

Maldens and Coombe Neighbourhood Committee

20 March 2019

The Groves - Road Safety Petition

Report by the Assistant Director - Highways, Transport, and Regulatory Services

Purpose

To note receipt of a petition related to road safety in The Groves area of New Malden and propose a way forward for investigating the issues raised.

Recommendations

To **resolve** that -

1. The issues set out in the petition be noted.
2. The programme outlined in paragraphs 13 to 16 to progress the scheme be agreed.
3. A report be submitted to a future Committee meeting, outlining the recommendations from the working group process and detailing plans for any wider public consultation.

Benefits to the Community:

To work in partnership with the local community to review the issues raised within the petition and to consider a range of solutions collectively with local stakeholders, prior to any wider public consultation.

Key Points

- A. The council has received a petition entitled 'Make the streets safe for our children' with over 500 signatures, covering The Groves area of New Malden. The petition is specifically concerned with the 'increasing prevalence' of motorists driving on the footway and the impact this is having on pedestrians, in particular children, due to the number of local schools in the area. The number of verified signatures is currently below 500, however the petition is currently live, and if it reaches 500 verified signatures will be submitted to Full Council.
- B. There are currently no funded projects to consider this issue within The Groves. The most recent feasibility and consultation work was carried out in 2011. An extensive community engagement process was undertaken at this time, via a working group of local stakeholders involving ward councillors, resident association members and school representatives, which was followed by a subsequent consultation. This resulted in a small number of measures being taken forward, including one way working on Mount Road.
- C. Given the length of time that has passed since the previous consultation process, and the issues highlighted within the petition, officers propose to utilise Transport for London (TfL) Local implementation Plan (LIP) funding within the 2019/20 financial year, to progress feasibility work in partnership with local stakeholders. Subject to the outcome of this feasibility work, a consultation is planned to follow within 2019/20. Consideration will then be given to funding any supported measures, via the LIP within the 2020/21 financial year.

Context

1. A copy of the petition is included in Annex 1. The petition states;

'With four school sites, three of which are primary schools, within the groves area of New Malden, we the undersigned are very concerned about the increasing prevalence of driving on pavements. On a nearly daily basis local parents are witnessing cars driving up onto the pavement and putting lives at risk, especially for small children often out of site for these drivers. We have raised this with our local councillors and the leader of the council and asked them to act swiftly to address this dangerous driving and to re-consider a one way system. We have had little progress and can't wait any longer. They have suggested bollards and behaviour change, but we do not believe that bollards will work (these are regularly taken out by drivers) or behaviour changing approaches as drivers in rush hour and school pick up time cause these issues and the risks and potential effect of pavement driving are too high.

The Groves area (Lime Grove, Poplar Grove, Chestnut Grove and surround streets) has very narrow roads and the junctions are often small without great visibility. Parking is difficult and taking out spaces to create passing zones will exacerbate this issue. A one-way system has been piloted in Mount Road and part of Chestnut and has been successful in reducing dangerous driving and blockages.

We would like the Council to reconsider a one way system to protect all pedestrians, as well as cyclists, from increasing traffic, congestion, and dangerous driving. It has been difficult to show the councillors how important this issue is to local parents and residents as public meetings are hard to get large numbers of people to attend. We have started this petition in order to evidence the concern.'

2. The specific requests of the petition are that *'by signing this petition you are letting your local councillors, MP and Kingston Council know that:'*

- *you agree that there is an issue with dangerous driving in the groves area of New Malden*
- *you want them to look at the options to address this immediately*
- *to reconsider a one-way system*
- *have a well advertised consultation on a one-way system that takes into account both local residents in a wider area as well as those using the streets e.g. parents at the local schools*

3. In response to the petition, officers are proposing to take forward an area wide feasibility study and consultation process in 2019/20. Due the the nature of the local road layout across The Groves area it is not possible to consider individual streets in isolation. For example, one way working on one street may simply shift issues onto parallel streets alongside increasing traffic volumes elsewhere in the area.

Background

4. A previous petition, on a very similar matter, was submitted to the council in July 2010. This petition concerned traffic congestion and potential danger to pupils travelling to the two primary schools (on three sites) and residents, in addition to the environmental pollution and risk of obstruction to emergency vehicle access routes in the area. Between July 2010 and May 2011 a working group was

established to consider the issues and develop a series of proposals. The working group consisted of Ward Members, members of the Groves Residents' Association, the local Safer Neighbourhood Team, representatives from the two local schools and two council officers.

