**Consultation Response Report**

**School Lane Improvement Plan – Connecting the Community**

A consultation on options was held on the above scheme between 10th September and 25th September 2015.

The three options were:

1. Do nothing.
2. Improved footpath adjacent to the wooded section.
3. Upgrade of road to adoptable standards with footway adjacent to the resident properties.

The purpose of the consultation was to obtain information from the local community in order to provide a recommendation to the Community Council via the Local Member and if possible address any concerns raised.

During the consultation process there were comments made by individuals to other individuals with regards to views being made on the options. As these comments do not have any technical influence, but are personal views, they have been ignored.

The concerns and comments are summarised as below, along with the Council’s response.

In response to the consultation between these dates the Council received 56 direct responses from the community and a petition style response by a local resident that had 114 signatures for differing options.

The response for each option is set out below:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Option 1 | Option 2 | Option 3 | Other |
| 3 | 29 | 27 | 1 |

The other option was presented by Sustrans and highlighted a design standard for pedestrian and cycling dominated roads.

Petition style responses by signatures wasas follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option 1 | Option 2 | Option 3 |
| 1 | 19 | 114 |

1. **Issue – Waste of money / funding**

*“Frankly a ridiculous waste of money/resources to try and fix an issue that’s barely an issue at all”*

*“Option 3 is totally overkill, expensive”*

*“I strongly object to wasting taxpayer money on an unnecessary project”*

*“Option 2 is the most cost effective solution to make it a safe walking environment for the children walking to school and other pedestrians”*

Response

Value for Money is a personal perspective and therefore is subjective. For example a vulnerable user would be supportive of the investment as it would provide access to an area where they are unable to go due to the current conditions.

The funding of Option 2 and 3 is looking to be supported by the Aggregate Levy Fund which comes from taxes placed on aggregate extraction. This funding can be utilised to improve community facilities.

The Council has agreed to provide funding for Option 3 if partial funding is realised from an application made to the Aggregate Levy fund.

Option 2 would be supported by the Council without funding from the Aggregate Levy Fund.

1. **Issue – No impact from the Aggregate Industry**

*“There has been no impact stemming from the Aggregate Industry”.*

Response

The aggregate industry is prevalent in the area around Gwaelod-y-Garth. As Main Road has no footway for a significant length, School Lane acts as the only safe pedestrian route to the school. Although individuals may not feel the direct impact of the industry, the community of Gwaelod-y-Garth is impacted indirectly by the aggregate industry.

1. **Issue – School Lane is not of a suitable condition**

*“My grandson fell in a pothole on the way to School via School Lane. It cost him a morning off School, a badly cut leg, loss of confidence and soaking wet clothes that had to be changed”*

*“Water outside our gate making it impossible to access our property unless we wear waders”*

*“By far the most frustrating part of the problem is the desperately poor condition of School Lane”*

*“I have walked this route many times over 20 years. However, there have been many time I have been unable to it because of flooding”*

*“It is impossible to walk in safety along Main Road. School Lane is the only alternative in this village. It has become impossible to walk along School Lane, too. Getting from one end of the village to the other is a nightmare.*

*“A path alone would be pointless expenditure. Users would be regularly drenched by dripping trees and intermittent traffic”*

*“I walk my children to school every day and the lane is a disgrace”.*

*“Option 3 would considerably increase the number of children able to walk to school in wetter months of the year, which will bring numerous benefits, not only to the children’s wellbeing but also reducing the number of vehicles parking in the school yard”*

*“This has gone on long enough – Option 3 please”*

*“As the years pass the puddles get deeper, the mud gets deeper”.*

*“The lane is seldom dry”*

*“The lane is getting more and more unmanageable”*

Response

Option 3 would provide positive drainage to alleviate the drainage issues and provide a solution that would require limited maintenance.

Option 2 provides an alternative route for pedestrians but will not resolve any ongoing issues with ponding or potholes on School Lane.

1. **Issue – Surfacing will make safety worse**

*“There have never been any accidents on School Lane in the 43 years I have lived in the Village. The condition of the track deters other traffic from using it and so is mostly used by residents on the lane”*

*“The deterioration of the road caused traffic to diminish making it noticeably safer for children both living on the lane and those walking to and from the school”*

*“Surfacing would lead inevitably to faster driving and therefore make this route less safe”*

*“People will make a way of parking / driving on the pavement and it simply is not made for sharing”*

*“Traffic would use this as a rat run to bypass the traffic on Main Road”*

*“Improving roads in any way only promotes the use of cars and makes people drive faster. If the Council’s aim is to promote walking to school, then it’s better to focus solely on walking and not cars in any way”*

Response

The comments received about a deteriorated road reducing vehicle speed are supported as it acts as a traffic calming measure. However, the condition of the road for pedestrian and cyclist movements is extremely poor and therefore either option 2 or option 3 are considered to support providing improved facilities.

Option 3 does provide issues associated with the speed of vehicle movements and therefore consideration of traffic calming measures would be required if this option is taken forward.

1. **Issue – Footway through woods to Main Road not considered with the options**

*“The better footway option is not included. This is the path that leads from School Lane through the woods to Main Road”*

*“A link to the newly made pathways through the woods and linked to Main Road avoiding any pedestrian use of School Lane”*

*“It would be more sensible and safer to encourage people to use the footpath through the woodland to Main Road”*

Response

Although the footway does provide an option for able bodied users there are issues for vulnerable users and parents using pushchairs.

The use of wooded footways to provide a route to school is not supported by The City of Cardiff Council under Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008. Therefore this option was not considered appropriate for consultation.

