

VINE LANE, UXBRIDGE - PETITION ASKING THE COUNCIL FOR TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES AND A PEDESTRIAN CROSSING NEAR ACS HILLINGDON INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

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

HEADLINES

Summary	To inform the Cabinet Member that a petition has been received asking for improved traffic calming measures on Vine Lane close to ACS International School and a pedestrian crossing close to St Andrews Road, Uxbridge
Putting our Residents First	<p>This report supports our ambition for residents / the Council of: Live in good quality, affordable homes in connected communities.</p> <p>This report supports our commitments to residents of: Safe and Strong Communities.</p>
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 is in the region of £85 per location and can be funded from within existing revenue budgets for the Transportation Service.
Relevant Select Committee	Property, Highways and Transport Select Committee
Relevant Ward(s)	Hillingdon West

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and Transport:

- 1. meets with petitioners and listens to their request for the Council to implement improved traffic calming measures near ACS International School, Vine Lane, Uxbridge**
- 2. notes the recent additional traffic calming measures delivered by the Council on Vine Lane between Blossom Way and Sylvana Close;**

3. notes the previous investigations undertaken by a specialist transport planning consultant employed by the developer of St Andrew's Park and Council Officers reviews in relation to a possible zebra crossing on Vine Lane;
4. encourages ACS International School to work with the Council's Road Safety and School Travel Team;
5. Further to (4), asks his ward member colleagues to intercede and assist and
6. subject to the outcome of the above, decides if officers should commission additional independent 24/7 speed and traffic surveys close to the school as part of the review of the recently installed traffic calming measures on Vine Lane.

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 36 signatures signed by residents has been submitted to the Council under the following heading:

"To improve the safety of pedestrians moving between St Andrew's estate and Vine Lane, including children, parents and staff members walking to and from schools in the area, we request that the Council create:

Improved traffic calming measures near ACS Hillingdon International School and a pedestrian crossing to facilitate safe crossing for pedestrians moving from St Andrew's Road to the opposite side of Vine Lane near the school."

In an additional statement submitted with the petition, the lead petitioner has helpfully provided the following information:

"Traffic calming measures to be put in place in the stretch of Vine Lane near ACS Hillingdon International School, running just to the south of ST Andrew's Road to the roundabout connecting Vine Lane with Sylvania Close.

Also, a pedestrian crossing to facilitate safe crossing for pedestrians moving from St Andrew's Road to the opposite side of Vine Lane near the school."

2. Vine Lane is a mainly residential road and connects Hillingdon Hill in the south to Honey Hill and eventually on to Hercies Road in the north. ACS Hillingdon International School's main entrance is located on Vine Lane. The road has a rural feel and can be seen on a Jean Rocque map of the County of Middlesex dated 1757 making this an ancient thoroughfare following much the same route now as it did then. A location plan is attached as Appendix A.
3. Information taken from the ACS International School's website suggests that the school located to Hillingdon in 1978 and historically has 'bussed' its students to the school. The school continues to offer a 'door-to-door' and 'shuttle' bus service to and from the school.
4. Vine Lane is subject to a 20mph zone which starts close to its junction with Blossom Way and extends to a point approximately 50 metres north of the junction with Cedars Drive. From Cedars Drive there are a range of traffic calming features including, raised tables, carriageway narrowing, priority workings, a width restriction, a series of chicanes, signs and road markings associated with the 20mph zone.
5. There is an existing width restriction on Vine Lane just to the south of Court Drive which prevents goods-vehicle through-traffic but at the same time allows delivery vehicles to service the local community and buses to provide services to the school.
6. In context with the understandable concern about speeding in the vicinity of the school, the Cabinet Member may wish to point out that the principal body involved in enforcing speed limits remains, as it always has been, the Metropolitan Police. The Council has no comparable powers of enforcement and unless and until there are any changes in Primary (National government) legislation, this situation is unlikely to change. Clearly the Council is not in a position to dictate resourcing priorities to the Police, who have many competing demands, but the simple fact remains that the Police have a fundamental role in governing traffic speeds through enforcement.
7. Although a 'speed camera' has not formed part of the specific requests from petitioners, the Cabinet Member may also wish to point out that contrary to a fairly common public belief, the Council neither owns nor operates any safety cameras; those which have been variously deployed on Borough roads are funded, installed, owned, operated and maintained by a consortium led by Transport for London (TfL) in conjunction with the Metropolitan Police, His Majesty's Courts and London Councils (the body that represents the interests of the 32 London Boroughs and the City of London). Criteria used by TfL when considering the possibility of a new safety camera rely upon the pre-existence of a serious road traffic collision ('RTC') history.
8. Officers have interrogated the Police RTC Database, which contains reports by police officers who have attended the scene of an RTC, and they indicate that the most recent RTC near the school was a single 'light' incident nine years ago. It is appreciated that Police data of this kind does not necessarily tell the whole story, but it is nevertheless a useful tool for those tasked with setting road safety priorities across the Borough's extensive road network. Schools are in a good position to lobby for special attention but this needs to be undertaken in a collaborative manner, as highlighted below.
9. Petitioners have requested a pedestrian crossing close to the school and this has been investigated on several occasions by Council officers and as part of the development of

