

25 March 2021

Response to the Petition: “Physical measures to reduce speeding in our area”

Ward(s): Rushall-Shelfield

Portfolios: Councillor Andrew - Regeneration

1. Aim

- 1.1. A petition has been submitted calling on Walsall Council to install road safety measures on Barns Lane, Rushall. The hard copy of the petition contained 262 signatures with more than 300 further signatures on the online version.
- 1.2. The Council’s petitions scheme state that “if a petition contains at least 500 signatories the relevant senior officer will give evidence at a public meeting of one of the Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The authority has determined that the response to such petitions must be given by either the chief executive, executive directors, directors or heads of service. The committee may also decide to call the relevant portfolio holder to attend the meeting.”

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. This report recommends that:
 - a) A “dragon teeth” gateway feature be installed on Westgate approach to Barns Lane to emphasise the lower speed limit; the existing 20mph repeater signs be replaced with larger signs and “SLOW” marking be installed along the length of Barns Lane.
 - b) The need for further engineering works on Barns Lane be considered as part of the annual borough wide road safety review.

3. Report detail – know

- 3.1. Barns Lane is a local distributor road that runs from Winterley Lane to Westgate and then extends north west to Subbers Green Road. There are over 250 residential properties on Barns Lane which is approximately 1 mile [1.6km] in length. A 20mph speed limit was introduced between the junction with Winterley Lane and north east of the junction with Pool View in March 2014 as part of a wider safety scheme. A 30mph speed limit then extends to the junction with Subbers Green Road. There is footway provision along the full length of the road, on both side within the 20mph zone and on one side of the road in the 30mph section. **A plan showing the road can be found at Appendix A.**

- 3.2. The Highways Act 1980 places a general duty on the highway authority to keep its highways reasonably free of obstruction and in a condition that allows the safe passage of people and goods. Section 39 of The Road Safety Act 1988 places a statutory duty for highway authorities to:
- a) prepare and carry out a programme of measures designed to promote road safety;
 - b) carry out studies into accidents arising out of the use of vehicles; and
 - c) take such measures as appear to the authority to be appropriate to prevent such accidents.
- 3.3. Section 90 (A to F) of the Highways Act 1980 is the current legislation that covers the introduction of all forms of vertical deflections on a carriageway. The Traffic Calming Act 1992 amended the Highways Act 1980 to permit the introduction other forms of traffic calming within additional sections 90 (G to I). Such measures are therefore permitted for the purpose of 'promoting safety and preserving or improving the environment'. The Highways (Road Humps) Regulations 1999 require three or more street lights to be present not more than thirty eight metres apart or to comply with British Standard (BS5489 1992) .
- 3.4. The petition submitted makes the following request:

We, the undersigned, call upon Walsall Council, in the light of a high number of accidents and ongoing crashes and damage to property in Barns Lane, Rushall to revise its oft-stated position of no or minimal action in regard to long-standing community and councillor requests to:

- a) *put in place physical measures to reduce speeding;*
- b) *re-route through HGV traffic away from the heavily residential areas of Barns Lane and Spring Road, Shelfield; and*
- c) *ensure that, meanwhile, in conjunction with West Midlands Police, there is regular, frequent enforcement against speeding drivers in the Westgate/Barns Lane 20 mph zone.*

"We therefore ask the Council to instruct officers to bring forward effective measures to address the issues above as a matter of urgency."

Responding to Road Safety Concerns

- 3.5. The Council receive a high volume of requests for traffic and road safety schemes. The range of issues includes speeding concerns, collisions concerns and parking issues. A data lead approach is taken to prioritising the implementation of road safety schemes and a programme is collated for Cabinet approval each year.
- 3.6. All scheme requests are recorded, assessed and categorised. In the case of local safety schemes, sites should have a minimum of six personal injury collisions in the previous three years to be considered as part of this programme. This is indicative of the number of injury collisions which occur on the highway in the borough on an annual basis and generates a list of schemes which far exceeds the current level of

funding available. The traffic engineering team undertake the annual review of injury collisions to prioritise those schemes where road safety will be most effective in reducing known casualty histories.

