

## **RYEFIELD AVENUE, HILLINGDON, - PETITION RERQUESTING THE REMOVAL OF GRANITE BLOCK SAFETY HAZARDS**

<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Keith Burrows
<b>Cabinet Portfolio</b>	Planning, Transportation and Recycling
<b>Officer Contact</b>	Caroline Haywood, Planning, Environment, Education and Community Services
<b>Papers with report</b>	Appendix A

### **HEADLINE INFORMATION**

<b>Purpose of report</b>	To inform the Cabinet Member that a petition has been received from residents of various roads within the estate requesting the removal of granite block safety hazard.
<b>Contribution to our plans and strategies</b>	The request can be considered as part of the Council's annual programme of road safety initiatives.
<b>Financial Cost</b>	There are none associated with this report.
<b>Relevant Policy Overview Committee</b>	Residents' and Environmental Services
<b>Ward(s) affected</b>	Hillingdon East

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Cabinet Member:**

- 1. Considers the petitioners' request and discusses with them in detail their concerns in regards the traffic calming measures;**
- 2. Notes the levels of support for the proposals at the time of the original public consultation prior to the scheme being built, and of the level of support for the more recent measures in Windsor Avenue near Oak Farm School;**
- 3. Notes the reduction of accident levels and traffic speeds since the scheme was introduced;**
- 4. Subject to the concerns raised by petitioners, asks officers to conduct further review of the traffic calming measures under the Road Safety Programme; and**
- 5. Asks officers to thoroughly review the construction and condition of the over-runnable areas in Ryefield Avenue and to report back to the Cabinet Member and Ward Councillors**

## **INFORMATION**

### **Reasons for recommendation**

To allow the Cabinet Member to discuss in detail matter's raised above with petitioners.

### **Alternative options considered / risk management**

These can be identified from the proposed detailed discussions with the petitioners.

### **Comments of Policy Overview Committee(s)**

None at this stage.

### **Supporting Information**

1. The Council has received a petition containing 30 signatures from three residents of Ryefield Avenue and from residents of 13 other roads within the estate. The petition was also signed by the Chair of Oak Farm Residents Association.
2. The petitioners state that they '*request the complete removal of the granite block safety hazards from the full length of Ryefield Avenue.*'
3. Ryefield Avenue is within Hillingdon East Ward and is mainly residential with a small parade of shops and school at one end of the road. The carriageway in Ryefield Avenue is 7 metres wide and the footway is 1.7 metres wide, with vehicles allowed to park on the footway with four wheels up. Ryefield Avenue connects the majority of roads within the estate with Long Lane; a plan of the area is shown on Appendix A.
4. In July 2007, a 20 mph scheme was fully installed following detailed consultation with residents and Ward Councillors, and analysis of a prevailing accident problem at some of the junctions. The scheme included a new roundabout at the junction of Windsor Avenue and Ryefield Avenue, kerb build out at the junction of Berkeley Road with Ryefield Avenue, a new pedestrian refuge close to Leybourne Road, various road markings and granite set over-runnable areas along the length of Ryefield Avenue.
5. The design of the scheme took account of the fact that, for much of Ryefield Avenue, 'four wheels up' parking is permitted, which tends to limit the options for traffic calming measures. More substantial chicanes, for example, would have necessitated significant loss of parking for residents, many of whom do not have off-street parking. The selection of over-runnable areas was based on previous design experience and practice in Hillingdon and elsewhere, and such schemes have been found to reduce traffic speeds in many cases.
6. The design was developed in conjunction with a number of senior members of the Oak Farm Residents' Association, including the present Chair, as well as the Ward Councillors of the time; a number of review meetings were held at the Civic Centre and a public consultation was undertaken – which included an exhibition at the Oak Farm library (with officers on hand to answer queries).

7. The results of that consultation which were reported to the Cabinet Member in July 2006, showed that 69% of respondents were in favour of the scheme. As a consequence, the Cabinet Member authorised officers to construct the scheme, with funding in full provided by Transport for London.

8. In the letter attached to the current petition, the petitioners have stated the reasons they feel that the over-runnable areas should be removed are as follows:

- a. *'They cause major hazards to drivers when a vehicle is parked opposite them. Ryefield Avenue is not then wide enough for two vehicles travelling in opposite directions to safely pass one another. This results in drivers having to take part in a "game of chicken" to see who will give way. The only other solution being to ride up on these 6 inch high traps, possibly damaging vehicle suspensions;*
- b. *'These granite block safety hazards need numerous repairs at great and ongoing costs to us Council tax payers, while serving no useful purpose;*
- c. *'When covered in several inches of snow they become invisible to road user. They are then extremely dangerous, especially to cyclists and motorcyclists, who if they are unaware of these and hit them can be thrown across Ryefield Avenue'; and*
- d. *'Some of these granite block safety hazards also cause poor drainage, which at times of icy weather can lead to dangerous road surfaces'.*

9. In response to each of these comments, officers make the following observations:

10. (a) The design of the chicanes is deliberately intended to slow traffic; this design has been used in many other sites throughout the United Kingdom and has generally found to have been effective in reducing speeds. The slopes of the over-runnable areas are moderate and well within national design guidelines, and there is no reason to believe that any suspension damage would be caused to any vehicle proceeding at a sensible speed.

11. (b) It is acknowledged that some damage has occurred to the edges of one (of the total of eight) over-runnable areas – specifically at the one outside No 113 Ryefield Avenue - and this has necessitated repair work, the cost of which (as of January 2011) amounted to £250. In some cases, temporary repairs have been undertaken which whilst unsightly are suitable to ensure the site has been made safe.

12. Officers from the Council's Streetscene Maintenance section have reviewed the condition of the over-runnable areas throughout the scheme and have actioned appropriate permanent repairs. In light of the concerns raised by the petitioners, the Cabinet Member may be minded to ask officers to undertake more detailed investigations of the structure and state of these features with a view to minimising further ongoing maintenance obligations.

13. (c) All drivers should proceed with extreme caution when the roads are covered 'in several inches of snow' as in such conditions, any feature such as kerbs, manhole covers, gullies, carriageway markings and road markings are similarly invisible. This is a view that is shared with the Metropolitan Police, whose views have been sought on the scheme. The police observed that cyclists and motorcyclists should in any case proceed with extreme caution in conditions of heavy snow or ice.

14. (d) The drainage arrangements have been reviewed and there has been no reports to the Council of flooding. There has been no problem observed relating to the existing drainage arrangement.

## **Accident Data**

15. Prior to the scheme being implemented, the accident data showed that there had been 9 accidents in Ryefield Avenue. Four accidents at the key junction of Ryefield Avenue & Windsor Avenue in the preceding 36 months (up to August 2006). Since the scheme has been installed, the accident data has been reviewed and the results show there have been 6 accidents in Ryefield Avenue with one accident at the same location in the equivalent period (i.e., 36 months to September 2010).

16. Two of the more recent accidents in Ryefield Avenue as a whole have involved children stepping out into the road, one involved a vehicle not giving way on the roundabout, one was a cyclist being hit while on the roundabout, one vehicle was hit whilst turning right out of a side road and one vehicle was hit from behind whilst stationary. None of these accidents can be attributed to the over-runnable areas.

## **Speed Surveys**

17. A speed survey in August 2006 prior to the introduction of the scheme showed that the average 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds over 14 days was 34mph northbound and 35mph southbound. The Cabinet Member will be aware that the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed is the speed at or below which 85% of traffic is found to travel, and is the standard statistical tool used by traffic engineers to assess speed trends overall.

18. The Council is committed to reviewing the speeds of vehicles after schemes are installed. A previous speed survey in August 2008 showed that some vehicles were exceeding the speed limit, but the majority were travelling under 20mph. The 85% speed north bound was 28mph and south bound was 27mph, this is a reduction of 18 and 23 percent respectively.

19. It is suggested therefore that the Cabinet Member discusses with the petitioners their specific road safety concerns and establish the basis of any further actions to see if suitable improvements can be identified. Officers have already investigated, for example, further suggestions from the lead petitioner for enhanced waiting restrictions near the junction of Ryefield Avenue and Victoria Avenue to address safety problems associated with commuter parking there, and it is hoped that further positive dialogue of this nature can benefit local residents in the area.

## **Financial Implications**

There are none associated with the recommendations to this report, as feasibility studies can be undertaken with in house resources. However, if the Cabinet Member subsequently considers the introduction of any additional measures suitable funding will need to be identified.

## **EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES**

### **What will be the effect of the recommendation?**

The recommendations will identify the extent of the petitioners concerns and look at possible solutions to mitigate these.

### **Consultation Carried Out or Required**

Ward Councillors have been consulted and two have responded. Both have indicated support in principle for the petition as they feel the scheme in its present form could be improved.

## **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

### **Corporate Finance**

N/A.

### **Legal**

At this stage, there no are no special legal implications arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

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

In considering the discussions with the petitioners, decision makers must ensure there is a full consideration of all representations arising including those which do not accord with the officer recommendation. The decision maker must be satisfied that responses from the public are conscientiously taken into account.

In all cases, the decision maker should bear in mind Section 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 which means that the Council as traffic authority has a statutory duty to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic.

### **Corporate Landlord**

N/A.

### **Relevant Service Groups**

N/A.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Accstats – Accident database