

Meeting date: 12 JULY 2022

Report to: Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure

Subject/report title: **PETITION SUMMARY**

Report from: Head of Highway Management and Head of Public Realm

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Wards affected:

- All Wards | Bickenhill | Blythe | Castle Bromwich | Chelmsley Wood |
 Dorridge/Hockley Heath | Elmdon | Kingshurst/Fordbridge | Knowle |
 Lyndon | Meriden | Olton | Shirley East | Shirley South |
 Shirley West | Silhill | Smith's Wood | St Alphege
-

Public/private report: Public

Exempt by virtue of paragraph: N/A
N/A

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide an update on eight petitions received for the Environment and Infrastructure portfolio, and where appropriate, agree the associated recommendations.

2. Decision(s) recommended

- 2.1 The Cabinet Member is asked to:
- (a) Note the current position with regard to petitions received for this portfolio, as set out in Appendix 1.
 - (b) Agree the proposed recommendations set out below for each petition.

3. Matters for Consideration – Petition 1: Introduce speed reduction / traffic calming measures on Dovehouse Lane

3.1 At Full Council, on 8 February 2022, Councillor Gibbin submitted a petition on behalf of residents, requesting the introduction of speed reduction / traffic calming measures on Dovehouse Lane.

4. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

4.1 Dovehouse Lane is an important local distributor road that connects A41 Warwick Road at its western end with the B425 Lode Lane at its eastern end.

4.2 The road is primarily residential with properties benefiting from off street private driveways and parking areas typically for multiple vehicles. The carriageway is approximately 6.5m wide at its eastern end, widening to approximately 7m at its western end.

4.3 The road benefits from parking restrictions at its western and eastern ends to prevent obstructive parking at junctions and discourage all day parking from the businesses at Dovehouse Parade. Due to the presence of these restrictions, combined with the available off-street parking space, the carriageway is typically clear of parked vehicles.

4.4 There have been a number of private residential developments in recent years that have generated small levels of on-street parking which the Council is aware of and there has been some concern from local residents.

4.5 At its western end, the road benefits from horizontal traffic calming features at key locations to encourage driver compliance with the speed limit. The removal of the central carriageway markings and provision of central splitter islands along the route also slow traffic.

4.6 There are footways on either side of the carriageway and these provide access to the canal network which is a popular recreational route. It is noted that the footway on the southern side of the road in sections is narrower than the footway on the northern side of the road, which itself benefits from a grass margin at various points.

4.7 At its junction with Warwick Road is the Dovehouse Parade which has several local convenience shops and facilities that service the local community. The connecting section of Warwick Road and the junction are areas of high traffic demand in peak periods. This area is subject to a separate petition considered at paragraphs 10 and 11 of this report.

4.8 The eastern end of Dovehouse Lane, at its junction with Lode Lane, is controlled by a signalised junction. The junction also acts a primary access into the Jaguar Land Rover site. This access, whilst predominantly used by non-goods traffic, still generates large volumes of vehicles at peak and shift change times, including pedestrian and cycle traffic.

4.9 A review of the most recently available traffic survey and speed data is summarised below. The data indicates that volumes and speed of traffic using the route have remained generally consistent and are considered typical for a road of this type.

	Mean speed (MPH)	85%tile speed (MPH)	Daily average 2-way flow
<i>Sep-21</i>	30.1	34.6	8501
<i>Feb-16</i>	31.55	35	8106
<i>Variance</i>	-4.59%	-1.10%	4.80%

- 4.10 Data of road collisions resulting in injury are recorded by the Police and made available to the Local Authority who carry out a biannual review of collision data to help inform service priorities.
- 4.11 Reviewing the most recently available full year data (2019-2021 provisional), indicates that there have been 2 recorded incidents. Both took place during winter months in 2019 in periods of darkness (between 16:30 – 18:30) and involved vulnerable road users. The first involved a pedestrian, who was hit by a vehicle turning from Warwick Road into Dovehouse Lane. The second involved a motorcycle traveling along Dovehouse Lane and a vehicle pulling out of a side road.
- 4.12 The available data does not indicate whether speed was a contributory factor in either of the two recorded collisions; however, it appears that it is unlikely to be a significant factor in either.
- 4.13 Following the procurement of a mini speed visor for the Olton Ward in 2022, Dovehouse Lane is due to feature regularly on the programme over the coming 12 months and it is anticipated that this will have a positive impact for the road.
- 5. Reasons for recommending preferred option**
- 5.1 The available data does not identify an immediate road safety priority that would justify the reallocation of existing funding at this time. It is noted that this is a location which will now feature regularly on the speed visor programme which is considered a positive step for the road.
- 5.2 It is also proposed that existing carriageway markings are refreshed, as site observations have identified that they are faded in places and would benefit from renewal.
- 5.3 It is therefore recommended that the concerns raised are fed into the review of speed compliance and road safety management by the Stronger Communities and Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Board later this year.
- 6. Matters for Consideration – Petition 2: Investigate the issue of speeding on Dovehouse Lane and in consultation with residents implement their preferred traffic calming measures**
- 6.1 At Full Council, on 8 February 2022, Councillor O’Nyons submitted a petition on behalf of residents, requesting that Solihull Council investigate the issue of speeding on Dovehouse Lane and, in consultation with residents, implement their preferred traffic

