

A4020 / THE GREENWAY – PETITION REQUESTING IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AT THE JUNCTION

Cabinet Member	Councillor Keith Burrows
Cabinet Portfolio	Planning, Transportation and Recycling
Report Author	Bob Castelijm, Planning, Environment and Community Services
Papers with report	Appendix A

HEADLINE INFORMATION

Purpose of report	To inform the Cabinet Member that a petition has been submitted to the Council regarding pedestrian safety at the junction of The Greenway and A4020, Hillingdon Road, Uxbridge.
Contribution to our plans and strategies	The petition will be considered in accordance with the Council's strategy for improving safety in general and school environments in particular.
Financial Cost	There are no direct costs associated with this report. However, initial costs will be associated with the design of improved crossing facilities and modifications to the method of signal control once the course of action has been determined. These, together with any subsequent scheme implementation costs, would have to be met from the Council's Local Implementation Plan allocation from Transport for London.
Relevant Policy Overview Committee	Residents' and Environmental Services
Ward(s) affected	Brunel and Uxbridge North

RECOMMENDATION

That the Cabinet Member:

- 1. Meets and discusses with petitioners their concerns with the existing signalised junction of the A4020 Hillingdon Road and The Greenway;**
- 2. Subject to the above, asks officers to explore options and funding opportunities;**
- 3. Instructs officers to undertake appropriate traffic and pedestrian surveys to inform these further investigations;**
- 4. Asks officers to report back to him on possible solutions;**

PART 1 – MEMBERS, PUBLIC AND PRESS

5. In the interim, instructs officers to liaise with the Metropolitan Police, Transport for London and the Police Safer Neighbourhoods Teams; and
6. Instructs officers in the Council's Road Safety Education, Training & Publicity team to liaise with Uxbridge High School on appropriate road safety training initiatives.

INFORMATION

Reasons for recommendation

The petitioners have raised concerns about the safety of the existing arrangements. Hearing the petition will allow the Cabinet Member to understand the detail of petitioners' concerns and direct further actions.

Alternative options considered

None at this stage as the petitioners have asked to state their case to the Cabinet Member, and the petition hearing will provide them with an opportunity for this.

Comments of Policy Overview Committee(s)

None at this stage.

Supporting Information

1. A petition with 576 signatures has been received from the Head Teacher of Uxbridge High School, expressing concerns about the safety of pedestrians at the junction of The Greenway and Hillingdon Road, Uxbridge. The petition appears to have been signed by a large proportion of the school community, including many of the pupils, under the following heading:

"Staff and students at Uxbridge High School have made a number of requests to the Local Authority to review safety at the junction of the Hillingdon Road (A4020) and The Greenway. Prior to and during this period there have been a number of serious traffic accidents, some involving pedestrians. The school community requests that the Local Authority conduct an urgent review of safety at the junction and to implement improvements, particularly in respect of pedestrian safety."

2. Hillingdon Road is the section of the A4020 (often known colloquially as the Uxbridge Road) which runs principally east-west through the centre of the Borough, and which carries large traffic volumes throughout the day. The speed limit has been 40mph over the relevant length of the A4020 since 8 April 1981 (Traffic Management Order No. 117). The Greenway is connected with Hillingdon Road by a signal controlled junction. Details are shown on the location plan attached as Appendix A.

3. Uxbridge High School is located in The Greenway and serves a wide catchment area, details of which are to be drawn up as part of its School Travel Plan scheduled to be re-written early in 2011. The School may be complimented on its commitment to the School Travel Plan process as it has already achieved 17% reduction in car dependency since its introduction in 2005. It is well placed to achieve the 25-30% reduction target set for 2013/14 in the Draft Local Implementation Plan.

