

EASTCOTE ROAD, RUISLIP - REQUEST FOR REMOVAL OF RAISED ZEBRA CROSSING

Cabinet Member(s)	Cllr Jonathan Bianco
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Property, Highways & Transport
Officer Contact(s)	Sophie Wilmot, Place Directorate
Papers with report	Appendix A – Location Plan

HEADLINES

Summary	To inform the Cabinet Member that a petition has been received from residents of Eastcote Road, Ruislip requesting removal of a raised zebra crossing.
Putting our Residents First Delivering on the Council Strategy 2022-2026	This report supports our ambition for residents / the Council of: Live active and healthy lives This report supports our commitments to residents of: A Green and Sustainable Borough
Financial Cost	The financial costs associated with the recommendations to this report is dependent on the instruction from the Cabinet Member. 6.a) has no direction financial implications 6.b) will be managed within existing revenue budgets and 6.c) will be managed through the Council's Capital Release process.
Relevant Select Committee	Property, Highways and Transport
Relevant Ward(s)	Ruislip

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and Transport:

- 1. meets with petitioners and listens to their request for the removal of a raised zebra crossing on Eastcote Road, Eastcote;**
- 2. notes the previous petitions and communications from residents, requesting improvements to road safety in the area, as detailed within the body of the report;**
- 3. notes the benefit of the raised zebra crossing, as detailed with the report;**

4. considers the cost of removal of the zebra crossing, as outlined in the report;
5. reviews the work done to date by officers to investigate the concerns being raised by the petitions, as provided within the report; and
6. based on the above, considers the options outlined in paragraph 19 and instructs officers on one of the following courses of action:
 - a). Take no further action at this stage but keep the matter under review;
 - b). Commission further traffic volume and speed surveys and report back to the Cabinet Member and Ward Councillors;
 - c). Instruct officers to investigate budgetary options to cover the costs involved in removal of the raised table, subject to consultation as necessary.

Reasons for 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.

Select Committee comments

None at this stage.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. A petition with the minimum compliant total of **21** signatures has been received by the Council, requesting the removal of a raised zebra crossing on Eastcote Road. The petition has been signed under the following:

'We the undersigned implore Hillingdon Council to have the raised table for the Zebra crossing located by 273 Eastcote Road Ruislip which was installed in February 2022, removed and the crossing returned to be flat with the road surface. The raised table has caused far more distress to us residents and cause for safety concerns than we had here previously. The crashing down of various trucks, vans, trailers etc along with the skip vehicles which boom and clang coming off the ramp is simply unbearable for the residents here with such occurring at all hours - particularly an issue early morning, including Saturdays, as well as often very late into the night. Sleep is disturbed: being jolted awake, causing great stress with the bomb-like sound. The booming crashes off the ramp cause properties to shake, much more than the HGV's roaring past used to. Further cracks in houses have appeared and there is danger caused to pedestrians with debris being thrown off skips onto the pavement as they crash down. Such debris has also caused car tyres to burst when using the driveway into the adjacent property. Pedestrians are very startled by the often-deafening booms. Flooding occurs by the ramp with heavy rain causing the pavement to be impassable. The raised table has got to go. It has ruined our environment

here, made pedestrian safety more of an issue, given greater concern for the fabric of our properties and made our lives a torment.'

2. Eastcote Road (B466) is a major east-west route in Hillingdon that links Ruislip to Northwood Hills and Eastcote. Eastcote Road is designated as a Borough secondary distributor road and forms part of the H13 bus route. Although now a mainly residential road, Eastcote Road and Eastcote High Road also have local shops, a busy public house and are a main route for school children. From an 1868 Ordnance Survey map, cartographers showed that what is now Eastcote Road, follows much the same route as it does today so clearly this is an ancient thoroughfare. A location plan is attached as Appendix A to this report.

