

Agenda Item	8
Report No	ERA-06-22

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Easter Ross

Date: 17 February 2022

Report Title: Bridgend Primary School, Alness – Traffic Calming on Caplich Road and Ardross Road

Report By: Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report invites Members to approve the traffic calming measures proposed as part of the Safer Routes to School Scheme for Bridgend Primary School, Alness. These consist of a Build Out on the C1016 Ardross Road and a pair of Speed Cushions and a Build Out (road narrowing) on the U1963 Caplich Road, Alness.

There are 2 unresolved objections.

2 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:-

- i. Note the background to the proposed traffic calming measures and the representations received;
- ii. Approve the construction of the associated traffic calming; and
- iii. Note the intention to monitor the area after the construction including commissioning a traffic survey at the junction of Caplich Road/Perrins Road to determine the effectiveness of the new road layout and traffic calming measures.

3 Implications

- 3.1 **Resource** – These proposals are being funded through the ‘Safer Routes to School’ grant funding from the Scottish Government.

- 3.2 **Legal** - The construction of traffic calming requires statutory consultation under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 with details in The Road Humps (Scotland) Regulations 1998. This report sets out the representations received and is seeking approval to construct the traffic calming.
- 3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)** – Lower vehicle speeds aim to reduce the risks for vulnerable road users and increase active travel choices.
- 3.4 **Climate Change / Carbon Clever** – Reduced vehicle speeds have the aim of increasing active travel choices and thus reducing the number of vehicles, on the roads.
- 3.5 **Risk** – No identifiable risk from these Traffic Calming measures.
- 3.6 **Gaelic** - There are no Gaelic implications.

4 Background

- 4.1 As part of the Highland Council ‘Safer Routes to School’ programme to introduce measures to improve road safety around schools, and provide an environment to encourage walking and cycling, plans were drawn up to introduce traffic calming measures in relation to Bridgend Primary School on Ardross Road and Caplich Road, Alness.

These works compliment the recently completed School Travel Plan.

The proposals were welcomed by the School Head Teacher, Parent Council and supported by the Area Roads Manager.

- 4.2 As of January 2022, there were 2 outstanding objections to the proposed traffic calming measures on Caplich Road and Ardross Road, Alness and 3 representations in support of the proposals for Caplich Road.

5 Finance

- 5.1 Funding for the implementation of the scheme is coming from the Scottish Government Grant Funding for ‘Safer Routes to Schools’.
- 5.2 The estimated cost of construction of the scheme as consulted on would be in the region of £64,000.00.

6 Consultation

- 6.1 Prior to statutory consultation taking place the Bridgend Primary School Head Teacher and Parent Council were consulted on design options. This consultation was undertaken via ‘Teams’ and through email correspondence. The design proposals were accepted by both the above.
- 6.2 Statutory consultation begun with the Emergency Services, Community Council, Freight Transport Association, Road Haulage Association, Highland Cycle Campaign and Bus Companies.

6.3 The residents immediately affected by the design proposals were delivered design consultation letters inviting them to make representation, these letters were delivered by hand on 10 December. This was done to ensure they were fully aware of the start of statutory consultation.

6.4 The proposal was advertised in the local press in December 2021 with 10 January 2022 deadline for representations and was also attached to local lamp columns.

7 Representations

7.1 The Highland Council has received 3 representations in support of the proposals for Caplich Road.

7.2 Two objections have been received during the public consultation.

The objections break down as follows:-

- both objections are for the proposals on Caplich Road; and
- both objections are for the proposals on Ardross Road

7.3 A summary of the grounds for objection contained within these objections are as follows:-

Evidence of Need

The justification for these changes, as stated in the “statement of need” is purely “In the interests of road safety and in order to improve road safety for those walking and wheeling in the community, in particular children walking and cycling to and from Bridgend Primary School,”

As a business which has operated numerous HGV vehicle movements along these routes for over 70 years, we have no knowledge of any incidents / near misses that would justify these changes and the undoubted disruption it will cause to any traffic using these roads, including the ones that our business is dependent upon.

We are 100% committed to pedestrian safety, but there is no evidence provided to suggest there is a problem which needs addressed here. If there is such evidence, then we will be happy to collaborate with the authority to find the optimal design to address those issues and minimise needless disruption of traffic.

Caplich Road Speed Cushions

- Effectiveness – these cushions are largely agreed to be ineffectual, as vehicles will merely move further away from the kerb line in order to straddle them, thus allowing them to maintain the same speed.
- Safety – These cushions will undoubtedly encourage vehicles to move further away from the kerb line in order to straddle them, creating a needless collision risk with vehicles moving in opposing directions.
- Collective Effects – Once the “need” is established, the fact that a new build out is likely, creating enforced traffic calming, will surely have to be taken into account before these additional traffic calming measures can be justified.

Caplich Road build out

Safety – The proposed location, and prioritisation of routing, will cause significant safety issues by:-

- Requiring loaded HGV vehicles to stop on a downhill route, which is not easy to do quickly
- Forcing vehicles, including HGV's, to pass each other on the narrowest section of Caplich Road, which will lead to blockages if the stationary vehicles are not tight to the road kerb.
- Forcing vehicles tight to the road kerb on the hill, where the footpath is already far narrower than recommended, thus creating a pedestrian safety concern to the North of the proposed build-out
- Taking no account of the residential access points to the north of the proposed build-out
- Not addressing the issue of those who regularly park cars on the hill to the north of the proposed build out.

Ardross Road build out

Our objection here is entirely based on need. The main issues we are aware of in this vicinity are the lack of visibility for vehicles exiting Perrins Road, which this will not help and the telegraph pole which is in the middle of the pavement in the location of the proposed build-out. Indeed, the proposed location suggests the latter is the main issue you are trying to address, which is a bigger issue given the construction of a new accessibility ramp to the school to the north of the telegraph pole (i.e., in an utterly inaccessible location, when it could have easily been located to the south of the pole, negating the need for a build out at all.

Build out should be just to the North side of Perrins Road Junction to allow safer exit from Perrins Road.

Consultation

Given that there are a small number of HGV based businesses who have no alternative route to markets other than these roads, it would surely have been sensible, or even just courteous, to have reached out to us directly to consult prior to finalising a public consultation design.

7.4 A summary of the representations and officer comments is set out in the table at **Appendix 3**. Copies of the representations and communications are provided at **Appendix 4**.

7.5 In view of the desire to make progress with Safer Routes to School and the associated traffic calming around Bridgend Primary School, Alness, this report is being brought to Committee to seek approval for the construction of the traffic calming features on Caplich Road and Ardross Road, Alness.

8 Reasoning

8.1 Evidence of Need

The Road Safety Team has been working with the Bridgend Primary School Management and Parent Council to develop Safer Routes to School to encourage more school pupils to walk, cycle, scoot, and wheel to school to build and support more sustainable active travel in the local community.

An increase in active travel also leads to a reduction in car usage around the school and alleviate several residents, school pupils and their parents' concerns about parking at school start and finish times.

The proposals we believe will make the route safer as it will reduce vehicle speeds, provide wider footpath provision and safer crossing points not just for the school pupils and parents but also for the local community looking to cross at that location.

8.2 Caplich Road – Speed Cushions

The proposed speed cushions are part of the overall traffic calming plan for Caplich Road to work alongside the proposed build out by reducing the speed of all vehicle types. The intention of the proposals is to make safer travel for the community and vulnerable road users.

