcome the barriers and maximise the opportunities for cycling to and from five trip attractors in the local area (the four schools and Whitleigh Green).

The recommendations of the report are:-

- Concentrate [on] encouraging a modal shift towards more walking and public transport use within Whitleigh - Prevailing road conditions and steep gradients throughout the area are why opportunities for cycling in Whitleigh are thought to be limited.
- Convert Whitleigh Way to shared use. This will require revisions to the connection with Crownhill Road.
- Provide a suitable controlled crossing point where Whitleigh Road meets Crownhill Road
- Introduce on-carriageway measures for cyclists along Budshead Road eastwards from its junction with Tamerton Foliot Road to link with the off-carriageway routes on Tavistock Road
- Consider introducing a cycle audit process for all planning applications that require a change to the highway. Provide suitable training if necessary
- Consider promoting active recreation for the local community by the creation of mountain bike tracks.

### 4.4 Walking audit

The Local Access Forum undertook a walking audit of Whitleigh. The audit reviewed the practicality of walking in the local community, official Rights of Way in the area (drawing on the review of the 1988 Ramblers' Map) and possible leisure routes to complement the walking group delivered by the NHS as part of the *Walking for health project*.

(<http://www.wfh.naturalengland.org.uk/>).

The audit identified that:-

- Some of the alleyways and pathways need more frequent maintenance and better lighting to make walking more attractive in Whitleigh.
- There are potential leisure routes in and around Whitleigh, many of which have wayfinders marking the path but which may need more local publicity. Additional leisure routes have also been identified.
- A number of Public Rights of Way have already been registered. However, further potential routes have been identified.

### 4.4 Public transport audit

The public transport audit reviewed all the bus stops in the Whitleigh locality and considered the infrastructure and information available at each stop. The key findings of the public transport audit were:-

- A number of bus stops could benefit from hard-standings and bus borders. These measures would improve the waiting environment of the stops, bus passengers currently have to stand

on the grass when waiting for a bus, and increase the accessibility of public transport for people with restricted mobility and / or pushchairs.

- Information at the bus stops was not always available
- Parked cars in some areas make it difficult for buses to access bus stops.

## **5.0 PROPOSED PROGRAMME**

WHITLEIGH: Safer and Sustainable Travel is intended to; improve road safety, encourage and enable greater levels of walking, cycling and bus use amongst Whitleigh residents and improve the quality of life of the community.

Using the feedback from members of the public and key stakeholders a programme has been developed which will reduce average traffic speeds, make it easier and safer for people to cross the road and encourage people to travel sustainably to and from Whitleigh. Table 5.1 summarise the key engineering components of the programme, all of which will be delivered by March 2012. However, WHITLEIGH: Safer and Sustainable Travel embodies a move away from traditional engineering and a move towards a holistic programme combining both engineering and behavioural change measures; the latter elements of the scheme is described in table 5.2 . The scheme is focussed on the northern part of the Whitleigh in recognition of the extensive traffic calming which has already been introduced to the south of Budshead Road. This decision has been made in order to maximise the funding available and ensure that all of the Whitleigh community can enjoy safer and sustainable travel.

**Table 5.1: Proposed engineering programme for WHITLEIGH: Safer and Sustainable Travel**

SCHEME		DELIVERABLES			
Title	Description	Walking	Cycling	Public Transport	Road Safety
Budshead Road – lay-by modification	Removal of the lay-by which borders Whitleigh Green.	Y – Improving visibility along Budshead Road, through the removal of the lay-by will make it safer for pedestrians to cross the road using the two existing traffic islands	Y- Removal of the lay-by will remove the conflict between cyclists on the highway and vehicles using the lay-by.	Nil- The removal of the lay-by will have no impact on buses.	Y – The removal of lay-by on Budshead Road will improve visibility for traffic exiting Whitleigh Green. At present vehicles parked in the lay-by create a hazard for vehicles exiting the Whitleigh Green car park.
Targeted bus build outs	Introduction of a number of built out kerbs at popular bus stops on Taunton Avenue.	Y- The bus build outs will narrow the road in certain locations reducing the distance pedestrians have to cross from one side of the road to the other.	N – Bus build outs will create a ‘pinch point’ in the road which means that the gap between cyclists and cars will be reduced at certain points. However, the number of build outs will be limited and cars should not overtake cyclists in these areas.	Y – Bus build outs will overcome the problem of buses not being able to access bus stops due to parked cars.	Y- When buses are stopped at the build outs they will act as mobile traffic calming effectively reducing traffic speeds on Taunton Avenue, an area of particular concern to local residents. Reducing the width of the road will also improve pedestrian safety and by targeting high demand bus stops the pedestrian crossing improvements will be delivered in areas where people want to cross the road.
Gateway treatments designed to reduce the ambient traffic speed in Whitleigh	Introduction of gateway signage – similar to ‘Welcome to our village’ signs on Budshead Rd to advise motorists that they are travelling into a local community and	Y – The gateway signs will change the look and feel of Whitleigh and will encourage through and local traffic to slow down when travelling in Whitleigh	Y – Cyclists will benefit from the lower ambient road speeds and it is envisaged that more people will feel safe enough to cycle. The scheme also benefits from	Nil – The gateway treatments will not impede bus services.	Y - Reducing traffic speeds will reduce both the likelihood and severity of any traffic collisions should they occur.

