

PETITION ASKING FOR MEASURES TO ADDRESS PARKING AND TRAFFIC CONCERNS IN WHITEHEATH AVENUE, RUISLIP

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 concerned with parking and traffic in Whiteheath Avenue, Ruislip.
Contribution to our plans and strategies	The request can be considered in relation to the Council's strategy for on-street parking controls and road safety.
Financial Cost	There are no financial implications associated with the recommendations to this report.
Relevant Policy Overview Committee	Residents, Education and Environmental Services
Ward(s) affected	West Ruislip

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Meeting with the petitioners, the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transportation and Recycling:

1. listens to their concerns over parking and traffic in Whiteheath Avenue, Ruislip;
2. subject to the outcome of the above, asks officers to investigate possible options to mitigate the concerns raised by petitioners and then to report back to the Cabinet Member;
3. considers whether, in light of the petitioners' testimony, to instruct officers to commission independent 24/7 traffic speed and volume surveys at locations to be agreed with the petitioners and Ward Members; and
4. instructs officers from the Council's Road Safety and School Travel Team to follow up on initial dialogue with Whiteheath Junior School to explore measures they can put in place with the school to alleviate local residents' concerns.

Reasons for recommendation

To allow the Cabinet Member to discuss with petitioners their concerns and, if appropriate, add their request to the parking scheme and road safety programme.

Alternative options considered / risk management

These will be discussed with petitioners.

Policy Overview Committee comments

None at this stage.

3. INFORMATION

Supporting Information

1. A petition with 52 signatures has been submitted to the Council signed by residents who live in Whiteheath Avenue, Ruislip. In an attached narrative submitted with the petition, the lead petitioner's statement includes:

"As residents of Whiteheath Avenue we have major concerns over the congestion caused by the comings and goings from Whiteheath Junior School.

"As the school has grown in size and it has become more usual for parents to ferry their children to and from school by car, traffic congestion in the road has increased considerably. Despite the dedicated efforts of the School Caretaker to manage traffic flow, this has now reached crisis point. It is only a matter of time before there is a serious or even fatal accident during pick-up and drop off times.

"There are two main contributing factors.

- i) Teachers parking in the road all day opposite the school gate rather than in the school car park thus restricting the space available for parents to stop.*
- ii) Parents turning their vehicles around in the road after collecting or dropping their children rather than continuing around the block*

"Unlike most other roads adjacent to schools in the borough, Whiteheath does not have any traffic calming measures."

2. Whiteheath Avenue is a mainly residential road just off of Ladygate Lane, Ruislip. A location plan is attached as Appendix A. The entrance to the school is located on Whiteheath Avenue while the nearby Whiteheath Infant School is located on Ladygate Lane. The 331 bus route is close by which runs between Ruislip and Uxbridge and travels through Northwood and Harefield en route.

3. Beyond its junction with Grasmere Avenue, Whiteheath Avenue is effectively a dead-end road with a number of small side roads leading off it. Grasmere Avenue is a short road with a pedestrian link over the River Pinn that connects to Westcote Rise, which is a short walk from Bishop Winnington Ingram (BWI) Church of England Primary School. Anecdotal evidence from local residents indicates that some parking takes place in Grasmere Avenue and Fairfield Avenue

which is associated with BWI, thus adding to local parking during the school day.

4. Grasmere Avenue connects to Fairfield Avenue and from there to Glenfield Crescent. The latter joins to Ladygate Lane and there is as a consequence an informal 'loop' of school-related traffic serving Whiteheath Junior School as drivers follow either a clockwise or anti-clockwise route when picking up or dropping off at the school entrance in Whiteheath Avenue. The Cabinet Member may be interested to note that, whilst the majority of the petitioners who signed the petition live in Whiteheath Avenue, five were from Grasmere Avenue, four from Ravenscourt Close and one from Ladygate Lane.

5. Officers have been advised by Whiteheath Junior School they are a three-form entry school and despite recent construction works which have been undertaken, pupil numbers have remained largely unchanged for the last 20 years at between 353 and 358 pupils. It has also been advised that the school employs around 40 staff, but many only work part time, job sharers or support and lunchtime staff. The existing on-site parking provides one disabled parking space and 22 other spaces.

6. In the period since the petition was submitted by residents, the school has recently responded to and engaged with officers from the Council's Road Safety and School Travel Team.