8.3 Caplich Road – Build Out

The reason this location was chosen following consultation with Bridgend Primary School Parent Council is that it forms part of a key active travel route for pupils and parents crossing from Springfield Terrace and the other streets linked through a number of paths to Springfield Terrace. A number of locations were discussed with them and the chosen location was identified by them as the most appropriate location for a safety feature as it is the desire line and crossing location used by pupils / parents crossing Caplich Road whilst walking to school. It directly links to the pavement on Springfield Terrace which are you will be aware is only on the North side of that road.

This road is one of the main routes for HGV's and other large vehicles entering and exiting the nearby quarry and for vehicles travelling from the streets to the North of Obsdale Road to that part of Alness. The proposed road design almost halves the time a vulnerable user is on the carriageway while crossing the road in this location.

In relation to the visibility at this location, when taking into consideration the proposed speed cushions location, the permanent 20mph speed limit, the nature of Caplich Road being long and straight and direction of traffic in the surrounding roads we believe the build out will provide a safer egress from Springfield Terrace.

In relation the priority setting for traffic at the proposed build out. The main reason the priority has been put up hill by the design team is that to reverse it would likely encourage vehicles to speed up through the build out whilst going downhill. Reversing this priority would therefore result in the desired speed reduction impact of the traffic calming feature not being realised.

8.4 Ardross Road – Build Out

The proposed location is designed to complement the investment in the newly installed disability compliant designed ramp access to the school, which will provide great benefits to those using the access such as wheelchair users, buggies, cyclist etc.

At present the pavement is narrow at this point for those looking to access the ramp. The location and design of the build out provides a safer accessible route along the pavement whilst also complimenting the 20mph speed limit for the road as it will result in a reduction in vehicle speeds, making it a more suitable and safer area for those using the road including vulnerable road users.

The proposed location and design will slow down traffic using Ardross Road when heading towards the Perrins Road/Ardross Road junction from the school direction and will therefore provide further provision for exiting the Perrins road junction safely.

The Road Safety Team undertook design and feasibility research into a ramp access at the Perrins Road steps into the school. The estimated cost was £200k and this was deemed cost prohibitive.

8.5 Consultation

In relation to the points about consultation, the Roads Authority is required to carry out a prescribed statutory consultation process for all proposed traffic calming schemes.

These proposals were advertised in the local press, notices attached to lamp columns and letters detailing these proposals were delivered to the houses immediately affected by them. This was the start of public consultation giving residents a chance to comment or object prior to wider public consultation.

The proposals were sent to Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Scottish Ambulance Service, Bus Companies, HC Public Transport, Highland Cycle Campaign, Road Haulage Association, Logistics UK, Local Elected Members, Community Council and as you know residential properties.

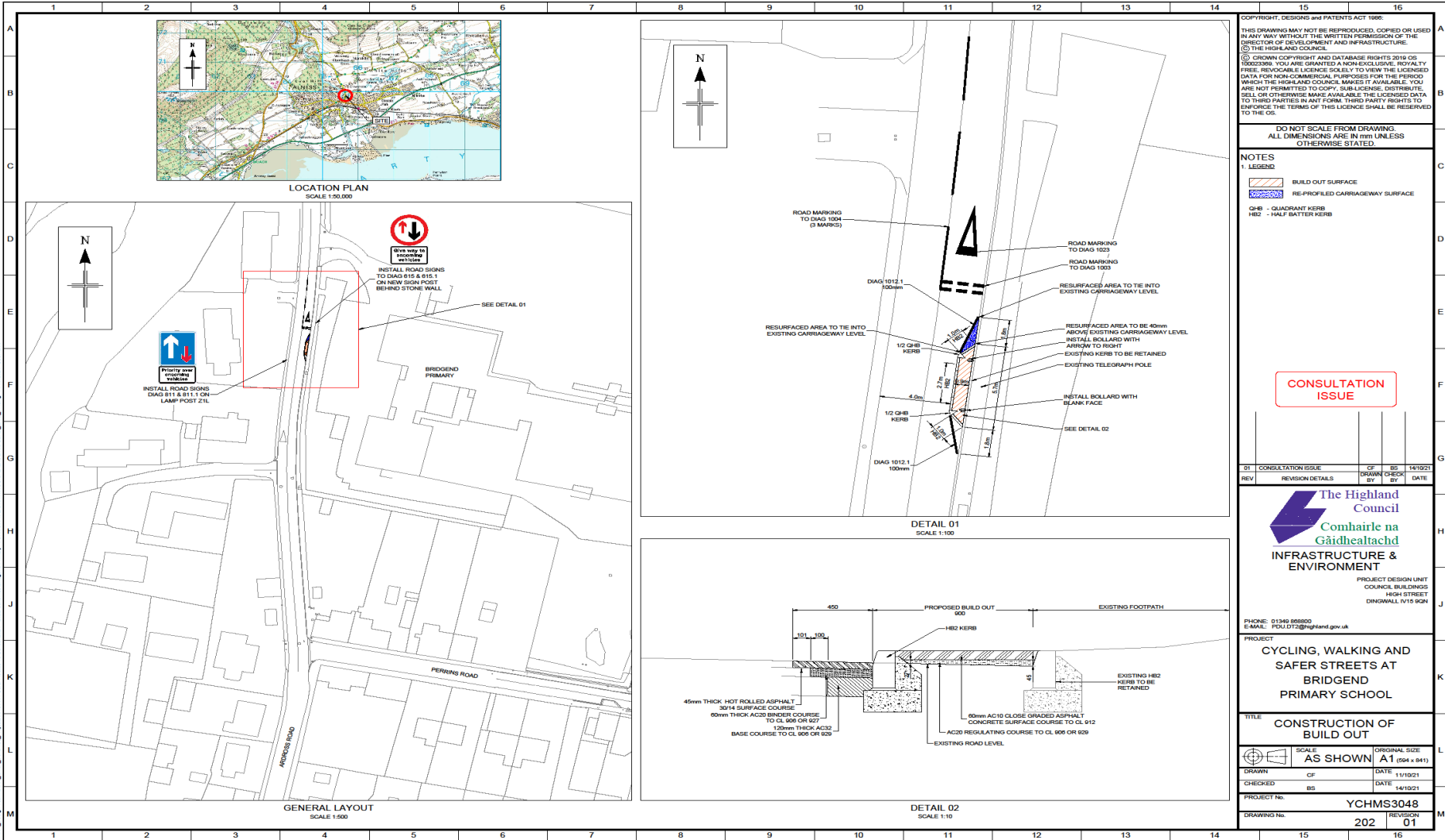
I have assured the objectors that their points about the consultation process have been taken on board for consideration in future consultations.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

Date: 28 January 2022

Author: Ian Graham, Road Safety Officer (School Travel Plans)

Ardross Road Build Out



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NOTES
 1. LEGEND

- BUILD OUT SURFACE
- RE-PROFILED CARRIAGEWAY SURFACE

Q8-B - QUADRANT KERB
 H82 - HALF BATTER KERB

CONSULTATION ISSUE

01	CONSULTATION ISSUE	CF	BS	14/10/21
REV	REVISION DETAILS	BY	BY	DATE

The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd
INFRASTRUCTURE & ENVIRONMENT

PROJECT DESIGN UNIT
 COUNCIL BUILDINGS
 HIGH STREET
 DINGWALL IV15 9GN

PHONE: 01340 88500
 E-MAIL: PDU.D12@highland.gov.uk

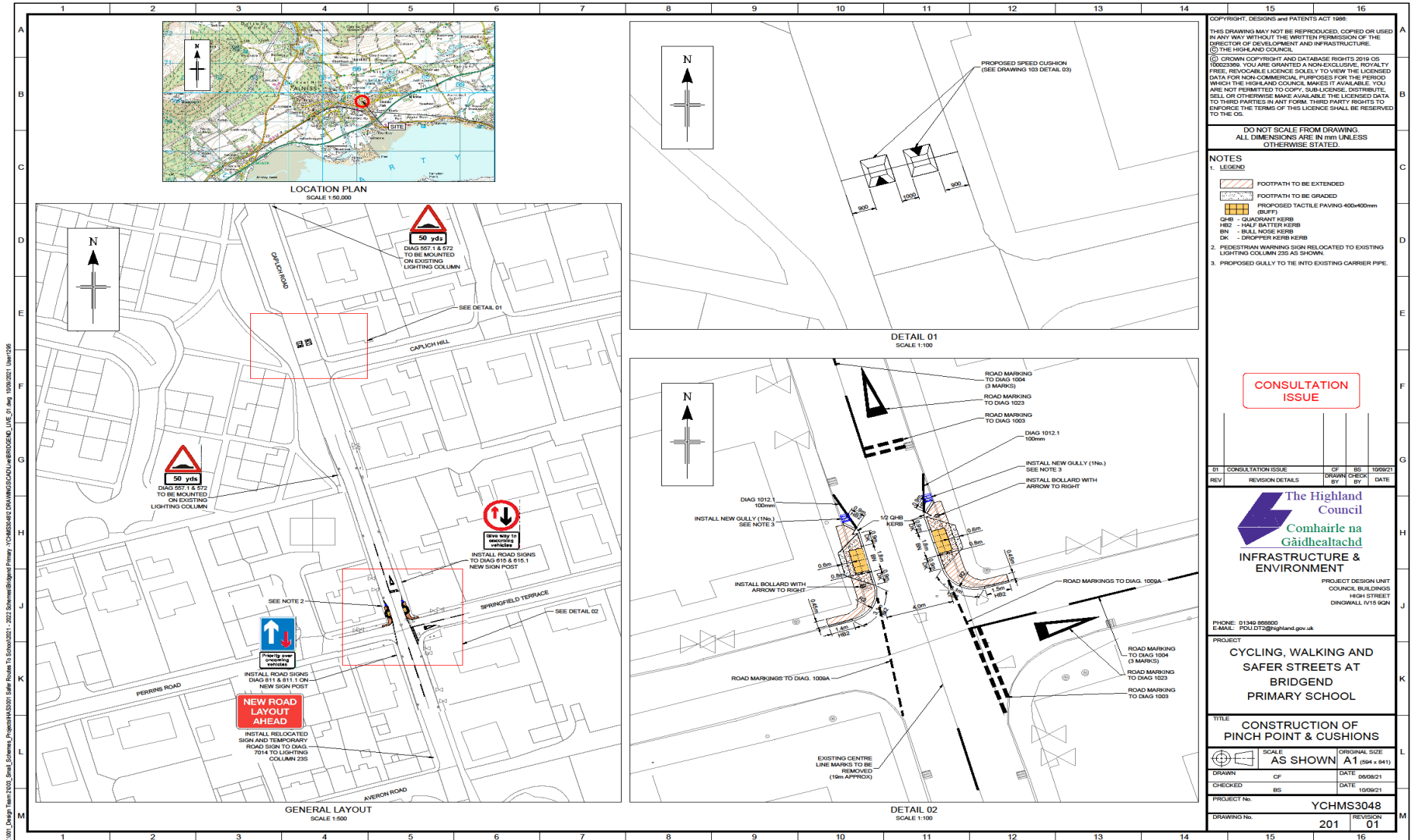
PROJECT
 CYCLING, WALKING AND SAFER STREETS AT BRIDGEND PRIMARY SCHOOL

TITLE
 CONSTRUCTION OF BUILD OUT

SCALE	AS SHOWN	ORIGINAL SIZE	A1 (894 x 641)
DRAWN	CF	DATE	1/1/2021
CHECKED	BS	DATE	14/10/21
PROJECT No.	YCHMS3048		
DRAWING No.	202	REVISION	01

T:\00 - Design Team\2020_Small_20mm\3_Proposed\A1\01 - Safe Routes To School\2021 - 2022\Scheme\Design\Primary - YCHMS3048 - CONSTRUCTION OF BUILD OUT\BROCKENBUSH_DRAWING_01.dwg 14/10/21 - Unit 17/25

Build Out and Speed Cushions Caplich Road, Alness



T:\001_Design_Team\2020_Sum_Schemes_PopularHLS\07_Safer Routes To School\2021_2022_Schemes\Bridgend Primary YCHMS3048\DRAWING\SCAU\BRIDGE\LD_LINE_01.dwg, 10/09/2021, User:1208

Table of Representations and Officer Comments

Representor	Date Received	Summary	Officer Comment
Supporter 1	9 th Dec 21	Supports the build out and installation of speed cushions on Caplich Road	Welcome support. No further action required.
Supporter 2	7 th Jan 22	Supports the build out and installation of speed cushions on Caplich Road	Welcome support. No further action required.
Supporter 3	12 th Jan 22	Supports the build out and installation of speed cushions on Caplich Road	Welcome support. No further action required.
Objector 1	10 th Jan 22	<p>Objection to the build out and installation of speed cushions on Caplich Road and build out on Ardross Road include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No evidence of need • Flaws in proposed design which will result in greater safety issues than currently. • Safety – The proposed location, and prioritisation of routing, will cause significant safety issues • Lack of consideration / consultation to long established HGV based businesses that rely on these roads as their only routes to market 	Response letter / emails sent on sent on 20 th Jan and second response after further communication received sent on 26 th Jan 22 replying to the points raised within their objection including the rationale behind the need and design / location of the traffic calming features and the consultation process.
Objector 2	10 th Jan 22	<p>Objection to the build out and installation of speed cushions on Caplich Road and build out on Ardross Road include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No evidence of need • Flaws in proposed design which will result in greater safety issues than currently. 	Response letter / emails sent on sent on 20 th Jan and second response after further communication received sent on 27 th Jan 22 replying to the points raised within their objection including the rationale behind the need and design / location of the traffic calming features and the consultation process.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safety – The proposed location, and prioritisation of routing, will cause significant safety issues• Lack of consideration / consultation including two long established HGV based businesses that rely on these roads as their only routes to market	
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Copies of Correspondence

Supporter 1**IAN GRAHAM (Roads and Transport)**

From: Road Safety
Subject: RE: traffic calming features caplich road

Sent: 09 January 2022 18:55
To: Road Safety <Road.Safety@highland.gov.uk>
Subject: traffic calming features caplich road

CAUTION: This email was sent from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Attention ian graham

thank you for your letter dated 10th december 2021; as residents of a property adjacent to this junction for 45 years, we are indeed pleased to hear that proposals are being considered for this particularly hazardous section of caplich road. over the years we have been concerned for the safety of pedestrians there. in the past, we willingly supported the council's proposal to widen the road on the east side adjacent to our property, and provide a footpath.

i think that the proposal will have make a significant improvement to the current situation. the proposed road adjustments on caplich road will significantly improve the safety of all road users and pedestrians. the better visibility of traffic on caplich road for people entering the junction from springfield terrace will also make the situation less hazardous.

an additional benefit might be an increase in the amount of traffic complying with the 20mph speed restriction; even more would do so if a traffic speed indicator were installed. many accelerate as they approach the junction, and traffic coming down the hill is often perceived to be going 'too fast', if not actually 'speeding'.

i was a teacher for many years in alness academy and worked on several 'safer routes to schools' schemes, and other traffic schemes as a member of the alness community council in the 1970s and 1980s.

the increased traffic generated by cars delivering pupils to bridgend school contributes greatly to the hazards faced by their fellow pupils and local residents.

could i suggest that other measures to reduce the traffic be considered; for example in evanton pupils are encouraged to be dropped off/picked up at the village centre car park and then proceed on foot to the school. such a scheme could work for bridgend pupils, who could be safely dropped off/ picked up in the car park situated between obsdale road and averon road, and proceed to walk the rest of the way. additionally, the reduced numbers of vehicles at the caplich road junction and on perrins road would, in itself, make the situation for them much safer. paradoxically, if the route were perceived to be safer, fewer pupils might be 'driven to school' to the benefit of their social and physical health.

in recent years, more frequent and larger-capacity industrial traffic uses the route to/from caplich quarry. it is not unusual to have very large laden lorries, both articulated and non-articulated, and others carrying loaded skips towing a trailer loaded with 2 more skips, using the road, for which it was never designed. such vehicles navigating the Tee junction at obsdale road, some of which then turn right onto market street or proceed down alness high

street cause regular issues and are detrimental to the integrity of the road surface and drains, most of which have been in a sunken state since the road was last re-surfaced.

in a significant report published by jack holmes in the 1960s for the easter ross area, it was the intention that traffic to/from caplich quarry would use the distributor roads around shillinghill and obsdale park and that these be linked by an appropriate route through the quarry itself. access would be onto the A9 at the milnafua junction. an implementation of this system would greatly improve the traffic situation, not just on caplich road, but throughout the east end of alness.

i would be willing to be part of a group should one be set up to consider other 'safer routes' measures.

yours sincerely

██████████

Supporter 2

IAN GRAHAM (Roads and Transport)

From: Road Safety
Subject: RE: Traffic Calming Features Caplich Road, Alness

[REDACTED]
Sent: 07 January 2022 15:35
To: Road Safety <Road.Safety@highland.gov.uk>
Subject: Traffic Calming Features Caplich Road, Alness

CAUTION: This email was sent from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Re Traffic Calming Features Caplich Road, Alness:

Build Out and Speed Cushion Installation Proposal

Dear Ian Graham,

I support the above proposal.

My property is [REDACTED] which is at the junction of Caplich Road. The above proposal is sited [REDACTED].

I was pleased to read your proposal which I hope goes a long way to help solve what has been a really serious problem for years. This has become dramatically worse with the increased number and size of vehicles going to and from Pat Munro's quarry. The 20 mile an hour road markings and signage is mostly completely ignored and hopefully the two parts to your proposal should help curb the speeds.

As it stands, I witness on a regular basis, lorries and other vehicles taking a run at the hill to get up there before another vehicle appears at the top to slow them down. I only hope that uphill traffic doesn't still try to do that even with the build out in place. At the very least, it should make them think, but the problem is that Caplich Road is

totally unsuitable for the volume and type of vehicles that use it.

I know that the brief for this proposal is to improve the safety of pupils' routes to school, and that this is of primary importance. However there are also major safety issues on this road throughout the working hours of the quarry.

1

The pavement on my side of the road is very narrow and there is little distance between people walking on the pavement and these enormous vehicles. Personally I no longer walk up and down Caplich Road, if I can help it, because if two quarry vehicles pass one another alongside you, you can see how top heavy they are and it can feel very unsafe. You see mothers with buggies or young children or people with dogs on leads press themselves against walls or fences to try and distance themselves from the lorries. Speed reduction will help, but won't solve that problem. The build out and crossing will make it much safer to walk to and from Perrins Road and away from the traffic.

I wholeheartedly support this proposal and hope it makes for a safer environment for school children and the local community.

██████████

Supporter 3

IAN GRAHAM (Roads and Transport)

From: Road Safety
Subject: RE: Bridgend Primary School Alness - Traffic Calming

Sent: 12 December 2021 17:36
To: Road Safety <Road.Safety@highland.gov.uk>
Subject: Bridgend Primary School Alness - Traffic Calming

CAUTION: This email was sent from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

For attention of Ian Graham, Road Safety Officer.

Thank you for your recent letter, and a copy of the proposed traffic calming measures on Caplich Road, Alness.

We are delighted and certainly approve of the calming measures to be put in place on Caplich road. as very few vehicles adhere to the speed limit on this road.

There are a large number of children crossing Caplich Road at the point where the footpath begins leading into Shillinghill housing estate, and then onto Bridgend school. As you are aware there are more classrooms being erected at Bridgend school, which means even more kids crossing at this point. There used to be a metal barrier at this point, (see photos) but since it has been removed there has been quite a number of near misses.

There is a six foot wall beside the footpath which obstructs the view of vehicles coming up Caplich road. The metal barrier at this point used to slow children down and stop them running or cycling straight onto Caplich Road from Shillinghill. This metal barrier rotted away and the barrier was removed. Could/Should this metal barrier be reinstated as an extra safety precaution at the same time as, (or before), the traffic calming measures are put in place. It has also been suggested to me, by other concerned members of the public that maybe this entrance/exit could be blocked off and the pathway be moved further up Caplich road, away from the high wall.

We would be very grateful if you, and your team could have a look at this concern.

I thank you in advance for your time.

Regards

F

Objector 1

To: Road Safety Consultations Team

Highland Council
Glenurquhart Road
Inverness

Date: 07.01.2022

Dear Sir / Madam

Bridgend Primary School Proposed Traffic Calming Measures Ardross Road / Caplich Road

On behalf of [REDACTED]
we wish to register our concerns to these proposals on the grounds of:

1. Evidence of Need

The justification for these changes, as stated in the “statement of need” is purely
“In the interests of road safety and in order to improve road safety for those walking and wheeling in the community, in particular children walking and cycling to and from Bridgend Primary School,”

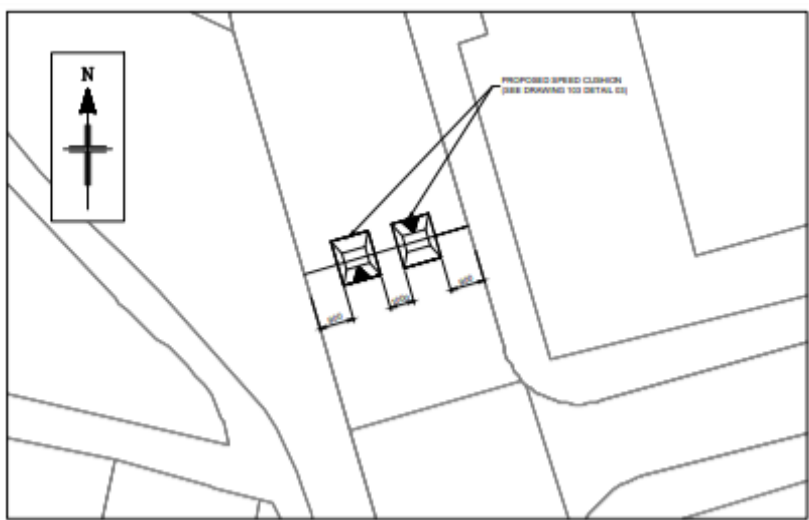
As a business which has operated numerous HGV vehicle movements along these routes for over 70 years, we have no knowledge of any incidents / near misses that would justify these changes and the undoubted disruption it will cause to any traffic using these road, including the ones that our business is dependent upon.

