

**Meeting date:** 5 SEPTEMBER 2023

**Report to:** Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure

**Report title:** PETITION SUMMARY

**Report from:** Paul Tovey - 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
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**Public/private report:** Public

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

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**1. Executive Summary**

1.1 To provide a formal response to three petitions received for the Environment and Infrastructure Portfolio, relating to:

- (a) Hillborough Road
- (b) Cycle Lane Meriden
- (c) Whitefields Road proposed crossing

## **2. Decision(s) Recommended**

2.1 The Cabinet Member is asked to:

(a) Note the current position regarding petitions received for this Portfolio, as set out in Appendix 1

(b) Agree the preferred recommendations within the report.

## **3. Matters for Consideration Petition 1: Request that the Council look into the parking issues on Hillborough Rd, given concerns over safety due to double parking.**

3.1 At Full Council on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2023, Councillors Carthew, Gibbin and Karen Grinsell submitted a petition on behalf of residents, friends, and families of residents of Sir Josiah Mason Trust requesting that the Council investigate the parking issues on Hillborough Road, given concerns over safety due to double parking.

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

4.1 Hillborough Road is located off Hartshill Road and is predominately private, forming part of the Sir Joshua Mason Trust Olton Complex. The first 12m of the road, at its junction with Hartshill Road, fall within the boundary of the public highway. The Council's remit is limited to the public highway with any parking activity in the remainder of Hillborough Road being a matter for the managing agent of the Trust.

4.2 Hartshill Road has an initial width of approximately 5.2m which narrows after its junction with Hillborough Road to below 5m. This first section of road has limited frontages and is primarily a means of access to Hillborough Road and the residential properties at the eastern end. The road is a cul-de-sac and terminates at a turning head with access to a private garage area for adjacent properties. Properties on the road typically have access to off street parking for either 1 or 2 vehicles. Site observations show that whilst on street parking does occur within this residential section of the road, including pavement parking, this is typically generated by homeowners and their visitors.

4.3 At present, parking restrictions on the road are limited to double yellow line protection at its junction with Lincoln Road which extends 20m into the road and is intended to prevent obstructive parking. This is also the location of the Aura Dance Studios, a well-attended facility and trip generator for the area. The site has two private car parks one at the front and the other at the rear, which provide capacity for normal operations. It is noted that the studio encourages visitors to use the onsite parking on its website.

4.4 The Civil Enforcement Team have visited the locations three times since May; on each occasion no parking in contravention of these restrictions was observed. However, it is noted that at peak periods the current unrestricted nature of the road enables on street parking and that the width of the road may encourage footway parking, which could be obstructive to other road users and pedestrians.

## **5. Reasons for recommending preferred option**

5.1 Noting the concerns, it is recommended that Hartshill Road and Hillborough Road are referred to the annual Traffic Regulation Order review process for consideration as part of the 2024/25 works programme, which will enable the request for parking restrictions to be fully considered. In the interim, it is proposed that officers contact Aura Dance Studios and ask that visitors are reminded to use the site's private car park and park

considerately to minimise use of the public highway network.

**6. Matters for Consideration Petition 2: Request that the Orcas be removed from the cycle lane between Meriden to Millisons Wood.**

6.1 At Full Council on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2023, Councillor Delaney submitted a petition on behalf of residents, requesting that the Orcas be removed from the cycle lane between Meriden to Millisons Wood.

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

7.1 The Birmingham Road Cycle Route scheme was implemented as part of the Department for Transport (DfT) Tranche 3 Active Travel Fund. This connected the residential areas around Millisons Wood to Meriden Village. The scheme was initially designed at the request of the community and the Parish Council as a school bus service no longer operated and the new facility would provide an option to travel more sustainably. The previous on-carriageway cycling provision was narrow and unsegregated, encouraging high vehicle speeds and acted as a deterrent to cycling.

7.2 Appropriate protection for cyclists from motor vehicles on roads which are above the 40mph speed is required. This can be in the form of fully kerbed cycle tracks, stepped cycle tracks or light segregation such as Orca kerbs on Birmingham Road.

7.3 Since installation of the cycle lane, it has been reported that the narrowing of the traffic lanes has resulted in an accelerated deterioration of the road surface, causing rutting and potholes. These defects are being addressed in this year's resurfacing programme and remedial works are programmed to take place in November, giving time to resolve other problems.

7.4 The Orca kerbs have been reported to be perceived hazards. The build-up of dirt, salt and spray can conceal the reflective features, creating a safety hazard for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians.

7.5 A conventional sweeper struggles to sweep and keep the lane clean, often straddling the Orca kerb and damaging the belly of the sweeper unit. A mini or footway sweeper has been used but is not the most efficient and cost-effective means due to detritus and leaf fall.

**8. Reasons for recommending preferred option.**

8.1 The options are being considered as part of a separate report on this project elsewhere on the agenda. The recommended decision is to remove the Orcas and replace with a different system of soft segregation.