Previous Petitions & Correspondence

3. The measures at the zebra crossing and the junction of Windmill Hill / High Road Eastcote were brought forward following a petition of **207** signatures calling for urgent safety measures on Eastcote Road; that previous petition was signed under the following heading:

Title: *Road Safety Measures urgently needed - Eastcote Road (between Spring Drive up to and including Windmill Hill roundabout)*

Statement: *'We the undersigned petition Hillingdon Council to urgently implement the following road safety measures: - Speed cameras with fines throughout the stretch of road between Spring Drive/ Fore Street and Windmill Hill roundabout junction. - Improvement of design of Windmill Hill roundabout junctions to include severe traffic calming. - Enforce breaches of the London Lorry Control Scheme throughout this area and stop HGV's tearing through these roads day and night causing noise & vibration disturbance to our homes. - New and improved VAS signage in key stretches of road between Spring Drive all the way through to Windmill Hill roundabout. - Renewed road surfacing & fixing of potholes/ drain and gully covers.*

Justification: *We call on Hillingdon Council to take note of the road problems in this area (notwithstanding a terrible fatal collision on 25th October 2020 in the area) and put together a proposal to make the entire stretch of road safer for residents, pedestrians and other road users as a matter of urgency.'*

4. It is understood that the incident which presumably galvanised the petitioners into raising the topic of wider road safety in Eastcote Road was almost certainly the one referenced by the petitioners. At the time of the petition hearing, the case was still subject to police investigation and consideration by the Coroner, so it was not possible to make further comment then, because of the risk of prejudicing the case in question. The case has now concluded, with the prosecution of the driver who caused the tragic infant fatality; it has since been placed on the public record that the driver was suffering from regular medical episodes which incapacitated him (a fact which he had failed to disclose to the DVLA) and furthermore, at the time of the collision, was found to have been under the influence of cocaine, the combined consequences of which meant that he lost control of his car, which led to it crossing the road and striking the infant in her pushchair with tragic consequences.

5. It was clear that the shock of this dreadful incident, resulting in an infant death, understandably served as a catalyst for residents' wider concerns about road safety in Eastcote Road, prompting the petition which was heard by the previous Cabinet Member in April 2021. Much detail was included in the petition report of the time, including such matters as the status of safety cameras, and the fact that the Council was preparing to re-join the London Lorry Control

Scheme (LLCS); as most of the issues from the petition referenced above were covered through the previous hearing process, most of it does not require repeating in this present report.

6. However, further information, including concerns and suggestions, was provided by petitioners both at the hearing and via subsequent correspondence with Officers.

7. An example of this additional helpful detail from petitioners is as follows:

“The zebra crossing near to Lidgould Grove/Pembroke Park is very precarious due to the fact that drivers from either side of the road are unable to react quickly enough if they are travelling at speed due to the S-bend in the road. Pavements on this stretch of road are also very narrow, kerbs are too low (on the bend towards Ruislip) and vehicles have been seen mounting the narrow pavement where they are unable to see pedestrians clearly due to the bend. Re-instate refuge islands at zebra crossing on Eastcote Road by Pembroke Park entrance as this is a busy crossing at peak times due local schools either side (Coteford, Haydon, Warrender, Bishop Ramsey). Often cars do not stop simultaneously on both sides of the road despite pedestrians being in full view and people are left ‘hanging’ in the middle waiting to cross”.

8. The former refuge island referred to by the petitioners was removed when the zebra crossing was first introduced as part of the redeveloped RAF Eastcote. The old refuge island, comprising a pair of old-fashioned iron ‘D-rings’, was substandard both in its size and its location. Having provided a proper formal (Zebra) crossing the Council clearly could not allow any crossing point created within the new crossing to be substandard. The current carriageway width does not lend itself to a crossing with a centre island that meets current design standards, which stipulate a minimum width for waiting pedestrians, including anyone with a pushchair or using a wheelchair, who are pausing half-way across the road, as well as adequate passing width on both sides for general traffic.

9. The issue with the provision of a refuge island which is compliant with national standards has previously been communicated to petitioners, who responded as follows:

“If it remains that refuge islands are still deemed impossible (but serious question why) please investigate if a slightly raised table to the crossing area would work instead?”

10. In responding, the point about design standards for refuge islands was again reiterated, but the idea to raise the level of the crossing which, as can be seen from this came directly from the petitioners themselves, was considered by officers and Members as a reasonable and viable option, as clearly raising of zebra crossings is a common traffic calming solution where there are concerns about traffic speeds, and indeed there are many such raised crossings not only throughout the Borough but across the whole country.

Work done to date

11. Following the original petition requesting road safety measures, the zebra crossing was raised as well as the junction of High Road Eastcote / Windmill Hill to slow cars and improve facilities for those wishing to cross the road at this point. In accordance with legislation, prior to the work taking place, formal public notices were erected on site near the crossing, between 20th October 2021 and 10th November 2021, and there were no objections received. The opportunity

was also taken to install a number of warning signs to make drivers more aware of the zebra crossings in the area.