the formal RAF Uxbridge site. As part of an independent Road Safety Audit commissioned by the developer of the site, the possibility of a zebra crossing was investigated at the location indicated in the petition. Regrettably, due to the narrow carriageway width and the lack of footway on Vine Lane, there is insufficient space to install the required beacons and other signage required in law to provide a zebra crossing. However, the provision of an uncontrolled crossing point at the end of the new footway created immediately south of the junction with St Andrew's Road was recommended and subsequently installed.

10. Following a petition considered by the previous Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation, requesting "*further traffic calming measures in Vine Lane and the installation of a zebra crossing in Vine Lane adjacent to the junction of St Andrew's Road*", independent speed and traffic surveys at locations agreed by petitioners and ward councillors were commissioned.
11. As a direct result of the data captured, an additional three sets of speed cushions were recently installed in the section of Vine Lane between Blossom Way and Sylvana Close. As these measures have only recently been implemented, the effectiveness of these have yet to be assessed.
12. The Cabinet Member will also be aware that a new "School Keep Clear" road marking was also implemented at the front of the school, to what could be described as its somewhat concealed entrance, to warn drivers of its presence.
13. In addition, new 20mph speed limit signs have been installed and the 20mph roundels on the carriageway have been repainted. In context, it would be disingenuous to suggest that the Council has been deficient in terms of road safety measures near the school.
14. However, as the petition is requesting further traffic calming measures, and as result of testimonies made by petitioners, the Cabinet Member may be minded to instruct officers to commission independent 24/7 speed and traffic surveys close to the school as part of the review of the recently installed speed cushions between Blossom Way and Sylvana Close.
15. As the Cabinet Member will be aware, independent traffic surveys are a reliable and well-established means to help understand the real situation on the ground. The surveys generally use specialist equipment, including pneumatic tubes which are mounted temporarily on the road surface, fitted transversely across the whole width of the carriageway. These devices are installed for a period of at least a week to ten days and monitor traffic movements on a '24/7' basis. The discreet equipment is sufficiently sophisticated that, not only can it record traffic speeds at any given time, but it also records the size and type of vehicle, from motorcycles to large multi-axled lorries.
16. The Cabinet Member may wish to point out to petitioners and other residents of Vine Lane that recent experience has shown that some residents become unhappy about the noise and disturbance they associate with new traffic calming; whilst the existing restrictions in the road do help govern the through-put of larger vehicles, the fact remains that vehicle-induced noise from raised speed tables and cushions is something that residents may wish to consider before they are introduced. Should raised traffic calming features form part of any future recommendation, formal public consultation by notice and letter would be expected.

17. In addition to possible engineering measures, the Cabinet Member will know that the Council's Road Safety and School Travel Team actively works with several schools across Hillingdon to develop their school travel plans. This dialogue can not only result in the development of physical measures but can also help the school engage with children, parents and carers to consider how they travel to and from school and to start to embed positive change to more sustainable modes of transport.

18. The Council's Road Safety and School Travel Team offers free education, training and publicity to all schools in Hillingdon to improve safety and sustainability through travel plans, campaigns, projects and initiatives. Examples of these include:

- Support for 'Walk to School week/ month'
- 'Bikeability' training
- Funding for scooter and cycle storage facilities,
- Support for 'Junior and Youth Travel Ambassadors',
- Delivering active and safe travel assemblies and classroom talks
- Practical pedestrian training
- 'Moving On' to secondary school presentations
- 'Theatre in Education' productions

19. It should be noted that whilst the school have requested traffic calming measures to improve the "*safety of pedestrians moving between St Andrew's Estate and Vine Lane*" the school have not taken up the offer from the STARS Team for free pedestrian training, 'Bikeability' training or other wider initiatives, although there have been overtures from the team to the school to try to encourage them to engage with the broader work of the team and to be able to reap the many benefits to the school and the school community that this work can offer.

20. As the school community is clearly concerned at road safety around the school by submitting this petition, the Cabinet Member may be minded to encourage the school to now actively engage with the Council's School Travel and Road Safety Team so some of the initiatives listed above could be adopted by the school with the support of Council officers. In support of this, the Cabinet Member may wish to entreat his Ward Councillor colleagues to assist in terms of encouraging this dialogue as it can benefit the wider local community as well as the school itself.

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 is expected to be managed through existing revenue budgets. If works are subsequently required, funding would need to be identified from a suitable source.

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.

TITLE OF ANY APPENDICES

Appendix A - Location plan