

SWAN ROAD, WEST DRAYTON - PETITION REQUESTING A REDUCTION IN THE SPEED LIMIT TO 20MPH

Cabinet Member(s)	Councillor Keith Burrows
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Cabinet Member for Planning, Transportation and Recycling
Officer Contact(s)	Steven Austin Residents Services Directorate
Papers with report	Appendix A

1. HEADLINE INFORMATION

Summary	To inform the Cabinet Member that the Council has received a petition asking for the speed limit to be reduced on Swan Road to 20 mph.
Contribution to our plans and strategies	The request can be considered in relation to the Council's strategy for on-street parking controls.
Financial Cost	There are none associated with the recommendations to this report.
Relevant Policy Overview Committee	Residents' and Environmental Services.
Ward(s) affected	West Drayton

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Cabinet Member:

- 1. Meets and discusses with petitioners their request for a 20mph speed limit in Swan Road, West Drayton;**
- 2. Notes the Council has to date commissioned four separate sets of independent traffic surveys in Swan Road, undertaken in November 2008, July 2011, January 2014 and July 2014, the results of which are set out in this report and none of which support the case for traffic calming;**
- 3. Notes the efforts by officers to try to address the petitioners' concerns through the 'intelligent intervention' before the petitioners meet formally with the Cabinet Member;**

4. Notes the meeting which took place on 23rd October 2014 between the lead petitioner, all three Ward Members and two officers with a view to understanding and taking forward the petitioners' concerns;

5. Considers whether further studies are justified on the basis of any detailed evidence which the petitioners are able to provide.

Reasons for recommendation

The petition hearing will provide a valuable opportunity to hear directly from the petitioners of their concerns and suggestions.

Alternative options considered / risk management

None at this stage.

Policy Overview Committee comments

None at this stage.

3. INFORMATION

Supporting Information

1. A petition of 39 signatures has been submitted to the Council from residents who live in Swan Road asking for a reduction in the speed limit to 20mph. In an accompanying statement the lead petitioner suggests the problems are as follows:

"Traffic is going well above the speed limit. This was exacerbated by a raised table put at the top of Swan Road this year. Problem is particularly severe in the evenings, night mornings and weekends when there are fewer cars parked on the road."

2. Swan Road is a mainly residential road close to West Drayton Town Centre with its shops and local amenities. The location of Swan Road is indicated on the plan attached as Appendix A.

3. The petition has been signed by 27 out of the 97 properties in this section of Swan Road between Old Farm Road and Station Road which represents 28% of the total households.

4. It is not clear why the petitioner believes that the raised junction treatment at the junction of Swan Road and Station Road 'exacerbates' the problems in Swan Road. This was a traffic calming feature which was created as part of the Yiewsley & West Drayton Town Centre Improvement Scheme. The purpose of the raised surface treatment was to slow traffic turning in and out of the junction and to make it safer for pedestrians to cross the junction itself. This feature was a specific response to an established road safety concern which previously existed at the Swan Road/ Station Road junction and, as the Cabinet Member will recall, was supported by local residents when they were consulted upon the town centre scheme.

5. As a result of the present petition and in order to promptly address residents' concerns, the Cabinet Member will recall that he approved the introduction of a new 'SLOW' marking in Swan

Road at a location agreed with the lead petitioner and furthermore instructed officers to commission an independent speed and traffic survey at three locations in Swan Road. These surveys were undertaken by an independent specialist third-party company. The intention was to accelerate the kind of investigations which normally only arise after a petition has been heard and formed part of the Council's 'intelligent intervention' approach which is designed to speed up the process of managing residents' aspirations through their petitioning.

6. The survey data was captured using Automatic Traffic Counters (ATCs) which, as the Cabinet Member will know, are pairs of rubber tubes laid across the carriageway and attached to a road-side data recorder. These types of surveys are the most reliable means of measuring traffic volumes, types and speeds over a 24-hour, seven day a week basis so any particular patterns during different times of the day or week.

7. This survey was undertaken between 19th January and 25th January 2014. The 85th percentile was found to be 28mph northbound and 26 mph southbound at location one, 28mph northbound and 27mph southbound at location two and 29mph northbound and 27mph southbound at location three. As the Cabinet Member will be aware, the 85th percentile is the speed at or below 85% of all vehicles are observed to travel. This is a nationally recognised method of assessing traffic speeds as it effectively refers to the majority of traffic movements. It is worth noting that a similar survey was undertaken in Swan Road in November 2008 and at the time the 85th percentile was found to be 29mph in both directions.

