

ROYAL BOROUGH OF GREENWICH

HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 2 JUNE 2021 AT 7.00 PM

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Members:

Councillor Bill Freeman (Chair), Councillors Peter Brooks, David Gardner, Christine May, Gary Parker, Aidan Smith and Matthew Clare

Officers

(Interim) Assistant Director Transportation; Head of Highways; Head of Traffic Group; Transport Strategy Manager; Principal Traffic Engineer; Committee Services Officer

Other Members in Attendance

Councillor Nigel Fletcher

The Chair varied the order of business and took Item 7 after Item 4.

Item

No.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mick Hayes and Sarah Merrill

2 Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

3 Declarations of Interest

Resolved -

That the list of Councillors' memberships as Council appointed representatives on outside bodies, joint committees and school governing bodies be noted.

4 Minutes

Resolved -

That the minutes of the meeting of the Highways Committee held on 24 February 2021 be agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

5 Response to a Petition requesting the introduction of traffic calming measures and safety measures along Broad Walk

The Transport Strategy Manager gave an illustrated introduction to the report. He emphasised that Officers had worked with the Police to understand why the accidents had happened.

During discussion of the matter it was commented that Roadwatch tended to be weakly supported and that they needed to lobby to get delegation so they did not just need a Police Officer present. It was queried whether signs/stickers could be put on wheelie bins.

In response to a Member's question, the Transport Strategy Manager advised that while they could consider width restrictors and planters, funding limitations meant they would have to balance any such proposals against other priorities.

Resolved -

That the proposed petition response as stated in Section 6 in the report, and that it will be reported to Council on 23 June 2021, be noted

6 Response to a Petition regarding the School Streets Scheme in Ivor Grove

The Transport Strategy Manager gave an illustrated introduction to the report. He highlighted that the delay in re-opening schools had affected when the consultation could be conducted.

There was a discussion of the matter. Members indicated they were happy with the proposed Option. It was recognised that the Schemes were meant to make things better for children travelling to school, and that overall they were beneficial. It was noted that there had been an unprecedented level of opposition to the scheme and that there need to be consultation on the matter; the benefit of using the Experimental Traffic Order was acknowledged. It was suggested to Officers that the lessons learnt from this particular implementation should be rolled out to other places where the Scheme was to be trialled.

Resolved -

That the proposed petition response as stated in Section 6 in the report, and that it will be reported to Council on 23 June 2021, be noted

7 Request for removal of speed cushions in Halfway Street - Response to a Petition

The Principal Traffic Engineer gave an illustrated introduction to the report. He indicated that no survey had been conducted to consider the source of the vibrations mentioned by the petitioners. He explained that the Option to do nothing was proposed because speeding was an issue and the speed cushions had been put in to address that.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Head of Traffic Group confirmed that the cushions were put in following concerns raised by residents and Ward Councillors, and speed surveys at that time suggested there was an issue with speeding. The preferred option was to keep the cushions in place, there would need to be a consensus about removing them because of the speeding. He noted that it was unusual to receive a request to implement speeding measures and then a few years later be asked to remove them. They would be in an awkward position if they were removed and then there was a fatality as a result of speeding.

The Committee was addressed by the petitioner and three residents in support. It was emphasised that noise and the vibrations arising from the cushions was affecting their lives and causing stress and anxiety. Some residents were saying their properties shook, and they lived with the expectation of inevitable noise. Some residents had moved to the back of the properties because they could not open windows at the front, and it was affecting sleep. Some had or were considering selling and moving. Buses used the road and they often moved to the wrong side of the road to avoid parked

cars. Cars sought to avoid the cushions. There had been accidents, and the photographs at Appendix A were an example. It was highlighted that the road had not been resurfaced in decades, and the drainage appeared to be sinking. There had been no consultation regarding the use of speed cushions. It was understood there was an issue with speeding but the problem was the method used to address it was causing problems and it was not felt that the cushions served the purpose for which they had been installed. It was queried why there could not be liaison with Bexley Council about placing a sign on their side requesting motorists to slow down, or why vehicle activated signs could not be installed.

In response to questions from the Committee the petitioner said that he was not aware of any consultation regarding the implementation of the speed cushions. He was not aware of any measurements regarding increased noise or any structural surveys but residents had cracked ceilings and he was not able to sleep because of the noise.

In response to questions from the Committee the residents suggested the speed cushions did not work because of the approach and exit from the roundabout. It was confirmed that there were two set of cushions for the whole street.

