Road Crossing Request Policy

Dorset Council

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1. Dorset Council receives a significant number of requests for pedestrian crossings on roads across the county each year. Due to budget constraints, not all requests can be fulfilled. This policy outlines a fair and consistent process to rank and prioritise crossing schemes based on specific criteria. The goal is to allocate resources effectively and ensure that the most beneficial projects are implemented.

1.2. The assessment process and criteria are informed by the latest guidance from the Department of Transport, such as the Traffic Sign Manual: Chapter 6 (2019). By following this approach, Dorset Council can make informed decisions about crossing infrastructure and better serve the needs of our residents within the budget available in any given year.

2. Types of Crossings

2.1. Crossings are important in enabling the safe movement of pedestrians and cycles across the county and play an important part in assisting more vulnerable groups.

2.2. **A controlled crossing** is a crossing that prioritises pedestrians or cyclists. They are typically regulated by traffic signals or other mechanisms to ensure safety.

Controlled crossings

- **Zebra** A pedestrian crossing marked by black and white stripes and flashing amber beacons. Drivers must yield to pedestrians approaching or on the crossing.
- **Parallel**: Similar to a zebra crossing, but with a separate lane for cyclists marked by broken white lines. Drivers must yield to all cyclists and pedestrians on the crossing.
- **Pelican:** A signal-controlled pedestrian crossing. Pedestrians activate the crossing by pressing a button. A green person or audible signal indicates when it's safe to cross. Cyclists must dismount and walk.
- **Puffin**: Similar to a pelican crossing, but with sensors that detect waiting pedestrians, accommodate slower moving pedestrian and ensure the lights change only when necessary.
- **Touca**n: A shared pedestrian and cyclist crossing. Cyclists don't need to dismount. It operates like a puffin crossing but also includes a red and green bicycle symbol.
- **Pegasus**: A crossing designed for horse riders and pedestrians, often found in rural areas. Raised pushbuttons allow horse riders to activate the crossing without dismounting.
- **School Crossing Patrol (SCP)**: A school crossing patrol is a trained individual,

often called a "lollipop person," who helps children and other pedestrians safely cross the road near schools during school start and end times.

2.3. In addition to these crossings, there are also several other types of uncontrolled crossings. Uncontrolled Crossings are pedestrian crossings that do not have traffic signals or other mechanical aids to regulate traffic. They rely on the courtesy and caution of both pedestrians and drivers.

2.4. Common examples include:

- **Pedestrian Refuges:** These are raised sections/islands in the middle of the road that provide a safe stopping point for pedestrians before crossing the remaining lanes.
- **Pedestrian Buildouts**: Creating a small platform on the edge of the roads surface that extends the pavement and narrows the road width.
- **Dropped Kerbs**: Where the edge of the pavement is lowered to road level, allowing easier access for wheelchairs, strollers, and people with mobility issues. Often found at junctions or side roads, it may include tactile paving to assist visually impaired users.

3. Requesting a Crossing Facility

3.1. Requests will only be accepted from local councillors or town and parish councils, where they will need to demonstrate and supply evidence of support from the wider community. Members of the public who want to request a crossing facility will need to go through their Dorset councillor or their local parish or town council.