12. In terms of other work, officers have spoken to HS2 and their contractors, who are working in the wider local area, and tasked them to ensure that they do not allow any of their heavy lorries to use Eastcote Road which is not an authorised HS2 Construction Route. Officers have also discussed with the petitioners the fact that Eastcote Road is a key distributor road along with the fact that in recent years the numbers of larger lorries using the road has increased – some of them serving logistics centres as far away as Victoria Road, South Ruislip, their routes constrained by the low bridges in that area. Officers have an ongoing dialogue with London Councils about lorry routing, as part of the London Lorry Control Scheme (LLCS), which the Council agreed to re-join in early 2021, following assurances given by London Councils that the LLCS would be managed and enforced more proactively in Outer London than hitherto.

13. The Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Team have undertaken some investigations into the specifics of skip lorries and the frequent noise aspects associated with unsecured chains but regrettably this is a widespread issue without an easy solution, being chiefly reliant upon goodwill by the skip businesses concerned.

14. The road in the area has been resurfaced, with the Council's Highways team using a new type of surfacing which is designed to reduce noise; this was one of the first areas to benefit from this new type of surfacing.

Benefits of a raised zebra crossing

15. The idea of speed tables stems from many years of research sponsored by Central Government, with extensive work by the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) at Crowthorne to develop the optimum profiles. When used on a bus route there are further design standards stipulated by Transport for London (TfL). The Council long ago stopped introducing the older round-topped 'sleeping policemen' but over the past couple of decades has introduced, where supported through consultation, coupled with some evidence of speeding, flat-topped speed tables of the kind installed in Eastcote Road, which is the subject of this present petition.

16. These raised tables not only serve to slow traffic (and moreover encourage approaching traffic to slow out of self-preservation as much as anything) but their presence reinforces the presence of a place where pedestrians are likely to cross, and there are particular benefits for wheelchair users, people with buggies and anyone else who can take advantage of having a level passage across the road which a raised table provides. Furthermore, the fact that there are key schools in the vicinity with catchment areas spanning both sides of Eastcote Road, strengthens the arguments in favour.

Disbenefits of a raised crossing

17. Whilst a raised table of the kind installed in Eastcote Road offers the road safety benefits already described, there can often be an unwelcome issue in terms of vehicle noise. It is appreciated that this concern is the key driving force behind the present petition. Background traffic levels and associated noise in the road were already higher than, say, an adjacent side road, but having said that this is typical of other local distributor roads in the area.

Cost and other implications for consideration of removal of the zebra crossing

18. Following the initial concerns raised by the residents, officers firstly checked and confirmed that the scheme had been accurately and properly constructed to design standards, and then considered a possible cost estimate for removing the raised zebra and reinstating the crossing at carriageway level. The Highways team provided a cost estimate of circa £19k for these works, based on rates from the Council's term contractors O'Hara who would undertake the works.

19. It should also be noted that removal of the raised table should properly involve a consultation process, including the local schools, to ensure that all views may be fairly and reasonably considered. It should be borne in mind that the driving factor behind the installation of this traffic calming feature, suggested by residents in the first place, was the enhancement of road safety.

Options going forward

20. Based on the information provided above, the Cabinet Member may be minded to consider the options below and instruct officers as to the next steps for this petition:

- **Option 1:** Do Nothing: no changes to be made to the crossing and the scheme to remain as is currently provided (financial cost: £0).
- **Option 2:** Review: review the speeds in the area in six months' time to ensure the speed reduction benefits are still being met (financial cost: £255).
- **Option 3:** Consultation on and, subject to the outcome, potential removal of the raised zebra crossing, and re-instatement of an at grade crossing (financial cost: £19,000; it should be noted that there is at present no budget reserved for such an action).

Financial Implications

The financial cost associated with the recommendations to this report is dependent on the instruction from the Cabinet Member.

6.a) Take no further action at this stage but keep the matter under review has no direct financial implications.

6.b) Commission further traffic volume and speed surveys and report back to the Cabinet Member and Ward Councillors will be managed within existing revenue budgets for the Transportation service.

6.c) Instruct officers to investigate budgetary options to cover the costs involved in removal of the raised table, subject to consultation as necessary will be managed through the Council's Capital Release process.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

The benefit or impact upon Hillingdon residents, service users and communities

To allow the Cabinet Member to consider the petitioners' request.