5. In May 2011 the Committee considered a report that set out a number of options to take forward to consultation. It should be noted that at the time, the working group discounted one way working on Acacia Grove, Chestnut Grove (part), Lime Grove and Sycamore Grove, following informal consultation with local residents. In the area of the current petition only two elements were taken forward for consultation, which included the introduction of passing places using double yellow lines on Acacia Grove; Chestnut Grove; Lime Grove and Sycamore Grove and improvements to local crossing points for pedestrians.
6. An area wide consultation followed, the results of which were presented to this Neighbourhood Committee on the 30 November 2011. The report detailed the outcome of the consultation process, which covered nearly 1,400 households. The consultation response rate was 24% overall, with response rates of 40-50% on some roads.
7. The recommendations agreed by the Committee included that no further action was taken on the proposals for passing places (through the introduction of double yellow lines) in Acacia Grove, Chestnut Grove, Lime Grove and Sycamore Grove, based on results not supporting that option.
8. It is noticeable from the 2011 consultation that the views of local residents and wider respondents did often not match, highlighting the challenge in balancing priorities of residents of a street with the needs of those utilising the street as part of their daily trip making. For example, the option consulted upon for Lime Grove in 2011 was 'do you support passing places including double yellow lines?', as the road is a two way road with parking on one side and limited passing places. The responses from residents of Lime Grove showed that 17 respondents said Yes (49%); 17 respondents said No (49%) and 1 had no opinion. Yet the overall response rate, from all respondents, was in favour of the introduction of passing places (63% for versus 20% against). This pattern is repeated across a number of locations.
9. Due to the overall consultation response rate being lower than 40% it was recommended at the time that no measures were taken forward unless there were strong safety grounds to do so. A review of collision statistics for The Groves (excluding junctions with Coombe Road), shows two slight incidents on Chestnut Grove in the five years preceding the consultation (2007-2011). No scheme was therefore delivered on Lime Grove. Lime Grove is the location of Christ Church Infant School and where the issue of driving on the footway has been highlighted to officers during a previous site meeting with the lead petitioner.
10. A number of further measures were considered at the junction of Lime Grove and Coombe Road following a pedestrian fatality at the junction in November 2015. An number of measures were taken forward to improve the crossing, as reported to this committee in December 2016. The option for the addition of a short section of one way road in Lime Grove towards Coombe Road, between the east side of the exit from Travis Perkins and the junction was considered as part of this report. This option was discounted at the time, due to the requirement to consult a wide residential area, and the impact on adjoining roads, which would have risked delaying improvement to the junction itself. It was agreed at the time

to 'hold the one-way in abeyance for future consideration, should further improvements be required.'

Proposal and Options

11. One of the key issues highlighted in the petition is that the current road layout results in vehicles driving on the footway, as there is no road space to allow vehicles to pass each other. Driving on the footway is an offence under section 72 of the Highways Act 1835 and is also prohibited by rule 145 of the Highway Code; 'You MUST NOT drive on or over a pavement, footpath or bridleway except to gain lawful access to property, or in the case of an emergency.' It is therefore an issue enforced by the police.
12. However, the Council recognises the challenges in enforcing this regularly, and the resource required to do so effectively. Changes to the road layout which can help to address this issue are therefore recognised as a potential part of the solution, alongside behaviour change measures and police enforcement.
13. In terms of progressing the petition and any potential options to address the issues, officers propose to meet with the Lead Petitioner and ward councillors initially, to review the petition, agree the timescales for the feasibility process and begin to define the project area.
14. In order to assist in defining the project area, officers intend to commission area wide traffic surveys, to collect a new baseline of traffic volume and speed data. This is vital in shaping local priorities and also understanding the impact of any proposed measures. Video surveys will also be conducted at locations where persistent driving on footways has been identified as occurring, in order to capture and analyse road user behaviour. Recent collision statistics will also be reviewed in full for the project area.
15. It is recommended that a working group of local stakeholders be established to highlight issues pertaining to the petition across the defined project area. Given the large geographic area covered by the project it is considered that the best approach will include nominating road representatives to allow the working group to be of a manageable size. To set out the proposed course of action, and collect road representatives names a public meeting is proposed to be held in late April/early May.
16. It is anticipated that an update on the outcome of the initial discussions, feedback on the data collection and from the public meeting will be reported to members at the June 2019 Committee Meeting. This is intended to confirm the scope of the project, formation of a working group and a community engagement approach.
17. This will include issues of driving on the footway, but also wider concerns over road safety, including vehicles speeds and volumes and the safety of pedestrians and cyclists. It is essential that the working group is made up of both local residents and parents of local school children. While these two groups are not mutually exclusive, they may have different local priorities.
18. The working group should also contain ward members and representatives from both local primary schools. Officers met with both schools in February 2019 to discuss issues relating to road safety and school access, and as a result both schools are now updating their School Travel Plans (STPs). The terms of reference for the working group would be considered by this committee at the June 2019 meeting.