4. The junction of The Greenway and Hillingdon Road features a signalled two-part pedestrian crossing on its east arm which is used by numerous pupils of Uxbridge High School.
5. The junction was the subject of a scheme which included the introduction of a westbound bus lane in 2006. At that time, the opportunity was used to revise the junction layout so that the right turning movement towards The Greenway was made safer. The scheme involved modifications to the footway on the south east corner of the junction.
6. The accident records collated before and after introduction of the 2006 scheme show that junction safety improved significantly as a result of the scheme. 41 injury accidents were recorded during the 36 months period to 31 December 2005 whilst the number during the 36 months to 31 August 2010 had fallen to 13, demonstrating that the scheme has reduced the number of accidents to one third of its original level.
7. The most recent records show that a 14-year old pedestrian was injured during the last three-year period.
8. Without waiting for any further design analysis, a series of 'soft measures' involving the travel plan team, road safety team and safer neighbourhood team either in support or indeed instead of design adjustments could help avoid any recurrence of such injury accidents, especially if the school community would champion the issues. The school community could, for example, nominate someone to be present during the morning and afternoon school peak times. Officers in the Council's Road Safety Team consider that behaviour and attitude can be improved by a combination of dedicated road safety education projects, new School Travel Plan measures and phasing school finishing times to manage the pedestrian flow, and the Cabinet Member may wish to commend this approach to the school as one element of the Council's response to the petition.
9. The Cabinet Member will be aware that, in common with every set of traffic signals in Greater London, the installation at the junction of Hillingdon Road and The Greenway is primarily the responsibility of Transport for London (TfL). Consequently, whilst the principles and layout of the junction may be shaped by the Council, any changes to the layout and operation of the junction must be agreed with TfL.
10. In advance of the Petition Hearing, officers have already engaged in outline discussions with their counterparts at TfL concerning this junction, and have also undertaken their own site investigations in order to provide advice for the Cabinet Member and for the petitioners' consideration:
 - Initial investigations suggest that the footway adjacent to the westbound bus lane is narrower than ideal, and that this can lead to overcrowding of the footway at peak times, with the potential for overspill into the carriageway;
 - The width of the existing pedestrian crossings is considered less than adequate for the high numbers of pupils who may be crossing at peak morning and afternoon periods;
 - The number of vehicles travelling through the junction appears considerably less than during the AM and PM peak periods, potentially offering scope to increase green time for pedestrians crossing at PM school times.

11. TfL have indicated that there may be scope to accommodate these issues through careful redesign of the junction layout and signal control equipment, although it will also be necessary to ensure that these changes do not at the same time adversely affect traffic queues at peak periods. Although it is a Borough road, the A4020 forms part of TfL's Strategic Route Network (SRN) and, as such, TfL also has a say in the overall operation and efficiency of the road.

12. Design solutions will have to take into account that the junction is to become a principal access point for the RAF Uxbridge development site, currently at planning application stage.

13. It is recommended that the Cabinet Member meets with the petitioners in order to understand the detail of their concerns and hear any suggestions they may have. Subject to the outcome of this discussion, the Cabinet Member may ask officers to undertake further studies, engage with the school as suggested above through the Road Safety Education process and to investigate funding opportunities such as the Local Implementation Plan (LIP), which can be used to cover the costs of the alterations that may be determined through these further studies.

14. Whilst any studies may be undertaken, the Cabinet Member will be aware that the Council often calls upon the guidance and assistance of the Metropolitan Police Traffic Division, the local Safer Neighbourhoods Teams and other emergency services. Matters of the nature of those being considered at this Petition Hearing are discussed both at regular Traffic Liaison Meetings and at site meetings as appropriate.

15. It is therefore recommended that the information provided by the petitioners is shared with these bodies and the opportunity is taken not only to review any proposals that stem from the studies, but also in the interim to consider any enforcement activities, the need for which may become apparent dependent upon the evidence provided by the petitioners.

Financial Implications

There are none directly associated with hearing the petition. If the Cabinet Member subsequently asks officers to engage specialist consultants to assist with the detailed studies necessary for detailed design of the junction, then costs may become necessary, but these could be identified from within the TfL LIP allocation for 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 as appropriate.

EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES

What will be the effect of the recommendation?

To allow the Cabinet Member to consider the petitioners' requests and discuss the possible options that may be available to address these concerns.

Consultation Carried Out or Required

Ward Members are aware of the petition. When the outcome of further studies is known, the need for any further consultations can be determined and agreed with the Cabinet Member.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

The report has no direct impact on the Council's property holdings. The Interim Corporate Landlord has no comments.

Legal

There are no special legal implications for the proposal, which amounts to an informal consultation. 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. Fairness and natural justice requires that there must be no predetermination of a decision in advance of any wider non-statutory consultation.

Should there be a decision that further measures are to be considered then the relevant statutory provisions will have to be identified and considered.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.