

Traffic Management Sub-Committee

13 June 2024



Reading
Borough Council
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Title	Petition – Request for Traffic Management on St Peters Hill and Church Road, Caversham
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Report author	James Penman, Network Services Manager, Network Services
Lead councillor	John Ennis
Corporate priority	Healthy Environment
Recommendations	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Note the content of this report.2. Agree to propose a revision to the existing ‘Lower Caversham’ 20mph zone entry on the next <i>Requests for Traffic Management Measures</i> report update to reflect the receipt of this petition and the requested measures.3. Agree to the lead petitioner being informed of the decisions of the Sub-Committee, following publication of the agreed minutes of the meeting.4. Agree that no public inquiry be held into the proposals.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1. To report the receipt of a petition requesting measures to enhance access to Caversham Court Gardens and St Peters Church, primarily a speed limit reduction on St Peters Hill and into Church Road in Caversham.
- 1.2. The *Requests for Traffic Management Measures* report that is updated to this Sub-Committee contains an entry for a desirable 20mph zone in Lower Caversham. The concept scheme was bounded by the junction of Church Road and St Anne’s Road.
- 1.3. Officers have considered the content of the petition and make a recommendation to propose an adjustment to the existing ‘Lower Caversham’ entry to reflect the receipt of this petition and to propose an extension to this concept area to include St Peters Hill. The next update is expected to the Sub-Committee meeting in November 2024.

2. Policy context

- 2.1. The recommendations of this report will not directly lead to changes being introduced. However, the implementation of such a traffic calming scheme would be expected to align with the following theme in the Council’s Corporate Plan for the years 2022/25:
 - Healthy Environment
- 2.2. A speed reduction scheme at this location would be expected to reduce risks and severity of potential casualty incidents. This may have the added benefit of removing barriers that some may have to using sustainable transport modes for travelling through this area, such as walking and cycling.

3. The proposal

Current Position

- 3.1. On 5 June 2024 Reading Borough Council received a petition that has been jointly promoted by The Church Leadership Team at St Peters Church and the Committee of the Friends of Caversham Court Gardens.

The petition reads:

The Church Leadership Team at St Peter's Church, Caversham, and the Committee of the Friends of Caversham Court Gardens wish to promote a petition in favour of a Traffic Management Scheme aiming to enhance safety for pedestrians accessing St Peter's Church and Caversham Court Gardens. The scheme would involve the enforcement of a 20mph speed limit from Darell Road on the whole length of St Peter's Hill and Church Road. The scheme would include signage near the entrance to Woodrow Court to warn drivers that elderly people may be crossing Church Road.

The petition has 165 individual indications of support.

- 3.2. For context, St Peters Hill leading into Church Road is a street-lit, nationally-classified 'A' Road with a speed limit of 30mph. From north-to-south it has the following features:
- a. Advance warning signing for the 13% gradient, to the south of its junction with Blossom Road;
 - b. The gradient of the road steepens toward its junction with The Warren, where there is signing to warn of the narrowing road;
 - c. Shortly thereafter is a warning sign for the bends in the road and the footways narrow also;
 - d. The carriageway and footway starts to widen from Auburn Court (opposite Caversham Court Gardens), on the first bend in the road; and
 - e. The road starts to level after the final steep bend in the road.

Appendix 1 provides a plan of the roads and highlights the section where treatment has been requested in the petition.

Within the latest 5-year period of Police-supplied casualty data (period up to 31 October 2023), there have been no recorded pedestrian casualties in the immediate area around Caversham Court Gardens nor St Peters Church. There have been 4 'slight' incidents further along and within the referred section of St Peters Hill and Church Road, with no linking patterns and no recorded suspicion that speeding was a contributing factor.

- 3.3. The *Requests for Traffic Management Measures* report that is regularly on this Sub-Committee agenda contains an entry for a desired new 20mph zone in lower Caversham. This request is line 2, Appendix 2 of the latest report update to this Sub-Committee (March 2024), which is also available on our website [here](#). This line refers to an earlier report that proposed a concept area and this report (and concept area plan) are available on our website [here](#). The concept proposal showed the zone ending on Church Road near to its junction with St Annes Road, so does not currently cover the area desired within this petition.

