

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURGOOD SERVICES

TO:	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB COMMITTEE		
DATE:	4 NOVEMBER 2014	AGENDA ITEM:	19
TITLE:	READING GIRLS SCHOOL - TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES ALONG NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT PLANNING & TRANSPORT
SERVICE:	TRANSPORTATION AND STREETCARE	WARDS:	CHURCH /KATESGROVE/REDLANDS WHITLEY
LEAD OFFICER:	CHRIS SAUNDERS	TEL:	0118 937 3949
JOB TITLE:	TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT CONTROL MANAGER	E-MAIL:	Chris.Saunders@reading.gov.uk

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 Planning Permission was approved by Planning Applications Committee on the 10<sup>th</sup> September 2014 for the demolition of the existing buildings and the construction of a new secondary school, with a transport contribution of £68,252 to mitigate the implications of the increased capacity at the school.
- 1.2 At the planning applications committee, Cllr Rhoda as ward councillor requested that the monies be used on a series of proposals for traffic calming on the section of Northumberland Avenue adjacent to the site, given the concerns raised by the local residents. This report details the options available.

**2. RECOMMENDED ACTION**

- 2.1 The sub-committee note the report.
- 2.2 That a further report is submitted to this committee detailing proposals to implement a 20mph limit on Northumberland Avenue between Hexham Road and Long Barn Lane.
- 2.3 A review of the current parking restrictions is undertaken, to take in to account the proposed changes to the school and any amendments required are included in a further report to this committee.

**3. POLICY CONTEXT**

- 3.1 The proposals are in line with current Transport and Planning Policy

#### 4. THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 Reading Girls School is located on Northumberland Avenue between the junctions with Long Barn Lane and Canterbury / Hexham Roads. The road is on average 6.5 metres wide and is subject to 30 mph speed limit. To the north of the Canterbury / Hexham Road junctions the road is subjected to a 20 mph. The length of Northumberland Avenue adjacent to the school has on street parking, traffic islands and bus stop build outs which reduce traffic speeds.
- 4.2 The requirements for 20mph speed limits are included within the Department for Transport document "Traffic Advisory Leaflet 9/99, 20 mph Zones and Limits". This document states *"20 mph zones would be particularly appropriate where there is an existing record of accidents to children occurring over an area, or where concentrations of pedestrians and/or cyclists exist or are anticipated. They can help to protect children walking and cycling to and from school, and may encourage other children to walk or cycle."* While the accident data for the length of Northumberland Avenue adjacent to the school only shows 2 accidents occurring in the last 3 year period both involved children being in a collision with a vehicle as they crossed the road.
- 4.3 The new school will also increase the schools capacity by 10% from 947 pupils to 1050 pupils and it has to be noted that the existing school is currently under capacity with 656 pupils on the role. Therefore the new school could result in a considerably increase in children going to and from the school.
- 4.4 The criteria continues that 20mph zones are unlikely to be appropriate where the observed 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds are above 24 mph unless traffic calming measures are provided if there is an excessive speed problem. Speed surveys were undertaken outside the field entrance to the school on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2014 between 1pm and 2.30pm in free flow conditions in accordance with national requirements. The weather was dry, sunny and unseasonably warm during the survey period. Free flow conditions are used to fully observe the speeds without hindrance from other bodies, when speeds are considerably reduced for example such as during peak hours and school start and finishing times. The results of the surveys showed that the mean speed along Northumberland Avenue in this location was 24 mph and the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed was 29 mph, which shows compliance with the existing 30mph limit.
- 4.5 However given the proximity of the school and the advice given in 4.2 it is recommended that the 20mph limit is extended along Northumberland Avenue from Hexham Road to Long Barn Lane in the interests of pupils and public safety. A review of the existing traffic calming features (islands, build outs, including bus stop build outs) taking in to account the new school layout will also be undertaken to ensure that the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed is reduce to comply with the DfT criteria. It is therefore recommended that detailed proposals are drawn up to be brought back to this sub- committee to implement a 20mph speed limit along the section of Northumberland Avenue adjacent to Reading Girls School together with any traffic management changes required.
- 4.6 There is also concern that during school start and finishing times indiscriminate parking along Northumberland Avenue outside the school is having implications

for road safety. The existing "School Keep Clear" markings are faded and given the changes to the access arrangements for pedestrians and vehicles as a result of the new school it is proposed that the current restrictions are reviewed and amended taking in the new layout, with the proposals being brought back to this sub-committee.

- 4.7 The safety of pupils is paramount and issues of pupils leaving the school and walking straight in to Northumberland Avenue have been noted by the Safer Schools Officer at Reading Police Station. It is therefore proposed that pedestrian barriers are erected on the front edge of the footways by the main pedestrian accesses to school to prevent pupils walking straight out on to the carriageway.

## **5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

- 5.1 To promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all.

## **6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

- 6.1 Any changes to speed limits or parking restrictions will require Statutory consultation to be carried out in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 None arising from this report.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The cost of the works will be funded from the Section 106 transport contribution obtained as a result of planning consent

## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 9.1 Planning Applications Committee, September 14<sup>th</sup> 2014, Agenda Item 14.