SCHEME		DELIVERABLES			
Title	Description	Walking	Cycling	Public Transport	Road Safety
	physical gateways (incorporating features such as vegetation, kerb realignments and 20 mph roundels on the road) on each of the northern spurs coming off Budshead Road.		minimal changes to the highway; traditional calming can disadvantage cyclists through creating carriageway pinch points.		
School crossing improvements outside Woodfield Primary School	The scheme will introduce a build out at the entrance to Woodfield School.	Y –The proposed build out will narrow the carriageway outside the school making it easier and safer for children and their families to cross the road.	N – Bus build outs will create a ‘pinch point’ in the road which means that the gap between cyclists and cars will be reduced at certain points. However, the number of build outs will be limited and cars should not overtake cyclists in these areas.	Nil- The build out will not impede bus services.	Y – At the start and end of the school day inappropriate parking alongside high pedestrian footfall makes the area outside the primary school a conflict site between motorists and children; a situation which has been exacerbated through the long term absence of a school crossing patrol. The proposed build out will narrow the carriageway outside the school making it easier and safer for children and their families to cross the road.
Gateway improvements on Lancaster Gardens	'School Keep Clear' markings will be introduced on Lancaster Gardens outside the main entrances to the Wood View Learning Campus	Y- Improving the visibility at the Campus entrance will make it easier for children and their families to cross the road.	Y- Improving the visibility at the Campus entrance will make it safer for children on bikes to enter and leave the site.	Nil- no service buses operate via Lancaster Gardens.	Y- Through removing parked cars from the vicinity of the school gate visibility will be improved thereby improving road safety

**Table 5.2 Proposed behavioural change measures**

Theme	Measures to be introduced / undertaken
Reducing road speeds in Whiteleigh and making sure that the lower speeds are adhered to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We will explore the introduction of Community Speed Watch in Whiteleigh in partnership with the local community and Devon and Cornwall Police.</li> <li>▪ We will change the look and feel of roads in Whiteleigh so all road users know they are entering a residential area where '20's plenty'</li> <li>▪ Mobile traffic calming will be introduced through the use of bus build outs</li> </ul>
Encouraging greater levels of walking and cycling in the local area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promotion of leisure based walking routes in Whiteleigh via the web, community centres, Walking Group and better signage.</li> <li>▪ Expansion of the Public Rights of Way in Whiteleigh. A number of potential walking routes have been identified in Whiteleigh by the walking audit. As part of the LoveLIFE (<a href="http://www.heraldlovelife.co.uk">www.heraldlovelife.co.uk</a>) initiative we will look to register and promote some of these routes as PRoW.</li> <li>▪ Promotion of the new sustainable transport map and cycling map for Plymouth</li> <li>▪ Provision of cycle stands at Whiteleigh Green</li> <li>▪ Promotion of adult and child cycle training</li> </ul>
Enabling greater bus use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Upgrading and consolidating information at bus stops through partnership working with local bus companies</li> </ul>

The effectiveness of WHITLEIGH: Safer and Sustainable Travel in: improving safety, encouraging sustainable travel, improving the urban environment, encouraging healthy lifestyles and improving access to employment opportunities and green spaces by tackling excess speed, making road crossing easier and safer, making cycling easier and safer, improving permeability and making it easier for buses to pass each other will be assessed following the completion of the scheme.