

# DUCKS HILL ROAD, RUISLIP - PETITION REQUESTING VEHICLE ACTIVATED SIGNS, SPEED CAMERAS AND A PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

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| <b>Cabinet Member(s)</b>    | Councillor Keith Burrows                                  |
| <b>Cabinet Portfolio(s)</b> | Cabinet Member for Planning, Transportation and Recycling |
| <b>Officer Contact(s)</b>   | Steven Austin, Residents Services                         |
| <b>Papers with report</b>   | Appendix A - Location Plan                                |

## HEADLINE INFORMATION

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|---|---|
| <b>Summary</b>                                  | To inform the Cabinet Member that the Council has received a petition from residents requesting traffic calming measures, vehicle activated signs, speed cameras and a pedestrian crossing on Ducks Hill Road, Ruislip.   |
| <b>Contribution to our plans and strategies</b> | The request can be considered as part of the Council's annual programme of road safety initiatives.   |
| <b>Financial Cost</b>                           | Subject to the outcome of discussions with petitioners, the Cabinet Member may be minded to commission speed and traffic surveys. The current cost of these is in the region of £85 per location and can be funded from within existing revenue budgets for the Transportation service. |
| <b>Relevant Policy Overview Committee</b>       | Residents, Education and Environmental Services.  |
| <b>Ward(s) affected</b>                         | West Ruislip.   |

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- 1) Listens to their request for various traffic calming measures and road safety initiatives in Ducks Hill Road, Ruislip;**
- 2) Notes the dialogue between the Council and the Metropolitan Police Service and London Fire Brigade;**
- 3) Subject to the outcome of the above, considers asking officers to undertake traffic surveys, at locations agreed by the petitioners, to report back to the Cabinet Member, and to feed in to the separate HS2 study;**
- 4) Subject to the above, also considers asking officers to undertake an assessment of pedestrian crossing demand at the site; and**

**5) Asks officers to add this section of Ducks Hill Road to the Vehicle Activated Signs programme.**

**Reasons for the recommendations**

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.

**INFORMATION**

**Supporting Information**

1. A petition with 20 valid signatures has been submitted by residents asking for traffic calming measures and a pedestrian crossing on Ducks Hill Road, Ruislip. Of the 20 signatures, five are from residents of Ducks Hill Road, Ruislip. The petition has been signed under the following heading;

*"Speed measures on Ducks Hill Road, Vehicle Activated Signs, Speed Cameras, Pedestrian Crossing (possibly with traffic lights)".*

In an accompanying statement the petitioners provided the following helpful information;

*"Vehicle Activated Signs, Speed Cameras and pedestrian crossing to prevent further fatal accidents and provide a safe place to cross to the road leading to the Lido. Outside of the Church where the current bollard is on Ducks Hill Road, Ruislip."*

2. Duck's Hill Road (A4180) is one of the primary north to south routes in Hillingdon and links Ruislip to Northwood then beyond to Hertfordshire and is classified as a Borough Main Distributor Road. A location plan is attached as Appendix A.

3. As the Cabinet Member will recall, in 2015, the Council commissioned speed and traffic surveys at two locations on Ducks Hill Road, one close to Reservoir Road and the other close to the Six Bells Public House. In accordance with the Council's normal practice, these surveys were undertaken by an independent specialist third-party company, the results therefore being not only accurate and comprehensive but totally impartial. 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 to capture any particular patterns during different times of the day or week.

4. The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile was found to be 37 mph northbound and 34mph southbound close to Reservoir Road, 39mph northbound and 38mph southbound at the Six Bells.

5. As the Cabinet Member will be aware, the so-called '85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed' is the speed at or below which 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. As a result of the above, the Council is undertaking a review of the current speed limit on Ducks Hill Road and other key routes in the north of the Borough.

6. The lead petitioner, local ward councillors and officers, are aware of recent collisions in Ducks Hill Road including a recent fatality. The lead petitioner has suggested that the measures they are requesting could prevent "*further fatal accidents*". It is clearly understandable that when tragic incidents occur there is a demand for action by the Council as the Highway Authority.

