

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH &  
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

<b>TO:</b>	<b>TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE</b>		
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>14 NOVEMBER 2019</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>PETITION TO RE-GRAVEL WARDLE AVENUE WITH CORRECT MATERIALS AS COMPENSATION TO ROAD CLOSURE ON ARMOUR HILL</b>		
<b>LEAD COUNCILLOR:</b>	<b>TONY PAGE</b>	<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	<b>STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT</b>
<b>SERVICE:</b>	<b>TRANSPORT</b>	<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>KENTWOOD</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>SAM SHEAN</b>	<b>TEL:</b>	<b>0118 937 2138</b>
<b>JOB TITLE:</b>	<b>STREETCARE SERVICES MANAGER</b>	<b>E-MAIL:</b>	<a href="mailto:highways@reading.gov.uk">highways@reading.gov.uk</a>

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To report to the Sub-Committee the findings of the petition requesting that the Council re-gravel Wardle Avenue with the correct materials as compensation for the road closure on Armour Hill.

**2. RECOMMENDED ACTION**

- 2.1 That the Sub-Committee notes the report.
- 2.2 To report to the Sub-Committee the findings of the investigation not to re-gravel Wardle Avenue.
- 2.3 That the lead petitioner be informed accordingly.

**3. POLICY CONTEXT**

- 3.1 Wardle Avenue is a privately owned road, for which the Council as Highway Authority does not have responsibility. This is a matter for the landowner(s).

#### 4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Council received a petition with a total of 45 signatures at the time of writing.
- 4.2 The wording of the petition reads: *‘Since the section on Armour Hill in 2018, we (the “residents of Wardle Avenue) have noticed a large increase in traffic including heavy vehicles on Wardle Avenue which has resulted in a rapid deterioration of the road. As you may be aware, Wardle Avenue is a private thoroughfare road and is not designed for huge volumes of traffic.*

*With the likelihood of the road falling into more disrepair as Armour Hill continues to stay closed, we would like to see your assistance in requesting for Reading Borough Council to re-gravel the road with the correct materials, as compensation. If Reading Borough Council had installed a ‘Road Ahead Sign’ at the junction of Wardle Avenue and Armour Road in 2018, I believe the road would not be in the state it is now’.*

#### 5. PROPOSAL

- 5.1 Wardle Avenue is a ‘Private Prospectively Maintainable Road’, which means that it is a private road and responsibility for its maintenance lie with the land owner or if unregistered, responsibly passes to the frontages of the adjacent property owners.
- 5.2 Wardle Avenue is located in Tilehurst and is a private road situated between Armour Road and Armour Hill. Wardle Avenue has a number of residential properties along its length and a bowling green club leading off the road.
- 5.3 Wardle Avenue is signed as a ‘private road’ and access rights are generally written into the Title Deeds of the properties that access directly off a private road. It is noted that due to the length of time the road has been in existence, highway access rights may have been established, however, this does not make Wardle Avenue a ‘Highway Maintainable at Public Expense’.
- 5.4 In late December 2018 a collapse occurred in Armour Hill near the junction with The Cedars. Thames Water repaired a watermain that was damaged, however, on further investigation the Council established that there was a ‘solution feature’ within the public highway, resulting in Armour Hill being closed between The Cedars and Westwood Road for safety reasons.

- 5.5 The Council commissioned a topographical and services location survey on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2019 and followed this with specialist dynamic probing within the highway adjacent the collapsed area to determine the extent and depth of the collapse / unstable ground area.
- 5.6 Specialist ‘cementitious grouting’ works to stabilise the ‘solution feature’ commenced mid-June 2019 and over 280t of grout was injected into the ground.
- 5.7 Following the successful completion of the ground stabilising works at the end of July 2019, a surface water sewer replacement scheme was brought forward and these works were completed on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2019, with Armour Hill then fully re-opened to through traffic.
- 5.8 The Council has a statutory duty under the Highways Act 1980 to maintain a safe highway. No diversion through Wardle Avenue was proposed nor signed during the urgent ground stabilisation works in Armour Hill.
- 5.9 Local residents may have chosen to use Wardle Avenue as an alternative route, however, as the road is private the Council has no control over the use of this road. The use of Wardle Avenue by local residents during the essential works in Armour Hill does not result in maintenance responsibility being passed to the Council. The Council therefore are not in a position to re-gravel Wardle Avenue in appropriate materials.
- 5.9 The Council recognises that Armour Hill ground stabilisation works were disruptive to local residents, including residents of Wardle Avenue and would thank all residents affected for their patience during these essential highway safety works.

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

- 5.1 This proposal supports the aims and objectives of the Local Transport Plan and helps to deliver the following Council Priorities:

- Ensuring the Council is fit for the future

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

- 6.1 The lead petitioner will be informed of the findings of the Sub-Committee.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 None arising from this report.

## **8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

8.1 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.

8.2 The Council will carry out an equality impact assessment scoping exercise prior making any alterations to the Highway.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None arising from this report.

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

10.1 None.