calming measures.

7. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

7.1 Dovehouse Lane passes through both the Lyndon and Olton Wards. Whilst two petitions have been received separately, they demonstrate the concerns of the local community regarding vehicle speeds relating to the full route. As such, the two petitions have been considered in section 4 of this report.

8. Reasons for recommending preferred option

8.1 See section 5 for the recommendations for Dovehouse Lane.

9. Matters for Consideration – Petition 3: Investigate suitable road safety options for the junction of Warwick Road and Grange Road and that the yellow hatched “do not enter” box is repainted

9.1 At Full Council, on 8 February 2022, Councillor Grinsell submitted a petition on behalf of residents, requesting that Solihull Council investigate suitable road safety options for the junction of Warwick Road and Grange Road as a matter of urgency. It was also requested that the yellow hatched “do not enter” box is repainted.

10. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

10.1 The junction of A41 Warwick Road at Grange Road is located in close proximity to the junction of Dovehouse Lane, the subject of two petitions. As referenced previously, this is an area which at peak periods sees a high volume of traffic using Warwick Road and surrounding connecting roads, including Grange Road which can lead to traffic congestion and delay.

10.2 Grange Road forms part of the local residential road network, providing connectivity to the A41 Warwick Road. This route has multiple uses including providing access to local employment, educational and recreational facilities as well as serving an important residential function for those properties fronting the road as well as those connecting to it.

10.3 The junction of Grange Road with Warwick Road benefits from a raised zebra crossing to aid pedestrians crossing this busy junction. In addition, a pedestrian refuge located at the mouth of the junction also provides more direct connectivity to the adjacent signal controlled crossing facility on the Warwick Road.

10.4 Warwick Road, at Grange Road and Dovehouse Lane, benefits from two yellow box markings. These improve the flow of traffic along the classified road network by allowing traffic turning right from Warwick Road to do so without delaying traffic. They also provide benefit for traffic emerging from the two side roads, particularly for traffic turning right on to the main road without causing unnecessary delay to traffic on Warwick Road.

10.5 Both the carriageway markings and operation of the zebra crossing have been inspected as part of the process of reviewing the petition request. It is noted that the

carriageway markings at this junction were visible but faded, and whilst the intention of the markings remained clear, it is considered that a refresh of the markings would benefit and aid driver compliance. At the time of the inspection it was also noted that the existing zebra crossing has the older halogen type beacons which are less efficient than current LED versions.

- 10.6 Following a request from ward councillors concerning poor driver behaviour at the junction, mounting the footway in the vicinity of the crossing to avoid queuing, a bollard has been placed in the footway on the western side of the crossing to prevent this practice.
- 10.7 A review of the most recently available full year data (2019-2021 provisional), confirms there have been no recorded incidents resulting in injury to road users at the Warwick Road/Grange Road junction. However, Police did notify the Council of a potential fatal road traffic collision involving a pedestrian trying to cross the Warwick Road last year. This incident is not showing on the CRASH data base at the time the enquiry was made. Enquiries are ongoing to determine the circumstances involved but the outcome is not expected to change the recommendations.
- 10.8 Looking more widely and incorporating the Dovehouse Lane junction with Warwick Road, it is noted that there are 2 recorded incidents during the same 3-year period, both resulting in injuries classified as slight. One of these incidents involved a pedestrian on Dovehouse Lane and is discussed in more detail in section 4.11 of this report. The second incident relates to a loss of control with no other vehicle involved. There is no data to suggest speed was a contributory factor in either incident.

