

WATFORD ROAD, NORTHWOOD - PETITION REQUESTING A PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

Cabinet Member(s)	Councillor Jonathan Bianco
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and Transport
Officer Contact(s)	Steven Austin – Place Directorate
Papers with report	Appendix A – Location Plan

HEADLINES

Summary	To inform the Cabinet Member that a petition has received from residents requesting a pedestrian crossing on Watford Road, Northwood.
Putting our Residents First Delivering on the Council Strategy 2022-2026	This report supports our ambition for residents / the Council of: Live in good quality, affordable homes in connected communities. This report supports our commitments to residents of: Safe and Strong Communities.
Financial Cost	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 are in the region of £90 per location and can be funded from within existing revenue budgets for the Transportation Service.
Relevant Select Committee	Property, Highways & Transport Select Committee
Relevant Ward(s)	Northwood and Northwood Hills

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and Transport:

- 1) Meets with petitioners and listens to their request for a pedestrian crossing on Watford Road, Northwood;
- 2) Subject to the outcome of the above, asks officers to undertake 24/7 speed and traffic surveys on Watford Road; and,

- 3) Subject to the above, also considers asking officers to commission a specialist company to undertake an assessment of pedestrian crossing demand at the location suggested by petitioners.

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 61 valid signatures has been submitted to the Council by some residents who live in the Northwood area, signed under the following heading:

“Install safe marked pedestrian crossing on Watford Road, Northwood ”

In an accompanying statement the lead petitioner has helpfully provided the following information:

“ Statement

We the undersigned petition Hillingdon Council to install a pedestrian crossing (preferably a light assisted Pelican/Green Man crossing) on Watford Road, Northwood (A4125) to make it safe for walkers, pedestrians, the elderly, those with disabilities and those with young families to safely cross the road in peak and off-peak times. We urge the Council to review speed/traffic calming measures as there is no enforced speed limit, no speed cameras, no speed bumps and no consequences for speedy drivers. This makes it dangerous for walkers trying to cross the road as no safe marked crossing exists. The Council must support walkers and those ditching cars to go green by providing safe pedestrian crossing.

Justification

There is no safe marked pedestrian crossing on Watford Road, Northwood HA6. The only available marked crossing is uphill from Brookdene Drive in the opposite direction from Northwood High Street and Public Transport. This zebra crossing is not suitable for pedestrians with disabilities and is on a 40 mile per hour speed limit road This crossing is insufficient and ineffective. During peak hours it sits on a blind spot for on-coming traffic.

The only other crossing available is adjacent to a busy roundabout on Green Lane. This crossing is inefficient and ineffective for walkers, pedestrians, those with disabilities or prams as it makes it impossible to cross as cars cannot stop as they leave Green Lane to

go on to Watford Road, especially during peak hours and the school run. They are simply accelerating. Walkers are being forced to run across the road. Elderly walkers are seen standing waiting on average for 10 cars to pass to find pause long and safe enough to cross.

Cars are accelerating and speeding due to no speed enforcement measures. Cars accelerate upon joining Watford Road from Green Lane or continue on 40 miles per hour speed limit as the pass NATO HQ. It is impossible for walkers to safely cross the road or find a safe marked crossing at the middle of the road as fast cars quickly approach. There are no safety precautions in place for elderly walkers or those with disabilities.

As night residents can hear speed racing cars and it is nearly impossible for residents walking home at night to safely cross the road due to the sheer speed to which cars are racing on Watford Road.

There have been a number of incidents on Watford Road and most recently a grandmother picking up her grandson from school in the afternoon was run over on Watford Road opposite Brookdene Drive due to no safe passage to cross the road. There is a police and ambulance records on file as evidence.

There are a number of schools and nursing homes within a short radius of Watford Road so it is shocking there are no marked safe crossing options available for walkers.”