This 'Requests for Traffic Management Measures' report typically comes to this Sub-Committee twice-annually and captures requests for traffic management schemes that do not currently have identified funding. Schemes originating from this list have attracted funding nominations, including those from Local 15% Community Infrastructure Levy and successful government funding bids, such as the Active Travel Tranche 4.

The Lower Caversham 20mph zone concept was developed at a time when significant developer contributions were expected. Unfortunately, these did not materialise,

however, this is still a desirable scheme for development and delivery. While the scale of the concept area is such that it would require significant funding, relatively smaller funding nominations could contribute to a phased delivery on an area priority basis.

Options proposed

- 3.4. There is currently no allocated funding for the development and delivery of the changes requested in this petition. Officers acknowledge the concerns that have been raised and propose the following recommendation.

It is recommended that the next update of the Requests for *Traffic Management Measures* report, which is expected to be at the November 2024 meeting of this Sub-Committee, includes an amendment to the Lower Caversham entry. It is recommended that the entry includes the section of Church Road west of St Annes Road, and includes St Peters Hill (part, or all, to be determined by scheme design, once funded). Given the nature of the road, it is considered equally important that any speed reduction be applied to both directions of traffic and the scheme will include any other potential enhancements that can be made, although the addition of any further signing will need to be balanced against the importance of not distracting from the important warning signs referred in Section 3.2.

It should be noted that 20mph zones are required to have regular traffic management features to ensure compliance and that these should be features that make the zone 'self-enforcing' (i.e. they slow traffic). Due to the combination of the steep gradient, narrow carriageway and steep bends, there are feasibility concerns around placing speed hump/cushion type features, due to the risks of destabilising vehicles, and the surface water drainage (ponding and deflection).

It should be expected that scheme development will only commence once funding has been identified, where it will be programmed around other funded scheme development priorities.

- 3.5. Officers note the petition request for enforcement of the reduced speed limit. Speed enforcement, including the placement of speed cameras, is not within Local Authority Civil Enforcement powers at this time, so this can only be undertaken by the Police. There should be no expectation of additional enforcement following the implementation of a 20mph scheme.

Other options considered

- 3.6. None at this time.

4. Contribution to strategic aims

- 4.1. The Council's new Corporate Plan has established three themes for the years 2022/25. These themes are:

- Healthy Environment
- Thriving Communities
- Inclusive Economy

- 4.2. These themes are underpinned by "Our Foundations" explaining the ways we work at the Council:

- People first
- Digital transformation
- Building self-reliance
- Getting the best value
- Collaborating with others

- 4.3. Full details of the Council's Corporate Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the [Council's website](#). These priorities and the Corporate

Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective and economical.

- 4.4. The recommendation of this report does not directly deliver changes. Requests for new traffic management measures would need to be considered alongside the Borough Council's Strategic Aims, the Local Transport Plan (LTP), and Local Cycling, Walking and Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).
- 4.5. When funded and delivered, a speed reduction scheme at this location would be expected to reduce risks and severity of potential casualty incidents. This may have the added benefit of removing barriers that some may have to using sustainable transport modes for travel to/from the school, such as walking and cycling.

5. Environmental and climate implications

- 5.1. The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 5.2. The recommendation of this report does not directly deliver changes, so a Climate Impact Assessment has not been considered necessary at this time.

6. Community engagement

- 6.1. 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.
- 6.2. 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).

7. Equality impact assessment

- 7.1. 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.
- 7.2. 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.

8. Other relevant considerations

- 8.1. None expected from the recommendations and decisions for this report.

9. Legal implications

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

10. Financial implications

- 10.1. None arising from the recommendation of this report.

11. Timetable for implementation

- 11.1. Not applicable.

12. Background papers

12.1. There are none.

Appendices –

1. Plan to show the requested area for treatment in context.
2. Photographs supplied with the petition – officers have provided approximate location descriptions.