



HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC REPRESENTATION PANEL

6 SEPTEMBER 2016

SUBJECT:	DEVONSHIRE PLACE, CLAUGHTON – PROPOSED TRAFFIC CALMING SCHEME
WARD/S AFFECTED:	CLAUGHTON & OXTON WARDS
REPORT OF:	MARK SMITH, HEAD OF ENVIRONMENT AND REGULATION
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR STUART WHITTINGHAM
KEY DECISION?	NO

REPORT SUMMARY

This report considers objections submitted against the proposal to introduce traffic calming features along with a 20mph Traffic Regulation Order in Devonshire Place Area, Claughton.

The report recommends that the Highways and Traffic Representation Panel note the objections and that the proposals as shown on drawing no. DC/0158/100 (Appendix 1) are approved and implemented.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The report recommends that the Highways and Traffic Representation Panel note the objections and that the proposed scheme to introduce traffic calming features along with a 20mph Traffic Regulation Order as shown on drawing no. DC/0158/100 (Appendix 1) is recommended for approval and implementation.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The introduction of traffic calming features along with a 20mph Traffic Regulation Order in Devonshire Place Area is a condition attached to the Notice of Grant of Planning Permission dated 1st December 2010 (Town and Country Planning Act 1990) associated to the redevelopment of Birkenhead High School Academy.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 None identified.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 On 1st December 2010 Planning Committee considered an application for the re-development of Birkenhead High School (minute no. 122 refers). The application was subsequently approved subject to a number of conditions. Minute no. 122/3/1 stated that the application be approved subject to the provision of '*speed reduction measures in Devonshire Place and Manor Hill, between Egerton Road and Palm Grove*'.
- 3.2 On 28th May 2015 Birkenhead Constituency Committee allocated £10,000 from the 2014/15 Integrated Transport Block Capital Programme to implement traffic calming measures around Birkenhead High School Academy, which will also impact on St Anselm's College and Red Court School.

4.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The initial statutory advertising process for the proposal included publication of notices on the road and in the press on the 11th May 2016, with an objection period from 11th May 2016 to the 3rd June 2016. All Party Spokespersons and affected Ward Councillors were informed.
- 4.2 Consultation letters providing details and extent of the proposals were delivered to directly affected 365 properties.

On 18th May 2016 a public meeting was arranged in Trinity with Palm Grove United Reformed and Methodist Church by a local resident. The meeting was attended by approximately 50 residents, two Cloughton Ward members and two Council Officers. During the meeting it was noted that there was strong support for the proposed traffic calming scheme as advertised.

- 4.3 During the formal consultation exercise, 43 responses were received of which 23 objected to the construction of road humps and 14 objected to the 20mph Traffic Regulation Order. 20 responses were received supporting the proposals to construct road humps whilst 29 supported the proposed 20mph Traffic Regulation Order. One person submitted comments regarding the proposals after the deadline date. For completeness these comments have

been reflected in the Report. A copy of the individual comments and objections are provided in Appendix 2. Broadly, the objections that have been received can be split into common themes which are summarised as follows:-

- 4.4 The objectors state that the proposed traffic calming scheme will not alleviate the congestion and parking issues that arise at the start and end of each school day. The objectors believe that parking restrictions and/or a residents parking scheme could resolve these issues. Alternatively, an area set aside within the school grounds for a drop off / pick up point could also assist.

In response: The introduction of speed humps can have a calming effect on traffic, thus reducing congestion, since vehicles using the route as a short cut deem it to be an unattractive route. However, it is noted that the level of school-generated traffic is unlikely to significantly decrease unless an alternative location can be designated as a school pick up / drop off area. Birkenhead High School Academy are considering using a parcel of their land specifically at an area set aside for school pick up and drop off.

Not providing the speed reduction measures would mean that the Planning Condition is not met.

New residents parking schemes must be self-funded and supported by 80% of the properties in the area. Based on an area with 300 properties the cost per household to set up the scheme would be £75 per property with an annual fee of £10. If the residential area has fewer than 300 properties the cost of the set-up fee would likely to be higher. It is considered that a residential parking scheme may reduce school-related parking. However, congestion generated by school-related traffic at drop off and pick up times would be likely continue at the present numbers.

A public consultation will be undertaken to advertise proposed 'no waiting at any time' parking restrictions at the junctions of Manor Hill / Devonshire Place / Grosvenor Place / Sandy Way and at Devonshire Place / Palm Grove. The parking restrictions at these junctions will protect the inter-junction visibility of pedestrian and motorists.

- 4.5 The objectors suggest that a one-way system would be more beneficial than the scheme proposed.