8. However, there were some concerns from officers that the data captured for vehicle classification on the survey appeared to show some discrepancies. As a consequence and in order to ensure that residents' concerns were properly investigated and that the data available was of the best quality, the surveys were undertaken again at the same locations on Swan Road over a seven-day period from 7th to 14th July 2014. The results of the second 24/7 speed and traffic survey were, however, very similar to those recorded in January. The July results showed the 85th percentile at location one was 27mph northbound and 26mph southbound, at location two it was 28mph in both directions and at location three it was also 28mph on both directions.

9. It is worth noting that a similar survey using ATC devices was undertaken in Swan Road in November 2008 and at the time the 85th percentile was found to be 29mph in both directions. Additionally, a manual speed survey was undertaken using a hand held device in July 2011 and again the 85th percentile was recorded as 28mph in one direction and 27mph in the other.

10. The Cabinet Member will be aware that research has shown that where signed-only 20 mph speed limits have been introduced the result is a negligible reduction in traffic speeds. Signed only schemes are therefore only appropriate for areas where traffic speeds are already low and is only recommended where the 85th percentile is at or below 24mph. The Cabinet Member will also be aware that the Metropolitan Police do not support any 20mph schemes which are not 'self enforcing'; in other words, where the natural speed of traffic is already around 20mph. Clearly a 'signed-only' scheme would not meet this criterion.

11. In roads where vehicle speeds are found to be significantly above the speed limit, typically where the 85th percentile is at or above 35mph, the Council will consider physical measures to encourage lower traffic speeds. These often take the form of vertical deflections such as speed tables or similar measures. However, the vehicle speeds that have been captured on four separate occasions over a period of approximately six years unfortunately do not support the case for either physical measures or a signed-only scheme.

12. In a separate meeting with the lead petitioner, local residents, the three local ward councillors and officers, residents cited a number of accidents in Swan Road including two fatalities in a single accident, a recent head on collision with a bus at the same location and a further two accidents in Swan Road. The lead petitioner in various emails to the Council suggests that the Council have not considered all of this Police evidence.

13. As the Cabinet Member is aware, officers rely upon the Police recorded collision data and it is always considered in context. In the regrettable circumstances where a collision results in a fatality the Council will meet Metropolitan Police Traffic Officers on-site to look into the circumstances so it is disingenuous to suggest that the Council has in any way not considered Police evidence. The collision that the lead petitioner refers to where there were two fatalities took place on April 2005. The Police concluded that in this incident "*this is a busy link road with few other injury accidents on record. The main cause of this accident was the behaviour of the Renault and VW Golf drivers who are unlikely to be influenced by any engineering measures*". The report also hinted at intoxication as being a contributory factor.

14. The two further incidents mentioned above were at the Station Road junction. One involved a 16-year old moped driver "undertaking" a car queuing to turn out of Swan Road and in the process he collided head-on with a car turning into Swan Road. Injuries were recorded as slight. The second incident of which we have details involved a motorcyclist who collided with a car in the process of turning right at the junction. Again, the injury was recorded as "slight". In the case of the collision involving a bus, this appears to have been as a result of two irresponsible drivers trying to race one another and ending up colliding with a bus. This incident is part of an on-going Police investigation.

15. On balance, therefore, the evidence collated to date has failed to support the case for a 20mph Zone scheme. Officers as well as all three Ward Members have met with the lead petitioner with a view to finding a productive and practical way forward, but to date none has been found which meets with the support of the lead petitioner. On this basis, therefore, it is recommended that the Cabinet Member meets with the petitioners so that they can state their case to him and in particular to have an opportunity to provide fresh evidence for his consideration, to enable him to make a decision on how best to proceed.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with the recommendations to this report. If works are subsequently required, suitable funding will need to be identified within the parking programme.

4. EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES

What will be the effect of the recommendation?

To allow the Cabinet Member an opportunity to discuss in detail with petitioners their concerns

Consultation Carried Out or Required

None at this stage.

5. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate finance has reviewed the report and the financial implications concurring that there are no cost implications to the Council associated with the recommendations to this report.

Legal

There are no special legal implications with the Cabinet Member to meet and discuss with petitioners their request for the speed limit to be reduced on Swan Road to 20 mph. A meeting with the petitioners is perfectly legitimate as part of a listening exercise, especially where consideration of the policy, factual and engineering issues are still at a formative stage. Fairness and natural justice requires that there must be no predetermination of a decision in advance of any wider non-statutory consultation.

The decision makers must ensure that there is full consideration of the results that have been received, regarding the traffic surveys in Swan Road. In exercising the power to approve the installation of the proposed traffic calming measures, the Council have to consider their statutory duty under section 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic. The statutory duty must be balanced with the concerns raised by the petitioners.

Should there be a decision that further measures are to be considered then the relevant statutory provisions will have to be identified and considered.

If specific advice is required, Legal Services should be consulted.

Corporate Property and Construction

There are no property implications resulting from the recommendations set out in this report.

Relevant Service Groups

None at this stage.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil.