

WIRRAL COUNCIL

HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC REPRESENTATIONS PANEL

16th JULY 2014

SUBJECT:	OBJECTIONS: IMPROVING ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY / LOCAL SAFETY SCHEME – TRAFFIC CALMING – HOUGHTON ROAD AREA, WOODCHURCH
WARD/S AFFECTED:	UPTON WARD
REPORT OF:	MARK SMITH, HEAD OF ENVIRONMENT & REGULATION
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report considers objections received as a result of proposals to introduce traffic calming features along with a 20mph Traffic Regulation Order in Houghton Road area, Woodchurch.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 On 13th March 2014 Cabinet considered and approved the 2014/15 Local Transport Capital Programme. Identified within the programme was the proposal to introduce traffic-calming features along with a 20mph Traffic Regulation Order in Houghton Road area, Woodchurch, to be funded from the Local Transport Capital Programme, 'Improving Road Safety' Strategy Block allocation.
- 2.2 Analysis of the road safety records provided by the police show that there have been 7 recorded injury accidents on Houghton Road during the recent 5 year study period.
- 2.3 Following preliminary scheme design, consultation letters were delivered to residents of properties in the immediate vicinity of the proposed scheme detailing the proposals. Notices were also erected on site and Party Spokespersons and Ward Members were informed. A public notice was also formally advertised within the local press.
- 2.4 Following this period of formal public consultation, two objections to the proposals were received, one of which remains unresolved at this present time. The objector is a resident of no.2 Marlwood Avenue, Wallasey.

- 2.5 As part of the public consultation exercise the Council received support for the scheme from three persons.
- 2.6 The content of the objector's concerns along with Officers' comments are as follows:
- 2.7 **People of Woodchurch are of a low economic standing in life. The repairs speed bumps inflict on their motor vehicles is too expensive! Brakes and wheel bearing repairs, loose exhausts etc.**

The Council design and implement physical traffic calming in accordance with the current design parameters set out by the Department for Transport within the Highways (Road Hump) Regulations. Vehicles travelling over road humps at appropriate speed should not suffer damage. The scheme will be signed in accordance with national requirements.

Wirral Council's Road Safety Team receive comprehensive (confidential) details of all injury related road crashes which are analysed to see what type of measures are needed to improve road safety.

The proposals for introducing traffic calming measures were formed following an investigation into the road safety record within Houghton Road. There were 7 injury crashes (with 13 casualties including serious injuries) in this study area over 5 years. Officers consider that the physical speed reduction measures proposed could have prevented 5 of the 7 injury crashes.

- 2.8 **Waste of Council financial resources that could be better put to use repairing holes in the road.**

The funding for this scheme is different to the funding used for maintenance, including repairing potholes in roads. The objector was contacted in writing asking them to identify the particular potholes that were causing concern and no response has been received.

- 2.8 **Why not target the upper classes of Heswall? Is it because you know they will object and put pen to paper?**

This 'Improving Road Safety Scheme' has been targeted, along with other similar schemes to deliver the greatest road safety benefit and contribute in a reduction to the number people injured on Wirral's roads.

- 2.9 **Speed bumps pose a very dangerous obstacle to motorcyclists and cycle riders especially in icy conditions.**

By reducing the speed, dominance and at times the volume of motor vehicles, traffic calming can benefit cyclists. Most cyclists actually avoid speed cushions by riding between the cushions and the nearside kerb or between adjacent cushions.

In addition, most motorcyclists can avoid speed cushions by negotiating the gaps between adjacent cushions. Where this is not possible, motorcyclists are able to negotiate road humps and speed cushions directly.

- 2.10 **Speed bumps cause a very real threat to the environment cars that speed up and slow down emit harmful gas pollution that babies and young persons breathe in! Babies and young people are closer to the ground where the poisonous gases gather! Asthma and chest breathing problems are incurred! Fact! Most houses on Houghton Road open their doors and windows very close to the road itself! Noise pollution is already bad.**

Low speeds are generally associated with high rates of exhaust emission because they usually involve a high proportion of acceleration and deceleration. However, smooth, low speed driving, in a high gear as possible, will result in relatively low emissions. The effect on emissions, therefore, of any traffic-calming scheme will depend on how the scheme influences both the average speed of traffic and the amount of speed variation.

