

Meeting date: 16 February 2021
Report to: Cabinet Member for Environment & Highways
Subject/report title: **PETITION SUMMARY**
Report from: Head of Highway Management
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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

1. Purpose of Report

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

2. Decision(s) recommended

- 2.1 The Cabinet Member is asked to:

- (a) Note the petitions received and the proposed programme for investigating and responding to them as detailed in Appendix A, and
- (b) Agree the proposed outcomes for the individual petitions as detailed in the report.

3. Matters for Consideration – Petition 1, request to consider the ongoing issues with inconsiderate parking and dangerous driving (excessive speed) on Stanway Road, Cropthorne Road, Cropthorne Gardens, Welford Road and Clarence Gardens. Petition 2, request for a road safety audit on Stanway Road

- 3.1 At the Environment and Highways decision session on 25 November 2020, Mr Antony Lowe submitted a petition on behalf of local residents calling on the Council to

consider the ongoing issues with inconsiderate parking and dangerous driving (excessive speed) on Stanway Road, Cropthorne Road, Cropthorne Gardens, Welford Road and Clarence Grove (the Stanway Road estate).

- 3.2 Subsequently, at Full Council on 8 December 2020, Councillor Karen Grinsell submitted a petition on behalf of local residents calling on the Council to undertake a road safety audit and full consultation with residents of Stanway Road, Welford Road and Cropthorne Roads.
- 3.3 In reporting the submission of the two petitions at the January 5th Environment and Highways Cabinet Member Decision Session, it was agreed that due to the similar nature of the matters raised and requested interventions within the two petitions that they should be reviewed and responded to together.

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

- 4.1 Stanway Road and the adjoining roads of Welford and Cropthorne Road are local residential roads, which form part of the public highway network. Located adjacent to the A34 Stratford Road and Solihull Road, they are situated close to the local retail facilities in Shirley Town Centre.
- 4.2 There are only two points of vehicular access from the Stratford Road and Solihull Road, serving approximately 500 residential properties. Based on an average 8 vehicular trips generated per property, the typical daily traffic flow is expected to be in the region of 4,000 vehicle movements per day for a normal residential street.
- 4.3 Residents have access to excellent public transport facilities which are located on Stratford Road and Solihull Road, a 5 to 10 minutes' walk away.
- 4.4 The Stanway Road estate forms part of the Winter Gritting Programme and therefore, is recorded as being "traffic sensitive" during winter months only. Stanway Road, in the vicinity of its junction with Stratford Road, is subject to Red Route 'no stopping' restrictions. A short section of double yellow lines then prevents parking around all approaches to the roundabout junction with Stanway Road, Welford Road and Cropthorne Roads. The rest of the estate has no parking restrictions which results in an amount of commuter, retail and residential parking taking place mainly to the south of the area.
- 4.5 Whilst the location of these roads does afford residents excellent access and connectivity to Shirley and Solihull Town Centres, as well as Birmingham, the layout and permeability of the roads does mean that they are easily accessible for passing traffic, with reports from residents that the road is used by through traffic, particularly at peak times.
- 4.6 Reports from local residents supported by the two petitions submitted highlight concerns over vehicle speed, failure to stop at road junctions and inappropriate parking, all of which it is suggested creates a road safety risk for road users and residents.

- 4.7 In response to these issues, which have been raised with the support of Local Ward Councillors, officers have over recent months taken various steps in order to explore and address residents' concerns over both speeding and inappropriate parking including:
- (a) Installation of a vehicle actuated mini speed visor (speed aware) device and posters to encourage improved driver compliance with the speed limit.
 - (b) Engagement with the takeaway store at the Stratford Road junction in response to reports of inappropriate parking including footway obstruction and subsequent installation of footway bollards to prevent future obstruction.
 - (c) Pavement protection bollards have also been installed to improve visibility on Crophorne Road in the vicinity of the bend.
 - (d) Increased levels of parking enforcement to improve compliance with the existing restrictions. This resulted in 114 Penalty Charge Notices being issued to motorists in 2020.
 - (e) Re-marking of existing junction and installation of a traffic island to encourage motorists to stay on the correct side of the street at the junction of Stanway Road with Welford Road (planned for installation from April 2021 and endorsed at the meeting with Mr Lowe (lead petitioner)).
- 4.8 Whilst it is anticipated that these measures will have a positive impact on the issues raised, it is clear that residents continue to have concerns, particularly in relation to driver behaviour and speed of "rat running" traffic.
- 4.9 Although an investigation into the collision history of these three roads shows that in the most recent three years (2017 to 2019 where full data is available) there have been no reported 'personal injury collisions', it is suggested that this location be referred to a piece of work that will look at the Council's priorities for "Low Traffic Neighbourhoods". This is an update of the former 20mph speed limit zones, that seeks to reduce the impact of extraneous traffic in residential areas. The outputs from this piece of work will be used to inform a further report on this matter by the end of the year. This will ensure that any preferred schemes can then be considered for the available capital funding in 2022/23 financial year.
- 4.10 Safety at the A34 Stratford Road and Stanway Road does however remain a concern, with 7 'personal injury collisions' occurring at or within 50m of this junction in the same 3-year period. There may also have been a number of other less serious 'damage only' collisions at this junction that add to the disruption and unnecessary delay on this section of the West Midlands Key Route Network, which Transport for West Midlands focus their resources on, as such incidents can have an impact on the reliability of local public transport journey times.
- 4.11 Therefore, as a result of working in partnership with the West Midlands Combined Authority, £15,900 has been secured to fund an experimental Traffic Regulation Order scheme that will remove several right turn manoeuvres and prevent some of the through traffic from being able to travel to the Stanway Road estate, as shown on the plan in Appendix A.