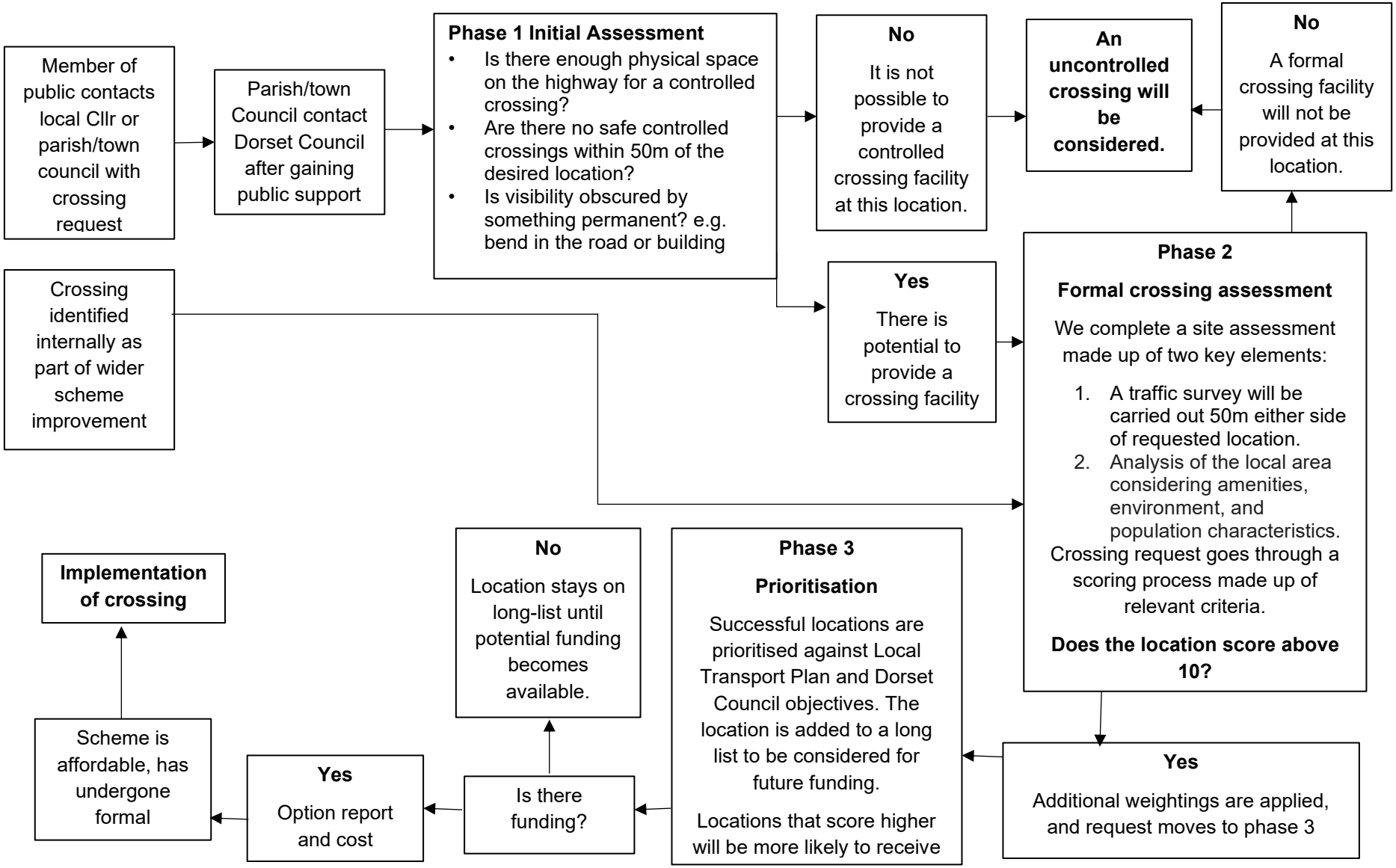
3.2. Where a permanent controlled crossing is requested at a location currently served by a school crossing patrol (lollipop person), the school crossing patrol will be automatically withdrawn once the crossing is in place.

3.3. When a request is received, it will be added to a register of requests for pedestrian crossings. Requests go through an assessment process described in 4.1 and shown in the flow chart below.

3.4. This policy applies to crossing requests. There may be occasions where Dorset Council installs a crossing if there is a specific safety concern, or as part of a larger infrastructure project.

3.5. Pedestrian and cycle crossings may also be required in new developments as a condition of planning permission, but this policy does not apply to developer installed or funded crossings.

Dorset Council Road Crossing Request Workflow Chart



4. Phase 1: Initial Assessment

4.1. The proposed crossing will undergo a Phase 1 initial assessment. This involves evaluating the following criteria:

- Adequate physical space on the highway to accommodate a controlled crossing facility
- Absence of existing safe controlled crossings within 50 meters of the desired location.
- Unobstructed visibility, free from permanent obstructions such as road bends or buildings.

4.2. A site must meet all the above criteria to proceed to Phase 2 If any criterion is not met, the request will be rejected, and the requestor will be informed. If the site is suitable Dorset Highways will complete a site assessment made up of two key elements: a traffic survey and analysis of the local area.