The Committee was addressed by Ward Councillor Nigel Fletcher, on behalf of fellow Ward Councillor Pat Greenwell. He said Ward Councillors had met with residents on site. He said the cushions did not appear to be reducing speed, he had witnessed cars avoiding the cushions by going up on to the pavement. With parked cars there the road became like a slalom. Buses were going around and on wrong side and he had been told that occurred regularly. He said that to do nothing was not an option and he requested that they take the cushions out and consult on other methods, for example signs and road markings.

In response to further questions from the Committee, the Head of Traffic Group said that they could consider removing the cushions when the road was resurfaced as scheduled, He gave an indication of the cost of the installation of the cushions and a possible cost of a replacement though the replacement measures would have to be defined.

There was a discussion of the matter. It was accepted that there should be measures to reduce speed and that was why the speeds humps had been installed. It was acknowledged that the petition indicated that residents were now experiencing problems and that something should be done. Members generally did not agree that Option 3.2 of the report should be followed, but

it was not felt that the speed bumps should just be removed with no replacement. Members agreed that there should be consultation on speed restriction methods. It was indicated that consideration should be given to the approach to the roundabout. It was suggested that interim measures such as signs and a temporary order to reduce speed be considered.

Resolved -

1. That the proposed petition response in the report, and that it will be reported to Council on 23 June 2021, be noted
2. That it be recommended that the Option stated at 3.1 of the report be implemented, and that
 - a) consideration be given to removing the speed bumps when the road was resurfaced (as stated in the proposed (local) road resurfacing schemes programme for 2021/22 at Item 9 of the agenda);
 - b) further traffic surveys be conducted, in order to enable a further speed restriction design option to be sought and consulted on; and
 - c) interim measures be considered, for example, implementation of signage and consideration be given to a temporary order to reduce the speed limit to 20mph

8 Winchcomb Gardens – Petition Requesting Road Resurfacing and Street Improvements

As the petitioners were not able to be present at their request the Chair agreed that the item be deferred to the next meeting.

9 Proposed Road Resurfacing Schemes

The Head of Highways gave a presentation to the Committee in support of the report. He highlighted that the backlog of works was increasing, reactive measures were expensive, and that current funding was insufficient.

During discussion of the matter it was suggested that there needed to be a more holistic view, facilitating pedestrian and cycle use rather than solely focusing on resurfacing, which would help with vehicle reduction.

The Head of Highways explained that there were separate funding streams for cycling measures, principally through the TfL Local Implementation Plans (LIP). The Council did not have revenue for footpath maintenance, virtually all the money was from TfL. Reactive maintenance money would be used to repair footpaths. He emphasised that if they did not intervene at the right

time the rate of deterioration would increase and the cost of repairing a road would become expensive, and the duration of the works became more disruptive to the public. New schemes were being introduced such as the Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, but the funding budgets had remained static; it would be difficult to meet the targets set for transport strategy. He said as they were not meeting maintenance demands at present it would be difficult to consider diverting money from maintenance to walking or cycling schemes; the need for resurfacing was not going to go away. The Head of Traffic Group added that some LIP money could be used for footways and when carriageway repairs were undertaken they could look to see how the footway could be improved; the aim was to integrate their programmes more.

During discussion of the matter it was queried whether funding could be achieved from CPZs and moving traffic enforcement, and from S106 money under the Town and Country Planning Act during development of a site. It was noted that the Government's agreement with the Mayor of London would mean £100million for healthy street initiatives which might slightly alleviate pressures on budgets.

The Head of Highways advised that it would be for the Council budget setting to determine how revenue from traffic enforcement and CPZs was used, but Highways could make a case for its use in road maintenance. S106 could not be used for some things such as general road resurfacing, however it might be possible to get money through a S278 agreement under the Highways Act during development of a site.

During discussion of the matter it was questioned whether there had been a rise in claims against the Council or TfL over accidents arising from damaged roads and pavements, and what impact might the TfL settlement, which had been described by the Mayor of London as wholly inadequate, have on the borough.

The Head of Highways confirmed that claims were monitored and trends were fairly stable. The TfL settlement would not have an impact on the principal road network which were in good condition, and they could not use it on their local roads.. The Head of Traffic Group commented that it was too early yet to know how the TfL settlement money would be spent across London but he estimated that in real terms it would be a reduction in funding for the borough.

Resolved -

1. That it be noted how the Council prioritises and selects roads for resurfacing.
2. That the proposed (local) road resurfacing schemes programme for 2021/22, as outlined in, and appended to, the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.35pm

Chair