
Meeting: Traffic Management Meeting
Date: 20 October 2009
Subject: Petition to implement width restrictions in Billington Road Leighton Buzzard

Report of: Basil Jackson

Summary: To report to the portfolio holder for safer and stronger communities that a petition has been received from residents in the Billington Road area requesting traffic management measures and to recommend that this be noted and the lead petitioner be advised that proposals to change traffic management on Billington Road will be included as part of the wider Leighton Buzzard Exemplar Town process.

Contact Officer: Nick Chapman
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Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: Leighton Linslade.

Function of: Council

**Reason for urgency
(if appropriate)**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

that the contents of the petition be noted and the lead petitioner be advised that proposals to change traffic management on Billington Road will be included as part of the wider Leighton Buzzard Exemplar Town process.

Background

1. In January 2009 a petition was sent to Bedfordshire County Council on behalf of residents of Billington Road, Leighton Buzzard regarding the need for a width restriction with priority working on Billington Road Leighton Buzzard in the belief this will reduce vehicle speeds. In accordance with the process in operation at that time an acknowledgement was sent to the lead petitioner.
2. The procedure in place at that time was for Bedfordshire Highways staff to undertake investigation into the grounds stated on the petition and to report the petition together with a proposed course of action to the first available meeting of the Bedfordshire County Council Development Control Committee.

3. Due to the changes in local government arrangements in Bedfordshire that were taking place at the time there was no opportunity to do this within the life of the outgoing County Council and the arrangements for presenting to members of the new Central Bedfordshire Council were not available at that time, and indeed for some time subsequently.
4. This petition was reported to Executive Committee on the 15 September 2009 and referred back for a further report.
5. Leighton Buzzard is currently in the process of considerable residential development as part of the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Development Area. Part of the brief for this extensive work is that it be accompanied by measures targeted at reducing car ownership and encouraging modal shift in the way residents travel in and around the town. This is under the general heading of the Leighton Buzzard Public Transport Exemplar Project.
6. The underlying principles of this project relate to the provision of a positively advantageous environment for public transport and walking and cycling to encourage a reduction in the use of cars for local journeys. This will build on the traffic management schemes already implemented and the current work of the Cycle Demonstration Town staff working with designers to improve the cycle infrastructure.
7. The exemplar works will look at further improvements right across the area linking the major new development to the town centre and the rail station. The measures implemented will be designed to considerably restrict the current level of vehicular use of Billington Road particularly to through traffic with the exception of buses and cycles. The aim being to make Billington Road more accessible and friendly for residents.
8. Currently Central Bedfordshire officers are still in the process of working with the developers to produce a comprehensive design brief for this work. Implementation of works is currently targeted to be by 2012 but the current economic downturn may affect this.
9. It would therefore be inappropriate to move forward with relatively costly traffic management works at this time ahead of the finalisation of the comprehensive design brief.

Conclusion and Next Steps

10. The most appropriate course of action is to advise the petitioners that designs to amend the traffic management of Billington Road are likely to be undertaken this year for wider consultation and future implementation. This will depend on funding through development and this in itself will depend on the rate of progress of the development. This may be reviewed should the timescale for the wider scheme be revised.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

This work is in accordance with the Councils objectives for Environment and Economy in that it looks at sustainable communities, sustainable local travel and the use of local shops and amenities.

Financial:

The cost of design will be met from within existing budgets.

Legal:

None as a result of this report.

Risk Management:

None as a result of this report.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

None as a result of this report.

Equalities/Human Rights:

None as a result of this report.

Community Development/Safety:

Will ultimately improve this

Sustainability:

Will ultimately improve this

Background Papers

Copy of petition