5. Phase 2: Formal Crossing Assessment

5.1. Dorset Highways will conduct the traffic survey 50 meters on either side of the proposed crossing location (for a total of 100 meters). The survey will be timed to coincide with peak traffic hours and days. For example, surveys near schools will be conducted during the school term or surveys near tourist hotpots may need to be carried out when seasonal demand is known to be higher.

5.2. The traffic survey will collect data as outlined in the Traffic Signs Manual: Chapter 6 (2019). This includes a comprehensive classification and count of pedestrians and vehicles at 15-minute intervals. Additionally, the survey will gather information on traffic flow, speed, and other relevant factors to inform the decision-making process for the proposed crossing.

5.3. Each criterion will be assigned a score between 0 and 2. A higher overall score indicates a greater likelihood of approval for a controlled crossing. If a location score exceeds 10, it will be prioritised for further consideration using additional weighting scores.

5.4. The criteria and scoring sheet can be found in Appendix 1 and criteria used are explained in Table 1 below:

Table 1 Road Crossing Assessment Criteria

Road Crossing Assessment criteria	Description
Current speed limit (mph)	Current maximum speed limit of the road. This reflects the inherent risk associated with higher speed limits; a 40mph road, for example, would automatically receive

	a score of 2 simply due to its designated speed.
85th Percentile Speed (mph)	The 85th percentile speed refers to the speed at or below which 85% of vehicles travel on a road. It provides a more accurate picture of actual traffic speeds rather than the speed limit. The higher the 85th percentile speed, the more points awarded on the scoring system.
Maximum weighted traffic flow in busiest 1 hour period (2-way)	This is the volume and types of vehicles during the busiest hour of the day. The higher the peak traffic, the more difficult it is for pedestrians to cross. Larger vehicles such as HGVs count as 2 vehicles due to their size and increased risk to pedestrians. This is weighted in the count.
Carriageway width (m)	Wider roads are more difficult for pedestrians to cross.
Number of Lanes to cross	More lanes increase the distance, time and difficulty for pedestrians to cross. Crossing one lane with a pedestrian island is significantly easier than crossing four lanes of traffic.
Number of available gaps in 5 minutes	This gap analysis assesses crossing opportunities by counting the frequency of traffic gaps within a 5-minute interval. It assumes a pedestrian crossing speed of 1.2 meters per second, with an additional 5 seconds per metre to take account of people with mobility impairments. Therefore, the analysis uses a calculated crossing time based on the slowest potential user. The formula used is: **Crossing Time (Secs) = Road width (m) ÷ 1.2metres per second + 5 seconds** This calculated crossing time is then compared to the observed traffic flow to determine crossing suitability.
Intervisibility	Intervisibility means that different road users (drivers, pedestrians, cyclists) can

	see each other. Features that could obscure visibility, or cause obstructions, particularly for mobility or visually impaired people is an important factor when scoring a site for a controlled crossing.
Maximum weighted pedestrian flow in busiest 1 hour period (Over 100m)	The highest number of pedestrians moving through an area during the peak hour. Significant pedestrian movement within an area adjacent to a road can indicate a high level of pedestrian activity and desire lines.
Schools within 400m	Schools generate a surge of pedestrian and vehicle traffic, particularly during drop-off and pick-up times. The closer the school to the requested crossing location the higher it scores.
Trip generators leading to significant pedestrian and vehicle movement within 400m	Some locations create increased crossing movements. For example, a town centre or large supermarket will score higher than a singular small shop. This assessment will be conducted using the professional judgment of the site assessor.
Trip generators that could encourage vulnerable road users	e.g. hospital, doctors' surgery, retirement homes (excluding schools). These locations often see a higher proportion of individuals who may have mobility impairments or other vulnerabilities that make them less able to navigate traffic safely.

Prioritisation and Additional Weightings

5.5. Sites meeting the Phase 2: Formal Crossing Assessment criteria will proceed to phase 3, where additional weighting factors will be added onto the formal assessment score to determine the scheme's priority order. These additional weightings look at local information and demographics. For example, a location that scores 13 on the initial assessment and 9 points on the additional weightings will receive a score of 22.

5.6. A ranked long list will be maintained to determine the order in which proposed crossing locations are put forward for budget allocation. It should be noted that new crossing requests may be submitted, potentially affecting the ranking and timeline for existing proposals.

