

NORTH COMMON ROAD, UXBRIDGE - PETITION REQUESTING MEASURES TO DETER "RAT RUNNING"

Cabinet Member(s)	Councillor Keith Burrows
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Cabinet Member for Planning, Transportation and Recycling
Officer Contact(s)	Caroline Haywood Residents Services Directorate
Papers with report	Appendix A - Location plan

1. HEADLINE INFORMATION

Summary	To inform the Cabinet Member that the Council has received a petition from residents requesting measures to deter rat running in North Common Road, Uxbridge.
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 none associated with the recommendations to this report.
Relevant Policy Overview Committee	Residents' and Environmental Services.
Ward(s) affected	Uxbridge North.

2. RECOMMENDATION

Meeting with the Petitioners, the Cabinet Member:

- 1. Listens to their concerns with "rat running" in North Common Road and South Common Road, Uxbridge.**
- 2. Subject to the outcome of the above, asks officers to undertake traffic surveys, at locations agreed by the petitioners and then report back to the Cabinet member.**

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 with a total of 31 signatures (of which 10 are residents from North Common Road, two from South Common Road and 19 from Water Tower Close) has been received by the Council.

2. The petition states " *I have now completed the survey of local residents' views on the traffic issues around Uxbridge Common and the overwhelming response was that there was a very real concern that not only was the Common being used as a rat run during Traffic Grid lock times but more importantly that it was regularly used as a rat run to avoid the general "build-up" of traffic on Park Road between approx. 4:30 & 6:30 pm and that it was this traffic that was a real problem as the culprits often cut the corner going around the Duck Pond and it's simply a matter of time before there is a serious incident. The survey discussed the merits of three proposals, namely the following - 1. Keep Clear cross hatching across entrance/exit of all three main exits from residential areas onto of North Common Road, 2. Resident Only Access Barrier System at junction between North Common & West Common and at junction of South Common Road & Park Road, that is ONLY closed between 4:30 & 6:30 pm, 3. Centre of road white lines all way along North Common Road to signify two-way traffic & carefully scheduled parking restrictions on single yellow (i.e. not allowed between 4:30 & 6:30 pm). As you can see from the survey, the most "popular" proposal was the barrier (23 out of 32 signatures). The justification for the barrier would not only to stop the rat run but also, as I have already highlighted, the issue of safety with the cars cutting the corners at the Duck Pond. Having spoken to a lot of the residents during the survey, it was clear that all shared the same concerns that it was accident waiting to happen.*"

3. North Common Road is a residential road that forms a horseshoe with West Common Road and South Common Road around Uxbridge Common green. These roads join the northbound side of the dual carriageway part of Park Road (B483). The carriageway in North Common Road is approximately 5 metres wide. These roads are within Uxbridge North Parking Management Scheme, with vehicles parking within designated bays on one side of the road. Water Tower Close is a no-through-road off North Common Road. The roads in question are shown on the plan attached as Appendix A to this report.

4. During peak times when vehicles are queuing on Park Road heading towards the A40, some vehicles have been observed to use South Common Road and North Common Road to try to jump ahead of the queue, although how much time this manoeuvre saves in practice is open to debate. During the day time the road is relatively quiet, with low traffic flows.

5. The petitioners have suggested three options: -

- The first option was to keep clear cross hatching on all three main exits on to North Common Road.
- The second option was a resident only access barrier at the junctions of North Common Road with West Common Road, and at the junction of South Common Road and Park Road.

- The third option was centre lane road markings on North Common Road to signify two-way traffic, and carefully scheduled parking restrictions.

6. Keep-clear road markings will not deter vehicles from rat running. These types of markings are used to keep entrances clear for vehicles to turn into the road. As Park Road is a dual carriageway, no vehicles are able to turn across the path of oncoming traffic. Measures to restrict access to North Common Road would also apply to residents and visitors in the area. As the Cabinet Member will be aware, road markings are prescribed by the Department for Transport in the "Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016". The standards stipulate that the road must be more than 5.5 metres wide for centre lane markings to be installed. North Common Road does not meet this requirement.

7. As these roads are public highway, all vehicles have a right to pass and re-pass along them. Any barrier would prohibit this and would be a form of "stopping up", which is not legally permissible without major consultation. Any such barrier would also have to be a permanently closed obstruction and would not be available for residents to open at will.

8. It is therefore suggested that the Cabinet Member meets with petitioners and listens to their concerns in greater detail, and discusses the advantages and disadvantages of possible options to restrict access to their road. Subject to the outcome of these discussions the Cabinet Member could recommend undertaking traffic surveys in North Common Road and South Common Road, at locations to be agreed with the petitioners, in order to help inform any possible solutions.

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 Road Safety 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 this report and notes that there are no current works proposed and therefore no financial implications. It is also noted that if works are approved, they will be subject to the usual capital release processes.

Legal

There are no special legal implications for the proposal to discuss with petitioners their concerns with traffic volumes in North Common Road, Uxbridge, 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 non-statutory 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 corporate property and construction implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Relevant Service Groups

None at this stage.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.