We are 100% committed to pedestrian safety, but there is no evidence provided to suggest there is a problem which needs addressed here. If there is such evidence, then we will be happy to collaborate with the authority to find the optimal design to address those issues and minimise needless disruption of traffic.

2. Flaws in proposed design which will result in greater safety issues than currently

Assuming the “need” can be evidenced, the proposed designs do not represent the best solution and could even result in greater safety issues. We will consider the proposals in turn:

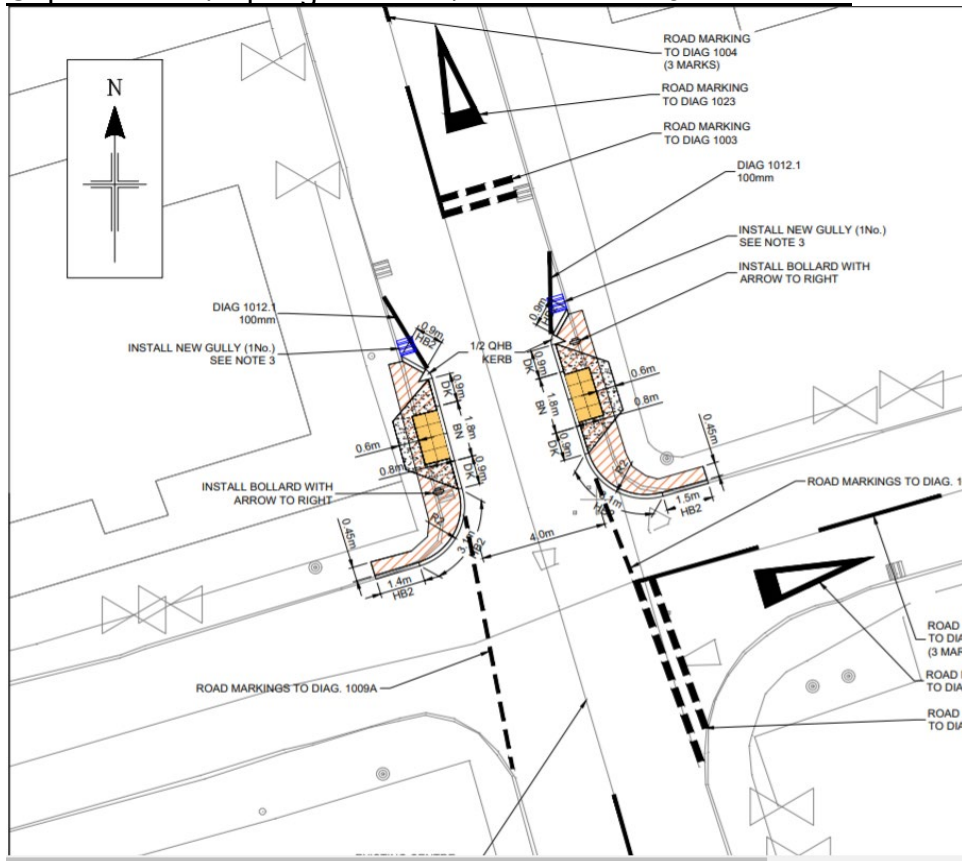
a) Caplich Road Speed Bumps



We would question the sense of this design based upon:

- Need – what is the problem these cushions are attempting to address?
- Effectiveness – these cushions are largely agreed to be ineffectual, as vehicles will merely move further away from the kerb line in order to straddle them, thus allowing them to maintain the same speed.
- Safety – These cushions will undoubtedly encourage vehicles to move further away from the kerb line in order to straddle them, creating a needless collision risk with vehicles moving in opposing directions.
- Collective Effects – Once the “need” is established, the fact that a new build out is likely, creating enforced traffic calming, will surely have to be taken into account before these additional traffic calming measures can be justified.

b) Caplich Road / Springfield Terr / Perrins Road Jcn Build-out



We would question the sense of this design based upon:

- Safety – The proposed location, and prioritisation of routing, will cause significant safety issues by:
 - a) Requiring loaded HGV vehicles to stop on a downhill route, which is not easy to do quickly
 - b) Forcing vehicles, including HGV's, to pass each other on the narrowest section of Caplich Road, which will lead to blockages if the stationary vehicles are not tight to the road kerb.
 - c) Forcing vehicles tight to the road kerb on the hill, where the footpath is already far narrower than recommended, thus creating a pedestrian safety concern to the North of the proposed build-out
 - d) Taking no account of the residential access points to the north of the proposed build-out
 - e) Not addressing the issue of those who regularly park cars on the hill to the north of the proposed build out.

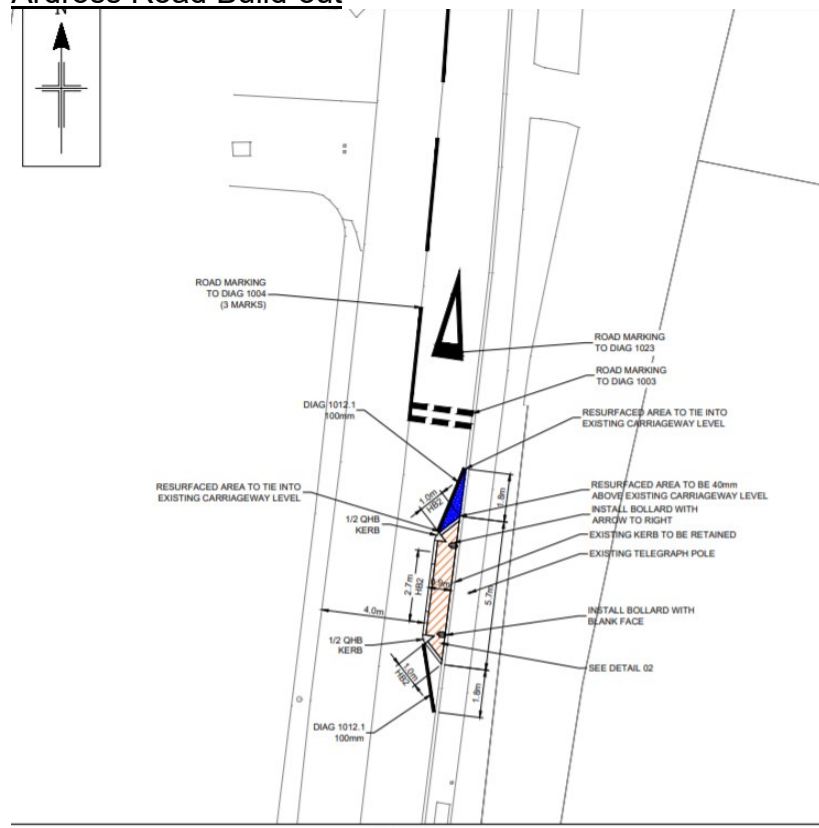
The only issues we are aware of, in this vicinity, are the limited visibility splay for vehicles existing Springfield Terrace and the narrow width of road on the hill section to the North of the proposed build out, where 2nr HGV really struggle to pass (good practice is for one to wait at the top or bottom of the hill, giving priority to loaded vehicles). A car and an HGV can safely pass, but it is narrow and can be worrying for some drivers. Whilst neither of these issues are relating specifically to school travel safety, an improved design would be beneficial. However, it would make more sense to:

- Locate the build-out / crossing to the south of the junction, and
- Give priority to vehicles going south, not north
- Prohibit street parking on the hill to the north

That would address all of the issues in a safer manner.