- 3.7. Schemes that have a lower number of injury collisions are transferred to the promotion of community health and safety programme (PCHS) for further review. Schemes held in this programme are assessed with the a road safety aspect, but include the impact a potential scheme may have on improving access to schools, local shops and public open space. The schemes are then ranked in priority and will be delivered based on the availability of funding.
- 3.8. There have been six slight collisions (collisions in which at least one person is slightly injured but no person is killed or seriously injured) recorded on Barnes Lane in the three years 2018, 2019 and 2020. Two of these collisions occurred in the vicinity of the Kings Road/ Farmers Boy public house and only one of those involved excessive speed. The other incidences were damage only collisions and are not routinely included for consideration.

With regards to physical measures to reduce speeding, a request for traffic calming on Barnes Lane is retained in the list of schemes held under the PCHS programme. In the most recent review, completed in February 2021, the Barnes Lane and Westgate scheme request ranked 17th in a list of about 145 schemes. This is largely due to the increases in the number and severity of collisions at other locations also included in the programme. **Details of the full PCHS programme can be found at Appendix B.**

Request for an environmental weight limit to re-route HGVs elsewhere

- 3.9. Environmental weight restrictions offer a means of preventing heavy goods vehicles from using minor roads as inappropriate short cuts between main routes. They are still permitted to enter weight restricted areas for access (e.g. making deliveries). When proposing a weight restriction for any route or area, careful consideration must be given to those vehicles that will be re-routed. In some instances, a route may seem inappropriate for HGV use but there may be no other realistic alternatives. If there are no alternative routes, introducing a weight restriction will only displace problems on to similarly inappropriate roads. Where alternative routes are available, we must ensure wherever possible to positively sign these routes. Early warning of a weight restricted area must also be given to help the restriction to be self-enforcing.
- 3.10. Barnes Lane serves as one of five routes that link the A461 Lichfield Road and the A454 Little Aston road. It is classified as a local distributor road and its role within the road hierarchy is to carry all classifications of traffic from the principal road network through to local residential and commercial premises.
- 3.11. Automatic traffic counters were used to collect data on the speed, volume and classification of vehicles using Barnes Lane in 2019. Counters were placed on Barnes Lane, between Westgate and Stubbers Green Road, and on Westgate, north of Tintagel Way. Both counters indicated that HGVs made up just 1% of the traffic using the road.

- 3.12. For the reasons indicated above, there are currently no plans to implement an environmental weight limit on Barns Lane or Spring Lane.

Request for speed enforcement.

- 3.13. In response to concerns raised by Cllr Richard Worrall, a request has been submitted to West Midlands Police (WMP) to undertake speed enforcement on Barns Lane.
- 3.14. Feedback from WMP indicates that during an operation in November 2020, of 481 vehicles monitored on Barns Lane, 14 drivers were passed for persecution and a further 65 drivers were educated regarding their speed.
- 3.15. In light of local concern, the Council propose to install a “dragon teeth” gateway feature on Westgate to emphasise the lower speed limit. Additionally, the existing repeater signs will be replaced with larger signs and “SLOW” marking will be installed along the length of Barns Lane. This work will be scheduled for completion in the summer of 2021 as part of the Council’s minor works programme. **A plan showing the outline proposal for the scheme can be found at Appendix C.**
- 3.16. The need for further engineering works will continue to be considered as part of the annual borough wide road safety reviews.

4. Financial information

- 4.1. The proposed works fall within the scope of the Council’s budget for road safety engineering works.

5. Reducing Inequalities

- 5.1. The Council’s road safety programmes of work provide all citizens using Walsall’s highway network a standard of service which will maintain the safe passage of vehicular and pedestrian traffic so far as is reasonably practicable.

6. Decide

- 6.1. The Council has to determine a reasonable level of intervention in response to the concerns raised by the signatories of the petition detailed in this report. This needs to take into account the borough wide demand for road safety measures and the site specific data with respect to incidents and traffic speeds.

7. Respond

- 7.1. The proposed improvements to signage on Barns Lane will be implemented by 31st August 2021.

8. Review

- 8.1. The need for further road safety engineering works will be reviewed on an annual basis as part of the Council borough wide safety review. Any future road safety scheme proposals which are likely to impact residents and road users in the Barns Lane will allow a period of consultation and comment on the details of the scheme before implementation.

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