11. Reasons for recommending preferred option

- 11.1 The A41 Warwick Road which this petition relates to forms one of the routes reviewed biannually as part of the Borough wide collision review. The most recent review, conducted in 2021, ranked this route in 5th place in terms of collision rates of the 88 routes surveyed. It was noted the road has an improving collision trend and as such whilst it was recommended that the route should continue to be monitored, no further action was recommended at this time.
- 11.2 As such, when considered alongside the most recently available collision data and site observation, the data does not identify an immediate road safety priority that would justify the reallocation of existing funding at this time.
- 11.3 The existing road markings, including the yellow box markings, are identified on the lining refresh programme and the work will be carried out before the end of October 2022. It is also suggested that the beacons on the existing zebra crossing are added to the upgrade programme for conversion to LED lighting which will improve visibility of the crossing during the day and night.

12. Matters for Consideration – Petition 4: Investigate the issue of speeding on Pierce Avenue and in consultation with residents implement their preferred traffic calming measures

- 12.1 At Full Council, on 8 February 2022, Councillor O’Nyons submitted a petition on behalf of residents, requesting that Solihull Council investigate the issue of speeding on

Pierce Avenue and in consultation with residents implement their preferred traffic calming measures.

13. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

- 13.1 This street has been raised regularly in recent years due to inconsiderate driving behaviours. It is a very straight route, with gradients at either end that can make drivers feel more comfortable travelling faster uphill.
- 13.2 There is though no evidence of an actual road safety problem in this street, based on the currently available collision records provided by West Midlands Police.
- 13.3 The Council's Speed Visor signs have been and will continue to visit this location to help raise awareness of local concerns. This has also been shared with the Police and an active Community Speed Watch group visit this location too, to remind drivers to comply with the 30mph speed limit.

14. Reasons for recommending preferred option

- 14.1 It is recommended that the Council's Speed Awareness programme should continue to be used to support residents' concerns and a copy of recent speed surveys shared with West Midlands Police to help inform their enforcement priorities.

15. Matters for Consideration – Petitions 5: Residents of Grove Avenue request that the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) be amended to remove the right of access for all properties in Grove Road

- 15.1 On 22 April 2022, Mrs Mandy Hall submitted a petition on behalf of residents of Grove Avenue, requesting that the TRO be amended to remove the right of access for all properties in Grove Road.

16. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

- 16.1 Residents have requested an amendment to the existing TRO affecting a residential street in the vicinity of Solihull Hospital, to change access requirements that may no longer be required or appropriate.
- 16.2 Officers continue to work with the residents and Ward Members on this matter and have advised that this request will be referred to the Council's annual TRO prioritisation process for consideration, due to be carried out and reported to this Cabinet decision-making session in November.

17. Reasons for recommending preferred option

- 17.1 The existing TRO has been operating since 1990 and there have been a number of changes in the area. Amending the restrictions may resolve these concerns if

supported by West Midlands Police, who are currently responsible for the enforcement of the existing Prohibition of Driving traffic order.

17.2 It is recommended, therefore, that this request should be referred to the annual TRO prioritisation process to be considered alongside other requests for new or amended parking restrictions which has been operating well for over 10 years.

18. Matters for Consideration – Petitions 6: Request that Solihull Council install public toilets in the area of Shirley Park

18.1 At Full Council, on 8 February 2022, Councillor Allen submitted a petition requesting that Solihull Council install public toilets in the area of Shirley Park. We need people to visit Shirley and the lack of toilet facilities has an impact on elderly, very young, disabled people, our regular shoppers, those we want to attract for the first time and those who take advantage of the many attractions at Shirley Park.

19. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

19.1 Shirley Park reopened in June 2014 following £600,000 of improvement works including improved access, new play equipment, outdoor gym, community artwork, planting, refurbished tennis courts and a dog agility area.

19.2 Public toilets were considered as part of the 2014 improvement project and the decision was made at the time not to install public toilets for the following reasons:

- (a) The cost to both build and maintain a public toilet is significant.
- (b) Due to the relatively small size of Shirley Park and the high number of play, recreational and sports facilities, the park is already operating to capacity and space is at a premium. Therefore, there is very little available space to locate a suitably sized public toilet facility.
- (c) Space and locations are restricted by a lack of underground infrastructure to serve a public toilet facility; this again reduces the possible locations.
- (d) Unfortunately, public toilets attract anti-social behaviours and suffer high levels of vandalism. This increases management costs, maintenance and risk to the general public.

19.3 Parkgate Shopping Centre is immediately adjacent to Shirley Park and forms one of the main park entrances. This Shopping Centre provides a fully accessible public toilet and is signposted by fingerpost signs within Shirley Park.

19.4 Following receipt of this petition, Officers have investigated this matter further and a detailed assessment has been undertaken to understand the feasibility of a public toilet in Shirley Park.