Another alternative would be to do single carriageway along the entire length of the hill section, thus forcing people to stop at the top and bottom, i.e., the wider parts, not on the narrow part on the hill.

c) Ardress Road Build-out



Our objection here is entirely based on need. The main issues we are aware of in this vicinity are the lack of visibility for vehicles exiting Perrins Road, which this will not help and the telegraph pole which is in the middle of the pavement in the location of the proposed build-out. Indeed, the proposed location suggests the latter is the main issue you are trying to address, which is a bigger issue given the construction of a new accessibility ramp to the school to the north of the telegraph pole (i.e., in an utterly inaccessible location, when it could have easily been located to the south of the pole, negating the need for a build out at all.

Lack of consideration / consultation to long established HGV based businesses that rely on these roads as our only routes to market.

Given that there are a small number of HGV based businesses at [REDACTED] who have no alternative route to markets other than these roads, it would surely have been sensible, or even just courteous, to have reached out to us directly to consult prior to finalising a public consultation design.

In conclusion, we are more than happy to help address any significant safety issue relating to school travel, or any other travel for that matter, but every additional measure does have a knock-on effect to business viability and other travel, so it does only need to be with justifiable cause. Once that cause has been established, the best solution then needs to be determined which addresses the issues at minimal detrimental effect to others. In this case, neither measure appears to have been done.

We look forward to receiving your response.

Regards

Response to Objector 1 – 20th Jan 22

Dear Sir

Bridgend Primary School - Proposed Traffic Calming Measures Ardross Road / Caplich Road

I refer to your correspondence in relation to the above subject and public consultation.

In response to your objection, I would like to answer as follows –

- 1) Evidence of Need – The Road Safety Team has been working with the Bridgend Primary School Management and Parent Council to develop Safer Routes to School to encourage more school pupils to walk, cycle, scoot, and wheel to school to build and support more sustainable active travel in the local community.

An increase in active travel also leads to a reduction in car usage around the school and alleviate several residents, school pupils and their parents' concerns about parking at school start and finish times.

The proposals we believe will make the route safer as it will reduce vehicle speeds, provide wider footpath provision and safer crossing points not just for the school pupils and parents but also for the local community looking to cross at that location.

The residents who have responded to the consultation are in favour of the Caplich Road proposals.

- 2) Point a) –

The proposed speed cushions are part of the overall traffic calming plan for Caplich Road to work alongside the proposed build out by reducing the speed of all vehicle types. The intention of the proposals is to make safer travel for the community and vulnerable road users.

Point b) –

The location for the proposed build out has been developed in consultation with the Parent Council for Bridgend Primary School. A number of locations were discussed with them and the chosen location was identified by them as the most appropriate location for a safety feature as it is the desire line and crossing location used by pupils / parents crossing Caplich Road whilst walking to school. It directly links to the pavement on Springfield Terrace which you will be aware is only on the North side of that road.

In relation to the points you raised re visibility at this location. When taking into consideration the proposed speed cushions location, the permanent 20mph speed limit, the nature of Caplich Road being long and straight and direction of traffic in the surrounding roads we believe the build out will provide a safer egress from Springfield Terrace.

In regard to the point you raise about parking further up the hill in this area, if you are not already aware, I confirm that this area has a number of restrictions on parking, the link detailing this is as follows -

https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/19634/alness_tro_plans_2018

I will pass your concerns to the Parking Enforcement Team for them to address.

In relation to your point about the priority setting for traffic at the proposed build out. The main reason the priority has been put up hill by the design team is that to reverse it would likely encourage vehicles to speed up through the build out whilst going downhill. Reversing this priority would therefore result in the desired speed reduction impact of the traffic calming feature not being realised.

Should the proposal be implemented monitoring will be undertaken to establish if the priority setting is causing issues with its directional settings and can be reviewed if required.

Point c) –

The proposed location is designed to compliment the investment in the newly installed disability compliant designed ramp access to the school, which will provide great benefits to those using the access such as wheelchair users, buggies, cyclist etc.

At present the pavement is narrow at this point for those looking to access the ramp. The location and design of the build out provides a safer accessible route along the pavement whilst also complimenting the 20mph speed limit for the road as it will result in a reduction in vehicle speeds, making it a more suitable and safer area for those using the road including vulnerable road users.

In relation to your point about visibility from Perrins Road the proposed location and design will slow down traffic using Ardross Road towards that junction from the school direction and will therefore provide further provision for exiting the Perrins road junction safely.

Thank you for raising the point about the Perrins Road junction. We will monitor the impact of the proposed traffic calming feature on Ardross Road and the Perrins Road junction and should we feel that this location would benefit from additional safety features including traffic calming we will look into this.

3) Public Consultation Process

In relation to your points about consultation with your business and others who operate in the same regard, the Roads Authority is required to carry out a prescribed statutory consultation process for all proposed traffic calming schemes.

These proposals were advertised in the local press, notices attached to lamp columns and letters detailing these proposals were delivered to the houses immediately affected by them. This was the start of public consultation giving residents a chance to comment or object prior to wider public consultation.

I can confirm that the proposals were sent to Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Scottish Ambulance Service, Bus Companies, HC Public Transport, Highland Cycle Campaign, Road Haulage Association, Logistics UK, Local Elected Members, Community Council and as you know residential properties.

This process is a requirement of legislation and any outstanding objections require Elected Members to make the decision at Area Committee as to whether the traffic calming is installed, they are presented with officer comments, letters of support and objector correspondence to base their decisions on. This is to try and ensure a fair transparent process where your correspondence can be viewed and taken into consideration before the final decision as to whether we can proceed to construction.

I can confirm that all parts of the full legal consultation process are being undertaken for these proposed traffic calming measures.

I hope the above has outlined the rationale behind the proposals that have been carefully considered and brought forward for this area of Caplich Road / Ardross Road, Alness, you can see the benefits to the proposal, and it alleviates the concerns you have raised.

For your information the school, local community and local residents are all incredibly supportive of the Road Safety proposals we would like to implement for them, and we have had no objections from any of these bodies.

I am happy to discuss this with you on the phone should you wish.

Should you still wish to pursue your objection to the proposal, the next stage of this formal process is for your objection to be heard by the Elected Members at the Local Area Easter Ross Committee Meeting which is scheduled to be held on 17th February 2022. Copies of all correspondence pertaining to your objection will be anonymised and contained within the papers that go to this Committee.

I would be grateful if you can confirm if you wish to withdraw your objection or if you wish it to stand.

Yours faithfully

Ian Graham
Road Safety Officer

Objector 1 Response –

Hello Ian

Thanks for the response and I fully subscribe to the stated objectives of the projects, being:

1. To reduce the number of pupils being transported to school by car, and
2. To facilitate that by improving pedestrian safety at public road crossing points, which absolutely necessitates, indeed desires, an increase in inconvenience to vehicular traffic on those routes, at those locations

I'm also sure that HC have been in receipt of central funding to achieve those objectives and it is in all of our interests to make sure that is used and used wisely. The one factor which I am surprised isn't factored in there, is to also make it LESS convenient to transport pupils to school by car, as that would be an obvious factor in achieving the stated objective.

