

HILLSIDE ROAD, NORTHWOOD - PETITION REQUESTING TO HAVE CHICANES INSTEAD OF THE COUNCIL'S PROPOSED SPEED TABLES

Cabinet Member(s)	Cllr Keith Burrows
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Planning, Transportation & Recycling
Officer Contact(s)	Caroline Haywood Residents Services
Papers with report	Appendices A - C

1. HEADLINE INFORMATION

Summary	To inform the Cabinet Member that a petition has been received asking for chicanes instead of the proposed raised tables in Hillside Road, Northwood.
Contribution to our plans and strategies	The request can be considered as part of the Council's annual programme of road safety initiatives.
Financial Cost	There are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendations to this report.
Relevant Policy Overview Committee	Residents' & Environmental Services
Ward affected	Northwood Hills

2. RECOMMENDATION

Meeting with the petitioners, the Cabinet Member:

- 1. Notes the previous petition which specifically requested speed tables, together with the results of the subsequent consultations, which also strongly supported the proposal for traffic calming using speed tables;**
- 2. Discusses their request to consider chicanes or similar measures of some form (to be determined) instead of the proposed raised tables in Hillside Road, Northwood;**
- 3. Notes that neither a 'non over-runnable' chicane arrangement (i.e. with raised kerbs), nor a 'give way priority working' bollard arrangement is considered inappropriate for Hillside Road for reasons set out in the body of the report;**
- 4. Notes that the proportion of Heavy Goods Vehicles which already use Hillside Road is significantly less than one percent of the total traffic volume (as explained in the body of the report), and;**

5. Subject to the above, either
- (i) confirms his previous decision to proceed with the traffic calming already authorised;
 - or
 - (ii) asks officers to undertake further investigations under the Road Safety Programme and report back to him.

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

These can be identified from the proposed detailed discussions with the petitioners.

Policy Overview Committee comments

None at this stage.

6. INFORMATION

Supporting Information

1. A petition with 93 signatures has been submitted to the Council from residents of Hillside Road, Northwood requesting traffic calming using chicanes instead of the proposed speed tables, which arose following an earlier petition asking for such a scheme.
2. The petition states '*We the undersigned wish the Council to install chicanes as opposed to speed tables in Hillside Road, as part of the traffic calming measures intended for the road. In choosing this option we understand there may be a delay of some months while details of a design most appropriate for the road is worked out. If during the conduct of the design study, competing interests of traffic users who do not live in the road come to the surface we as residents expect the Council to comply with its own, well published motto of 'putting our residents first.'*
3. Attached to the petition was a report detailing the results of an informal consultation undertaken by the lead petitioner, which formed the basis for this petition. The report stated that of the 95 properties in Hillside Road, 60 properties supported chicanes, eight supported raised tables, and two properties were against both options. 21 properties did not respond and four properties are unoccupied.
4. Additional information supplied with the petition claimed that '*ground transmitted vibration problems from passing traffic to adjacent houses in one part of the road came to light between July and December 2015 as the result of three attempts by Affinity Water plc to achieve an adequate repair of the consequential damage caused by its earlier failure to deal promptly with a mains water leak into this road. The desired outcome is the Council install chicanes which are vibration free as opposed to speed tables which are not in Hillside Road. One unexpected result of carrying out the petition, was that it became apparent that traffic generated vibration is also an issue for some residents at both the western and eastern ends of the road. Therefore the problem in the 'middle' which was the original trigger for the request for chicanes, is not unique. The Council may wish to take note of this in the future planning. It is surprising that the Council originally offered the residents of the road speed tables without letting them know about the*

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possible side effects of vibrations. However, it is to the credit of the Councillors involved that they have now been open-minded enough to recognise that a traffic vibration issue exists in Hillside Road and that their original proposal for traffic calming measures involving speed tables is not suitable, and that an alternative is needed. For the record there is no doubt that the desire for traffic calming in one form or another is high as ever for the residents, and they support the Council's attempts at trying to solve the problem.'

5. Hillside Road is a residential road within Northwood Hills ward. The road lies on the H13 bus route, which runs every 20 - 30 minutes and is a main route between Pinner and Northwood. The winding alignment of the carriageway also demonstrates significant horizontal and vertical gradients. A plan of the area is shown on Appendix A to this report.

6. The Cabinet Member will recall hearing a previous petition, also from residents of Hillside Road, specifically and unequivocally requesting speed tables to reduce vehicle speeds in Hillside Road. In response to this the Council undertook an independent 24 hour / seven day traffic speed and volume survey.

7. The results showed that the majority of vehicles were found to be exceeding the 30mph speed limit. The 85% speed eastbound was 37mph, whilst westbound was 39mph. The so-called "85th percentile speed" is a statistical value, which represents a speed, at or below which, all vehicles were found to be travelling. This is a nationally recognised method of assessing traffic speeds as it effectively refers to the majority of traffic movements.

8. The level of traffic was consistent throughout the week with on average 4,000 vehicles each day in each direction. The data captured was subsequently shared with Ward Councillors and the Cabinet Member who agreed for officers to explore the residents request for physical traffic calming measures in the form of raised tables.