19.5 Whilst Officers understand and recognise the value of public toilets, there remain significant reasons against the development of a public toilet in Shirley Park. These reasons are very similar to those outlined above and are as follows:

- (a) The current estimated capital cost of building a public toilet in Shirley Park is approximately £250,000 to £300,000
- (b) The ongoing revenue costs to maintain a public toilet is approximately £30,000 per annum on an 'open and clean only' basis and £70,000 per annum for an attended service.
- (c) The relatively small size of Shirley Park and the high number of play, recreational and sports facilities, remains a challenge in terms of the minimal available space to site a public toilet. Shirley Park is surrounded by residential property, and this is a significant consideration in terms of locating a public toilet. Local residents may oppose any plans to site a public toilet facility near to their property boundary.
- (d) Based on recent site assessments, the only suitable site for a public toilet in Shirley Park would be the site of the old football changing rooms in the hardstanding area at the rear of Grenville Road. This site is highlighted in Appendix 1.

Officers believe this site to be inappropriate due to the proximity of the residential properties on Grenville Road. This was a key reason for demolishing the previous football changing facility and Officers would advise against this location.

- (e) Public toilets remain a high risk in terms of attracting anti-social behaviour and suffer high levels of vandalism.
- (f) Public toilet provision remains in place at Parkgate Shirley Shopping Centre. This facility is easily accessible from the park and is signposted by fingerpost signs located within Shirley Park.

- 19.6 Based on the information outlined above, Officers recommend that public toilets are not installed in Shirley Park. However, Officers believe there are pop up public toilet provision opportunities that could be explored to assist with periods of peak footfall, particularly when key events are carried out such as summer holiday events, sports activities and key attractions like the Shirley Donkey Derby.
- 19.7 Shirley Park has a very successful, well established Friends of Shirley Park community group. This group are incredibly proactive in terms of driving forward improvements and the ongoing management of Shirley Park. This group would provide an important community input into the idea of future pop-up public toilet provision, advising on the type of facility required and when this facility might be needed to coincide with key events.
- 19.8 Therefore, Officer recommend the concept of pop-up public toilet provision is explored further in conjunction with the Friends of Shirley Park community group and this concept is trialled in Shirley Park as and when required to support times of peak footfall related to events.
- 19.9 If successful, the concept of pop-up public toilet provision would also be considered for other parks, based on need in relation to key events.

- 19.10 **Matters for Consideration – Petition 7: Request to rename Elmdon Park Beacon to The Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee**
- 19.11 At Full Council, on 5 April 2022, Councillor Clements submitted a petition requesting that Elmdon Park Beacon be renamed to The Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee.
- 19.12 **What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?**
- 19.13 Elmdon Park Beacon, named 'Beacon Europe', was erected to commemorate the formation of the Single European Market, being first lit by the Mayor of Solihull Councillor Brian Chapple on 31st December 1992. Beacon Europe was organised by Solihull Scout Group Council and sponsored by Solihull Council, Laing Midlands, Land Rover and British Gas.
- 19.14 The key organisations involved with the original installation of the beacon in 1992 - Solihull Scouts and Jaguar Land Rover were contacted on 2nd February 2022 regarding the request to rename the beacon. This was a result of initial informal enquiries prior to the petition to determine whether there would be support of a name change. As of 25 April 2022, no response has been received from either organisation, aside from acknowledgements that the emails had been received.
- 19.15 Officers believe there have been no other requests to change the name of the beacon. There has been some social media dialogue regarding this request and overall, the proposal received mixed feedback with very little conclusive support and an equal amount of negativity.
- 19.16 The Elmdon Beacon has stood as a symbol of the Single European Market for 30 years. Whilst there is an appreciation that there is now a very different position in terms of the European Single Market, the Beacon still stands as an historic monument representing a specific event in history. Officers believe renaming such monuments could be regarded negatively by the local and wider community and be publicly challenged.
- 19.17 **Reasons for recommending preferred option**
- 19.18 Officers support the request to mark and celebrate the Queens Jubilee in Elmdon Park and therefore recommend a new landmark is created in the park, branded 'The Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee'.
- 19.19 As part of the Councils commitment to plant 250,000 trees, Officers recommend the planting of a 70 tree orchard at the top of Elmdon Park, near to the beacon, to be named 'The Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee'. This orchard would provide 70 trees, to mark each year of Her Majesty the Queens service.
- 19.20 Planting would take place as part of the forthcoming winter season, between November 2022 and February 2023. A suitable naming ceremony could be arranged with the local community and Elmdon Park Support Group.