- 4.12 Due to current traffic conditions, which are leading to high vehicle speed on the network generally, and concerns regarding “car cruising” taking place in the evenings in this vicinity, it is recommended that an experimental order is progressed immediately after residents have been informed of the scheme and its potential benefits. This will then trigger the required 6-month consultation period, whereby the local community can feedback their views to help the Council decide whether the temporary scheme should be removed, changed or made permanent.
- 4.13 The scheme will involve the closure of the gap in the central reservation, as shown in Appendix A, with standard temporary traffic management measures, which could be removed at short notice in the event of un-foreseen matters arising. This type of experimental traffic order can be in place for up to 18 months, with the first 6 months used to gather feedback from local stakeholders. Cabinet Member will be asked to consider removing, amending or making the scheme permanent, which will depend on the feedback received and evidence gathered, which must be no later than 15 months after the temporary restrictions were introduced.
- 4.14 This scheme, if implemented permanently, may also help to resolve some of the residents’ concerns expressed in both petitions.

5. Reasons for recommending preferred option

- 5.1 The list of interventions detailed in paragraph 4.7 have and will continue to help to raise awareness of residents’ concerns. These concerns will also be shared with colleagues at West Midlands Police so that they can consider carrying out local speed enforcement on the Stanway Road estate.
- 5.2 Whilst these measures on their own may help, it is recommended that this location should also be put forward for consideration as part of our Low Traffic Neighbourhoods project. Later this year, some example sites will be used to help identify the council’s priorities for this potential new work stream. As shared in this year’s Resources and Priorities report, there is already high demand for the capital works funding and therefore, it will also be necessary to develop a prioritisation process, along similar lines to that used successfully for both the Traffic Regulation Order and Community Liveability programmes.
- 5.3 As we emerge from the COVID movement restrictions and traffic movements return to new normal levels, traffic surveys and other related data will be collected to help inform the process. It may also be appropriate to engage with local residents to understand their views on the types of measures and interventions that they would support being deployed in the future. Due to the difficulties with face to face engagement at the present time, the Commonplace on line portal will be an ideal tool for this process.
- 5.4 However, the highest priority at the present time, is considered to be taking action to reduce the number of road traffic collisions at the A34 Stratford Road / Stanway Road junction. It is therefore proposed to implement the experimental traffic order to close the gap in the central reservation of the A34 at its junction with Stanway Road. This will not only improve safety but also reduce the amount of traffic “rat running” through the residential estate.

- 5.5 This scheme will also have the added environmental benefits associated with reducing congestion, improving air quality and general health and well-being benefits associated with encouraging more walking and cycling activity.
- 5.6 The purpose of introducing the measures proposed as a trial initially will enable an evidence led approach to be adopted, collecting feedback and data to demonstrate the impact and value before any permanent measures are put in place.
- 5.7 The use of the Commonplace portal will ensure that local residents and stakeholders can be engaged, feed into and be kept up to date with the impact of scheme which, if successful, has the potential to address many of the concerns raised within the two petitions.
- 5.8 Being externally funded and using semi-permanent measures, the proposed intervention can be trialled with limited risk and cost, both in terms of initial set up and ongoing maintenance.
- 5.9 It is also proposed to set up an allocation of £20,000, funded through the 2021/22 Community Liveability Programme, which will be used to investigate and develop the Low Traffic Neighbourhoods scheme identification and prioritisation process. This proposal is included in the Resources and Priorities report being considered elsewhere on this meeting's agenda.

6. Implications and Considerations

- 6.1 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. UK Central (UKC) and maximising the opportunities of HS2. 3. Increase the supply 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.</p>
<p>Environment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Enhance Solihull's natural 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.</p>
<p>People and Communities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Take action to improve life chances in our most disadvantaged communities. 8. Enable communities to thrive. 	<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>9. Sustainable, quality, affordable provision for adults & children with complex needs.</p>	<p>Any specific risks identified during the detailed design process will either be designed out or mitigating measures proposed which may also be subject to an independent Road Safety Audit process</p>
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6.2 Consultation and Scrutiny:

6.2.1 The matters arising from these petitions have not been subject to review by any of the Council's Scrutiny Boards. With any proposed changes requiring the support of a Traffic Regulation Order the associated statutory 21 day consultation process will be followed at the appropriate time.

6.3 Financial implications:

6.3.1 The cost of the measures set out in section 4.7 of this report will be met from within existing Highway Services revenue budgets.

6.3.2 £15,900 has been secured from Transport for West Midlands in order to trial the introduction of a proposed gap closure of the A34 at its junction with Stanway Road. This funding will enable the introduction of the trial as set out within the body of this report.

6.3.3 In order to support the trial referenced above, it is recommended that a £20,000 allocation is sought from the 2021/22 Community Liveability programme to enable any measures associated with the Low Traffic Neighbourhoods as set out within section 5.9 of this report. As such this element will be managed within and as part of our overall existing capital budgets.

6.3.4 There are no other financial implications as a result of the recommendations contained in this report.

6.4 Legal implications:

6.4.1 None as a consequence of this report.

6.5 Risk implications:

6.5.1 The Corporate Risk Management Approach has been complied with to identify and assess the significant risk associated with this decision/project. This includes (but is not limited to), financial, political, legislation and reputation risks.

The Approach is not intended to eliminate all risks and not all the risks identified can be managed all of the time. Also, risks will still exist that have not been identified.

However, based on the information provided, no significant risks have been identified.

6.6 Equality implications:

6.6.1 None as a consequence of this report. Specific Fair Treatment Assessment will be considered while investigating each petition.

7. List of appendices referred to

7.1 Appendix A – Stanway Road location plan.

7.2 Appendix B - Petition Update Summary table February 2021.

8. Background papers used to compile this report

8.1 None.

9. List of other relevant documents

9.1 None.