



## Highways Committee

23rd July 2008

### Report from the Director of Transportation

For Action

Wards Affected:  
Brondesbury Park and Queens Park

**Report Title: Petitions against Traffic Calming Proposals on Mount Pleasant Road and Aylestone Avenue as part of the Aylestone Avenue 20mph Zone.**

Forward Plan Ref: E&C\_08/09 – 005

#### 1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report informs members of two petitions that were received from residents of Aylestone Avenue and Mount Pleasant Road against the traffic calming being proposed as part of the Aylestone Avenue 20mph zone. The reports outline officer's investigations into the matter and recommends that the traffic calming proposals are as proposed

#### 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Committee notes the contents of the petitions/objections and issues raised.
- 2.2 That Committee notes the outcome of officers' investigation of the petitions/objections as detailed in section 3.0
- 2.3 That Committee agrees to overrule the objections to the hump notices on Aylestone Avenue and Mount Pleasant Road and authorises officers to proceed with the implementation of the proposed measures on these roads.

## 3.0 Detail

### Background

- 3.1 As part of the Councils 20mph programme it was proposed to implement a 20mph zone within the Aylestone Avenue area, bounded by Chamberlayne Road, Sidmouth Road, Brondesbury Park and the railway line south of the Avenue. The scheme came about following repeated requests from members of the community and schools to provide measures to address the danger generated by the high speeds and rat running that takes place within the area. All three of the schools within the area have completed School Travel Plans identifying the need to introduced engineering measures to improve roads safety. Following the last of several public meeting held on the matter within the area in January 2007 and campaigns and protest marches by parents of local school children, Brent was able to secure sufficient funding to undertake initial design and public consultation on proposals. These proposals were subject to public consultation in Nov/Dec 07 which showed that 70% of respondents supported the proposal, 27% opposed it and 3% expressed no opinion. In particular regards to Mount Pleasant Road 61% supported the proposals, 32% opposed them and 7% expressed no opinion. In regards to Aylestone Avenue 58% supported the proposals, 38% opposed them and 4% expressed no opinion.
- 3.2 On the 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2008 the scheme was approved for implementation by the Director of Transportation under delegated authority.
- 3.3 On 24<sup>th</sup> April 2008 hump notices were place on site and in the local press in accordance with the requirements of section 90c of the Highways Act 1980. This notice relates to the nature, dimension and location of the proposed measures. The notice requires a 21 day period on these grounds which ended on the 15<sup>th</sup> May 2008.
- 3.4 Two objections were received prior to the 15<sup>th</sup> May 2008. The first in the form of a petition from residents of Mount Pleasant Road dated the 12<sup>th</sup> May 2008. The second in the form of a letter from Vivian Moses, a resident of Aylestone Avenue, received on the 15<sup>th</sup> May 2008; this was subsequently supported with a petition received on the 20<sup>th</sup> May 2008. A copy of these objections/petitions is included in Appendix A
- 3.5 On the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2008 the Director of Transportation in consideration of the objections to the hump notices authorised the implementation of the traffic calming measures under delegated authority on all roads within the 20mph zone area except for Mount Pleasant Road and Aylestone Avenue which were to be referred to this Committee for decision
- 3.6 On the 8<sup>th</sup> May 2008 the 20mph zone order was advertised. No objections were received and the order was made on the 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2008 and came into force on the 7<sup>th</sup> July 2008.
- 3.6 The petition from Mount Pleasant Road is in accordance with standing orders and states

*“Whilst I accept the need for traffic calming measures in Mount Pleasant Road. I strongly object to the current proposal to install 11 sets of speed cushions in Mount Pleasant Road – on the grounds of increased environmental and noise pollution, detrimental effects on personal well being, damage to cars and increased response times for emergency vehicles. “*