20. Matters for Consideration – Petition 8: Start footpath improvements around Barn Lane Recreation Ground to link up all the entrances/existing footpaths thereby providing a footpath around the entire park and grassed area

20.1 At Full Council, on 5 April 2022, Councillor O’Nyons submitted a petition requesting that Solihull Council start footpath improvements around Barn Lane Recreation Ground to link up all the entrances/existing footpaths thereby providing a footpath around the entire park and grassed area.

21. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

21.1 Officers welcome the request to install a footpath around Barn Lane Recreation Ground. Similar projects have been delivered in other Parks, notably the project working with friends of Damson Park to create a circular footpath around Damson Park.

21.2 It is important to highlight the installation of a footpath around Barn Lane Recreational Ground would be a significant project. Officers estimate a need to install approximately 330 metres of footpath at 1.8 metres wide.

21.3 Based on previous projects, the cost of a 330 metre self-binding stone footpath is approximately £45,000 and a tarmac footpath approximately £65,000. This is a significant cost and Officers would seek to secure external grant funding to deliver this type of project before utilising core Council funding.

21.4 It is important this project is progressed with the local community. Barn Lane Recreational Ground does not currently have an established friends of park group. Officers suggest the first step is to work with Ward Members to generate community interest and help develop a friends of park group before progressing the footpath project.

21.5 An established community group could work with Officers to secure external grant funding to deliver this project.

21.6 Once suitable community engagement is secured, Officers will work with Ward Members and Community representatives to progress external funding grants for the footpath installation project.

21.7 The installation of a footpath would need to take into consideration impact on current football pitch provision and existing planting, including trees and meadow.

22. Reasons for recommending preferred option

22.1 There is a significant cost involved in this type of project. and it is important that the authority explore alternative funding options. External grant funding is a viable option, and this has previously funded the delivery of similar projects such as Damson Park circular footpath. Funding is accessible through the right level of community support and ownership.

22.2 We have a proven record in Solihull of positive community driven parks and the value of this type of community ownership is clear both in terms of improved services,

investment, and community consultation with regards to park facilities. Therefore, this project provides an opportunity to encourage and secure this type of community involvement.

23. Implications and Considerations

23.1 State how the proposals in this report contribute to the priorities in the [Council Plan](#):

Priority:	Contribution:
<p>Economy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Revitalising our towns and local centres. 2. Deliver UK Central (UKC) and maximise the opportunities of HS2. 3. Increase the supply, quality and energy efficiency of housing, especially affordable and social housing. 	<p>The Council's priorities have been taken into consideration when making the recommendations contained within this report. It is considered that there are no direct implications as a result of the recommendations of this report.</p>
<p>Environment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Enhance Solihull's natural and physical environment. 5. Improve Solihull's air quality. 6. Reduce Solihull's net carbon emissions. 	<p>The Council's priorities have been taken into consideration when making the recommendations contained within this report and there are no significant environmental implications.</p>
<p>People and Communities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Take action to improve life chances and health outcomes in our most disadvantaged communities. 8. Enable communities to thrive. 9. Sustainable, quality care and support for adults & children with complex needs. 	<p>Safety and accessibility is at the heart of everything the Council does when considering making changes to how the public highway operates. This includes the safety of children, young people and our most vulnerable road user groups.</p>
<p>10. Promote employee wellbeing</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>

23.2 Consultation and Scrutiny:

23.2.1 The matters arising from these petitions have not been subject to review by any of the Council's Scrutiny Boards. With any proposed changes the associated statutory consultation process will be followed.

23.3 Financial implications:

23.3.1 The costs associated with managing the petitions are funded from within existing service core Council budgets.

23.3.2 Any financial implications associated with proposed actions identified in the report will be prioritised and managed within the appropriate existing service revenue and capital budgets.

23.3.3 For potential schemes where there could be alternative external funding options the Council will work closely with the key stakeholders to identify and review future opportunities available for these.

23.4 Legal implications:

23.4.1 None because of this report.

23.5 Risk implications:

23.5.1 The cost associated with managing the petitions are funded from within the existing Highways Services staff revenue budget.

23.6 Any financial implications associated with proposed actions identified in the report will be prioritised and managed within the appropriate existing Highways Services revenue and capital budgets.

23.7 Equality implications:

23.7.1 None because of the recommendations of this report.

23.8 Linkages to our work with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), the Local Enterprise Partnership or the Birmingham & Solihull Integrated Care System (ICS):

23.8.1 None associated with the recommendations of this report.

24. List of appendices referred to

24.1 Petition Update July 2022 – Appendix 1.

24.2 Shirley Park Petition Location Map – Appendix 2

25. Background papers used to compile this report

25.1 The petition submitted in reference to this report.

26. List of other relevant documents

26.1 None.