5.7. The additional weightings are made up of the following factors:

Table 2 Additional Weightings

Additional Weightings	Description
Pedestrian and cycle collisions	Collisions involving pedestrians and cyclists can be a direct indicator of existing danger at a location. A site with a history of collisions is a higher priority than a site where no collisions have occurred.
Identified as part of strategic active travel network/plan	These networks represent planned routes for walking and cycling, often prioritised at a regional or national level. Adding a controlled crossing supports the goals of these plans by making the routes safer and more attractive for active travel.
Existing School Crossing Patrol (SCP)	The fact that a school has a dedicated SCP often indicates an existing safety problem. It means that the road is considered difficult to cross so children need assistance to cross safely. While SCPs are valuable to the community, they are only there for a short time each day. A controlled crossing offers a permanent solution for all hours of the day and for all people.
Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) decile	This is a tool used to understand how deprived one area is compared to others based on several criteria. Communities that have higher levels of deprivation often have less access to private vehicles, making safe pedestrian infrastructure even more critical. Higher levels of deprivation can also be linked to a higher proportion of vulnerable road users, including children, elderly individuals, and people with disabilities. These individuals may be more reliant on walking and cycling for transport and may be less able to navigate traffic safely. More deprived areas will score higher on the priority list.

6. Crossing Implementation

6.1. When funding is allocated to a scheme, an engineer will produce an option report and cost estimates and make a recommendation. Dorset Council will update the scheme requester.

6.2. Implementation is subject to affordability, public consultation outcomes, and funding. Project timelines will vary according to the other demands on the Dorset Highways programme.

6.3. The availability of external funding, including Section 106 agreements, can accelerate the implementation of certain crossing locations on the ranked list.

6.4. Construction typically takes six to eight weeks to complete but varies depending on location. The crossing will be available for use shortly after and we will continue to monitor the safety of the crossing for the first year of operation.

6.5. Where applicable, when the crossing is in place, the school crossing patrol will be withdrawn.

6.6. If a controlled crossing is found to be significantly underused, Dorset Council reserves the right to remove it under certain circumstances.

Appendix 1 Crossing Score Card

Categories	Recorded Data	Green (0)	Amber (1)	Red (2)	Score	Comments
Speed limit (mph)		20	30	40+		
85th Percentile speed (mph)		<30	>30	35+		
Maximum weighted traffic flow in busiest 1 hour period (2-way)		<400	400 to 840	>840		
Number of available gaps in 5 minutes		>4	4	<4		
Carriageway width (m)		<6	6 to 8	>8		
Number of lanes to cross		1	2	3+		
Is intervisibility obscured?		Intervisibility for vehicles and pedestrians is good e.g. long straight road with no obstacles	Partial intervisibility that is obscured by something that can be removed e.g. signs, non-protected trees, parked cars			
Maximum weighted pedestrian flow in busiest 1 hour period (Over 100m)		<50	50-100	>100		
Schools			Within 400m	Within 200m		
Places with significant pedestrian and vehicle movement within 400m		Some Access Requirements (a small shop or post box)	Moderate Access Requirements (A parade of more than 4 shops, library, post box, bus stop etc.)	Significant Access Requirements (leisure centre, supermarket, retail park etc.)		
Places could encourage vulnerable pedestrians. E.g. doctors' surgeries, retirement homes, playgrounds, nursery/pre-school, **Excluding schools**		>400m	<400m	<100m		
				Total Score:	0	

Appendix 2 Additional Weightings Score Card

Categories	Recorded Data	Green (0)	Amber (1)	Red (2)	Score	Comments
Pedestrian and cycle involved collisions		0	1	>1	0	
Identified as part of strategic active travel network e.g. ATIP, NCN, TCF, neighbourhood plan?		No	No, but could supply a link within 150m	30+		
Older people in area		<borough average	0 to 5% above borough average	>5% borough average		
School Crossing Patrol		These are privately or community-sponsored sites that fall below the required criteria but are still supported by schools, local councils, or businesses willing to fund the patrol.	These sites partially meet national criteria but may still qualify for a patrol if there are additional safety concerns, such as a history of collisions or strong community support. (Cat B)	A high priority sites that exceed national criteria for SCP. (Cat A)		
Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) decile		5 to 10	3 or 4	1 or 2		

				Total	0	