A copy of the petition is included in appendix A

- 3.7 There are currently 2 general types of traffic calming that are available to reduce speeds; vertical measures and horizontal measures. Horizontal measures (chicanes etc that deflect vehicular movements), to be effective, only tend to be used in conjunction with vertical measures (Humps, speed cushions etc.). Because of the kerbside space required to introduce horizontal measures, with the negative impact this has on the available parking. They are not used in areas of high parking pressure like Mount Pleasant Road.
- 3.8 The issue of the impact of traffic calming on emergency services is a topic that has had much discussion in recent years. The London Assembly investigation into this matter in 2004 identified that the impact of traffic calming on emergency vehicles was minor in comparison to congestion and roadwork's. It also indicated that there was no evidence traffic calming contributed to deaths because of delays in response times and supported the continued successful use of traffic calming in the reduction of road traffic accidents.
- 3.9 Research into the effects of traffic calmed areas on vehicle emissions and noise suggests that some schemes may have resulted in increased noise levels and emissions for some pollutants. This is because the design of early traffic calming schemes, with measures requiring vehicles to travel very slowly over them space between 100-150m apart encouraging a lot of accelerating and breaking.
- 3.10 This research has shown that you can actually obtain a general reduction in emissions with a design of traffic calmed areas that encourages smooth driving behaviour. The speed of vehicles at the calming feature should be, as far as possible, similar to the speed between the features. In order to achieve this, relatively close spacing of features are required. A typical instance is that with a road hump spacing of around 50m to 60m the "speed difference" will be 5 mph. The proposed average spacing of measures along Mount Pleasant Road is approximately 55m.
- 3.11 2 personal injury accidents (pia) have occurred on Mount Pleasant Road in the past 3 years; the existing 85%ile speeds are 33mph. Following the introduction of the proposed scheme it is expected that this would reduce to the low 20mph. Each mph of speed reduction has been demonstrated to decrease the likelihood of accidents occurring. With less traffic calming measures on the road the speeds would be higher along with the risk of accidents
- 3.12 Correspondence has subsequently been received from residents of Mount Pleasant Road expressing concerns that the traffic calming had not been implemented despite the positive consultation and asking this committee to

authorise the implementation of the traffic calming. A copy of a letter from Prof. Denis and Dr. Dorothy Judd is attached in appendix B

- 3.13 In conclusion the current, or similar arrangement of traffic calming along Mount Pleasant Road is seen as the most practical and affective arrangement to prevent the concerns expressed by the residents from occurring. Also the scheme has demonstrated support from the residents of Mount Pleasant Road through the public consultation process.
- 3.14 The objection received from Vivian Moses, which is attached to this report, in appendix A, covers a wide variety of issues. The vast majority of the issues made within the objection are not valid grounds for objection to the hump notice. The ones which are; are as follows;
- 3.15 *“A change in the nature or position of measures within the scheme.”*

Since public consultation was undertaken the following amendments have been made to the scheme in light of issues raised during the consultation.

1. Relocation of the proposed zebra crossing on The Avenue near Aylestone Avenue to The Avenue adjoining the Tiverton Road roundabout
2. Introduction of traffic islands at the junctions of Okehampton Rd/Dundonald Rd and Okehampton Rd/Mount Pleasant Ave.
3. Extension of the 20mph zone along Tiverton Rd to Chevening Rd
4. Provision of sinusoidal humps along Tiverton Rd/Okehampton Rd between The Avenue and Chamberlayne Road
5. Improvements to the school warning signage
6. The removal of the proposed traffic island at the junction of Chudleigh Road/Aylestone Avenue unless additional funding can be identified

The first 3 of the issues have been subject to additional public consultation and are unrelated to the hump notice. The 4th issue has been subject to statutory consultation and was included within the hump notice. It is therefore not a change to proposals included within the hump notice and therefore the objection has no validity. The 5th issue is not a matter that needs consultation and is unrelated to the hump notice. The final issue was consulted on during the original consultation as subject to availability of funding and this position has not changed.

- 3.16 *“It is discriminatory of Brent to refuse sinusoidal humps in Aylestone Avenue whilst being prepared to emplace them in Tiverton and Okehampton Roads. No old-fashioned humps should be installed anywhere; such funds as may be available should be used for sinusoidal humps solely where they can be shown to be needed and effective.”*

Sinusoidal humps are not a new development in traffic calming but have been in use for over 10 years, almost as long as speed cushions. They have

however been unpopular in the past because of the increased costs and difficulties in creating the sinusoidal profile. Because of renewed interest from cycling groups in the use of this measure Brent is undertaking a trial at a number of sites within the borough, including Okehampton Road and Tiverton Road, in order to be able to assess the benefits, costs, maintenance issues and the views of emergency services. Only once this trial is completed will any decision be made to supplement the use of speed cushions with Sinusoidal humps. There is certainly no intention to completely replace the use of speed cushions, which will continue to be the principal form of traffic calming used within the borough. In addition the metropolitan police have a standing objection to the installation of any new humps within the borough, whilst they accept the introduction of speed cushions and speed tables. It is currently uncertain as to what their final view on sinusoidal humps will be. The Council will not move to a more widespread introduction of sinusoidal humps until the outcome of the trial has been resolved. This should not prevent the council from delivering its road safety programmes to further reduce casualty levels within the borough.

The public consultation undertaken within the community was on the basis of installing speed cushions on all of the roads. These proposals were supported by 70% of respondents.