1. **Issue – Tight bend on School Lane**

*“The installation of a footway around the 90 degree bend (blind corner) at the garages is not achievable due to the lack of space. Larger vehicles will have to mount the kerb”*

Response

The tight bend exists in the present condition of School Lane and creates an issue for sight lines and vehicles movements. The footway at this section would be dropped to road level to allow overrun but would be delineated to indicate to vehicles the area of pedestrian movements. Option 3 does not make the current condition any worse than the current position. Option 2 would move pedestrian away from the tight bend if they utilised the footway.

1. **Issue – Locked gates**

*“How those locked gates would work in practice is a mystery”.*

*“The lane should be kept as it is, as it is another emergency exit out of the village should main road become impassable”*

Response

Option 3 proposes the use of gates to identify that the section of School Lane is a private road. The gates would not be locked and it would be for users to open and shut the gates to deter the lane being used by other motorists. Access for deliveries and emergency vehicles would be supported. The use of gates is prevalent for private lanes around Cardiff to stop unwanted vehicle movements.

1. **Issue – The gates will not work**

*“Proposing a gate system will not work as acceleration between the two points is achievable and there is not guarantee the gates will be shut after use”.*

*“Reliance of any proposal of the human act of closing a gate is destined to fail, due to the unfortunate lazy attitude of too many”*

Response

The gates in option 3 do need to be supported by users and the local community for them to be effective. Stopping vehicle movement through the lane was considered but could not be supported due to issues with access for deliveries and emergency vehicles.

The presence of gates was not intended to reduce speed but to limit access to the lane. Traffic calming measures could be utilised to reduce speed and this could be considered with the design.

1. **Issue – Parking spaces for residents**

*“Option 2 would prevent certain residents of School Lane having a parking space”*

*“I do not think it is sensible to have a path extend down to the point where it is removing spaces from residents”*

*“I disapprove of the fencing off of the footpath and the removal of the undesignated parking”*

Response

Option 2 would remove undesignated parking adjacent to the wooded area to support the placement of an improved footway. The reason for the protection is to ensure that the footway is not damaged by vehicles parking on the footway. The protections odes not specifically have to take the form of a fence and wooden bollards could be extended. Access and parking within wood would be made for parks operatives maintaining the wooded area.

Unfortunately parking is unable to be supported by option 2 without pushing the footway into the wooded area and the issues associated with this have been discussed previously.

The Council have no issue with the unregulated parking and this parking is supported in option 3.

There are no legal issues for parking to be maintained for residents as the land is owned and maintained by the Council.

1. **Issue – Accessibility by vulnerable users**

*“Option 2 – a footpath would ensure elderly, disabled and small children have a safe route”*

*““I am a pensioner who uses School Lane of a regular basis and find it impossible to walk that way whenever it has been raining”*

Response

Accessibility to vulnerable users is a consideration that will be reviewed via an Equality Impact Assessment on the options.

The drawback of Option 2 is that vulnerable users would not be able to access the properties on School Lane and therefore would limit vulnerable persons from purchasing these properties. The Council has a corporate objective to ensure that the vulnerable are considered and supported in all the work we undertake.

1. **Issue – No street lighting improvements**

*“I do not understand why a street lighting scheme has not been proposed to provide the suggested safe route to school”*

Response

Street lighting was not an issue originally identified by the users of School Lane. A review will be undertaken by the Council to see what improvements can be achieved. This review will be undertaken on whatever option is taken forward.

1. **Issue – The pedestrian pavement is adjacent to the housing**

*“The proposed pavement is on the side of the road adjacent to the houses meaning that all vehicles parked in the drives of these properties would have to cross the pavement which seems to undermine the purpose of the project in increasing safety”*

Response

Option 3 proposes the pavement adjacent to the properties of School Lane. This would be the standard design for any road as the pavement is for use by the residents as well as other users. The placement of pavements adjacent to driveways is common throughout the UK and is not seen as an issue with regards to safety. Both pedestrians and drivers will be aware of the potential hazards, as it is a normal occurrence, and therefore will act to reduce the likelihood of the hazard occurring by being vigilant and attentive.

1. **Issue – Concerns over the rural character or deprivation of the conservation area**

*“Creation of a suburban highway would irretrievably destroy the rural character of the lane and conservation area”*

*“I think asphalting the lane would spoil the look and feel of it and would be hot underfoot in the summer for dogs that are often walked there”*

*“Option 2 would have less impact on our rural environment”*

Response

The Conservation in the Council has reviewed the potential options and has stated that there are no issues associated with the Conservation area as long as consideration is made to the environment during the design. The Delivery Team will work with the Conservation Officer to limit any concerns or impact in this area.

**Response from Sustrans**

Sustrans took a quick review of the proposals for School Lane and commented that as the majority of users are pedestrian and cyclist that a Cycle Street (DE012) design standard from the Design Guidance: Active Travel (Wales) be considered where a speed limit and ban on overtaking cyclists is imposed.

Response

The promotion of cycling is supported by the Council but School Lane has an incline that does not support large numbers of cycle movements. However there is potential to utilise the design standard in Option 3 to soften the aesthetics and discourage vehicle movements.

**Recommendations**

The consultation clearly identifies that Option 1 – ‘do nothing’ should not be considered and this view is supported by the majority of both residents of School Lane and the community.

Option 2 is marginally the preferred options through individual responses but Option 3 is supported when the petition style response is included. The main issues identified in the consultation have been responded to.

The recommendation would be to support Option 3 as this will alleviate the underlying issues of School Lane. To alleviate concerns raised during the consultation The Council will ensure that the comments received are considered during the detailed design process so that they are mitigated. Examples would be that Traffic Calming measures could be implemented on School Lane to remove issue of speeding traffic and deter vehicle use, materials utilised in construction could be sympathetic to the conservation area etc.

From a Council perspective there is a need to support vulnerable users who want to use School Lane and therefore Option 3 would support the Council’s corporate objectives.