- 2) Watford Road (A4125) is a borough main distributor that links Northwood and Northwood Hills in the south to Watford in the north. Watford Road is a mainly residential road although Frithwood Primary School is located nearby on Carew Road. St Helen’s School’s main entrance is a short walk away on Green Lane and the school has a rear access also on Carew Road. A plan of the area is attached as Appendix A. The Cabinet Member will no doubt be pleased to know that Frithwood School has recently started work with the Council’s dedicated School Travel and Road Safety Team towards the development of a School Travel Plan, and if the incident mentioned by petitioners is related to that school, there is a good opportunity to collaborate on road safety improvements across the board.
- 3) As mentioned by the lead petitioner, the southern section of Watford Road is within Hillingdon, just to the north of its junction with Mount View, Watford Road is within the boundary of Hertfordshire County Council.
- 4) As drivers enter Hillingdon from the north, the speed limit changes from 40 mph in Hertfordshire to 30 mph at the Borough boundary where two signs advise motorists of the change of limit. From that point the 30mph speed limit is indicated by the presence of street lighting which in effect is the road sign informing drivers of the speed limit.
- 5) The Cabinet Member may wish to advise the petitioners that the first port of call for anyone with concerns about traffic speeds will always be the Police, which is the only statutory organisation with the powers of enforcement against speeding drivers, as speeding is an enforceable offence which can result in prosecution and in many cases points on the driver’s licence.
- 6) As the point has been raised, the Cabinet Member may also wish to advise petitioners that, contrary to a common prevailing public belief, so-called ‘speed cameras’ (more formally

'safety cameras') are not owned, maintained or operated by Councils within London, but instead are fully the responsibility of the Police, Transport for London, His Majesty's Courts and 'London Councils', the body responsible for representing all the interests of London's boroughs. The siting of such equipment is a matter for the partnership of these bodies and is generally selected in cases where there is a very high prior record of road traffic collisions involving serious injury. None of the revenue streams involved come to the Council.

- 7) The lead petitioner has mentioned an incident on Watford Road that involved an incident where a pedestrian was injured. As this appears to have happened recently, it would be helpful if the petitioners could provide some further information so the Council can liaise with colleagues in the Metropolitan Police Service to understand the circumstances behind this. It is appreciated that incidents involving the Police may not tell the whole story, but at the same time the views of from the Police can be a very important part of the dialogue to help the Council prioritise interventions across the Borough when there are always competing requests. The Police for their part always ask for as much detail as possible to enable them to interrogate their own internal systems, the latter understandably not directly available for the Council to interrogate in detail.
- 8) Whilst some forms of traffic calming have been introduced widely, in some instances, especially on main distributor roads, petitioners may wish to consider the fact that such features can sometimes have the unintended effect of increasing noise from passing traffic, notably skip lorries and similar commercial vehicles which may carry loose loads. Horizontal traffic calming such as chicanes and similar measures are seldom suitable on such busy roads as they can be less effective at actually reducing the speeds of vans and lorries in particular. The Cabinet Member may wish to advise the petitioners to consider these factors in their own deliberations.
- 9) Petitioners have suggested "*a safe marked pedestrian crossing*" they would like to see at this location to improve pedestrian safety when crossing Watford Road. There are many types of crossing that 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 the last but not least the traffic volume and speed.
- 10) Petitioners have mentioned a possible Zebra Crossing which as the Cabinet Member will be aware are covered by a Statutory Instrument laid out in Parliament and has nationally prescribed design standards with it. These include statistical formulae which require the consideration of the data previously described. It should be noted that a Zebra Crossing involves the introduction of two or more flashing Belisha Beacons which experience has shown can be perceived as a nuisance to those living nearby. In addition, the design of any new formal crossing of this kind must take account of any existing access onto the highway (e.g. a driveway) to avoid safety conflicts between pedestrians and drivers manoeuvring nearby. Notwithstanding the legal process involved and the requirements set out above, the introduction of a Zebra Crossing can be a complex and lengthy process.
- 11) There are of course alternative pedestrian crossings that could be considered which usually compromise dropped kerbs, tactile paving a traffic island refuge and illuminated beacon are in some ways easier to implement. Although many of the considerations highlighted previously apply to this type of arrangement, this is perhaps a more typical provision for a site of this kind, catering for the likely levels of pedestrians using the

crossing. Forward visibility in both directions for any options mentioned appears to be more than adequate due to the alignment of Watford Road.

12) In conclusion, as a result of the petition raised by residents the Cabinet Member may be minded to instruct officers to commission 24/7 Automatic Traffic Counts on Watford Road and possible pedestrian counts. The data captured and the testimony of petitioners will help inform the investigations into the possibility of improved crossing facilities close to the Baptist Church on Rickmansworth Road, Harefield.

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 £85 per location, which will be managed within existing revenue budgets for the Transportation Service. The cost of commissioning pedestrian counts is estimated to be in the region of £600, subject to obtaining quotes from appropriate specialist companies. If works are subsequently required, suitable funding will need to be identified.

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.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Petition received.