- 3.17 *“Vehicles attempting to straddle humps to reduce their impact. This often results in them veering to the middle of the road, so increasing the risk of accidents by collision with oncoming traffic.”*

The correct layout of cushions is obviously important in their effective operation, with 4 cushion arrangements being preferable in wide enough roads to allow the correct alignment of vehicles over them. However there is no evidence that a 3 cushion arrangement with vehicles having to move to the middle of the road contributes to increased accident levels. As part of finalising the detailed design for the Aylestone Avenue 20mph zone all roads apart from Hanover Road, Henley Road and Chudleigh Road have been designed with a 4 cushion arrangement. Hanover Road, Henley Road and Chudleigh Road are of a width that requires a 3 cushion arrangement as there is only width for a single lane of traffic when parking is taking place. As vehicles already have to drive up the centre of the road and give way to each other the reduced speeds associated with the traffic calming can only be a safety benefit.

- 3.18 *“The use of signage and speed camera only to enforce the 20mph zone.”*

The use of speed cameras to enforce 20mph limits is not currently an option as there is currently no legislation to allow this, although a trial is underway in Camden on a monitoring only basis. This should not prevent the Council from delivering its road safety programmes to further reduce casualty levels within the borough whilst these trials are undertaken, with the possibility a few years down the road that new legislation is produced. Trials have been undertaken

on using signage only to enforce a 20mph zone; this demonstrated only a 1mph reduction in speed and is not therefore a viable alternative.

- 3.19 The subsequent petition received from Vivian Moses is in accordance with standing orders and reads

*“We the undersigned, electors and residents of the proposed Aylestone Avenue 20mph zone, object strongly to the installation of any traffic calming humps in Aylestone Avenue as announced for the week starting May 22<sup>nd</sup>. As suggested by the lead member, we hereby ask for this matter to be considered by the Transportation Committee in July.”*

- 3.19 This petition, which was received after the objection period for the hump notice closed, is outside the grounds available for objection of the hump notice, those being the nature, size and position of the proposed measures.

- 3.20 Aylestone Avenue runs north/south through the middle of the 20mph zone. It is entirely residential on east side but has a secondary school and a park on the eastern side. Traffic surveys indicated peak hour traffic flows in excess of 250 vehicles/hr with flows in excess of 100 vehicles/hr for much of the rest of the day. This would indicate that some rat running is taking place along the road.

- 3.21 85%ile speeds were measured on the road at 34.2mph northbound and 34mph southbound. 85%ile speeds are the speeds at which 85% of traffic travels at or less than and is the national standard for assessing speeds on roads. Speeds in excess of 60mph were measured on the road during the middle of the day.

- 3.22 One personal injury accident has occurred on Aylestone Avenue in the past 3 years.

- 3.23 If Aylestone Avenue was to be excluded from the 20mph zone it is possible that additional traffic would be diverted onto this route as opposed to other routes through the area that would be traffic calmed.

- 3.24 Subsequent discussions have taken place with the petitioner, who does not seem fundamentally opposed to the reduction in the speed limit, purely in the use of vertical traffic calming measures. Additional suggestions have been made about the introduction of a roundabout or stop lines at the Aylestone Avenue/Chudleigh Road junction, these although possibly improving the safety of the junction would not meet the legal requirement for the introduction of a 20mph zone and are unlikely to be able to be funded through the existing Transport for London allocation.

- 3.25 In conclusion, Aylestone Avenue has an existing rat running and speeding problem which is undesirable on any residential road, particularly with the presence of a school and park. Omission of the speed cushions on the road, with no viable alternative would mean exclusion of the road from the zone and the possibility of worsening the situation in front of a school and park. Public consultation on the road demonstrated majority support for the scheme.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 Officer time and costs associated with this issue is funded from a £200,000 allocation from Transport for London for the Aylestone Avenue 20mph Zone within the 2008/09 financial year.

#### **5.0 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 The introduction of vertical traffic calming features, road humps, speed cushions etc, require the advertising of a hump notice in accordance with the requirements of section 90c of the Highways Act 1980. This notice relates to the nature, dimension and location of the proposed measures. The notice requires a 21 day objection period on these grounds. This committee can decide to overrule these objections, support them or refer the matter to public inquiry.

- 5.2 Should it be decided to omit Aylestone Avenue and or Mount Pleasant Road from the 20mph zone an amendment to the Aylestone Avenue 20mph zone order will need to be undertaken

#### **6.0 Diversity Implications**

- 6.1 All public consultation material distributed include a section written in the most common languages used in the borough with an explanation of how more information can be obtained.

#### **6.0 Environmental Implications**

- 6.1 The implementation of measures detailed in this report will help to reduce vehicular speeds and contribute to road safety.

#### **7.0 Staffing / Accommodation Implications**

- 7.1 The Council's Transportation Service Unit will deal with all issues related to the proposals detailed in this report.

#### **Background Papers**

Highways Committee Minutes 27<sup>h</sup> March 2008,  
Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984  
Highways Act 1980  
File Ref: TP – 678

## **Contact Officers**

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## Appendix A: Copy of Petitions



## Appendix B: Resident Letter