

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	02 MARCH 2023		
TITLE:	PETITION - TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES ON ROTHERFIELD WAY		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	TONY PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	CLIMATE STRATEGY AND TRANSPORT
SERVICE:	HIGHWAYS & TRAFFIC SERVICES	WARDS:	CAVERSHAM HEIGHTS, EMMER GREEN
LEAD OFFICER:	JAMES PENMAN	TEL:	0118 937 2202
JOB TITLE:	NETWORK SERVICES MANAGER	E-MAIL:	NETWORK.MANAGEMENT@READING.GOV.UK

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To report to the Sub-Committee the receipt of a petition requesting the Council to provide traffic calming measures on Rotherfield Way.
- 1.2 To recommend that the request for traffic calming be added to the regularly reported 'Requests for Traffic Management Measures' list of requests so that it may be recorded for future funding allocation.
- 1.3 Appendix 1 - Results of a resident survey and comments received as part of the survey and petition signing, supplementing the petition.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Sub-Committee notes the content of this report.
- 2.2 That the existing request for a pedestrian crossing on Rotherfield Way contained within the regularly reported 'Requests for Traffic Management Measures' is updated and expanded to reflect the receipt of this petition and the request for traffic calming. This will be a proposed amendment to the existing entry as part of the next update report.
- 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 Requests for new measures would need to be considered alongside the Borough Council's Traffic Management Policies and Standards and Strategic Aims, the Local Transport Plan (LTP), and Local Cycling, Walking and Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

4. THE PROPOSAL

Current Position

- 4.1 On 22 February 2023, a petition was submitted to the Council, at the time of writing containing 157 named signatures (49 from paper forms and 108 names from an electronic form). The petition stated the following:

Rotherfield Way is a steep residential road, which is used as a through way by drivers travelling into Reading. There is a crossroads towards the top with Surley Row, just after a blind corner. Because drivers regularly speed down the hill, it is hazardous to cross any part of the road on foot, or to pull out from driveways, as well as from Surley Row (particularly the small narrow part). A major walking route to local schools crosses Rotherfield Way. There is a refuge right at the top of the road which actually exacerbates the problem, because drivers often speed away from it, ignoring the crossroads ahead.

We ask the Council to provide effective traffic calming measures on Rotherfield Way.

- 4.2 Supplementary to the petition was the submission of a resident survey summary and comments that were received as part of this survey and alongside petition signatures. These are included in Appendix 1.
- 4.3 Addressing the issue of speeding motorists is particularly challenging for a Local Authority. Despite motorists being in no doubt as to the speed limit, through nationally recognised presentation of the Highway, there sadly continues to be a proportion of motorists who wilfully choose to speed and who do not drive in an appropriate manner for the conditions.

At this time, speed enforcement - which includes the placement and operation of fixed and mobile enforcement equipment - can only be undertaken by the Police. With funding and resource limitations alongside other policing priorities, enforcement cannot currently be relied upon to provide a sustained method in which to deter speeding. Reading Borough Council has been and continues to lobby the government and Police for an increase in civil powers of enforcement against speeding motorists.

Local authorities have limited tools in which to address speeding, which are predominantly limited to the implementation of physical speed calming 'features', such as speed humps. It is understandable - and regretful - that the implementation of such features will not be welcomed by many, as they are indiscriminate and impact on the surrounding environment. Consideration also needs to be given to the potential implications of some features to public transport vehicles, emergency service vehicles, active travel modes, and the feasibility in the context of the highway layout (e.g. proximity to junctions and

vehicular footway crossovers). Some of the comments on Appendix 1 acknowledge these challenges.

For a Local Authority a scheme of features can also be resource-intensive and costly to design, install and maintain. However, until mooted mandatory technologies are in place to override motorist inputs and limit vehicle speeds, and/or autonomously impose fines on the offending motorist, there appears to be no alternative to these physical measures.

- 4.4 Many of the comments in Appendix 1 additionally request pedestrian crossing facilities. The Council has previously received such requests and the Sub-Committee agreed to add this to the regularly reported 'Requests for Traffic Management Measures' list. This report has been updated for this March 2023 Sub-Committee meeting (line 69 on Appendix 3 of the report refers to Rotherfield Way).

This report is a useful source for the Council when considering options for funding allocation through, for example, local 15% Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds. Many schemes that originated from this list have been delivered and continue to be developed following funding allocations.

Options Proposed

- 4.5 There is currently no allocated funding for the development and delivery of the requested changes. It is entirely appropriate that consideration of traffic calming takes into account the previous request for pedestrian crossing facilities, particularly as such facilities could also have a positive impact on driver behaviour and speeds travelled.

It is recommended that the existing entry on the 'Requests for Traffic Management Measures' is adjusted to reflect the receipt of this petition and expanded to include the request for traffic calming - it is recommended that both elements be considered for funding allocation and are subsequently developed as a single scheme and are not separated.

This update would be included as a proposed amendment for the next report on this item (expected November 2023) and the entry will also be updated to reflect the latest Police-supplied road casualty data for the street.

Other Options Considered

- 4.6 None at this time, as there is regrettably no identified funding to develop or deliver these requested features.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 The recommendation of this report does not directly deliver changes.

- 5.2 Full details of the Council's Corporate plan are available on the website and include 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 recommendation of this report does not directly deliver changes, so a Climate Impact Assessment has not been considered necessary. Once funding is available to deliver a scheme of traffic calming features, an Impact Assessment will be undertaken.

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 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).

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 recommendation does not directly lead to any physical change. Assessment will be considered once funding for development and delivery of a scheme is identified.

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 Requests for Traffic Management Measures (Traffic Management Sub-Committee, March 2023)