

Council – 14 April 2014

Petition – Road safety improvements: Blakenall Heath area

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report is in response to the petition “We the undersigned demand Walsall Council take urgent action to improve road safety in the Blakenall area. In particular and especially Valley Road, Ryle Street and Ingram Road.”
- 1.2 The petition contained in excess of 1,500 signatures. The Council’s petitions scheme provides that: *“If a petition contains at least 1,500 signatures it will be debated at a meeting of the Council. This means that the issue raised in the petition will be discussed at a meeting to which all Councillors can attend and speak. The Council will endeavour to consider the petition at its next meeting although on some occasions this may not be possible and consideration will then take place at the following meeting. The petition organiser will be given 5 minutes to present the petition at the meeting and the petition will then be discussed by Councillors for a maximum of 15 minutes. The Council will decide how to respond to the petition at this meeting. They may decide to take the action that the petition requests; not to take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate, or to ask for further information. Where the issue is one where the Cabinet are required to make the final decision the Council will decide to make recommendations to the Cabinet. The petition organiser will receive written confirmation of this decision and this will be published on our website.”*

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That the content of the petition be noted.
- 2.2. To await the outcome from the ongoing police investigation into the cause of the road traffic collision that occurred on Monday 24 February 2014 at the junction of Valley Road / Ryle Street.
- 2.3. To note that a provisional sum of £10,000 has been made in the Council’s capital budget for 2014/15 to implement additional works at the Valley Road / Ryle Street junction following the conclusion of the police investigation, should these be required.
- 2.4. To await the outcomes from the prioritisation of the ten identified areas for consideration of a 20mph signed only speed limit.

3. Background Information

- 3.1. The roads mentioned in the petition form part of the residential area of Blakenall Heath. Characteristics of the roads in this area are that they are wide, straight, generally tree-lined and lightly trafficked. The roads are classified as residential roads as they link to the distributor roads.
- 3.2. A previous petition was received from residents during November 2008 which requested "speed restrictions along Valley Road". At the time, the request was considered as part of the Promotion of Community Health and Safety programme as there were insufficient personal injury collisions to qualify for inclusion on the Local Safety Scheme programme. A traffic survey was undertaken which recorded the mean traffic speeds at 31.5mph.
- 3.3. Although Valley Road qualified for the introduction of traffic calming measures it was ranked tenth and therefore a number of other requests were prioritised ahead of it and therefore could not be implemented, although it remains in the programme.
- 3.4. The latest traffic data for Valley Road was collected as part of a borough wide survey during 2012. The survey recorded the mean speed of traffic at 26.2mph which is consistent with a road of this type. In addition a review of the personal injury collisions identified that there had been 4 recorded personal injury collisions during the previous three years thus supporting the continuing inclusion in the Promotion of Community Health & Safety programme.
- 3.5. A previous collision occurred at the junction Valley Road / Ryle Street during September 2013. The collision involved a bus leaving the road and stopping in the garden of a nearby property. At the time West Midlands Police attended the collision and it was recorded on the police log. Fortunately despite the physical damage to the boundary wall and garden no personal injury was sustained and as such the collision was not recorded as a personal injury collision.
- 3.6. The most recent road traffic collision occurred on 24 January 2014 involving a single car and a coach. Unfortunately the collision resulted in fatal injuries to one of the passengers in the car and serious injury sustained by the driver. Due to the severity of the collision it is being investigated by West Midlands Police Collision Investigation Unit as part of the Coroners Inquiry. The investigation is ongoing and we are not expecting this to be concluded for some months.
- 3.7. As part of these investigations it is standard procedure for the Council's Road Safety team to support the investigation process and undertake a joint review of the collision site with the police. This site inspection has been completed and a report will now be compiled to support the ongoing investigation.

- 3.8. Obviously it would be inappropriate to determine the outcomes of the ongoing police investigation; however, the Council has reserved £10,000 as part of the 2014/15 capital programme to introduce any measures that may further improve the operation of the junction if these are recommended.
- 3.9. As part of the 2012 borough wide traffic survey the traffic speeds were measured along Ingram Road at 28.6mph, again consistent for the type of road. In addition a review of the personal injury collisions along the entire 1.5km length of road identified that there had been 9 recorded personal injury collisions 3 resulting in serious injury during the previous three years. A further review of the collisions only identified small clusters of collisions that failed to meet the minimum intervention criteria. At the time no requests had been made requesting additional road safety measures along Ingram Road and as such the road would continue to be monitored as part of the annual review.
- 3.10. A three year capital bid has been prepared for further Promotion of Community Health and Safety projects. This is currently on the Council's reserve list of capital schemes to be funded when resources become available.
- 3.11. More recently the Council has decided to pilot 20mph signed only speed limits across a number of residential areas. Clearly if the outcomes from these pilot sites are successful then further consideration will be given to rolling out these measures across a wider area. As part of the Local Transport Plan report taken to Cabinet during March 2014, ten areas were identified as benefitting from the introduction of a 20mph signed only speed limit; following discussion with local councillors, Blakenall and Goscote was included as part of these areas.
- 3.12. As part of the 2014/15 Local Transport Plan it is planned to roll out more pilot areas to assess the benefits of 20mph signed only speed limits. The ten areas identified will be analysed further using the Council's assessment framework to identify which areas will be prioritised. Funding of £74,000 has been allocated and work will shortly commence to assess how many areas can be treated.
- 3.13. If the Blakenall area is prioritised then a blanket 20mph signed only speed limit can be introduced which may help to address the road safety concerns raised within this petition.

Jamie Morris
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30 March 2014