In response: it is not considered that a 'one way' Traffic Regulation Order could be implemented in selected roads in isolation. 'One way' roads can lead to a potential increase in speed due to there being no opposed flows. A number of residents have also raised concerns about the possibility of introducing a 'one way' system.

A 'one way' Traffic Regulation Order would not reduce traffic speeds, and would not therefore meet the Planning Condition.

- 4.6 The objectors suggest that the introduction of speed humps would reduce the capacity of on-street parking.

In response: parking will be permitted on the proposed road humps unless there is an existing parking restriction in place and that the vehicle does not cause a hazard to other road users or pedestrians.

- 4.7 The objectors are concerned about the position of the road hump proposed outside 110/112 & 65/67 Grosvenor Road.

In response: the position of the road hump does not conflict with the existing position of the vehicle crossings servicing the properties in question. The positions and distances between humps have been designed in accordance with the current guidance supplied by the Department for Transport.

- 4.8 That objector is concerned that speed cushions will be constructed as traffic calming features and vehicles will be able to avoid the cushions by moving to the centre of the road.

In response: The scheme does not include speed 'cushions'. As part of the proposal 28 Round topped road humps will be constructed. Each hump will be 3.7m long and a full road width, terminating 200mm from adjacent kerb lines with a nominal height of 75mm.

- 4.9 An objector suggests that the amount of speed humps proposed appears excessive.

In response: The scheme has been designed in accordance with the standards set by the Department for Transport for the introduction of road humps. The spacing between humps has been designed to maintain an 85th percentile speed of traffic at or below 20mph.

- 4.10 An objector suggests that the laying of humps will disrupt traffic and will involve more builder's vans, lorries and vans.

In response: It is envisaged that there would be element of traffic disruption should the traffic calming features be constructed. However, it is hoped that the works in the vicinity of the school could be programmed during school holidays with the remaining humps being constructed under restricted hours during term time.

- 4.11 The objectors suggest that there is no justification for speed humps in Grosvenor Place, Howbeck Road nor on Grosvenor Road between Manor Hill and Palm Grove and questions the criteria used to determine which roads were included in the proposals.

In response: As part of the investigation process for this proposal consideration had to be given to the impact of displaced traffic onto the surrounding highway network. Therefore, these roads were included in

order to provide a 20mph zone along routes that already have school generated traffic and would likely be exacerbated further should traffic calming features not be provided. Supplementary funding has been made available by the Birkenhead Constituency Committee to enable this more comprehensive scheme.

- 4.12 An objector suggests that the funding would be better spent on enforcing the existing parking restrictions. When the Wirral Council CCTV car parks in the road signs are placed on the footway, therefore no-one parked where they shouldn't.

In response: Warning signs are temporarily erected to further highlight the presence of the CCTV enforcement vehicle and to inform drivers that camera enforcement is taking place in that area. Since May 2014 there have been 16 Penalty Charge Notices issued within Devonshire Place Area.

Not providing the speed reduction measures would mean that the Planning Condition is not met.

- 4.13 The objectors suggest that there is no speeding problem in the area and the proposals are a waste of money. What is the average speed of vehicles during term time and in peak periods? How many convictions for speeding have there been in the roads affected by the proposals?

In response: speed surveys have been undertaken in Devonshire Place area outside of peak times. The average 85th percentile speed in the roads surveyed is 30mph. At peak school times it is recognised that the speed of traffic reduces significantly around Devonshire Place due to the amount of vehicles attempting to access the schools.

Wirral Council do not have access to Merseyside Police records in relation speed related convictions.

- 4.14 An objector suggests that a traffic calming scheme should actually be constructed in Alton Road.

In response: The planning condition associated to this proposal along with the additional funding supplied by Birkenhead Constituency Committee did not state that Alton Road be included in the proposals.

- 4.15 An objector questions if planning condition for the introduction of speed reducing features was formally conveyed to residents.

In response: on 1st December 2010 a report was submitted to Planning Committee outlining the concerns raised against the proposed redevelopment of Birkenhead High School for Girls. Whilst it is unlikely that the condition for the introduction of speed reducing features was formally conveyed to residents the committee report outlining the proposed condition was a public document and the Planning Committee

Meeting was open for members of the public to attend. The conditions agreed by the Planning Committee have been published on the Council's website.

- 4.16 An objector questions the accident record for the area and if any of the roads included in the proposals are deemed to be amongst the top 5% of roads in the Borough for frequency of accidents?