7. As the Cabinet Member is aware, officers rely upon the Police recorded collision data and this is always considered in context. In the regrettable circumstances where a collision results in a fatality, the Council will usually meet Metropolitan Police Traffic Officers on-site to assess the circumstances, so the Council always carefully considers police evidence. The collisions that the petitioners mention, the Council understands, are still currently subject to an on-going Police investigation so it is not appropriate to comment on the circumstances behind these in detail at the present time.

8. However, it is understood that the incident whereby the young driver of a car collided with the wall of the former church, involved the car in question travelling at some speed along Reservoir Road, and thus perpendicular to the carriageway in Ducks Hill Road. Council officers provided a summary of known road traffic collisions (RTC) over a period to their colleagues in the emergency services; including the Metropolitan Police and the London Fire Service (LFB) as part of the ongoing dialogue, and the LFB has provided the following comments (parts have been redacted for reasons of sensitivity or to avoid prejudicing any ongoing investigations):

*To answer your question, although the death of [redacted] is very sad, it is a result of [redacted]. I do not feel that additional traffic calming measures would ultimately reduce this type of incident, purely because the driver is usually ignoring signage or driving erratically.*

*You have taken a twenty year period which resulted in a cluster of incidents around the Ducks Hill Road area. The LFB do not record incidents by the severity of the injury, but by type, e.g. Road Traffic Accident (RTC), Fire, Flooding, Fire Alarm Actuating etc. The attached word document shows RTC incidents (the red icons) over the last 5yrs and each incident record will contain details of those injured and the severity.*

*There may be more minor incidents which did not require the attendance of the LFB, LAS or Police or some which the Police attended, but did not require the LFB and therefore, we have no record of them.*

*Ultimately, we are saddened by any death caused by any RTC and would support action to reduce fatal car accidents. Having said that, we are not overly concerned with this junction as you could take a twenty year snap shot of other similar junctions and get a similar outcome.*

Both the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and the LFB added that they would be supportive of the principle of any review of the posted speed limit in Ducks Hill Road. The Cabinet Member will be aware that for most assessments of road safety aspects, designers would generally only consider RTC data from the most recent three year period for which data is available; the reference to a longer period was purely part of the informal dialogue with the LFB and MPS.

9. The Cabinet Member will be aware that 'traffic cameras' (more formally 'road safety cameras') of the kind referenced by the petitioners are not the responsibility of the Council, but

are owned, installed and maintained by the MPS in collaboration with Transport for London (TfL), 'London Councils' (the pan-London body which represents all London Boroughs) and Her Majesty's Courts. There are certain criteria which TfL apply for the consideration of any new safety camera, and tragic though the circumstances were of the fatality which undoubtedly prompted the petitioners to submit their petition at this stage, it seems unlikely that this site in Ducks Hill Road would meet those standards.

10. Although as just stated, the Council does not manage or install road safety cameras, it does have a number of electronic 'Vehicle Activated Signs' (VAS) which use a system of radar to detect the speed of approaching vehicles and to then flash a speed limit warning to any of those vehicles which exceed the posted speed limit. As the Cabinet Member will know, experience in Hillingdon and elsewhere shows that these signs tend to be most effective when they are moved around to different sites to avoid the risk that they become too familiar and consequently less effective at any one site.

11. There is at present, a pedestrian crossing near the site in question, which comprises a traffic island refuge with an illuminated central beacon. This is a typical provision for a site of this kind, catering for the likely levels of pedestrians using the crossing. Forward visibility in both directions, north and south, is considered more than adequate due to the alignment of Ducks Hill Road. A recent incident which resulted in damage to the traffic island refuge is understood to have involved a vehicle travelling with excessive speed, very late at night, with no injuries or loss of life.

12. Other types of crossing can be considered where there is sufficient pedestrian demand and the circumstances are appropriate, the latter including the layout and type of road, the availability of sufficient room on the carriageway and adjacent footways, and last but not least the traffic volume and speed.

13. The familiar Zebra Crossing, covered by a Statutory Instrument laid out in Parliament, has nationally-prescribed design standards associated with it. These include statistical formulae which require the consideration of the data just described. Petitioners may also wish to note that a Zebra Crossing involves the introduction of two or more flashing Belisha Beacons which experience has shown can be perceived as a nuisance by those living nearby. In addition, the design of any new formal crossing of this kind must take account of any existing accesses onto the highway (e.g. a driveway) to avoid safety conflicts between pedestrians and drivers manoeuvring nearby.

