

# LADYGATE LANE, RUISLIP - PETITION REQUESTING A ZEBRA CROSSING

<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Jonathan Bianco
<b>Cabinet Portfolio</b>	Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and Transport
<b>Officer Contact</b>	Steven Austin – Place Directorate
<b>Papers with report</b>	Appendix A

## HEADLINES

<b>Summary</b>	To inform the Cabinet Member that a petition has been submitted by parents and guardians of pupils who attend Whiteheath School, asking for a Zebra Crossing on Ladygate Lane, Ruislip close to Marlborough Avenue.
<b>Putting our Residents First</b>	This report supports the Council objective of <i>Our People</i> . The request can be considered as part of the Council's annual programme of road safety initiatives and on-street parking controls.
<b>Financial Cost</b>	There are no financial implications associated with the recommendations to this report.
<b>Relevant Select Committee</b>	Corporate Resources and Infrastructure Select Committee.
<b>Relevant Ward</b>	Ruislip.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and Transport:

- 1) Meets with petitioners and listens to their request for a Zebra Crossing on Ladygate Lane close to Marlborough Avenue;
- 2) Notes the excellent work being undertaken by the Council's dedicated 'School Travel and Road Safety Team' (STARS) with the two Whiteheath schools and to promote this highly beneficial partnership; and
- 3) Subject to the outcome of the above, asks officers to undertake further detailed investigations on a possible Zebra Crossing or other appropriate measures on Ladygate 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 33 valid signatures has been submitted to the Council by local residents and parents whose children attend Whiteheath School, requesting a Zebra crossing on Ladygate Lane close to Marlborough Avenue.
2. The petition has been signed under the following heading:

*“We the undersigned petition Hillingdon Council to install a zebra crossing in the section of road between Marlborough Avenue and Ladygate Lane, HA4 7PR, as an essential pedestrian safety measure for pupils and parents walking to and from Whiteheath Junior school.”*

In an accompanying statement the lead petitioner helpfully points out the desired outcome from the petition:

*“Being one of the main routes to school, Ladygate Lane is an extremely busy road with a high concentration of young children. Few cars ever stop for the children crossing as the drivers are mostly parents with tunnel vision who only have one aim, and that is to get their children to school on time or people rushing to get to work on time. What makes it a particularly dangerous road is that most drivers do not adhere to the 20-mph speed limit, which changes from a 30-mph zone. The risk of injury increases exponentially with impact speed. A crash at 30-mph has twice as much energy and is as destructive as a crash at 20-mph. At the point where most of the school children cross, the road is a 30-mph zone, exactly where we are proposing to have a pedestrian crossing. Over the years I have witnessed countless near misses and my son and I have been victims to a couple ourselves. Driving around the borough I have noticed that Whiteheath Junior is one of the few schools, if not the only school, which does not have a pedestrian crossing nearby to enable children to get to school on time, and above all, safely. Why wait until a serious incident occurs.”*

In a further accompanying statement, the lead petitioner provided the following information:

*Ruislip has become a very densely populated area and looking at the number of cars on the road compared to when I first moved to Ruislip in 2000, traffic and congestion has increased tenfold, especially during the school run. Most parents I speak to choose to take their children to school by car as they feel it is too dangerous to walk or cycle to school and having been the victim of 2 near misses myself, I cannot say I blame them.*

*Other reasons why having a pedestrian crossing in front of every school is imperative:*

*A generation ago, 70% of primary school children walked to school but this has dropped to just over half (51%)*

*The government has a target in its Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) to have 55% of primary school children walking to school by 2025.*

*A quarter of all car journeys in the UK are under ONE mile.*

*For 5-10- year-olds the average trip length to school is 1.5 miles.*

*During morning peak traffic times, 1 in 4 cars on the road are taking children to school.*

*The UK school run alone is responsible for generating half a million tons of CO2 per year – more than some small countries.*

*A study of air pollution in London found children growing up nearest to busy roads had reduced lung volume, a loss of approximately five percent in lung capacity – compared to in less polluted areas. And this isn't just a London problem \_ that goes for anywhere with bust traffic.*

*Every month 1,200 children are injured in traffic related collisions that happened within 500m of a school.*

*Some existing ideas/initiatives/schemes on how to get the ball rolling.*

*Does our Council have a walking to school target or strategy? Again, if a pedestrian crossing encourages more parents and children out of their cars and walk and*