Anyway, taking the proposed measures in turn:

- a) Springfield terrace junction – no argument that improvement is needed here, and that the build out is a good idea. My issue is that I think the proposed design will cause significant safety issues (laden HGV vehicles trying to stop downhill and vehicles being forced to pass on a very narrow section of the road (i.e., on the hill)). I maintain a safer design would be to either:
 - i) Locate the build-out to the south of the junction and prioritise the downhill traffic (incidentally this would also be an inconvenience for the majority of school traffic using this junction, as it generally approaches from the south, so would be win/win for the objectives. OR
 - ii) Build out the entire length of Caplich hill, so that laden HGV's are stopping at the top, vehicles are passing at a wider part of the road AND the footpaths could be made into something which is much wider.
- b) Caplich Road Speed Bumps – I don't object to these; I'm merely pointing out that they are generally ineffective and cause a vehicular safety issue by encouraging traffic into the middle of the road. If their only justification is to try to slow traffic down in preparation of the possible need to stop at the build out, one has to wonder what has been the point of the recently installed 20mph zone. If it is to make an alternative crossing point safer (e.g., from Caplich Hill), I think a more robust and recognisable crossing point would be better.
- c) Ardross Road Build-out – this has no conceivable benefit to safety at any recognised pupil crossing point, as the main ones they use to cross Ardross road would be at Averon Road. It is obvious that the only purpose of this build-out is to get around the telegraph pole that is currently in the middle of the footpath. The same effect could be achieved by relocating the pole and would avoid needless disruption to traffic which is already in a 20mph zone.
- d) Consultation with Key Users – It surely makes sense, when considering any changes like these, to identify any frequent essential road user of the route and consult with them to get the best solution for all. Scottish water does that very well when making changes to their water supply systems, but it appears that HC don't see it as being beneficial, restricting their consultee list to emergency services and then general public consultation, by which time the design has pretty much been finalised and stakeholders are unlikely to accept change, even when beneficial. In this case, we are well known to contribute the significant majority of HGV traffic using this route, along with 2 or 3 businesses at Crosshills farm, so it would not have been difficult to start a conversation, if anyone was actually wanting the best solution for all.

I'm not going to retract my concerns, as they remain and most of them have not been mentioned in your response. Hopefully they will cause some degree of design reconsideration, although your response suggests that is unlikely, but I'm happy to leave the decision to you and won't be looking to escalate an objection.

On your repeated assertion that the proposals have the wide support of parent council and local residents, I have no doubt that most people will welcome the suggestion of safety improvements for pupils, myself included. However, that isn't an endorsement of the proposed solutions as being the best technical design to provide those enhancements, whilst minimising any unnecessary disruption to essential road users. Essential road users do not have the option to move away from vehicle use (e.g., it is hard for us to deliver concrete on a bike), and our concerns are certainly secondary to pupil safety. However, we do still provide essential services to the community, local jobs and significant tax income to the government and local

authority. So, it would be nice if "avoiding unnecessary disruption to essential road users" was a factor which was taken into account in these decisions.

Happy to leave it with you.

Response to Objector 1 – 26th Jan 22

Thank you for responding to the letter.

In response to your point about reducing car journeys the new School Travel Plan for Bridgend Primary School includes the main aim of 'Encouraging safe, sustainable and active travel to school' and the build out features on both Caplich and Ardross Road are a key safety improvement on this for pupils using this route to travel actively to school.

In relation to the points raised –

- a) Springfield Terrace – As per our original letter, the design has been developed to take cognisance of a number of onsite factors including:
 - i. The main route/desire line for children / parents walking to school being one of main reasons for using the upper side of the junction for the build out as this is the side of the junction used by the majority of pedestrians to cross at this location.
 - ii. The design and location of the proposed build out supports traffic calming from the upper side of the junction making it overall a safer option.
 - iii. I note your point about HGV manoeuvring in the area and through the proposed build out. Our belief is that with the overall traffic calming features, including the proposed built out, speed cushions, 20mph speed limit already in place and it being a build-up area, with the new road design I would envisage that all vehicles would reduce their speed anyway approaching the build out to allow to them to safely manoeuvre through it as per the priority setting.

In relation to your point about Caplich Road we will commission an independent traffic survey of the area you have highlighted to look at the traffic flow / volume / type of vehicle / turning manoeuvres and performance of the new feature. The results will be made available once complete.

- b) Caplich Road speed cushions –these are used to reduce traffic speed for the benefit of all road users in the area, on this occasion they will have the added benefit of combining to reduce speed further on the approach to the build out, however this is not the sole reason for their inclusion in the scheme. As per all our installed schemes site visits will be undertaken to observe vehicle behaviour at the features following installation to ensure effectiveness of use.
- c) Ardross Road – The build out as per the letter is designed to support those using the pavement to access the school using the new disability accessible ramp and therefore encourage more people to actively walk, cycle etc to school. The location is designed to support this route past the post, but it will also assist in slowing traffic down in the area of the school entrance and that section of Ardross Road.
- d) Consultation – Thank you for raising your concerns about the Consultation process. These will be taken into consideration for future such consultations.

I note you state you do not wish to escalate the objection, but you state you do not wish to retract your concerns. Can I clarify if you still wish your objection to stand as this will allow us to decide

what next to do in the process. If your objection stands, we will present this within a paper to the local Area Committee for their consideration/decision and this includes anonymised Objections and Letters of Supports.

I look forward to your reply.

Regards

Ian Graham

Objector 1 Response to email of 26th Jan 22

Hello Ian

Thanks for the response, and I understand the balance you are trying to draw here. It's a question of judgement of pros and cons

Yes, leave my objection on record, but I am not objecting the principle, merely the design.

Regards

Objector 2- Initial objection correspondence

To: Road Safety Consultations Team

Highland Council

Glenurquhart Road

Inverness

Monday 10th January 2022

Dear Sir / Madam,

We would like to lodge an objection to the proposed traffic calming planning on Ardross Road and Caplich Hill in Alness.

We operate a small amount of haulage from our [REDACTED] on Ardross Road, and we feel that the proposed traffic calming measures have been ill thought and indeed unnecessary. We would have appreciated some consultation in these matters as it is likely to affect our haulage operations.

Where we don't have any objections to traffic calming and road safety in General, we feel that the proposed "Build Outs" on Caplich Road are going to cause more issues, giving priority to vehicles travelling up the hill will cause vehicles to meet in the narrowest point of the carriageway.

Ardross Road would appear to have been modelled around the telegraph pole which is sited on the footpath causing access issues to the new access path to the school.

Had the access path been constructed on the South side of the Pole no "Build Outs would be required.

We feel that if a "Build out" is required it should be sited at the North side of Perrins Road junction, which would allow traffic emerging from Perrins Road to have a clear view of the south bound traffic.

We look Forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]

Objector 2 – Response from Road Safety Team to letter of 10th January 2022

Please ask for: Ian Graham
Direct Dial No: 01463 702799
Our Ref: SRTS – Bridgend
Primary School
Date: 20th Jan 2022

Dear Sir

Bridgend Primary School - Proposed Traffic Calming Measures Ardross Road / Caplich Road

I refer to your correspondence in relation to the above subject and public consultation.