In response: during the current five year study period there have been four recorded personal injury accidents within Devonshire Place area. Analysis of these accidents has revealed that the introduction of traffic calming measures could reduce the likelihood of similar accidents occurring in the future.

Wirral Council do not hold a list of roads according to the frequency of accidents. This is due to the varied nature of Wirral's highway network and the different causation factors attributed to individual collisions. Wirral Council analyse each individual collision and also all routes and areas as a whole, this enables the council to introduce measures to reduce the number of people injured on the borough's roads in a cost effective manner.

This scheme is not a Local Safety Scheme nor is it funded from the Integrated Transport Block (Road Safety Block allocation).

- 4.17 An objector asks if approved, when will the approvals be implemented?

In response: It is hoped that should this proposal be given approval that works would commence during the 2016/17 financial year and that the works in the vicinity of the school could be programmed during school holidays with the remaining humps being constructed under restricted hours during term time.

- 4.18 An objector has questioned which Councillors are Members of Birkenhead Constituency Committee, and where appropriate did they excuse themselves for voting if they were governors of any of the schools concerned? Who suggested that local residents should be inconvenienced by this scheme?

In response: The following Councillors attended the Birkenhead Constituency Committee meeting on 28th May 2015:- A Brighthouse, P Cleary, J Crabtree, A Davies, G Davies, P Davies, WJ Davies, P Doughty, S Foulkes, M McLaughlin, C Meaden, T Norbury, D Realey, D Roberts and J Stapleton. There is no record of any Councillor excusing themselves from voting in relation to this scheme. Council Officers had recommended to the Birkenhead Constituency Committee that the allocation of an additional £10,000 would allow for the complete scheme to be introduced as advertised.

- 4.19 The objectors raise concerns that speed humps cause damage to vehicles.

In response: Where motorists drive with due care and consideration vehicles travelling over road humps at appropriate speeds should not suffer damage, provided the humps conform to the national hump regulations set out by the Department for Transport, which is the Standard the Council will employ.

- 4.20 The objectors suggest that the funding for this scheme would be better spent properly maintaining the roads, pavements, street lighting, road lines and traffic signs in the area.

In response: the funding provided as a result of the Developer contribution for this scheme is separate to the funding that can be used for maintenance, including repairing potholes in roads.

Not providing the speed reduction measures would mean that the Planning Condition is not met.

- 4.21 A supporter suggests that It would be re-assuring if a further speed hump could be placed at a point half way up Sandy Way.

In response: Sandy Lane is approximately 68 metres in length. It is considered that traffic is already moving at a speed at or below 20 mph within this road. It is proposed that the speed limit in Sandy Lane will be reduced to 20mph as part of the proposals and a further speed hump is not required to maintain the lower proposed speed limit in this road.

- 4.22 An objector suggests that the introduction of this scheme will exacerbate their existing back condition.

In response: the scheme has been designed in accordance with the standards set by the Department for Transport for the introduction of road humps. The round topped road humps will be constructed at the recommended height of 75mm +/- 5mm tolerance.

The Department for Transport states that road humps are effective because they cause discomfort to the driver when they are crossed at high speeds. Unfortunately for some vehicle occupants, for example those with back injuries, road humps have the potential to cause discomfort even at low speeds. It is important that humps are carefully designed and built to minimise discomfort for those travelling at appropriate speeds. The first consideration must be to ensure the hump dimensions are within those specified in the road hump regulations. A hump specification should not be for the maximum (100 mm) height, as this would not allow for any construction tolerance. Generally humps of 75 mm in height are recommended, as these minimise discomfort whilst maintaining effectiveness. The proposed measures are to be constructed using current national design standards issued by the Department for Transport.

- 4.23 An objector states it is not humps that are required, but a reduction in motor vehicles in order that residents can enjoy breathing improved air.

In response: The introduction of speed humps can have a calming effect on traffic, thus reducing the levels of carbon emissions as vehicles using the route as a short cut deem it to be an unattractive route. However, it is noted that the level of school generated traffic is unlikely to decrease unless an alternative location can be designated as a school pick up / drop off area. It is not possible to effectively restrict school / rat-running traffic whilst still permitting residential vehicular traffic.

- 4.24 An objector states that speed humps are unsightly and could have a detrimental effect on house prices.

In response: no evidence has been provided to substantiate the statement that the introduction of traffic calming measures will reduce property prices.

- 4.25 The objectors state that the position of the humps will restrict access to private vehicle accesses.

In response: it is proposed that no road humps will be constructed in a location where a vehicle crossing is present and reasonably competent drivers should be able to negotiate adjacent humps whilst undertaking a manoeuvre into their property.

