

WIRRAL COUNCIL

HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC REPRESENTATION PANEL

21 JANUARY 2013

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| SUBJECT: | PETITION – REQUEST FOR BLIND SPOT MIRROR FERNDALE AVENUE, HILLBARK ROAD, FRANKBY |
| WARD/S AFFECTED: | GREASBY, FRANKBY AND IRBY WARD |
| REPORT OF: | INTERIM DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES |
| KEY DECISION? | NO |

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report considers a 30 signature petition requesting the installation of a highway 'Blind Spot' mirror at the junction of Hillbark Road with Ferndale Avenue, Frankby.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A petition has been received signed by 30 residents and visitors to Ferndale Avenue and Hillbark Road, Frankby, requesting the installation of a mirror to facilitate a safer exit from Ferndale Avenue onto Hillbark Road.
- 2.2 Ferndale Avenue, Frankby is a short cul de sac serving some 15 properties within a semi rural area. It has a give way priority junction with Hillbark Road. Hillbark Road being the major road has a 30 mph speed limit in force and there are no footways on either side. Ferndale Avenue has footways on both sides. However, visibility is restricted in both directions for vehicles exiting Ferndale Avenue into Hillbark Road.
- 2.3 The National Speed limit (60mph) on Hillbark Road was reduced in 2009 when the current speed limit of 30mph was implemented following concerns raised by residents.
- 2.4 The personal injury collision data base has been interrogated and there have been no personal injury collisions at this junction in the period since 1989 that records are available.
- 2.5 Maintenance costs for highway mirrors are higher than for other traffic signs as regular cleaning is required to ensure it is kept clear of any visual obstruction.
- 2.6 The Council frequently receives requests for the erection of highway mirrors. Pursuing authorisation with the DfT to erect a mirror at this location may lead to increased requests to erect traffic mirrors in other parts of the borough.

3.0 NATIONAL GUIDANCE

- Mirrors are classified as a type of road traffic sign. As they are not prescribed in the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRG) their use on the highway is subject to special authorisation by the Department for Transport (DfT).

- All requests for special authorisation to enable the placement of a mirror in the highway are assessed by the DfT in accordance with Internal Advice Note 3/81.
- The DfT does not encourage mirrors on the highway. Special authorisation will only be considered for junctions in rural/semi rural locations where visibility is virtually nil. As a rule there will also be evidence of accidents related to poor visibility and high speed crossing traffic at locations where a mirror is being requested.
- Ultimately, the responsibility for deciding whether any road traffic sign or mirror is needed to maintain safety at a particular location rests with the appropriate local authority. If the authority is satisfied that the location meets the criteria set out by the DfT, is able to demonstrate that visibility cannot be improved by other means (such as removal of vegetation) and is satisfied the inherent drawbacks (see 14.2 (a-f)) will not outweigh benefits to road users, then the DfT will consider authorisation for use of a mirror at that particular location.
- Special authorisations are normally granted by the DfT for a trial period of 12 months after which a local authority is required to either remove the mirror or apply for the mirror to be erected on a permanent basis. All applications for the permanent erection of a mirror must be submitted to the DfT along with the following information.
 - a) Details of the mirror's effectiveness in all weathers.
 - b) Any complaints from motorists that the mirror is confusing.
 - c) Any report of difficulty by a driver in judging both the speed and distance of reflected vehicles.
 - d) Any problems with glare or sunlight.
 - e) Any report of damage by an accident or vandalism.
 - f) Whether it has been necessary to clean the mirror during the last 12 months.

4.0 RELEVANT RISKS

4.1 None identified.

5.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 The residential properties on each corner of Ferndale Avenue at its junction with Hillbark Road have been approached with a request to remove part of the hedge and vegetation along the boundary of each property with the highway to improve visibility for vehicles emerging from Ferndale Avenue.

5.2 The occupier of No. 177 Hillbark Road has responded indicating that they are willing to remove some of the foliage within their property but do not consider that it will make a great deal of improvement to visibility at the junction.

5.3 The occupier of No 175 Hillbark Road has indicated that he is not willing to remove part of his hedge.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 The lead petitioner has been contacted when it was explained that based on current guidance the Council does not have a policy of erecting Blind Spot mirrors on the public highway and based on evidence available that this particular site was unlikely to gain DfT authorisation for the erection of such a mirror.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

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

8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS, FINANCIAL, IT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

8.1 There are no implications arising under this heading from the recommendation of the report, however, should the authority ultimately decide to seek DfT authorisation to site a traffic mirror at this location, the application will be subject to the submission of evidence that would include site visit observations, review of the accident history and consideration of alternative measures to improve visibility. In addition to the installation costs of installing a mirror, traffic mirrors also require regular inspections to ensure they are correctly aligned and therefore reflecting the desired image. Regular cleaning is also required to ensure that the mirror is free from dirt and graffiti.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Should a mirror be erected on the highway the Council could be held liable should the mirror be cited as a contributory factor in a road traffic collision.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).

a) Is an EIA required? NO

11.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no carbon reduction implications arising.

