

**RESPONSE TO PETITION TO REDUCE THE SPEED TO 20MPH on  
NORTHCHURCH HIGH STREET AND PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS TO BE  
ADDED**

Report of the Chief Executive and Director of Environment

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Executive Member/s:- Ralph Sangster, Highways

Local Member:- Terry Douris, Bridgewater

**1. Purpose of report**

1.1 *To advise County Council of the receipt of a petition concerning Northchurch High Street, requesting a 20mph speed limit and pedestrian crossings, and to set out for Members the background and other relevant information of which officers are aware relating to the subject matter of the petition*

**2. Summary**

2.1 Notice of intention to present a petition concerning this matter containing 1,000 or more signatures has been received pursuant to the County Council's Petition Scheme. The petition states:-

*"To REDUCE the speed to 20mph on Northchurch High Street and pedestrian crossings to be added.*

*Make Northchurch High Street, a safer and healthier environment for all.*

*We are a thriving and friendly community with approximately 2500 residents. We have three social centres, two churches, a primary school, a pub, local shops and a recreation ground.*

*Pedestrians and cyclists in Northchurch deserve the right to travel through and around the village without fear.*

*The current traffic volume and speed, narrow pavements, insufficient lighting, polluted environment and lack of pedestrian crossings all contribute towards residents' grave concerns.*

*We demand Herts County Council implements measures to reduce the speed of traffic to 20mph, and add pedestrian crossings. To alleviate the above dangers, and in order to encourage sustainable and healthy transport, such as walking and cycling through our village.”*

2.2 The petition has 2160 signatures.

### **3. Procedure**

3.1 The petition which is the subject of this report has been received in accordance with the Council’s Petition Scheme (Annex 22 to the Constitution).

3.2 The deadline for receipt of motions from Members in respect of this Report under Standing Order 9 (3) is noon on Thursday, 22 March 2018.

3.3 Paragraph 54 of the Petition Scheme provides that the Petition Organiser will be given three minutes maximum to present the petition and will not otherwise be allowed to speak at the meeting. There is then a short debate by Council.

3.4 Paragraph 57 of the Petition Scheme states:

*The Council will decide how to respond to the petition at the meeting. It may decide to take the action the petition requests or not to take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate. Where the issue is one on which the Council Executive is required to make the final decision, the Council will decide whether to make recommendations to inform that decision. If the Council does not decide to deal with the petition in some other way, it will (at the discretion of the Chairman) be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the appropriate Cabinet Panel or to officers for consideration and report to the Local Member and Group Spokesmen.*

3.5 The subject matter of the petition relates to an Executive function and as such Council cannot make a decision on it but may make a recommendation to the Executive if it so wishes.

### **3. Background and other relevant information**

3.1 Following receipt of the petition officers analysed speed and accident data together with information from previous area studies and transport related programmes. This informed the discussion which took place on 22 February 2018 with two petitioners who met with the Executive Member, the local member and the neighbouring member for Berkhamsted and the Deputy Director of Environment.

- 3.2 The meeting discussed the Council's Speed Management Strategy (SMS) position on 20mph zones and limits on A roads and the existing accident and speed and volume data available.
- 3.3 The petitioners requested further information regarding the Council's policy for 20mph limits and zones on A roads elsewhere in the County together with further information on speed, volume and accident data.
- 3.4 The meeting concluded that officers would be asked to arrange a site visit with the two petitioners and the local member to better understand the specific areas of concern on vehicle speeds and pedestrian crossing requirements. Areas to discuss would include the Drivesafe initiative and opportunities for signage or road markings.

*This visit was subsequently arranged for 9 March 2018.*

- 3.5 The A4251 is a primary distributor road which also serves as a bus route. There is a 30mph speed limit in place.
- 3.6 The SMS specifies that "*20mph limits and zones will not generally be considered on the A & B road network*".
- 3.7 The High Street in Northchurch is a highly constrained environment with a continuous footway on the north side only. There is no footway between Northchurch Baptist Church and Stoney Close.
- 3.8 Mean speeds northwest bound, on a 24 hour basis, vary between 22mph - 29.6mph and southeast bound, 22mph - 25mph.
- 3.9 Accident data from Billet Lane to Pea Lane in the five years measured from August 2012 to July 2017 shows a total of 9 accidents, 4 resulting in serious injury and 5 resulting in slight injury. In the three year period from August 2014 to July 2017 there were 3 accidents, 1 serious 2 slight.
- 3.10 The 2013 Tring Northchurch & Berkhamsted Urban Transport Plan (UTP) investigated a number of options to deliver highway improvements in Northchurch High Street. One was to provide a zebra crossing or buildout near Bell Lane. This was not technically feasible due to the highway constraints. The other investigations covered speed reducing features such as vertical measures which the SMS precludes on A&B roads and additional central traffic islands which are not viable due to insufficient carriageway width.
- 3.11 The existing controlled crossing near the junction of New Road and the A4251 High Street is well used by the school community and public.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 There are no financial implications at this stage.

## **5. Equalities Implications**

- 5.1 When considering proposals placed before Members it is important that they are fully aware of, and have themselves rigorously considered the equalities implications of the decision that they are taking.
- 5.2 Rigorous consideration will ensure that proper appreciation of any potential impact of that decision on the County Council's statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a minimum this requires decision makers to read and carefully consider the content of any Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) produced by officers.
- 5.3 The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 5.4 No EqIA has been undertaken in relation to this petition.

### *Background Information*

#### [Speed Management Strategy](#)