
Meeting: Traffic Management Meeting
Date: 26 January 2011
Subject: Petition – Request for Traffic Calming Lowther Road Dunstable
Report of: Basil Jackson
Summary: The purpose of this report is to present a petition received from residents of Dunstable seeking Traffic Calming measures in Lowther Road Dunstable and to seek approval for a response.

Contact Officer: Nick Chapman
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Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: Dunstable Downs and Watling
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

Financial:

There is provision within the proposed Local Transport Plan for 2011/12 to design and implement local traffic management measures in Lowther Road.

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 Safety:

Revised road layouts and traffic calming would improve safety

Sustainability:

None as a result of this report

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities and Healthier Lifestyles is requested to note the contents of the report and agree a response to the lead petitioner to inform him of that.

Background and Information.

1. In December 2010 a petition signed by 289 people was received by Central Bedfordshire Council requesting “an increase in traffic calming measures to reduce vehicle speeding at this location”. The road in question being Lowther Road Dunstable.
2. Historically Lowther Road has been highlighted by local residents, local police and elected members over a number of years as a road where the speeds of vehicles cause concern.
3. Additionally the road, along with Langdale Road and Meadway, form the basis of a regular cut through for traffic wishing to avoid the A5 and the congestion upon it through the centre of Dunstable. There is no doubt that speeding occurs on this route.
4. The collision record for Lowther Road for the last five years shows that there have been seven individual incidents recorded. All the recorded injury collisions except one have resulted in slight injury only and the other included one fatality, one serious injury and one slight injury.
5. The fatality and one other collision were single vehicle collisions and relate directly to loss of control by the driver and the inappropriate use of speed. Both occurred in the vicinity of the same location on a bend in the road.
6. One incident also occurred when a vehicle was attempting to avoid police pursuit.
7. The remainder of the incidents generally relate to driver error rather than any indication of speed as a contributory factor.
8. In Lowther Road the majority of the drivers using the route will be either local residents or regular commuters. The locals are therefore aware of the type and layout of the road and will be aware that the speed limit is 30mph. Commuters typically are more focused on their destination than the environment through which they are driving and are generally in a hurry.
9. The road, is residential in nature, is generally in reasonable condition with houses set back behind a footway and verge with front gardens. The alignment is generally such that drivers of modern vehicles have no difficulty negotiating it at speeds at and beyond the posted speed limit. Additionally the stretch fronting Ardley Hill Lower School is straight and includes a dip.
10. The frontage of Ardley Hill Lower School has a large hedge fronting the highway.

11. In 2003 the Bedfordshire County Council's consultant Babbie produced designs for a traffic calming scheme in response to these problems. Proposals were taken to public exhibition in Ardley Hill Lower School in January 2004.
12. The scheme exhibited included pairs of speed cushions over the entire length of the road, mini roundabouts at Oldhill Road and Langdale Road and a new cycleway between Oldhill and Langdale Rd.
13. The outcome of the consultation was that the mini roundabouts were implemented at Oldhill and Langdale but it is understood that the speed cushions did not receive sufficient public support to be implemented.
14. Additionally on road cycle lanes have been implemented from Oldhill to Langdale Road and a pedestrian crossing at Ardley Hill School.
15. Despite the works implemented concern has continued from residents, members and the local police at the speeding that occurs.

The Way Forward

16. Dunstable has a number of issues relating to the way in which through traffic on the A5 uses the residential areas in an attempt to avoid queues on the trunk road at peak times.
17. There are, as a result, several established 'rat runs' through predominantly residential areas that also contain both local shopping centres and schools. There is also evidence from the local police officers that in off-peak times some local drivers also systematically break the speed limit.
18. Eventually the construction of the M1-A5 relief road will permit the current A5 to be de-trunked and permit a comprehensive traffic management system to be implemented to take advantage of reduced flows to all roads in Dunstable. This is currently still some years away however and in the short term it is necessary to explore alternative ways to both reduce the attractiveness of the 'rat runs' to through traffic and to reduce the speed of whatever traffic chooses to use those routes to a more acceptable and appropriate speed.
19. Central Bedfordshire Council is currently preparing its new Local Transport Plan. This has established priority areas for highway expenditure and will set delivery targets based upon locally derived needs. One of the priority areas is Dunstable and as a result over the next three years a considerable share of the available highways integrated scheme budget will be allocated to the Dunstable and Houghton Regis areas.
20. Following consultations with elected members the Lowther Road/Langdale Road route has been included as a priority scheme for 2011/12 within the proposed forward work programme.

21. As a result of this and provided that the draft programme is approved proposals will be brought forward to design physical measures to manage the speeds of vehicles on this length of road. These proposals will call on a variety of traffic management tools including the principles of using shared spaces to promote better behaviour from drivers.
22. Subject to approval of the programme design works will commence in April 2011 and the resulting designs will be made available for public consultation at the earliest possible occasion. It is expected that works should be delivered on site during the 2011/12 financial year.

Header page of Petition



SLOW DOWN ON LOWTHER ROAD!!!

This petition will be presented to Central Bedfordshire Council to reinforce our concerns regarding the speeding vehicles which continually travel up and down Lowther Road. Residents of Lowther Road have already witnessed numerous accidents including one fatality. Lowther Road is also a main walking route for many of the local schools which also present a risk when vehicles are travelling at speeds in excess of 30mph.

We the undersigned would like to see an increase in traffic calming measures to reduce vehicles speeding at this location.