12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no implications arising from the recommendation of this report.

13.0 RECOMMENDATION

13.1 The report recommends that the Panel note the petition but recommends to Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee that no further action be taken to pursue the erection of a highway blind spot mirror on the highway at this location.

14.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

14.1 There is no evidence to suggest that mirrors make a positive contribution to road safety and there are concerns relating to maintenance and liability in the event of a collision.

14.2 Many authorities do not support the use of mirrors in the highway. This is due to a number of safety issues which may arise from their use

- a) Distortion of reflected image.
- b) Glare from sunlight or headlamps.
- c) Ineffectiveness during bad weather (rain, snow, frost).
- d) Difficulty in realising speed of an approaching vehicle from a mirror image.

- e) Maintenance at a suitable height for approaching drivers may be subject to vandalism and would require high maintenance levels to keep them clean and free from visual obstruction.
- f) Reliance on the mirror's restricted image may compromise the safety of other road users particularly motorcyclists, cyclists and pedestrians whose image may not appear in the mirror.

14.3 The location currently has an very good accident record. The erection of a mirror has the potential to contribute towards a traffic collision for the reasons set out in 14.2 (a-f).

14.4 There are potential liability implications of placing a mirror on the highway in the event of it being noted as a contributory factor in a traffic collision.

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APPENDICES

Drawing No. DTS/2/12 indicating the location the petition refers to.

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Department for Transport Internal Advice Note 3/81
 DfT email 24/12

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

| Council Meeting | Date |
|-----------------|------|
| | |

Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit (from May 2012)

Section 1: Your details

EIA lead Officer: Mark Smith

Email address: marksmith@wirral.gov.uk

Head of Section: Mike Peet

Chief Officer: Chris McCarthy

Department: Technical Services

Date: 14 December 2012

Section 2: What Council proposal is being assessed?

Request for Blind Spot Mirror – Ferndale Ave, Hillbark Rd, Frankby

Section 2b: Will this EIA be submitted to a Cabinet or Overview & Scrutiny Committee?

Yes / No If 'yes' please state which meeting and what date

.....NO.....

Please add hyperlink to where your EIA is/will be published on the Council's website (see your Departmental Equality Group Chair for appropriate hyperlink)

.....<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/technical-services-0>.....

Section 3: Does the proposal have the potential to affect..... (please tick relevant boxes)

- Services**
- The workforce**
- Communities**
- Other** (please state eg: Partners, Private Sector, Voluntary & Community Sector)

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 4.

- None** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 4: Does the proposal have the potential to maintain or enhance the way the Council (please tick relevant boxes)

- Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advances equality of opportunity
- Fosters good relations between groups of people

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 5.

- No** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 5:

Could the proposal have a positive or negative impact on any of the protected groups (race, gender, disability, gender reassignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership)?

You may also want to consider socio-economic status of individuals.

Please list in the table below and include actions required to mitigate any potential negative impact.

| Which group(s) of people could be affected | Potential positive or negative impact | Action required to mitigate any potential negative impact | Lead person | Timescale | Resource implications |
|---|--|--|--------------------|------------------|------------------------------|
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Section 5a: **Where and how will the above actions be monitored?**

Section 5b: **If you think there is no negative impact, what is your reasoning behind this?**

Section 6: **What research / data / information have you used in support of this process?**

Section 7: **Are you intending to carry out any consultation with regard to this Council proposal?**

Yes / No – (please delete as appropriate)

If ‘yes’ please continue to section 8.

If ‘no’ please state your reason(s) why:

(please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 8: How will consultation take place and by when?

Before you complete your consultation, please email your preliminary EIA to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk via your Chief Officer in order for the Council to ensure it is meeting it's legal requirements. The EIA will be published with a note saying we are awaiting outcomes from a consultation exercise.

Once you have completed your consultation, please review your actions in section 5. Then email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for re-publishing.

Section 9: Have you remembered to:

- a) **Add appropriate departmental hyperlink to where your EIA is/will be published (section 2b)**
- b) **Include any potential positive impacts as well as negative impacts? (section 5)**
- c) **Send this EIA to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk via your Chief Officer?**
- d) **Review section 5 once consultation has taken place and sent your completed EIA to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk via your Chief Officer for re-publishing?**