



Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

HIGHWAYS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

REPORT

15 October 2013

Subject Heading:

Branfil Primary School 20 mph Zone

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The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Clean, safe and green borough	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Excellence in education and learning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities for all through economic, social and cultural activity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Value and enhance the life of every individual	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
High customer satisfaction and a stable council tax	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUMMARY

This document reports on the outcome of the second consultation on a 20mph zone and traffic calming scheme in the area to the east and north-east of Branfil Primary School as part of the planning conditions for the school expansion.

The scheme is within **Upminster** ward.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Committee having considered the representations made recommends to the Cabinet Member for Community Empowerment that the traffic calming improvements set out in this report and shown on the following drawings are implemented;
 - QL056/OB/01.B - Bridge Avenue south
 - QL056/OB/02.C - Acacia Drive
 - QL056/OB/03.B - South View Drive
 - QL056/OB/04.B - Cedar Avenue
 - QL056/OB/06.A - Bridge Avenue north
 - QL056/OB/07.A - Brookdale Avenue
2. That it be noted that the estimated cost of £45,000 for implementation will be met by Branfil School Expansion Capital Budget.

REPORT DETAIL

1.0 Background

- 1.1 In September 2013, work at Branfil Primary School was completed to expand the number of pupils from 420 to 630 and the number of staff from 61 to 92.
- 1.2 In support of the planning application, a Transport Assessment (TA) was undertaken in 2011 to gauge the likely impact of the extension. Automatic traffic surveys were undertaken in Cedar Avenue and Bridge Avenue (north of Brookdale Avenue) for thirteen days. Parking surveys were also carried out.
- 1.3 Engineering Services was instructed by Social Care and Learning to design a scheme that would improve the streets surrounding the school, to the benefit of non-motorised users. The streets to be included were Cedar Avenue, South View Drive, Bridge Avenue (from Brookdale Avenue) and Acacia Drive. The work was in support of discharging condition 10 of the expansion planning application consent (P0467.12).
- 1.4 The school fronts Cedar Avenue where the majority of parents access the school. The TA highlighted a speeding problem in Bridge Avenue. South View Drive links these two roads and Acacia Drive is essentially a continuation of Bridge Avenue. Other streets surrounding the school may

have issues of speeding and parent parking but it was decided these streets formed a reasonable area for inclusion in a possible scheme.

- 1.5 In Bridge Avenue, the 85th percentile often exceeded 38pmh with up to 8% of vehicles travelling between 41mph and 56mph.
- 1.6 In Cedar Avenue, whilst speeds are much lower, the highest 85th percentile was 30.6mph recorded at 20.00hrs.
- 1.7 Many properties in the area have off-street parking. Bridge Avenue also has footway parking bays.
- 1.8 The roads in question are relatively straight. Bridge Avenue is the widest at 7.5m and Cedar Avenue is the narrowest at 6.1m. For Bridge Avenue, the road width and the footway parking bays may go some way to explain the high traffic speeds.
- 1.9 An on-road cycle route extends from Upminster Park, along Brookdale Avenue, Bridge Avenue and South View Drive to Gaynes Parkway.

Traffic calming options

- 1.10 It is proposed for the study area to become a 20mph zone which needs to be self enforcing by the use of signs and physical measures.
- 1.11 The common option for traffic calming is speed humps. The height of these is restricted to between 75mm and 100mm at around 70 metre centres. StreetCare regularly receive complaints about the noise and vibrations generated by existing road hump schemes.
- 1.12 Discussions were held with the ward councillors and the school head teacher about the merits of a one-way system by the school with the entrance at South View Drive junction with Bridge Avenue and exiting at Cedar Avenue junction with Gaynes Park Road. This was considered to be too detrimental to the residents when the school is only during term time. They thought that school parents already operate an unofficial one-way system, in reverse to the above.
- 1.13 The current thinking for building new housing estates is to avoid long unimaginative straight lengths of road where drivers can reach excessive speeds. Soft landscaping and other street furniture is used to break the driver's view to ensure forward visibility is limited. This results in more appropriate speeds through the streets and reduces the apparent dominance of the car over other forms of travel.
- 1.14 Retrospectively, this is hard to achieve but introducing physical features along with parked cars to reduce the available carriageway width is one possible approach to change the nature of the carriageway.

- 1.15 A philosophy held by staff is to make travel for non-motorised users as accessible and attractive as possible. Therefore, where historically footway parking was introduced purely for the benefit of maintaining two-way traffic on residential streets, this is being reversed as a means of returning the footways to the benefit of pedestrians. The streets in this report are those such streets where Bridge Avenue and Acacia Drive are popular rat-runs for vehicles avoiding Upminster town centre.
- 1.16 The initial proposal involved the introduction of semi-circular islands adjacent to the kerb, planted with a tree or a shrub. These islands would create a chicane effect along the street. The type of tree chosen is suitable for this highway purpose. Footway buildouts were also proposed in Cedar Avenue outside the school and at the Bridge Avenue/Acacia Drive junction.