7. Following a recent meeting with the Deputy Head and PSHE co-ordinator at Whiteheath Junior School, the Cabinet Member may be pleased to note that significant progress has been made in updating and developing the school's Travel Plan in its efforts to promote and encourage active and safer travel on the home to school journey. Additionally, the school has booked pedestrian training for every pupil during the spring term in 2019 and in the meantime has already completed Bikeability training for Year Six pupils in October 2018. The school is also in the process of appointing 'Junior Road Safety Officers' (from Year 5 or 6) and plans to attend the Council's Junior Road Safety Officer event at which they have the opportunity to bid for funding to implement road safety initiatives in the school, which can include scooter or cycle storage as well as campaigns.

8. The petitioners have highlighted two main factors that contribute to the issues they identified in their road and these are set out in paragraph 1 of this report. The first is teacher parking and officers have already raised this directly with the school; however, as the Cabinet Member will be aware, the most effective way to manage parking in the road is to either introduce waiting restrictions in the form of yellow lines or to create a Parking Management Scheme which comprises parking bays, associated signs and residents' parking permits. It is not clear from the petition whether residents would support either option so it is recommended that the Cabinet Member discusses their concerns in greater detail.

9. The Cabinet Member may wish to note, however, that officers are not aware of any previous requests for parking management schemes in this area which is not close to either a shopping centre or a railway station.

10. The second concern relates to parents or guardians allegedly turning in the road rather than continuing around the block. Quite reasonably, the logical route which residents are suggesting that parents should take after collecting or dropping off their children is broadly as described earlier in this report; i.e., Whiteheath Avenue, Grasmere Avenue, Fairfield Avenue, Glenfield Crescent then back onto Ladygate Lane. The distance from the school entrance to the junction of Whiteheath Avenue and Ladygate Lane is approximately 800 metres while the same journey along

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Whiteheath Avenue is approximately 80 metres.

11. Site observations at the busy school peak periods shows that parking takes place at many points along this route and drivers often face other oncoming vehicles which can lead to conflict and delay which may discourage them from using this route. It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that parents prefer the shorter option.

12. The Cabinet Member will appreciate that, as frustrating as the practice of turning round in the road may be, it is not generally illegal and therefore there is little that the Council can do in practical terms, other than encourage the school to raise these concerns within the school community.

13. There is no 'informal one-way' in operation, but even if there were, there is no certainty that those who choose to turn around in the middle of Whiteheath Avenue would change their present behaviour. Some schools have established voluntary 'one-way' systems around schools which have a mixed level of success, because they rely upon parents adhering to them. Now Whiteheath School has become actively engaged with officers from the Road Safety and School Travel Team, this is perhaps something that they could assist the school in establishing and promoting.

14. Petitioners have also mentioned in their submission that Whiteheath Avenue does not benefit from any traffic calming measures or a 20mph speed limit; while this is true, these measures on their own are unlikely to resolve residents' road safety concerns. As the Cabinet Member will be aware, the problem of traffic congestion around schools is unfortunately common across the Borough. Notwithstanding this, and dependent upon the petitioners' testimony, the Cabinet Member may wish to consider the possibility of a series of independent traffic surveys in locations to be agreed with the petitioners and their Ward Members.

15. If residents are seeking an enforceable option to force school traffic to use a certain route, then perhaps the only practical way to achieve this would be a formal 'one-way' working for part of Whiteheath Avenue which would be underpinned by a legal Traffic Management Order. This type of restriction must by its very nature apply at all times and is incumbent on residents and non-residents alike. As a result, some residents may feel that such prescriptive measures may be excessive to address a problem that is only acute for a relatively short period of time, Monday to Friday during school time. It is therefore recommended that the Cabinet Member discusses with petitioners what options they feel they could support.

Financial Implications

There are none associated with the recommendations to this report. However, if the Council were to recommend traffic management or parking restrictions then funding would need to be identified from a suitable source.

4. EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES

What will be the effect of the recommendation?

To allow the Cabinet Member to consider the petitioners request and available options the Council has to address these concerns.

5. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance notes that there are no financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Legal

There are no special legal implications for the proposal to informally consult residents on parking restrictions. Informally consulting residents 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.

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's recommendations. The decision maker must be satisfied that responses from the public are conscientiously taken into account.

If the decision maker recommends officers undertake a statutory consultation, the procedures that should be followed in this case are set out in the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and The Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedures) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 (SI 1996/2489).

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

Corporate Property and Construction

None at this stage.

Relevant Service Groups

None at this stage.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Petition received