

**BRIEFING NOTE**

**To:** Full Council

**Date:** 22 February 2024

**Subject:** Petition for a safer Chester Road at the junction with Stonnall village

**1 Aim**

- 1.1 The Council's petitions scheme state that *“if a petition contains at least 1,500 signatures it will be debated at a meeting of the Council. 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.”*
- 1.2 Cabinet will consider the West Midlands Local Transport Plan Settlement and Transport Capital Programme 2024/25 at the March committee meeting. This includes a programme of road safety and related capital schemes for the year ahead.

**2 Report Detail**

Location

- 2.1 The A452 Chester Road forms part of Walsall's Strategic Highway Network, namely roads identified in the council's site allocation document as being for long distance traffic. The A452 is part of the Primary Route Network, defined as routes between major settlements, and also the West Midlands' Key Route Network.
- 2.2 Approximately 7.8 miles [12.5km] of the A452 runs through the borough from Brownhills to Streetly. The route is subject to varying speed limits along its length ranging from 30mph limits in largely residential areas to 50mph limits in rural areas.
- 2.3 The section of the Chester Road referred to in the above-mentioned petition is within in a street lit section on the borough boundary, has a 50mph speed limit and central hatching with designated right turn lanes and pedestrian refuges. Advanced crossroad warning signs are present on both approaches to each junction. There is footway provision on this section of the Chester Road on one side of the carriageway. A plan showing the route can be found in **Appendix A**.

Statutory Obligations

- 2.4 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:
- prepare and carry out a programme of measures designed to promote road safety;
  - carry out studies into accidents arising out of the use of vehicles; and
  - take such measures as appear to the authority to be appropriate to prevent such accidents.
- 2.5 The council carries out an annual, borough-wide road safety review. Requests for road safety measures are considered as part of this review. To ensure a consistent, transparent and rational approach, prioritisation is data-led with particular consideration given to collisions that have occurred in the previous three years. Additional factors that are reviewed included proximity of schools, local amenities and the level of public anxiety.
- 2.6 A proposed programme of road safety measures is presented to Cabinet in March for implementation in the following financial year.

Petition response

- 2.7 The petition submitted makes the following request:

*“Campaigning for road safety improvements at the junction of Lazy Hill, Gravelly Lane, Main Street and Downes Gate with the Chester Road at Aldridge/Stonall.*

*We the undersigned, wish Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council to make the above junctions safer for all traffic, vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians to use.”*

- 2.8 Speed and traffic counts taken over 7 days, 24 hours per day from 6 December 2022 to 13 December 2022 recorded an 85<sup>th</sup>ile speed (the highest speed of 85% of the traffic surveyed) of 46.8mph. The daily flow of vehicles averaged across 7 days along this section is 14,599. Personal injury collisions from the most recent police data September 2020 to September 2023 show that there was one fatal collision and four slight injury collisions recorded at the A452 Chester Road/Lazy Hill junction. Over the same period there were four slight personal injury collisions recorded at the junction of Birch Lane/Gravelly Lane. No personal injury collisions were recorded at the junction of Main Street and Downes Gate.
- 2.9 The section of the A452 Chester Road adjoining Lazy Hill and Gravelly Lane/ Birch Lane has been identified for inclusion in the 2024/25 Road Safety Programme. Subject to Cabinet approval in March 2024, a speed limit review will be undertaken, with a view to reducing the speed limit along this section of the

Chester Road to 40mph. Additionally, vehicle activated speed signs (VASS) will be installed along with increased signage on approach to the junctions, coupled with associated road markings.

### 3 Financial information

- 3.1 The estimated value of the works set out at paragraph 2.9 is £54,173.
- 3.2 Subject to Cabinet approval in March 2024, the proposed works would fall within the scope of the West Midlands Local Transport Plan Settlement and Transport Capital Programme 2024/25.

### 4 Reducing Inequalities

- 4.1 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.

### 5 Decide

- 5.1 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 site-specific data regarding incidents and traffic speeds.

### 6 Respond

- 6.1 Cabinet will consider the West Midlands Local Transport Plan Settlement and Transport Capital Programme 2024/25 at the March committee meeting.

### 7 Review

- 7.1 The next borough wide road safety review will take place in January 2025.

#### Author

Alana Saunders  
Road Safety Manager  
✉ [Alana.Saunders@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:Alana.Saunders@walsall.gov.uk)

Kathryn Moreton  
Director – Place & Environment  
✉ [Kathryn.Moreton@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:Kathryn.Moreton@walsall.gov.uk)

Appendix A – Section of A452 Chester Road including Lazy Hill and Birch Lane/Gravelly Lane junction