The introduction of a speed-controlling measure such as a speed cushion can influence traffic noise levels in a number of ways. For example, lowering the speed of vehicles may mean that vehicle noise emissions levels are reduced. In addition, after the measures are installed, traffic flows may be reduced, leading to further reductions in noise levels.

Officers note that no objections have been received from residents living within Houghton Road.

- 2.11 **A speed camera is a better-suited alternative.**

Houghton Road does not meet the criteria for the installation of a fixed speed camera.

- 2.12 **I think the proposals are dreamt up by idiots who obviously don't live in the area.**

Wirral Council has a statutory duty to monitor the numbers of recorded personal injury accidents across the Borough and to carry out improvement works to prevent such accidents. The Council employs suitably qualified and experienced Officers with a good local knowledge of the area.

- 2.13 **Pemberton Road is a nightmare to navigate; the speed bumps make it very dangerous alongside parked cars where the buses have to pass.**

The speed cushions in Pemberton Road have been constructed in accordance with the guidelines set by the Department for Transport. During the past three years there have been no recorded personal injury accidents in Pemberton Road.

- 2.14 **Speed bumps make people hit the gas afterwards and make up for lost time.**

The Local Safety Scheme is designed in accordance with the regulations set by the Department for Transport. The dimensions and spacing of the cushions are designed to maintain the speed of traffic at or below 20mph.

3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1 Officers consider that doing nothing would be inappropriate in this instance. They consider there is clear evidence that the trend in recorded personal injury accidents would continue within Houghton Road if no action is taken.
- 3.2 Houghton Road does not meet the criteria for the installation of a fixed speed camera.
- 3.3 The proposed scheme provides the Council with the opportunity to address the Council's LTP3 Objectives and meet Council's aspiration to make sure that Wirral's roads are safe and well maintained and to continue reducing the number of people injured in road traffic accidents.

4.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 4.1 Failure to undertake the proposed scheme would reduce the Council's opportunity to address Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) Objectives and meet the priority to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 As part of the consultation exercise for this scheme letters were delivered to two hundred and twenty two local residents informing them of the proposals. In addition, consultation was undertaken with Party Spokespersons, Ward Members, Cycle Forum, Pedestrian Forum, Emergency Services, Freight Transport Association, Road Haulage Association and Merseytravel. Notices were also posted on site and with local press.
- 5.2 Following submission of the objections, further discussions between the objector and Council were undertaken to discuss the concerns raised. The points raised by the objector have been carefully considered and it is concluded by Officers that the benefits that the scheme provides outweigh the objections raised and should not prevent the scheme from proceeding.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

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

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

7.1 The budget allocation for this scheme is £60,000 and will be financed from the 2014/15 Local Transport Capital Programme – Improving Road Safety Strategy block.

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

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The Council follows statutory processes to implement this type of proposal.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The proposed traffic-calming scheme is included within the 2014/15 Local Transport Capital Programme 'Improving Road Safety' Strategy Block approved by Cabinet on 13th March 2014, for which an Equalities Impact Assessment has already been undertaken.

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Low speeds are generally associated with high rates of exhaust emission because they usually involve a high proportion of acceleration and deceleration. However, smooth, low speed driving, in a high gear as possible, will result in relatively low emissions. The effect on emissions, therefore, of any traffic calming scheme will depend on how the scheme influences both the average speed of traffic and the amount of speed variation.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The implementation of this proposal will have a positive impact on road safety and result in fewer road casualties.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION

12.1 The report recommends that the Panel note the objections and that the proposed scheme consisting of a traffic calming scheme and associated 20mph Traffic Regulation Order, as shown on attached drawing number 'R&E/1/14/GR-a', be recommended to the Regeneration & Environment Policy & Performance Committee for approval and implementation.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION

13.1 The introduction of a traffic-calming scheme and associated 20mph Traffic Regulation Order in Houghton Road area, provides the Council with the opportunity to address the Council's LTP3 Objectives and meet the priority to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents.

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APPENDICES

Drawing numbers 'R&E/1/14/GR-a' indicating the proposed layout of the Traffic Calming Scheme.

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
Cabinet - 2014/15 Local Transport Capital programme	13 th March 2014