14. In some cases, especially where traffic speeds are higher, it may be appropriate to consider a traffic signal controlled crossing, typically the so-called Puffin Crossing which, like the Zebra Crossing, is governed by Primary Legislation. The Cabinet Member will also be aware that in common with the majority of the traffic signals across Greater London, any signal installations in Hillingdon are installed, owned and maintained by TfL (i.e. as with safety cameras) and TfL have their own assessment criteria associated with such schemes.

15. As with a Zebra Crossing, traffic signals involve a considerable amount of hardware which has to be accommodated on the highway, including of course the signals themselves but also cabinets and power supply points. The same considerations as with Zebra Crossings apply with regard to the proximity to any private access points.

16. Once appropriate surveys and studies which may follow the decisions to be made with regard to this petition, the Cabinet Member may be minded to instruct officers to add Ducks Hill Road to the VAS forward programme. The initial work involved in this would involve the

provision of a suitable sign post with an electrical supply to facilitate the deployment of the VAS on a part-time basis.

17. The Cabinet Member will meanwhile be aware that the Council has initiated work with HS2 (the High Speed Rail Line which cuts through the Borough) to review traffic speeds on a number of roads within the local network north of the A40 Western Avenue and south of Harefield and Northwood. These roads include Harvil Road, Breakspear Road South, Breakspear Road North and Ducks Hill Road. Although neither Breakspear Road North nor Ducks Hill Road form part of the HS2 Construction Route Network, it is recognised that they are likely to carry more displaced traffic as a consequence of the construction work associated with the HS2 project which, dependent of course upon any future decisions by National Government and the detailed works programme, may continue for up to a decade.

18. One potential outcome of this separate HS2-related study may conceivably include a change to the posted speed limit, and with that in mind, the testimonial of the petitioners, coupled with any other work instructed as a consequence, will be helpful in terms of informing that study.

19. In conclusion, as a result of the concerns raised by residents, the Cabinet Member may be minded to instruct officers to commission 24/7 Automatic Traffic Counts on Ducks Hill Road at locations agreed with petitioners and ward councillors. The speed and vehicle traffic data captured and the testimony of petitioners will help inform the investigations into possible measures, including feeding in to the HS2-related study referenced above.

### **Financial Implications**

If the Cabinet Member is minded to agree to undertake independent speed and traffic surveys, the cost is usually in the region of £80 to £85 per location, which could be funded through an allocation for the transportation and projects service. If works are subsequently required, suitable funding will be identified from Revenue Budgets within the Road Safety programme.

## **EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES**

### **What will be the effect of the recommendations?**

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

### **Consultation Carried Out or Required**

None at this stage.

## **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

### **Corporate Finance**

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

## **Legal**

It is important that decision-makers have no personal interest in the subject on which they are adjudicating, and should declare and preclude their participation in the decision R v Bow Street Metropolitan Stipendiary Magistrate, ex parte Pinochet Ungarte (No 2) [2001] 1 AC 119.

It is recommended that there is legitimate informal dialogue with those that are likely to be impacted by any changes or those with a particular interest; prior to the final decision. 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.

During the informal consultation, Members are guided to be mindful of the legal requirements for a proper consultation exercise are known as the Sedley requirements, adopted by Hodgson J in R v Brent London Borough Council, ex parte Gunning (1985) 84 LGR 168, being:

- Consultation must be made at a time when proposals are at a formative stage;
- Sufficient reasons for the proposal must be given to allow intelligent consideration response;
- Adequate time must be given for a response; and
- The product of the consultation must be conscientiously taken into account in finalising proposals.

In considering any informal consultation responses, decision makers must ensure there is a full consideration of all relevant representations arising including those which do not accord with the officer recommendation. Accordingly, the Council must balance the concerns of the objectors with its statutory duty to secure the expeditious, convenient, safe movement of vehicular and stationed parking, with other traffic. The decision maker must be satisfied that responses from the public are conscientiously taken into account.