9. Following detailed investigation a proposed traffic calming scheme to install three raised tables was developed, broadly in line with the petitioners' request. Due to the majority of properties benefiting from off street parking and the road layout, this was deemed to be the only viable option to reduce vehicle speeds. The raised tables were designed in accordance with Transport for London's design standards to be bus friendly, incorporating shallower ramps and longer flat top plateaux.

10. Local Ward Councillors were consulted on the proposal and supported the scheme in principle. Officers were then asked to informally consult the residents on the proposal, as shown on the plan attached as Appendix B of this report. The proposals were also discussed with the emergency services and bus operators at one of the Council's quarterly traffic liaison meetings, and the proposals were again approved in principle by all these parties.

11. Of the 95 properties in Hillside Road consulted, the Council received responses from 63 households which represent 66% of the total properties in the road. 55 responses indicated support for the scheme and eight were against. The results were shared with Ward Councillors, who supported the majority view and it was agreed to proceed with the scheme.

12. The proposed traffic calming scheme was then taken through the statutory consultation process, which involved the placing of advertisements in the local press and the display of public notices on site.

13. During this period the Council received one objection against the proposed raised table outside No.10 Hillside Road. In response to this, the location of the raised table was revised

and the objector and affected residents were re-consulted and no further comments were received. This was reported to the Cabinet Member and the decision was made to proceed with the revised scheme, attached as Appendix C to this report.

14. In addition, careful analysis of the feedback from the consultation shows that only one respondent (who supported the idea of traffic calming in principle) suggested the adoption of an alternative form of traffic calming such as a chicane arrangement.

15. The petitioners have cited recent highway works (which took place in April 2016) involving buried services as highlighting an issue about ground-borne vibration. It is understood that, initially, once this work had been completed, the carriageway surface was poorly reinstated, leading to unpleasant noise from traffic passing over this irregular surface.

16. The concern expressed by petitioners in this context appears therefore to be that the introduction of new raised speed tables would create either a similar or perhaps an even worse noise problem.

17. There is, however, no clear empirical evidence that, in general, properly constructed raised tables, with appropriate approach and departure ramps (clearly marked with white triangles in accordance with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016) and a smooth upper plateau, will exhibit any more ground borne vibrations or noise than chicanes or roads without traffic calming measures.

18. However, the Cabinet Member will appreciate that, where there is significant heavy goods vehicle (HGV) traffic, it may be the case that the noise aspect can become a nuisance. As the Cabinet Member will also be aware, experience elsewhere also tends to show that once a traffic calming scheme has been installed, the numbers of HGVs generally tends to reduce significantly, because understandably the drivers of such vehicles prefer to find an alternative route which is less restricted.

19. Clearly a factor in the consideration of HGV impact of this kind will be the proportion of such traffic. Officers have revisited the traffic survey data referred to above and found that typical figures were 80 HGVs out of 26,000 vehicles as a whole (eastbound from Northwood Way, over a week) and 44 out of 27,400 in the opposite direction, again over a week. This equates to an average of 0.23% of all traffic. This is not especially surprising because the existing width restriction in Northwood Way severely constrains the passage of larger vehicles through the area.

20. Mindful of the fact that it is arguably HGV traffic which could cause the most disturbance, the Cabinet Member will note that HGV traffic is already almost insignificant and, should traffic calming be installed, would be likely to fall even further.

21. It is unclear from the petition what form the petitioners would like the 'chicanes' to take, for example 'over runnable' chicanes or a layout for so-called 'priority working' (which generally comprises islands with illuminated bollards which reduce the width of the road and only allow vehicles to pass in one direction at a time).

22. It should be noted, however, that the examples of other roads in the neighbouring London Borough of Harrow, such as Paine's Lane, which have been cited by petitioners as examples to support their argument, are unfortunately not valid comparisons; these other roads are not bus routes, and furthermore Paine's Lane is even narrower than Hillside Road.

23. Traffic calming involving chicanes tends to be less effective at reducing traffic speeds (because car drivers may try to swerve through the chicane), and they add to street clutter and ongoing maintenance. They are generally unsuitable for bus routes in narrow residential roads and significantly impact upon street parking, whereas raised speed tables have no impact on kerb side parking whatsoever.

24. Therefore it is recommended that the Cabinet Member meets the petitioners and listens to their concerns and decides if this request should be investigated further, or alternatively reaffirms his earlier decision.

Financial Implications

There are not any direct financial implications arising from the recommendations within this report. Funding for traffic calming measures will be taken through the usual procurement process.

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

Consultation has been carried out on this proposal through a notice on site and in the local press. Local Ward Councillors have also been consulted.

5. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance has reviewed this report and concurs with the financial implications set out above.

Legal

There are no special legal implications for the proposal to discuss with petitioners their request to consider chicanes or similar measures instead of the proposed raised tables in Hillside Road, Northwood, which amounts to an informal consultation. 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 consultation

In considering any informal consultation responses, decision makers must ensure there is a full consideration of all representations arising including those which do not accord with the officer recommendation. The decision maker must be satisfied that responses from the public are conscientiously taken into account.

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

Corporate Property and Construction

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

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil.