

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	10 NOVEMBER 2022	AGENDA ITEM:	
TITLE:	PETITION - REQUEST TO URGENTLY REVIEW SAFETY AT HENLEY ROAD/CAVERSHAM LAKES ACCESS ROAD JUNCTION		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	TONY PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	CLIMATE STRATEGY AND TRANSPORT
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**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To report to the Sub-Committee the receipt of a petition requesting the Council to undertake a safety review and to take immediate steps to improve the safety at the junction of Henley Road, Caversham Park Road and 'Caversham Lakes' access road.
- 1.2 The report provides background on the Caversham Lakes development planning application, Police-supplied casualty data and recommends continued monitoring of planning appeals/re-submissions and casualty data.

**2. RECOMMENDED ACTION**

- 2.1 That the Sub-Committee notes the content of this report.
- 2.2 That relevant officers continue to engage with South Oxfordshire District Council in response to any future planning application developments for this site and continue to monitor Police supplied casualty data for any emerging patterns.
- 2.4 That the lead petitioner be informed of the decisions of the Sub-Committee, following publication of the agreed minutes of the meeting.
- 2.4 That no public inquiry be held into the proposals.

### 3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Government expects Local Authorities to implement road safety schemes to address sites with a history of personal injury incidents, 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).

### 4. THE PROPOSAL

#### Current Position

- 4.1 On 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022, an online petition was submitted to the Council that, at the time of writing, contained 475 signatures. The petition stated the following:

*As residents in the area, we regularly see accidents and near misses at the very dangerous junction of the access road to Caversham Lakes with Henley Road. This has been a hot spot for many years, even before the opening of the leisure facilities at Caversham Lakes. Turning on to the A4155, Henley Road, is particularly dangerous, with poor sight lines and a confusing staggered junction close to traffic lights to Caversham Park Village. Oxfordshire County Council have recorded concerns regarding the the Access Road/ Henley Road/ Caversham Park Road junction. Eye and Dunsden Parish Council report numerous accidents in the area, including a fatality. The confusing boundary issues must not prevent action being taken.*

*It is clear that the formal accident data substantially under records the number and the nature of accidents at this junction. We urge the Council to take immediate steps to improve safety at the junction.*

- 4.2 Reading Borough Council and Thames Valley Police have a close working relationship regarding incidents on the highway involving any casualties. Where serious incidents occur, or those involving fatalities, Council officers are often involved in aspects of the Police investigation process. The Council also receives monthly Police data in arrears, on incidents involving casualties, which is analysed and may be referred to in some committee reports.

The Council will review the results of this Police supplied data to consider whether there are any patterns, or specific factors/causes, that could be addressed by reasonable engineering solutions or highway alterations.

It would not be appropriate, nor permissible, for the Council to share or comment on details and causations of any incidents in a public forum, due to the sensitive information that is involved and the potential for upset that could be caused to relatives and friends of those persons involved. However, upon reviewing the latest 3-year period of data supplied (up to the end of June 2022), there has been 1 incident recorded at this junction, which was recorded with a severity of 'slight' - the severity levels are recorded as slight, serious or fatal.

- 4.3 Reading Borough Council Planning Officers provided comments to South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) in relation to the retrospective planning application that was submitted for the Caversham Lakes development. These comments included a recommendation of an objection to SODC on Highway safety grounds given the insufficient information that had been provided by the applicant. The level of detail provided has not allowed Highway Officers to be able to fully assess the application to identify the exact increase in vehicular movements and the peak hours demand to establish what impact the use has had on the Henley Road / Caversham Park Road / site access signalised junction.

No alterations had been identified at the junction to date given that there was insufficient information supplied with the application to ascertain whether the junction would in fact be in excess of its actual capacity.

It should also be stressed that the accident data that accompanied the planning application incorporated the latest set of data available with the assessment undertaken by the applicant and subsequently corroborated by officers identifying that no additional accidents have occurred as a result of the Caversham Lakes operation above the historic accidents levels in the vicinity of the site.

- 4.4 South Oxfordshire District Council has refused planning permission and Reading Borough Council planning officers will continue to engage in response to any future appeals or resubmissions.

#### Options Proposed

- 4.5 At this time, the evidential Police-supplied casualty data does not reflect the situation proposed in the petition. There is no identified funding to make alterations to the junction and it would be costly to do so.

Developments creating a material change in expected use of the area (e.g. significant increase in vehicle movements) would be required to make/contribute to changes on the Highway to mitigate the impact of those changes on the area. These changes/contributions would be secured as part of the wider planning application process. Clearly, this hasn't been allowed to happen to date, as the planning application was submitted retrospectively and has been refused.

- 4.6 It is recommended that relevant officers continue to engage with South Oxfordshire District Council in response to any future planning application developments for this site, accepting that it is not yet possible to anticipate the eventual outcome of this process.

It is also recommended that relevant officers continue to monitor Police supplied casualty data for any emerging patterns.

#### Other Options Considered

- 4.7 None at this time.

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

- 5.1 The recommendation of this report does not recommend any changes at this time.
- 5.2 Full details of the Council's Corporate plan are available on the Council's website and includes information on the projects which will deliver these priorities.

## **6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 6.2 The proposals contained in this report proposes no change, so a Climate Impact Assessment has not been considered necessary.

## **7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

- 7.1 The lead petitioner will be informed of the decision of the Sub-Committee regarding the request that they have made, following publication of the meeting minutes.
- 7.2 Officers have considered the content of the petition, and that arising from other correspondence, which has formed a basis of the report recommendation.
- 7.3 Meeting reports and minutes are published on the Council's website and Traffic Management Sub-Committee is a public meeting that can be attended. Recordings of the meetings are also available via the Council's website ([www.reading.gov.uk](http://www.reading.gov.uk)).

## **8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, 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.
- 8.2 It is not considered that an Equality Impact Assessment is relevant at this time as the report does not recommend any physical changes and the petition does not raise concerns about issues that are having a greater impact on groups with protected characteristics.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no foreseen legal implications relating to the recommendation of this report.

**10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

None arising from the recommendations of this report.

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 None.