**9. Matters for Consideration Petition 3: Object the proposed traffic calming measures and establishment of pedestrian crossing Whitefields Road.**

9.1 Councillor Marwa submitted a petition on behalf of residents objecting to the proposed traffic calming measures and establishment of pedestrian crossing on Whitefields Road.

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

10.1 Whitefields Road Walking Improvement Scheme provides surfacing improvements and widening of existing grass verges and the provision / upgrade of two crossing facilities. The improvements are being funded from the recent DfT Active Travel Fund allocation.

10.2 At this meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2022, the Active Travel Fund allocation was approved, which included improvements to the Whitefields Road area and provided

delegated authority to proceed to authorised officers.

- 10.3 The traffic calming measures, including the new zebra crossing on Whitefields Road outside St. Augustine's School, benefits the wider community and helps promote the Council's sustainable travel, road safety and air quality targets. As part of the School Crossing Patrol (SCP) service review carried out in 2018, it was agreed that opportunities to upgrade school crossing sites to formal pedestrian crossing facilities should be explored, as this improves service resilience and supports the community.
- 10.4 Officers wrote to residents on 17th May 2023 seeking comments on the proposals by 26th May 2023. The schools in the area were consulted on 22nd June 2023 and a formal statutory notice was advertised to construct a raised hump traffic calming measure, commission/upgrade two pedestrian crossing facilities on Whitefield Road (near to Grandborough Drive) and to replace the existing Toucan crossing to a Parallel crossing.
- 10.5 Such changes to the highway require notice being served under the powers of the Highways Act 1980. However, there is no requirement associated with the redeployment of a SCP, which is a non-statutory service. On 10th July 2023, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure approved the decision to redeploy the existing SCP from Whitefields Road to Dingle Lane.
- 10.6 Officers have investigated the objections and concerns raised by the petition and concluded that the traffic calming measures, and pedestrian crossing improvements provide long-term permanent benefits that promote walking and cycling journeys for the community, including children attending the local schools.

## 11. Reasons for recommending preferred option.

- 11.1 The provision of the new humped zebra crossing facility at this location will provide a long-term permanent facility to make crossing the road at this location easier at all times of the day, including weekends. This has the potential to benefit a wider portion of the local community. The new raised facility will both encourage driver compliance by providing a traffic calming feature, but will also assist pedestrians, particularly pushchair, wheelchair and other wheeled users to cross the road.
- 11.2 The provision of the new crossing provides an opportunity to redeploy the existing SCP to a new location which will assist the whole route journey for children attending nearby schools. Whilst we note that a suggestion has been made to retain the SCP, in addition to the new crossing, this is not possible. Our experience has shown that the SCP operating on zebra type crossings can send mixed messages to drivers which may result in reduced compliance when the patrol is not operating. It is the Council's policy not to provide an SCP where a formal crossing facility exists.

## 12. Implications and Considerations

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

Priority:	Contribution:
<p>People and Communities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Improving outcomes for children and young people in Solihull.</li><li>2. Good quality, responsive, and dignified care and support for Adults in Solihull when they need it.</li></ol>	<p>Safety and accessibility are 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>

Priority:	Contribution:
3. Take action to improve life chances and health outcomes in our most disadvantaged communities.	
<p><b>Economy:</b></p> <p>4. Develop and promote the borough's economy, revitalise our town and local centres and maximise the opportunities of UK Central and HS2,</p> <p>5. Increase the supply of affordable and social housing that is environmentally sustainable.</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 because of the recommendations of this report.
<p><b>Environment:</b></p> <p>6. Enhance our natural environment, improve air quality and reduce 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.

## 12.2 Consultation and Scrutiny:

12.2.1 The matters arising from this petition have not been the subject to review the Council's Scrutiny Boards. With any proposed changes, the associated statutory consultation process will be undertaken.

## 12.3 Corporate Parenting Implications:

12.3.1 None associated with the recommendations contained in this report.

## 12.4 Financial implications:

12.4.1 The costs associated with managing petitions are funded within existing service budgets.

12.4.2 Any financial implications associated with proposed and agreed actions identified in this report will be prioritised and managed within the service revenue and capital budgets.

## 12.5 Legal implications:

12.5.1 None because of the recommendations in this report.

## 12.6 Risk implications, including Risk Appetite:

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

12.6.2 The approach is not intended to eliminate all risks and not all 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.

## 12.7 Equality implications:

12.7.1 None because of the recommendations of this report.

## 12.8 Linkages to our work with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and /

or the Birmingham & Solihull Integrated Care System (ICS):

12.8.1 None.

**13. List of appendices referred to.**

13.1 Petitions Update September 2023 – Appendix 1.

**14. Background papers used to compile this report.**

14.1 None.

**15. List of Other Relevant Documents.**

15.1 None.