

WIRRAL COUNCIL

HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC REPRESENTATIONS PANEL

21 MARCH 2012

SUBJECT:	OBJECTION: LOCAL SAFETY SCHEME – TOWNFIELD LANE, OXTON
WARD/S AFFECTED:	OXTON WARD
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	STREETSCENE AND TRANSPORT SERVICES COUNCILLOR DAVE MITCHELL
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report considers two objections to the proposal to introduce a No Waiting At Any Time (NWAAT) Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) on Townfield Lane, Oxtan as part of a Local Safety Scheme.
- 1.2 This proposal promotes the Council's Corporate Priorities in improving road safety.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

- 2.1 The report recommends that the Panel note the objections, but that the proposed scheme consisting of a NWAAT TRO as shown on attached Drawing No. TS0395B0 be recommended to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee for approval and implementation.

3.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 3.1 There have been four recorded personal injury accidents at this location during the three year study period. In addition, my Highway Management Division are aware of two further incidents where vehicles have collided with, and damaged the pedestrian refuge island. The proposals have been developed in consultation with Merseyside Police and Emergency Services. Merseyside Police support this proposal, as the introduction of waiting restrictions should improve road safety and lessen occurrences of obstructive parking.
- 3.2 The proposed waiting restrictions will deter obstructive parking and will facilitate the ease and safe turning movement of vehicles from one road into the other. The proposals will also aid pedestrian movements by improving visibility around the area of the pedestrian refuge.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 On 17th March 2011 Cabinet considered and approved the Local Transport Capital Programme for 2011/12. This location was identified within the Road Safety Block element of the programme. The proposal includes, amongst other measures, a NWAAT TRO on Townfield Lane, Oxton, which would be funded from the Local Safety Scheme Programme.
- 4.2 During the three year study period there have been four recorded personal injury accidents on Townfield Lane. Two injury accidents involved vehicles heading north east that had entered the hatched carriageway marking, due to the presence of parked vehicles, and collided into the rear of vehicles waiting to turn right into Calveley Close from Townfield Lane. In addition to the four injury accidents there have been two other incidents which involved vehicles heading north east and colliding with the pedestrian refuge causing damage to it. The presence of parked vehicles close to the pedestrian refuge was a factor in both these incidents.
- 4.3 Following detailed design, as part of the consultation process, letters were delivered to residents of properties in the vicinity of the proposed scheme informing them of the proposal. Notices were erected on site and Party Spokespersons and Ward Members informed.
- 4.4 During this consultation period two individual objections and a petition were received. The content of the petition was to call for a local meeting of the residents affected to discuss the proposals with Wirral Council Officers, as the petitioners were concerned that the advertised parking restrictions were too onerous.
- 4.5 A meeting was held with Council Officers, a Ward Member, the Lead Petitioner and other petitioners in December 2011. It was agreed that the advertised restrictions be reduced on Townfield Lane to accommodate some on-street parking but still providing an adequate length of waiting restrictions to implement a safety scheme designed to reduce the number and severity of road accidents. The Lead Petitioner and residents then agreed to withdraw the petition.
- 4.6 Two separate objectors, who had also signed the petition, have submitted separate individual objections. The points listed below summarise the two remaining objectors concerns together with my response to each comment:-
 - 4.6.1 **Residents should be able to park outside their own front door.**
 - 4.6.2 This scheme has been developed in order to improve safety at this location. Vehicles parked close to the refuge island have contributed to both the accident record and also have obstructed the flow of traffic (especially for buses and large vehicles). Vehicles parked on Townfield Lane close to the junctions of Hargrave Avenue and Calveley Close also obstruct visibility for traffic emerging from these roads. Whilst it is recognised that this scheme will restrict some parking, following discussions with the petitioners' representative provision has been made to accommodate approximately 10 parking spaces on both sides of the road on Townfield Lane in the vicinity of these properties.
 - 4.6.3 **Parking is already limited due to the unnecessary pedestrian refuge in the road when there is a puffin crossing outside the school.**