3. Ladygate Lane is a mainly residential road but is used as a convenient route between Breakspear Road in the west to Bury Street in the east. As such, it is clear that a certain proportion of through traffic in Ladygate Lane at peak periods will be a combination of school-related traffic alongside more general commuter use. Roughly halfway along Ladygate Lane is a doctors' surgery (the Ladygate Lane Clinic).
4. Access to Whiteheath Infant and Nursery School and Ladygate Bowls and Social Club are both located on Ladygate Lane. Traffic coming into Ladygate Lane generally arrives and departs via its junctions with Bury Street at one end, Breakspear Road at the other, and Marlborough Avenue halfway along the length of the road. Some side roads, such as Thames Drive and Westwood Close, are not through roads although it is known that residents in those roads are often unhappy at the amount of parking they associate with the schools. Some school-related parking also takes place in Grasmere Avenue and Fairfield Avenue, occasionally obstructing residents' kerbs. There is also some evidence that a moderate amount of parking associated with Bishop Winnington Ingram takes place here, as that school is located across the other side of the River Pinn and there is a convenient footbridge linking Grasmere Avenue and Westcote Rise.
5. Contrary to the petitioners' assertion that the schools here do not benefit from a Zebra Crossing, there is an existing raised zebra crossing outside the entrance to the Infants school on Ladygate Lane which is approximately 250 metres from where petitioners have indicated they would like to see a further formal crossing point. It is acknowledged that the petitioners have focused their interest upon the needs as they see them of the Junior school, but the fact remains that there is a Zebra Crossing in Ladygate Lane which facilitates safer pedestrian crossing movements and most likely provides a route of benefit to some of the junior school community.

6. Whiteheath Junior School benefits from an entirely separate dedicated entrance located in Whiteheath Avenue, an adjacent road which also links back around to Laygate Lane in a loop, via Grasmere Avenue, Fairfield Avenue and Glenfield Crescent. The school benefits from a camera-enforced School Keep Clear zone in the heart of Whiteheath Avenue. As a result of working with the Council's School Travel and Road Safety Team, Whiteheath Junior School made plans to introduce an informal 'one-way' system via these side roads.
7. In practice, therefore, there are two immediately adjacent but separate schools which each generate their own levels of traffic and footfall associated with the morning drop-off and afternoon pick-ups, but as noted there has been good work by the schools in collaboration with the Council's school road safety team.
8. Most of the properties in Laygate Lane appear to benefit from dropped kerbs that provide access to off-street parking provision. A location plan is attached as Appendix A.
9. Analysis of the most recently available police recorded collision data for Chiltern View Road for the last three years indicate that there has been one recorded incident from 13 August 2020 which describes the severity as 'slight'.
10. Ladygate Lane already benefits from some traffic calming measures and immediately outside of the school there is an existing 20mph zone. The Cabinet Member may wish to inform petitioners that there are plans to extend this zone which will of course be subject to the required consultation. Should there be support for such a proposal, a competition could be run with the school where pupils will be invited to submit designs with a road safety message, to be included in the new 20mph zone signs.
11. Ladygate Lane is also subject to a 7.5 tonne maximum gross weight limit enforced by CCTV. The road also forms part of the 331 bus route.
12. Furthermore, the Cabinet Member will be aware that as part of a borough-wide initiative, the Council rolled out camera-enforcement of the school 'keep clear' zig zag markings of the kind seen near the school entrances.
13. As a point of interest, recently in response to a request from the school, the Council introduced a white bar marking in front of the field entrance in Ladygate Lane to deter inconsiderate parking in front of the gates.
14. Perhaps it may be helpful to provide a quick overview for the most used types of crossings which are shown in the list below, with key points for each type. It should be carefully noted that all of these crossings require adequate space, free of encumbrances such as vehicle crossovers, with sufficient road and footway width and clear sightlines. It is by no means certain at this juncture that any of them could be easily accommodated in Ladygate Lane, but clearly the first step is to establish the need, and then investigate what may be feasible:

#### **PEDESTRIAN REFUGE ISLANDS:**

- These are a relatively inexpensive method of improving crossing facilities for pedestrians, and of a type known as 'informal crossings' as there are no controls.
- When provided close to schools then the refuge island needs to be of sufficient width to accommodate large numbers of children and parents, some of which may have prams or pushchairs.

- Given the above, the width of the carriageway is also of critical importance, and it is important that the siting of such an island does not interfere with the ability of residents of nearby properties to continue to be able to safely enter or exit from their driveways where such facilities exist.
- The introduction of a refuge island inevitably reduces any adjacent kerb-side parking capacity.

