

**READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES**

TO:	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	14 SEPTEMBER 2016	AGENDA ITEM:	7
TITLE:	HIGHMOOR ROAD JUNCTION WITH ALBERT ROAD - ROAD SAFETY UPDATE REPORT		
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Sub-committee of works and meetings that have taken place to improve road safety at the junction of Highmoor Road with Albert Road, Caversham. There have been a number of reports to the Sub-committee relating to road safety at the junction of Highmoor Road with Albert Road. The most recent report titled '*ROAD SAFETY AND ROAD CASUALTIES IN READING - BASINGSTOKE ROAD WITH BUCKLAND ROAD & HIGHMOOR ROAD JUNCTION WITH ALBERT ROAD*' was presented to this Sub-committee in June 2016. To fully understand the context of this report the Sub-committee is reminded of the previous reports to which section 10 BACKGROUND PAPERS refer.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Sub-committee note the contents of this report.
- 2.2 That in consultation with the Chair of the Sub-Committee, the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport and Ward Councillors, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to carry out a statutory consultation and advertise the extension to the no waiting at any time restriction within Highmoor Road between the junctions with Albert Road and Buxton Avenue in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

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| <p>2.3 That subject to no objections received, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make the Traffic Regulation Order.</p> <p>2.4 That any objections received following the statutory consultation be reported to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.</p> |
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3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The most recent report titled '*ROAD SAFETY AND ROAD CASUALTIES IN READING - BASINGSTOKE ROAD WITH BUCKLAND ROAD & HIGHMOOR ROAD JUNCTION WITH ALBERT ROAD*' was presented to this Sub-committee in June 2016. To fully understand the context of this report the Sub-committee is reminded of the previous reports to which section 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS refer.
- 3.2 The government expects Local Authorities to implement road safety schemes to address sites with a history of personal injury collisions, and where possible link these with the promotion of sustainable travel.
- 3.2 Under the 1988 Road Traffic Act, the Highway Authority has a duty to take steps to both reduce and prevent collisions on the road network. In addition under the Traffic Management Act 2004 the authority has a duty to maintain and manage the road network and secure the safe and expeditious movement of traffic. (Traffic is defined to include pedestrians). It is therefore imperative that the authority continues to strive to reduce road casualties to ensure the network is safe for all users.

4. MEETINGS WITH CAVERSHAM AND DISTRICT RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION (CADRA) AND HIGHMOOR ALBERT ROAD CAMPAIGN (HARC)

- 4.1 In response to the 15th June Sub-committee meeting it was agreed that officers meet with CADRA & HARC to review the facts around the accidents that have occurred at the junction. The first meeting was held on Tues 12th July where it was agreed to carry out additional surveys (speed and driver behaviour) and pursue lining changes on the approach to the junction from Highmoor Road west side. The meeting explored the facts from the casualty data and why the previous recommendations to close the junction or change the priorities had been made. The casualty data is consistent in showing that drivers are failing to stop at the STOP sign and colliding with vehicles traveling north on Albert Road. The accident data clearly demonstrates this failure to stop indicating that Highmoor Road, when travelling east, suffers from a 'see through' problem. This is

where drivers focus is beyond the junction with no acknowledgement that the junction exists.

- 4.2 The second planned meeting with CADRA and HARC took place on Monday 22nd August. The lining changes (as discussed at the 12th July meeting) were altered slightly to a 'dragons teeth' arrangement and applied on Monday 15th August. Between the two meetings another accident occurred on Tues 9th August at approximately 4pm. This accident was exactly the same as the previous recorded casualties with a driver passing through the junction along Highmoor Road east bound without any acknowledgement that the junction existed.
- 4.3 Both meetings have been constructive in exploring the evidence based data that we have for this junction. The casualty data formed a significant part of the meetings but a broader discussion took place on vehicle speed and speeding. Speed counts were carried out between the 18th and 29th July. The result of the speed data was shown and discussed at the second meeting. The count equipment was set up in Highmoor Road just west of the junction and in Albert Road just south of the junction. The average mean speed on Highmoor Road for vehicles travelling east measured at 23.6mph. For westbound traffic the average mean speed was recorded at 23mph. On Albert Road the average mean speed was recorded at 23.1mph for northbound traffic and 23.7mph for southbound traffic. There is a perception locally that speed is an issue particularly on Albert Road but the data collected does not demonstrate this.
- 4.4 Both CADRA and HARC would like some form of traffic calming measure (road humps or cushions) within Albert Road with a raised table at the junction. Whilst these are reasonable requests the accident data does not suggest that collisions at the junction will be resolved by these measures. This is particularly the case with a raised table that would be difficult and expensive to profile and, for unfamiliar drivers on Highmoor Road, would not stop the see through problem. In addition, traffic calming including a raised table does not solve the visibility problem that exists on Highmoor Road which is clearly a concern locally. There appears to be a local perception that visibility on the Highmoor Road eastbound approach at the junction (to the right) is the cause of accidents. The casualty data does not support this as it is consistently unfamiliar drivers on Highmoor Road that results in people being hurt.
- 4.5 It has been broadly accepted by the representatives of both CADRA and HARC that the lining changes carried out is a positive development. Whilst this has improved the very final approach to the junction it is quite limited in its impact. There is a relatively small amount of on-street parking in this part of Highmoor Road which forces drivers onto the opposite side of the road travelling east towards the junction. It was agreed that this parking should be removed allowing an extension of the new marking. Keeping drivers

on the correct side of the road with an increased length of 'dragons teeth' marking ensures the very best warning of the junction ahead and the need to stop.

4.6 Further discussions included consideration for additional signing with the inclusion of an offside STOP sign and advanced STOP signing. There is no advanced STOP sign that could be applied but there are options for advanced signs of a junction ahead. The request to add an off-side STOP sign came from the perception that the police fatal accident signs mounted on the off-side had made a positive impact. If you are local and familiar with the junction the additional police signs are noticeable. However, the accident on 9th August occurred during the time that the police sign existed. Our own data collection recorded a vehicle driving straight through the junction (without slowing or stopping) as did the local ITV news during a news report. All three of these (recorded) instances involved the same Highmoor Road eastbound movement that has resulted in all of the casualties with the police sign in place.

4.7 There appears to be some evidence of shadowing across the STOP sign during bright periods. This shadowing is caused by surrounding established vegetation that exists throughout the area. A review of the casualty data does not evidence a particular shadowing issue although all of the accidents have occurred during daylight hours. Locally there is concern of vegetation growth at the junction. Visibility to the left at the junction when travelling Highmoor Road eastbound has been raised number of times during the past two years. The casualty data does not indicate that visibility is compromised due to this vegetation but officers remain open minded over the shadowing.

5.0 NEXT STEPS

5.1 The double yellow line waiting restriction should be extended further back from the junction along with the dragons teeth marking. There is a good argument to clear all parking within this part of Highmoor Road between Buxton Avenue and the junction itself with Albert Road. The dragons teeth should be extended at least double the distance where the triangles can start smaller increasing in size as a driver nears the junction. Dragons teeth can be used in this way to give the impression of a narrowing carriageway and counting down to the (hazard) junction ahead. The Sub-committee is asked to approve the statutory process to extend the double yellow lines and increase the length of the dragons teeth marking.

5.2 The professional opinion is that as long as this junction remains a cross roads the risk of accidents resulting in casualties remains. The desire for speed reduction measures, a wider 20mph speed limit and additional traffic management measures expressed by both CADRA and HARC may be reasonable long term ambitions. However, as

already covered within this report these measures will never remove the casualty risk and community concern around visibility whilst this junction remains a cross roads. The CADRA idea presented at the June TM Sub-committee meeting to close the east side of the Highmoor Road junction may be a more acceptable solution than our original proposal. We promoted a closure on the Highmoor Road west side approach to the junction with a dedicated bus only lane that led to significant objection. Much of the concern came from residents who live in the streets leading from Highmoor Road worried about the knock-on effect of displaced traffic. The CADRA idea keeps Highmoor Road west-side open but stops the cross movement into Highmoor Road east-side. Displaced traffic is then dispersed along Albert Road rather than forced into Matlock Road and Buxton Avenue. This does not solve the visibility concern at the junction or the wider rat running issue but will completely eradicate the see through problem within Highmoor Road.

- 5.3 Since the dragons teeth marking was applied a further CCTV survey has been carried out at the junction to evidence driver behaviour. At the time of writing this report the result of this CCTV survey had not been reviewed. Should the Sub-committee approve the process to remove parking and extend the road markings a further CCTV survey shall be carried out. If there is not sufficient evidence to demonstrate a positive change in driver behaviour the Sub-committee may be asked to reconsider the two closure options. A further report may be required to consider any objections to the waiting restrictions in November before the road marking proposal can be completed. If this is the case then a further CCTV survey may not be completed until early 2017 with results reported to the Sub-committee thereafter.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 That the Sub-committee agree to the extension of the waiting restrictions and road markings as detailed within this report. Once complete a further CCTV survey be carried out to record driver behaviour at the junction. A further report will provide evidence of the success or failure of these changes in early 2017.
- 6.2 That it be noted that the community would like a much wider traffic management and speed strategy developed for the neighbourhood. The idea is that these measures can be funded from developments and suchlike as they come forward.

7. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 7.1 The delivery of road safety and casualty reduction schemes help to deliver the following Corporate Plan Service Priorities:
- Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active.

- Providing infrastructure to support the economy
- Remaining financially sustainable to deliver these service priorities.

8. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

8.1 Our road safety and casualty reduction policies form part of our Local Transport Plan which was last consulted upon in 2010. Some locally promoted changes may require a public consultation process in line with the Local Authorities Traffic Order (Procedure) (England & Wales) Regulations 1996.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Waiting and movement restrictions are advertised under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

10. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

10.1 In addition to the Human Rights Act 1998 the Council is required to comply with the Equalities Act 2010. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:-

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The changes suggested within this report are relatively low cost and will be funded from existing transport budgets.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1 TM Sub Committee 16th January 2014 petition submission. TM Sub Committee 13th March 2014 Annual Road Safety Review. TM Sub Committee 11th September 2014. TM Sub Committee 4th November 2014. TM Sub-committee 15th January 2016. TM Sub-committee 15th June 2016.