- 4.26 A supporter asks if there will be any enforcement of the 20mph speed limit should the scheme be approved.

In response: the scheme has received support from Merseyside Police. The scheme has been designed to ensure that the 85th percentile speed of traffic is at or below 20mph through self-enforcement by means of traffic calming features.

- 4.27 A supporter suggests that there should be more than two humps in the section of Grosvenor Road between Forest Road and Manor Hill.

In response: the scheme has been designed in accordance with the standards set by the Department for Transport for the introduction of road humps. The spacing between humps has been designed to maintain an 85th percentile speed of traffic at or below 20mph.

- 4.28 An objector states that road humps increase air pollution.

In response: 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 an appropriate gear, can result in relatively low emissions.

The introduction of speed humps can have a calming effect on traffic, thus reducing the levels of carbon emissions as vehicles using the route as a short cut deem it to be an unattractive route. However, it is noted that the level of school generated traffic is unlikely to decrease unless an alternative location can be designated as a school pick up / drop off area.

- 4.29 An objector questions if road humps are actually required and refers to an existing 20mph zone without road humps in Willaston.

In response: speed surveys have been undertaken in Devonshire Place area outside of peak times. The average 85th percentile speed in the roads surveyed is 30mph. This scheme has been designed to ensure that the 85th percentile speed of traffic is at or below 20mph through self-enforcement by means of traffic calming features.

Speed surveys undertaken by Cheshire West & Chester Council reveal that there was a negligible reduction in vehicle speeds through Willaston Village following the introduction of the 20mph speed limit with the 85th percentile speed of traffic ranging between 27.9 and 31.8mph.

- 4.30 An objector suggests that a reduction in average vehicle speeds can be achieved by signage, flashing electronic signs, local groups with speed guns, introduction of shared space indicators eg paviers, street landscaping and a hearts/minds campaign aimed at drivers demonstrating the advantages of 20mph.

In response: the Council has an opportunity to provide a proven method of traffic calming through the introduction of road humps. Other methods of traffic calming which do not provide physical measures can have short term effect on speed reduction and would require greater input from Merseyside Police in respect of enforcement.

Merseyside Police and Wirral Council operate a joint voluntary service called 'Community Speedwatch', which allows residents concerned about speeding in their local area to monitor the speed of motorists using radar guns. The scheme aims to tackle areas where the dangers of careless driving and speeding are a real concern to local people. Speeding motorists are sent warning letters, which also explain the problems their speeding causes for people living in the area. The presence of Speedwatch volunteers can encourage drivers to slow down, raise their awareness of speed as an issue and make the location safer. At present there are no Community Speedwatch volunteers operating in Devonshire Place area.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The estimated cost of implementation is £60,000, which would be met from a £50,000 developer contribution provided as part of planning consent for the

redevelopment of Birkenhead High School Academy and £10,000 from Birkenhead Constituency Committee from the 2014/15 Integrated Transport Block Capital Programme

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Council follows statutory processes to consult upon and implement this type of proposal.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

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

8.0 RELEVANT RISKS

8.1 Failure to implement the scheme would mean that a planning condition attached to the planning consent for the re-development of Birkenhead High School on 1st December 2010 would not be met.

9.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

As part of the consultation exercise for this scheme letters were delivered to local residents in the vicinity of the scheme, informing them of the proposals. In addition, consultation was undertaken with Party Spokespersons, affected Ward Councillors, Active Travel Forum, Emergency Services, Freight Transport Association, Road Haulage Association and Merseytravel. Notices were also erected on site and a public notice was also formally advertised within the local press.

10.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(a) Yes and impact review is attached – <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-april-2014/eias-regeneration-envir>

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Proposed Traffic Calming & 20mph Zone
Devonshire Place Area, Claughton & Oxtton Wards
Plan Ref No. DC/0158/100

Appendix 2: Summary of Consultation Responses

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Local Transport Note 1/07 Traffic Calming – Department for Transport (March 2007)

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
<p>Planning Committee – Minute 122 - APP/10/01193 - Birkenhead High School, 86 DEVONSHIRE PLACE, OXTON, CH43 -1TY - The erection of a new hall and dining and associated teaching areas for the secondary school and the erection of a new hall and class spaces for the infants/junior school. The construction and laying out of associated landscape, parking, sports areas and community areas. The erection of a new entrance to the sixth form building, and the creation of an accessible access to the sixth form science areas.</p>	1 st December 2010
<p>Birkenhead Constituency Committee – Constituency Managers Update - Item 2.7 Integrated Transport Block Capital Programme 2014/15.</p>	28 th May 2015