

PETITIONS, TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDERS & LOCAL ISSUES

Report of the District Manager

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise members of the current status of petitions, to advise members of any objections to traffic regulation orders and to inform the Panel of any other local issues of importance.

2. PETITIONS RECEIVED

- 2.1 A new petition for the Joint Member Panel to consider was received on 17th October 2011 from the residents of St James Road in the Vicarage Ward . The petition contained signatures from 112 residents who are requesting their road is made into a “one-way” street.

2.2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.3 Fund a survey of vehicle movements from Discretionary Budget, so that current levels of usage and direction of traffic flow can be quickly established.

3. PETITIONS UPDATE

Petition – Courtlands Drive / A411 Hempstead Road junction

- 3.1 In June 2010 a petition was received from the residents in the Nascot Ward in respect of the Courtlands Drive junction with Hempstead Road.
- 3.2 The lead petitioner states in a covering letter dated 11th June 2010 that the residents are seeking an improved traffic flow at the junction. The petition has in excess of 100 signatures.
- 3.3 It was agreed with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the JMP together with the County Member for the Nascot Ward that in order to give the petition full consideration that the petition be discussed outside the JMP meeting.
- 3.4 The petition was presented at a meeting held at Herts Highways Local Area Office on the evening of the 26th July. The County Member, Nascot Ward Councillors, Traffic Police, Watford Councils

Arboriculturist, The Watford District Manager and Lead Assistant District Manager were all present at the meeting.

- 3.5 The lead petitioner presented a detailed plan of the junction and offered a number of junction improvement suggestions. These included reducing the current footpath width in order to introduce a filter lane for vehicles turning left out of Courtlands Drive and a dedicated lane for vehicles wishing to turn right from Courtlands Drive. The petitioner also requested that the visibility at the junction be improved and that the road markings be refreshed.
- 3.6 **RECOMMENDATION**
- 3.7 Officers agreed to undertake the cutting back of the trees and hedges to improve visibility and to refresh the keep clear and junction markings. These works have been carried-out and funded from the Local Category 2 budget.
- 3.8 In order for Members to fully consider the petition it was agreed that officers would provide Members with a cost of undertaking a 24 hour video survey of the junction. The survey would provide evidence of queue lengths in Courtlands Drive and pick up all vehicle, cyclist and pedestrian movements. The survey would also include analyses of the vehicle movements.
- 3.9 The estimated survey costs are £1,100.
- 3.10 Members agreed to fund the cost of a video survey from the Discretionary Fund, subject to confirmation of budgets. The survey was carried out on Wed 9th March 2011.
- 3.11 The survey data and video evidence were reported to the lead petitioner in April, and the survey data was also distributed to officers and local member attending the original petition meeting in July 2010.
- 3.12 The survey data revealed the maximum queue of vehicles waiting to turn out of Courtlands Drive was nine during the period 8.30-9.00am, and during the evening peak period of 5.00-5.30pm the maximum queue was seven vehicles.
- 3.13 The lead petitioner has prepared his own report and circulated it in May 2011 to those attending the original petition meeting. The report acknowledges large scale junction treatments such as traffic signal control and a roundabout do not provide a net benefit to Watford travellers and are not a priority for funding in the current period of austerity.

- 3.14 Other measures which have been investigated and rejected are as follows.
- 3.15 a) Revoking the no right turn into and out of Ridge Lane as a means of reducing pressure at the Courtlands Drive junction. This was rejected at the July 2011 JMP as it would lead to a reoccurrence of safety and congestion problems at the Ridge Lane junction.
- 3.16 b) New KEEP CLEAR road markings on the right turn lane from Hempstead Road allowing right turning traffic out of Courtlands Drive a better line of sight should right turning traffic from Hempstead Road decide to give priority to right turning traffic out of Courtlands Drive. This was rejected for various safety reasons (e.g. lack of visibility, non-standard layout, creating confusion) and it does not comply with the rules of the road given in the Highway Code which states drivers MUST give way to traffic on the main road when emerging from a junction with broken white lines across the road.
- 3.17 Officers have investigated a feasible local carriageway widening scheme in Courtlands Drive which gives more space for left turning vehicles to pass a queue of 4 right turning vehicles. The scheme would have the benefit of helping to reduce the queuing time which is a maximum of 5 minutes during 8.30-9.00am and less during non-peak times. The disbenefits of the scheme are such capacity improvements would attract more traffic to the junction, negating the queue reduction benefit, and space for pedestrians would be reduced to the minimum width. The scheme is estimated to cost £15-20k, subject to confirmation of statutory undertakers diversion costs, and could be met from the local county councillors Highway Locality Budget which becomes available in April 2012. However the local member would need to decide if this is sufficient value for money given vehicle drivers can choose, as many already do, to exit Courtlands Drive to the North where peak hour junction delays are less.
- 3.18 Officers are currently investigating the possibility of changing the settings on the signalised pedestrian crossing on Hempstead Road near the junction with Ridge Lane so, if the red phase is not regularly called by pedestrians, it automatically brings up a red signal at regular intervals during the peak hour which in turn will create gaps in the traffic flow to help reduce and clear the queues in Courtlands Drive. Other Highway Authorities are known to use this measure, though in the past Hertfordshire Safety Auditors have expressed pedestrian safety concerns.
- 3.19 Once investigations are completed, officers will report back to the lead petitioner and those attending the original petition meeting.

- 3.20 Petition for permanent pedestrian crossing on Horseshoe Lane near northerly junction with Boundary Way.
- 3.21 In October 2010, a petition of 164 signatures was received from the residents of Boundary Way in the Woodside Ward.
- 3.22 The Lead petitioner explained in a covering letter the signatories are seeking a permanent pedestrian crossing on Horseshoe Lane near the northerly junction with Boundary Way to replace the school crossing patrol service which ceased 2 years ago. An accident involving a cyclist crossing the road here has heightened their concerns.
- 3.23 At the Jan 2011 panel, members agreed to fund a pedestrian count out of Discretionary budget for 2010/11. The survey was carried out on Wednesday 16th Feb 2011 between 7am and 7pm.
- 3.24 The survey revealed 171 pedestrians crossed at or within 2 metres of the existing tactile area. 51 of the 171 were children. The peak hours when the greatest number of pedestrians crossed were 8 - 9am when 40 crossed and 3 - 4pm when 44 crossed.
- 3.25 A speed and volume count near the crossing point was carried out from 9th to 15th February 2011. The 85thile traffic speeds were 34-36mph. The 2 way flows measured during the peak hours were approx 700 which averages out to one vehicle every 5-6 seconds.
- 3.26 The survey results were discussed at the Officers Steering Group on 11th March 2011. It was discussed that as speeds were excessive and peak hour flows were high enough to afford little opportunity to cross, provision of a pedestrian crossing would improve the quality of life for residents and help to reduce traffic speeds in the absence of the traffic calming scheme designed in the early 2000s which never went ahead due to lack of funding. Officers agreed funding should be sought for a feasibility study to establish if a feasible pedestrian crossing can be found. Officers agreed to submit a CS99 to apply for £4000 of S106 funds from the Alban Wood school development.
- 3.27 Funding was found for the feasibility study, which is now complete. An update of the findings so far are contained in the IWP progress report (See Item 9 Appendix C of the agenda)

4. OBJECTIONS TO TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDERS

WATFORD SPECIALIST MARKET REPORT – CONSIDERATION OF OBJECTIONS TO THE PROPOSED TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER – HIGH STREET, THE PARADE, WATFORD

- 4.1 Members are requested to provide their views on overruling two objections to the proposed Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) (Prohibition of Driving and Cycling on Market Days) associated with the holding of 'specialist' markets on that specified area of High Street, The Parade.
- 4.2 A copy of the draft Order may be viewed at Appendix A.
- 4.3 **Background**
- 4.4 The purpose of the restriction is that it will apply only when signs are in place on specific market days between 6.00am and 7.30pm up to a maximum of fourteen occasions annually.
- 4.5 Exemptions will be made for vehicles being used by emergency services, market traders setting up and running authorised market stalls, authorised vehicles associated with the setting up, operation of and dismantling of the market and vehicles used in connection with local and Highway Authority Statutory Duties, waste disposal and street cleansing.
- 4.6 It is intended that this restriction will prevent the likelihood of danger arising to pedestrians attending the market by reducing potential conflicts between vehicular traffic and pedestrians.
- 4.7 The proposal was consulted upon informally during December 2010 and January 2011.
- 4.8 Informal consultation included: Fire, Police (traffic and town centre); Ambulance; District and County Councillors; district officers (Planning, Environmental Services); county officers (Network Management, District Manager); businesses and residents in the proximity of the market area; Watford Traffic Summit; SPOKES and the Cycling Touring Club.
- 4.9 The proposal was subsequently advertised as a Notice of Intention in the Watford Observer on 15th April 2011 with closing date of May 13th for receipt of objections.
- 4.10 In addition the Notice was sent to all the relevant statutory bodies (including the Cycle Touring Club) and full documents were held on deposit at Watford Town Hall and County Hall, Hertford for the necessary period.

4.11 Objections

4.12 During the statutory period, two objections were received.

4.13 These are summarised below, both received from local residents:

- Concern on environmental grounds that cyclists would be disadvantaged should the restriction be enacted.
- Concern that the publicity of the scheme has not been handled correctly.
- Concern regarding the legal precedent likely to be set and that the sustainability of cycling is likely to be undermined.

4.14 The objections in full may be viewed at Appendix B.

4.15 Recommendations

4.16 The officer's recommendation is for the objections to the TRO to be over ruled for the following reasons:

- Highway safety and the duty of care the Local Authority has towards vulnerable road users. The events will increase the footfall into the Parade area which would increase conflict between pedestrians and cyclists if there was no exemption on event days.
- The TRO has been advertised and publicized correctly with the relevant amount of time allowed for responses.
- The restriction is for a maximum of fourteen days per year. It should be noted that the brief for the enhancement of The Parade, Pond and Town Hall area states that the cycle route should remain. The Borough Council is keen to further promote cycling opportunities.

4.17. Contact Officer

4.18 Yvonne Shaw, Town Centre & Programme Manager, Watford Borough Council

Tel: 01923 278146, Email: yvonne.shaw@watford.gov.uk

5 LOCAL ISSUES – Woodmere Avenue Width Restriction Scheme

5.1 This scheme, to strengthen the existing width restriction, was constructed with funds from the 2010/11 Discretionary Budget.

5.2 Since the scheme was open to traffic on 28th February 2011, a considerable number of vehicles have collided with the restriction, resulting in a number of complaints, and sustained media interest.

- 5.3 A briefing note is contained as Appendix C, which covers the background to the scheme, correspondence received, and suggests a way forward.

6. LOCAL ISSUES – Radlett Road / Eastfield Avenue Thames Water Flood Alleviation Scheme

- 6.1 At the July 2011 panel meeting members resolved to refer this matter to the Mayor with a request that she makes contact with John Wood, in his capacity of HCC Director of Environment in order that influence is brought to bear on OFWAT and Thames Water to ensure that the project is definitely progressed as soon as possible and definitely in the next investment period.
- 6.2 A meeting took place on 23rd Sept 2011 to discuss the matter, and notes of the meeting are included as Appendix D.
- 6.3 A further meeting with the local county councillor, highway officers and Thames Water engineers is scheduled for 8th November 2011.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. Members are requested to note the information and provide any comments to the relevant officer.

8. CONTACT OFFICERS

Dave Swan	District Manager	01923 257094
Yvonne Shaw	Town Centre and Programme Manager Watford Borough Council	01923 278146 E-Mail : yvonne.shaw@watford.gov.uk