In response to your objection, I would like to answer as follows –

Public Consultation Process

In relation to your points about consultation with your business, the Roads Authority is required to carry out a prescribed statutory consultation process for all proposed traffic calming schemes.

These proposals were advertised in the local press, notices attached to lamp columns and letters detailing these proposals were delivered to the houses immediately affected by them. This was the start of public consultation giving residents a chance to comment or object prior to wider public consultation.

I can confirm that the proposals were sent to Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Scottish Ambulance Service, Bus Companies, HC Public Transport, Highland Cycle Campaign, Road Haulage Association, Logistics UK, Local Elected Members, Community Council, and residential properties in the immediate area of the proposals.

This process is a requirement of legislation and any outstanding objections require Elected Members to make the decision at Area Committee as to whether the traffic calming is installed, they are presented with officer comments, letters of support and objector correspondence to base their decisions on. This is to try and ensure a fair transparent process where your correspondence can be viewed and taken into consideration before the final decision as to whether we can proceed to construction.

I can confirm that all parts of the full legal consultation process are being undertaken for these proposed traffic calming measures.

Caplich Road

The location for the proposed build out has been developed in consultation with the Parent Council for Bridgend Primary School. A number of locations were discussed with them and the chosen location was identified by them as the most appropriate location for a safety feature as it is the desire line and crossing location used by pupils / parents crossing Caplich Road whilst walking to school.

In relation to your point about the priority setting for traffic at the proposed build out, the main reason the priority has been put up hill by the design team is that to reverse it would likely encourage vehicles to speed up through the build out whilst travelling downhill. Reversing this priority would therefore result in the desired speed reduction impact of the traffic calming feature not being realised.

Should the proposal be implemented monitoring will be undertaken to establish if the priority setting is causing issues with its directional settings and can be reviewed if required.

Ardross Road

The proposed location is designed to compliment the investment in the newly installed disability compliant designed ramp access to the school, which will provide great benefits to those using the access such as wheelchair users, buggies, cyclist etc.

At present the pavement is narrow at this point for those looking to access the ramp. The location and design of the

build out provides a safer accessible route along the pavement whilst also complimenting the 20mph speed limit for the road as it will result in a reduction in vehicle speeds, making it a more suitable and safer area for those using the road including vulnerable road users.

In relation to your point about visibility from Perrins Road the proposed location and design will slow down traffic using Ardross Road towards that junction from the school direction and will therefore provide further provision for exiting the Perrins road junction safely.

Thank you for raising the point about the Perrins Road junction. We will monitor the impact of the proposed traffic calming feature on Ardross Road and the Perrins Road junction and should we feel that this location would benefit from additional safety features including traffic calming we will look into this.

I hope the above has outlined the rationale behind the proposals that have been carefully considered and brought forward for this area of Caplich Road / Ardross Road, Alness, you can see the benefits to the proposal, and it alleviates the concerns you have raised.

For your information the school, local community and local residents are all incredibly supportive of the Road Safety proposals we would like to implement for them, and we have had no objections from any of these bodies.

I am happy to discuss your concerns with you on the phone should you wish.

Should you still wish to pursue your objection to the proposal, the next stage of this formal process is for your objection to be heard by the Elected Members at the Local Area Easter Ross Committee Meeting which is scheduled to be held on 17th February 2022. Copies of all correspondence pertaining to your objection will be anonymised and contained within the papers that go to this Committee.

I would be grateful if you can confirm if you wish to withdraw your objection or if you wish it to stand.

Yours faithfully

Ian Graham
Road Safety Officer

Objector 2 – Response to email / letter from Road Safety of 20th Jan, received 26th Jan 22

Sent: 26 January 2022 08:21

To: Road Safety <Road.Safety@highland.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: Bridgend School Travel Proposal Representation Caplich Road & Ardross Road

CAUTION: This email was sent from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Good Morning Ian,
Thank you for your timeous response.

Unfortunately, I would like my objection to stand, although I assume that the project will go ahead regardless of any concerns that we may have.

The consultation issue is the biggest thing with us, I know and understand that you have publicised and put posters on lamp standards, however surely consultation with key users would have been beneficial for all concerned.

Whereby we agree that pedestrian safety is paramount, there has to be better solutions than the ones provided?

Ardross Road - By not constructing the build out at Perrins Road at the junction you are still encouraging vehicles to “nose out” onto Ardross Road and hence not dealing with the obvious safety issue.

The footpath is too narrow due to the location of the telegraph pole and from experience, I’m pretty sure it would have been a more cost-effective solution to move the pole?

Caplich Road – Restricting HGV traffic in the narrowest point on the Road is both dangerous and ill thought. In busy periods i.e., morning school runs etc, it is absolutely possible that uphill traffic being held due to the priority being downhill, queue back to the corner causing even more restrictions to HGVs and indeed potentially forcing them onto the footpath. In all my time in Alness I can only recall one incident that was caused by a young chap texting while driving. Although I take on board your point about the proposed buildout area being the most used crossing point, would it not make more sense to direct pedestrian traffic to another more strategic point and avoiding the narrowest point in the carriageway?

We all take road safety seriously and where necessary issues should be addressed, and of course community councils and school parent groups will support this, but they need to have a working knowledge of what they are agreeing to.

Objector 2 – Response from Road Safety Team to email from Objector of 26th January 22

IAN GRAHAM (Roads and Transport)

From: Road Safety
To: Road Safety
Subject: RE: Bridgend School Travel Proposal Representation Caplich Road & Ardross Road

From: Road Safety
Sent: 27 January 2022 10:14
Subject: RE: Bridgend School Travel Proposal Representation Caplich Road & Ardross Road

Good Morning [REDACTED]

Thank you for responding to the letter.

I would like to add a further response to your points for your consideration –

- Consultation – Thank you for raising your concerns about the Consultation process. These will be taken into consideration for future such consultations.
- Perrins Road – We will look at the issues you have raised with regards to visibility when exiting Perrins Road as separate scheme to see if is appropriate for any improvements to be made at this point. The build out proposal on Ardross Road is designed to support those using the pavement to access the school using the new disability accessible ramp and therefore encourage more people to actively walk, cycle etc to school. The location is designed to support this route past the post but it will also assist in slowing traffic down in the area of the school entrance and that section of Ardross Road.
- Caplich Road - As per our original letter, the design has been developed to take cognisance of a number of onsite factors including:
 - o The main route/desire line for children / parents walking to school being one of main reasons for using the upper side of the junction for the build out as this is the side of the junction used by the majority of pedestrians to cross at this location.
 - o The design and location of the proposed build out supports traffic calming from the upper side of the junction making it overall a safer option.
 - o I note your point about potential traffic build up in the area. We will commission an independent traffic survey of the area you have highlighted to look at the traffic flow / volume / type of vehicle / turning manoeuvres and performance of the new feature. The results will be made available once complete.
 - o Our belief is that with the overall traffic calming features, including the proposed built out, speed cushions, 20mph speed limit already in place and it being a build-up area, with the new road design I would envisage that all vehicles would reduce their speed anyway approaching the build out to allow to them to safely manoeuvre through it as per the priority setting.

I hope the above can be of reassurance to you in relation to the proposals.

If you still wish your objection to stand we will present this within a paper to the local Area Committee for their consideration/decision and this includes anonymised Objections and Letters of Supports.

I look forward to your reply.

Thank you