Consultation carried out or required

None at this stage.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

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

Legal

Legal Services confirm that there are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

Infrastructure / Asset Management

None at this stage.

Comments from other relevant service areas

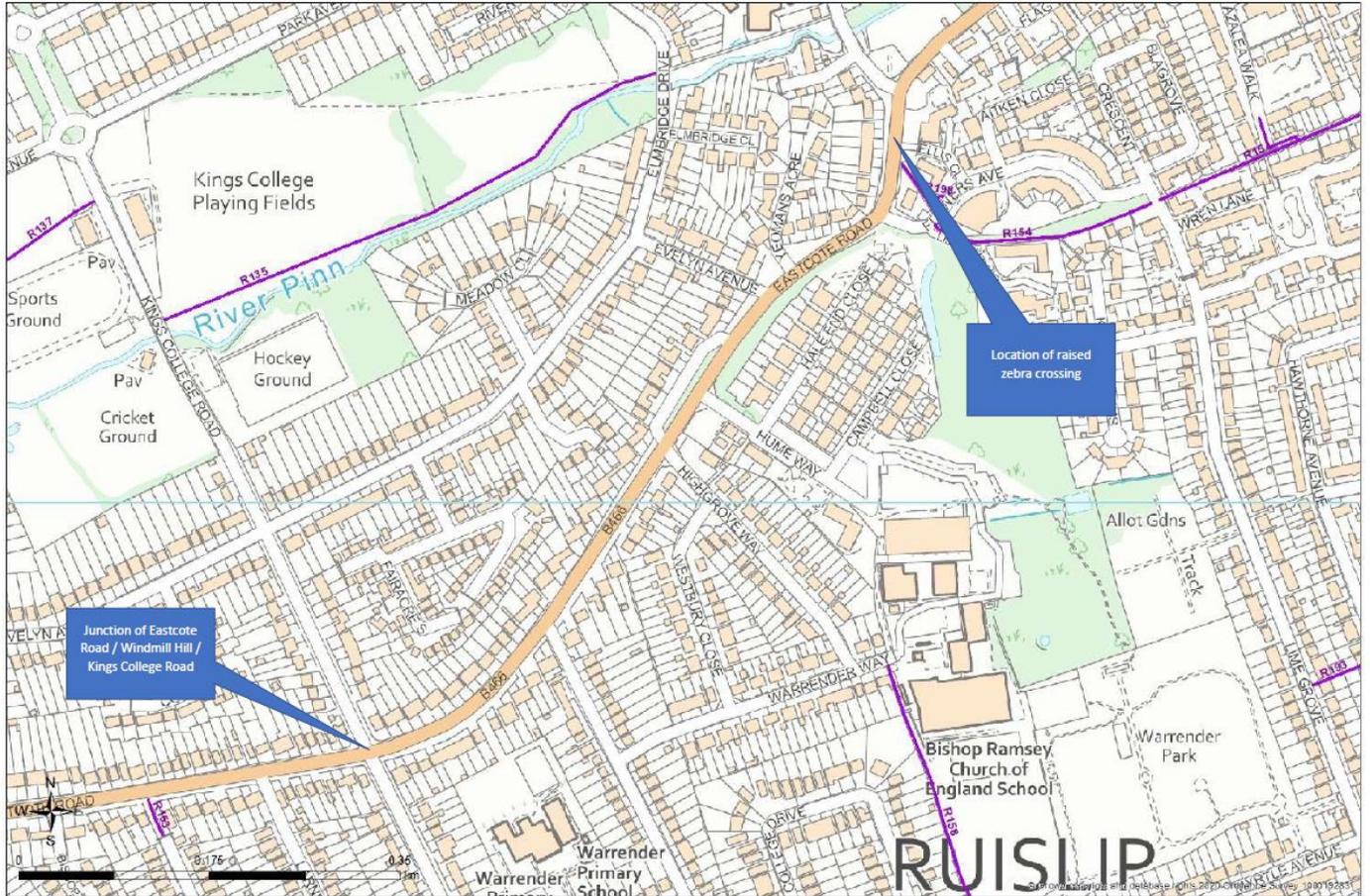
None at this stage.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Petition received.

Appendix A - Location Plan

Eastcote Road



Map Notes

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