19. It is then suggested that following the identification of issues, the working group will consider and discuss options to address these issues. This will include options for one way working, although as noted in the background section, this option was discounted by the previous working group established in 2011 at an early stage.
20. Officers intend to bring the outcome of the working group process to a future meeting of this Committee, with recommended options for consultation. Any consultation will therefore take place in the Autumn of 2019 at the earliest. While there may be an opportunity to fund small scale trial measures in 2019/20, any funding for significant highway changes would need to be prioritised within Kingston's 2020/21 LIP bid to TfL.
21. There is a need to recognise the request of the petition, while understanding the previous measures that have been either discounted prior to consultation or consulted upon. The previous consultation was carried out nearly 8 years ago, so it is possible that opinion may have changed. Consideration of previous measures should therefore not immediately be discounted, but explored further by the working group.
22. There should also be consideration of new options that may not have been available at the time of the previous consultation. For example, 'School Streets' are currently being trialled in a number of London boroughs, where streets outside schools permit only pedestrians and cyclists at drop off and collection times. Exemptions for vehicles of residents and businesses are permitted at very slow speeds. While not yet piloted in this borough, there may be options for similar trials or temporary measures that can be considered to address the issues experienced at school drop off and collection times within The Groves area.
23. Officers will work through potential options with the working group although it should be noted that some measures will not form part of this process. For example, speed camera enforcement of 20mph limits across wider residential areas is not currently financially viable and is technically challenging. Likewise any wholesale review of on street parking is not permitted to be funded under TfL's LIP programme and will not be considered.
24. While not specifically part of the project, officers will work with both local schools on their STPs. Initial meetings have taken place with both schools and officers will continue to offer support. STP's focus on school behaviour change initiatives that encourage more children to walk, scoot or cycle to and from school. They include road safety education and also highlight issues around air quality and the benefits of active travel, and can be tailored to address the specific concerns of schools. The council always requests an up to date STP in order to prioritise any changes to the public highway in the vicinity of a school.

Consultations

25. As detailed in section 11, any consultation on proposals would take place in the 2019/20 financial year. Previous consultations are detailed in the 'Background' section above.

Timescale

26. On overview of proposed timescales is as follows:
 - Meet with Lead Petitioner and Ward Councillors soon after this Committee, to review the petition and agree the scope of project. Commission data collection and

review the findings. Continue meetings with local stakeholders, including schools, as required. Agree terms of reference and membership of working group.

- Hold a public meeting in Spring 2019 to set out the suggested approach and identify road representatives.
- Update to the Maldens and Coombe Neighbourhood Committee on initial findings in June 2019.
- Subsequent to this, stakeholder group meeting(s) to take place to review issues and discuss possible solutions.
- A report to a future meeting of this Committee on the outcome of the above, funding requirements and proposed measures for consultation.
- Consultation will follow, subject to the outcome of the working group process and committee decision.

Resource Implications

27. There is currently no LIP funding allocated to progress this scheme. It is proposed to use a small amount of the 2019/20 'Future and Reserve Scheme Development and Monitoring' budget to fund feasibility work. Further approval will be sought prior to public consultation which will confirm budgetary details.
28. It should be noted that officer resource is allocated to progressing LIP funded schemes due for construction in 2019/20 as a priority, and as such progress on this project will be programmed around those schemes on the approved Capital Programme.
29. If the committee are minded to support the scheme to the design and delivery stage it will need to be included in the LIP bid for 2020/21 funding, which is likely to be considered by this Committee in September 2019.

Legal Implications

30. There are no legal implications to be considered at this stage.

Risk Assessment

31. The issue raised by the petition concerns safety on the public highway. Officers have had some initial liaison with the Safer Neighbourhoods Team (SNT), and will continue to request that there is a visible police presence when possible. There are resource implications for the SNT in carrying this out on a regular basis.
32. All design work will be taken forward in accordance with recognised design standards.

Equalities Impact Assessment

33. There is an overarching EQIA for the LIP programme, and as such individual projects do not need assessments.

Health Implications

34. The petition raises concerns about safety on the public highway, which has potential health implications. This report proposes a way forward to address this.
35. In order to secure LIP funding, any proposals will be developed in accordance with TfL's Healthy Streets approach which ensures projects work towards delivering attractive, healthy, accessible and safe neighbourhoods for people of all ages.

Road Network Implications

36. This will be a key consideration of any revisiting of one way working, and as detailed above new traffic data will be collected to inform decision making.

Environmental & Air Quality Implications

37. It is felt that with the existing levels of local traffic there are unlikely to be any significant environmental and air quality changes in the area. However, there may be some local benefits, particularly in the vicinity of schools, which will improve air quality in these locations. This will be a key consideration and will be dependent on the type of measure that will be proposed.

Background papers - Maldens and Coombe Committee Meeting reports from May 2011 and November 2011

held by author/other - Tom Sharland, Senior Professional Engineer

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