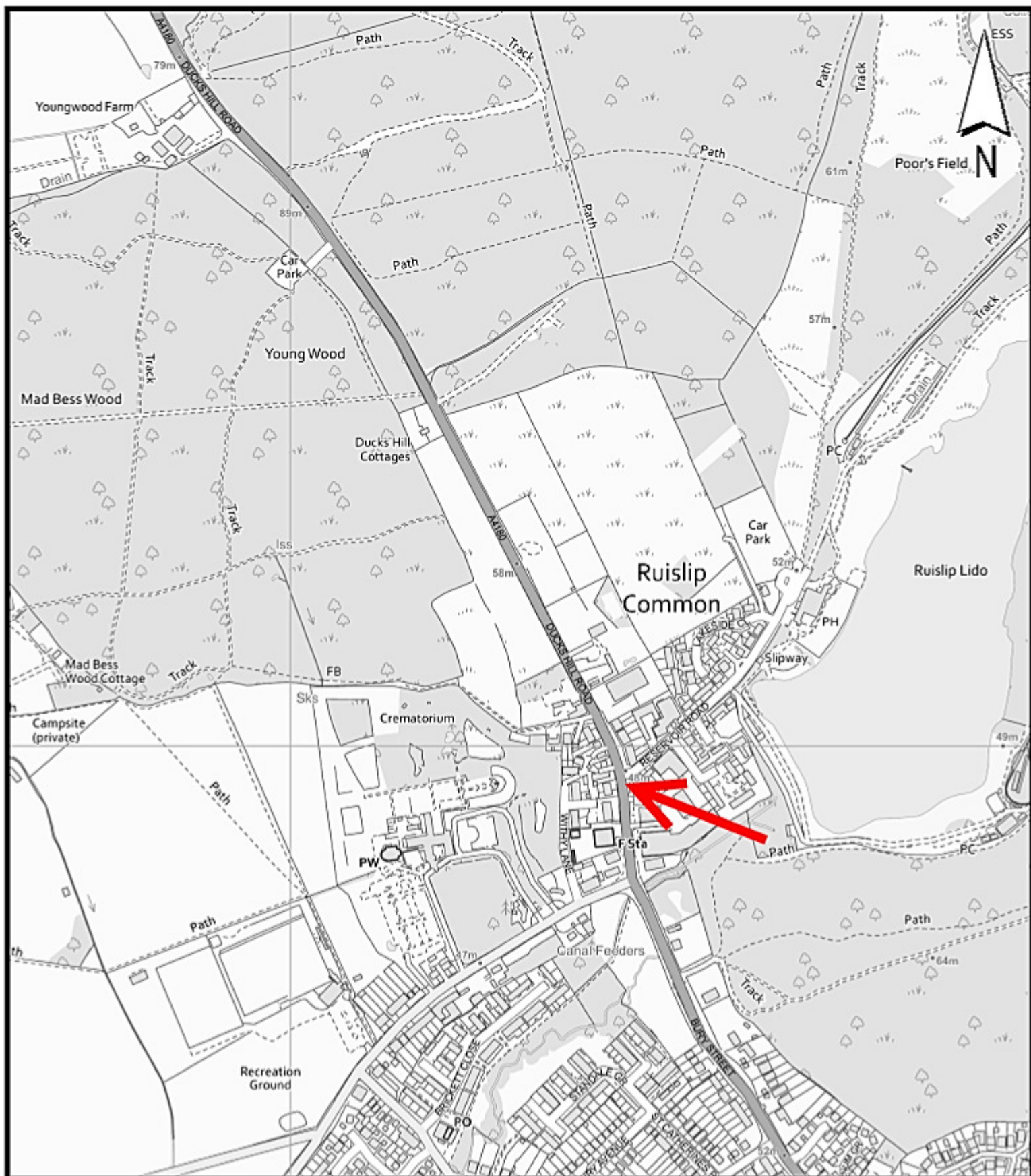
Should the outcome of the informal discussions with petitioners be founded that traffic calming measures, vehicle activated signs, speed cameras and a pedestrian crossing is required, it will be necessary to consider the Highways Act 1980, the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002, which govern road traffic orders, traffic signs and road markings.

## **Corporate Property and Construction**

There are no Corporate Property and Construction implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Petition received - July 2019



Ducks Hill Road, Ruislip - Petition requesting vehicle activated signs, speed cameras and a pedestrian crossing - Location plan

Appendix A

October 2019

Scale 1:6,500