- 4.6.4 Pedestrian surveys reveal that despite the nearby puffin crossing, this refuge island is still well utilised by pedestrians, in particular those using the adjacent bus stops. In addition, I consider that this refuge island also serves to moderate traffic speed on Townfield Lane for vehicles travelling in a south westerly direction. Indeed, this pedestrian refuge was introduced following requests from residents in the area as not only a refuge for pedestrians to cross but to also act as a traffic calming feature.
- 4.6.5 **Parking in Hargrave Close is already congested due to existing parked vehicles. Additional parking restrictions will make the matter worse and vehicles could block garage accesses.**
- 4.6.6 Following discussions with the petitioners' representative the proposal to reduce the extent of the advertised NWAAT parking restrictions will allow approximately 10 spaces of on street parking over both sides of Townfield Lane. The properties on Townfield Lane, between Hargrave Avenue and the bend have provision for off-street parking within their curtilage which can be accessed off Hargrave Close.
- 4.6.7 **It's safer to park your car outside the front of your house than in Hargrave Close.**
- 4.6.8 Not all properties on Wirral have the facility to park outside their property and have to park either further up/down their road or out of sight. The properties on Townfield Lane, between Hargrave Avenue and the bend have the provision for off street parking within their curtilage which can be accessed off Hargrave Close.
- 4.6.9 **In severe weather Hargrave Close is impossible to get in or out of. The road ices over and is always the last to de-ice. Everyone parks on Townfield Lane as it is safer.**
- 4.6.10 A request for grit bins to be located on both Hargrave Avenue and on Townfield Lane near to the bend have been received. Investigations to ascertain whether a grit bin can be located on Hargrave Avenue in close proximity to the bin on Townfield Lane are ongoing.
- 4.6.11 **Yellow lines will give those who do drive at speed more space to do so if there are no parked cars on either side of the road.**
- 4.6.12 The extent of the advertised NWAAT parking restrictions have been reduced following a meeting with the petitioner and will allow for approximately 10 spaces of on-street parking on both sides of Townfield Lane, thus creating a narrowing effect which can cause traffic to slow down on either approach. The scheme will also include the provision of a vehicle activated sign and carriageway markings which will have a calming effect on vehicular speeds on Townfield Lane.
- 4.6.13 **You are causing problems for families in the area due to the distance you are making people park from their homes.**
- 4.6.14 The proposed NWAAT parking restrictions have been reduced to the absolute minimum I consider necessary, following a meeting with the petitioner, which will provide available space for approximately 10 spaces of on-street parking on both sides of Townfield Lane for residents and visitors in the vicinity. The properties on Townfield Lane, between Hargrave Avenue and the bend have the provision for off-street parking within their curtilage which can be accessed off Hargrave Close.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

5.1 None identified.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 The introduction of a lay-by was also considered. Such a scheme is expected to cost in the region of £25,000. However, following the excavation of three trial holes, it was revealed that there are telecommunications and fibre optic cables in the area of verge where the proposed lay-by would be introduced. From experience, the cost to divert these cables around the lay-by would be in the region of £50,000. Due to these significant costs I do not consider the introduction of a lay-by to be a cost-effective solution.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 As part of the consultation exercise for this scheme, letters were delivered to eighty-three local residents informing them of the proposals. In addition, consultation was undertaken with Party Spokespersons, Ward Members, Emergency Services, Freight Transport Association, Road Haulage Association and Merseytravel. Notices were also posted on site.

7.2 Following the submission of the petition, a meeting was held with Council Officers, a Ward Member, the lead petitioner and several residents to discuss the concerns raised. The points raised by the lead petitioner and residents were carefully considered and it was concluded by the Council Officers that the original advertised NWAAT TRO could be reduced to allow space for some on-street parking (approximately 10 spaces) on both sides of Townfield Lane for residents and visitors. The Lead Petitioner then agreed to withdraw the petition.

7.3 The points raised by the remaining two individual objectors were also considered and the amended scheme discussed with each of them. Despite the proposed modifications to the scheme the objectors still wish to object to the proposals.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

8.1 There are no specific implications under this heading arising from this report.

9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

9.1 The budget allocation for this scheme is £30,000 and will be financed from the 2011/12 Local Transport Capital Programme.

9.2 Existing staff resources will be utilised in the progression of this scheme.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no implications under this heading.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)
(a) Is an EIA required? No

11.2 The proposed Local Safety Scheme meets the aspirations of Equality Impact Assessments, which have been completed for Road Safety, Accessibility, Dropped Crossings and Public Transport.

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no implications under this heading.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 This scheme has been designed following an investigation into road accidents at this location.

13.2 The measures identified will improve public safety.

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APPENDICES

Drawing No. TS0395B0 Indicating the proposed layout of NWAAT TRO.

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Letters and emails from residents objecting to the scheme have been used in the preparation of this report.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date