Initial Consultation and Outcome

- 1.17 Residents and Branfil school were consulted during May 2013. When collating the responses, it became apparent that whilst many respondents supported the 20mph zone, they questioned the number of chicanes and whether access to driveways would be hindered. Some people would have preferred humps. Cedar Avenue and South View Drive residents expressed concern about how the displaced parking space would encourage more parents to park across drives; this is already an ongoing problem for residents. Some suggested that the scheme should include the entire length of Bridge Avenue.
- 1.18 In the light of these responses, staff opted to redesign and re-consult the scheme.

Current Proposal

- 1.19 The Plans are contained in Appendix A.
- 1.20 The 20mph zone now includes all of Bridge Avenue, Brookdale Avenue, Brookdale Close, Boundary Road, Tyrells Close and Windmill Close. Many chicanes have been removed from Bridge Avenue and Acacia Drive, making the zone extension possible. They have all been removed from South View Drive and Cedar Avenue except near the junction with Gaynes Park Road, indicating to drivers the start of the zone along with the zone signs. All pedestrian buildouts have been removed from the scheme.
- 1.21 Chicanes/islands have been placed mostly opposite each other, requiring one vehicle to give way to another with neither direction having priority. This is no different to any other street in the borough where vehicles may park and prevent two-way traffic flow. The features are placed at around 70m intervals which is the recommended spacing for traffic calming.
- 1.22 The extensive school keep clear markings will remain in Cedar Avenue along the school frontage.

- 1.23 A flat top hump will be provided at the Bridge Avenue junction with St Mary's Lane.

2.0 Outcome of Public Consultation

- 2.1 By the close of the second consultation, of 422 letters posted, 23 replies were received, a 5.4% return.
- 2.2 The majority of respondents objected to the proposals. Some questioning the need for traffic calming, some concerned how the chicanes will affect visibility of access from their driveways or for pedestrians crossing the road. Also concerns were raised about loss of parking and how this impacts on large vehicles.
- 2.3 Residents of Cedar Avenue are especially concerned about their drive ways being blocked by the increased number of parents at the school.

3.0 Staff Comments

- 3.1 Staff recommend that the proposals be implemented as consulted. There will be some loss of parking. However the majority of properties have off-street parking. There is ample on-street parking therefore any issues residents have with inconsiderate parking by parents of the school or attendees of the sports stadium need to be addressed by enforcement.
- 3.2 The tree planted in the chicane will not obscure the visibility of drivers and pedestrians as the diameter of the tree trunk remains small. It is hoped that the chicanes and trees will alter the nature of the street from the driver's viewpoint.
- 3.3 Whether a car is parked on the footway or in the road, the risk to a pedestrian crossing the road remains the same.
- 3.4 Removing the footway parking could be a benefit for cyclists. A reduced running lane makes it harder for cars to overtake cyclists, enabling cyclists to feel more confident about being in the centre of the lane; the cycle logos are already located in the centre of the southern half of Bridge Avenue.
- 3.5 Several people had requested speed humps to calm the traffic. This scheme is an opportunity for the Council to implement an alternative method for calming traffic. Humps have their own critics and are not ideal on a cycle route.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

The estimated cost of £45,000 for implementation will be met by Branfil School Expansion Capital Budget.

This is a standard project for StreetCare and there is no expectation that the works cannot be contained within the cost estimate. There is an element of contingency built into the financial estimate. In the unlikely event of an overspend, the balance would need to be contained within the overall StreetCare Capital budget.

Legal implications and risks:

At any time parking restrictions, 20 mph zones and school keep clear markings require a traffic regulation order and advertisement.

Human Resources implications and risks:

None.

Equalities Implications and Risks:

The Council has a general duty under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that its highway network is accessible to all. Where infrastructure is provided or substantially upgraded, reasonable adjustments should be made to improve access. In considering the impacts and making improvements for people with protected characteristics (mainly, but not limited to disabled people, the young and older people), this will assist the Council in meeting its duty under the Act.

Traffic calming can help reduce traffic speeds, traffic volumes and the risk of collisions, especially involving vulnerable users. Older and younger people find it more difficult to judge traffic speed and they are especially at risk of being involved in a collision. Some people may be intimidated by traffic speed and so traffic calming may assist in reducing the problem.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Project file: QL 056 Bridge Avenue

APPENDIX A

Scheme Drawings:

- QL056/OB/01.B - Bridge Avenue south
- QL056/OB/02.C - Acacia Drive
- QL056/OB/03.B - South View Drive
- QL056/OB/04.B - Cedar Avenue
- QL056/OB/06.A - Bridge Avenue north
- QL056/OB/07.A - Brookdale Avenue