#### **RAISED SPEED TABLES:**

- In many cases where a refuge island is not practicable, typically either because the road is too narrow or there is insufficient room that is free of driveways, trees and street-furniture, then it is possible to contemplate a raised platform known as a 'speed table' which is designed to slow traffic and at the same time can provide a safer informal crossing point.
- As the Cabinet Member will be aware, there are already a series of such measures along the length of Ladygate Lane.
- The disadvantage of such measures is that there is frequently an unwelcome but almost inevitable unintended consequence of an increase in vehicle-generated noise, especially caused by passing heavy goods vehicles (notwithstanding the fact that, as already noted, Ladygate Lane benefits from a 7.5T HGV weight limit). For this reason, such a measure might not be welcomed by residents living in close proximity.
- Before a local authority can consider installing such a measure, a public consultation would be required.

#### **ZEBRA CROSSINGS:**

- Zebra crossings give priority to pedestrians and vehicles should stop safely to allow pedestrians to cross.
- Pedestrians have less waiting time to cross the road compared to other crossing options.
- Zebra crossings are more conspicuous than informal crossing points and provide a greater feeling of safety.
- Whilst their purpose and function is clear in the Highway Code, and they are enshrined within national legislation, Zebra crossings are not always respected by some drivers who may fail to stop.
- Significantly more costly and take longer to implement as there is a longer process for the Council to follow. They rely upon the installation of electrical equipment and associate power supplies.
- Can increase local congestion where pedestrian volumes are high, particularly when located close to a school.

- Can have a negative impact on adjacent residents.
- Before a local authority can consider installing such a measure, a public consultation would be required.

#### **TRAFFIC SIGNAL CONTROLLED CROSSINGS (PUFFIN CROSSINGS):**

- These rely upon a system of traffic signal control and are more common at busier junctions on main roads, and in cases where traffic speeds are much higher as a rule.
- All traffic signals in Greater London are owned, operated and maintained by Transport for London (TfL) rather than the Council, and as a result TfL will only consider such an installation if it meets their own criteria.
- Signal controlled installations are inevitably the most expensive form of pedestrian controls.
- Before a local authority can consider installing such a measure, a public consultation would be required.

#### **20MPH ZONE:**

- Although a 20mph Zone is not in itself a crossing point, there is an argument to be made that a worthwhile reduction in speed near to a school can provide obvious road safety benefits in terms of child pedestrian safety. The challenge however is frequently to develop a scheme which is not solely reliant upon the enforcement of the police and the goodwill of the drivers using the road.
- Speed tables may often be considered as part of a 20mph Zone, but the same problems already noted above need to be borne in mind.
- In the context of Ladygate Lane, as the Cabinet Member will be aware, the present extent of the existing 20mph zone does not presently include the crossing point suggested by the petitioners.

15. As can be seen, if the Cabinet Member is minded to ask officers to investigate the possibility of any form of crossing facility then the above and other technical factors must be considered. It is also highly likely that in these predominantly residential roads, the introduction of measures of the kind described above may be unpopular with some of the residents, who would be directly impacted by their introduction. The views of ward councillors may be especially important in this regard.

16. 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.

17. In addition, the School Travel and Road Safety 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

18. The Cabinet Member will be pleased to hear of the positive engagement the Council's STARS Team already has with the two schools. Whiteheath Infant School achieved 'Bronze' TfL accreditation this year and the Junior School retained their 'Gold' accreditation.

19. The most recent hands up surveys (2023/24) shows that 56% of nursery and infant school pupils actively travel to school and 45% of junior school pupils. This translates to 281 pupils (plus family members/guardians) across both schools travelling actively to school. Any possible measures to increase these numbers will be welcomed by both the school and wider community.

20. Additionally, the Council has recently published a new Cycling Strategy for 2024-2034 and work is progressing on a new walking strategy which will support the excellent collaborative working between the school and STARS team.

21. As a result of this petition, the testimonials from the school community and residents, it is suggested, therefore, that these requests should be further investigated.

### **Financial Implications**

Subject to the outcome of discussions with petitioners, the Cabinet Member may request officers to explore whether measures could be recommended to improve crossing facilities on Ladygate Lane. However, there would be no financial implications associated with such investigations.

## **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 confirms that there are no specific legal implications arising from this report. Whenever necessary legal advice is given in relation to specific issues as they arise to ensure that the Council always meets its legal obligations.

### **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