



TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Council – 12 October 2022

Consideration of a Petition containing more than 500 signatures

Petition regarding Road Safety and Traffic Management, South Downs Road

Petitioner, Bridget Green introduced the following petition which had received 517 signatures from addresses within the Borough.

“We petition the Council to create a 20mph zone around South Downs Road, from Langham Road and including Grange and Marlborough Roads. We also request visible signage, traffic calming measures and wider pathways.

This is a key route to Bowdon Church School, the Bollin School and Altrincham Grammar School for Boys. Few people walk or cycle along the road as the pavement is too narrow for pushchairs and speeding traffic means it is perceived by parents as too busy to cycle safely.

A 20mph limit would create greater safety for our children and benefit the whole community. It would alleviate parking issues, congestion and standing traffic as more pupils will be able to get to school by foot or bike.

Please reduce the speed limit, introduce appropriate signage warning drivers and implement traffic calming measures. This would create a more accessible link between Bowdon and Hale.”

In presenting the petition, the petitioner emphasised that the major safety concerns were the narrowness of the pavement which placed pedestrians in danger of oncoming traffic and the frequency in which vehicles mounted the pavement. Also, if people were to be encouraged to use more active forms of travel as a means of alleviating the congestion which was intensifying problems in the area, more safe routes were needed to do that. Appreciating that funding was extremely tight, the petitioner appealed for some creative ways to make it happen.

Councillor Adshead, Executive Member for Environmental Services and Councillors Whetton, Brophy and Leicester responded to the petition on behalf of the political parties and made the following points:

Councillor Adshead: Recognised that safety around schools was an issue across the Borough and the Council was currently trialling “school streets” a safety scheme as well as implementing a range of road safety schemes and initiatives. The Road Safety Team would now investigate the petition’s request and consider the various options. The Council continued to explore options to secure more funding and would press Transport for Greater Manchester for the expansion of 20mph zones.

Councillor Whetton: Feared that changes to the street scene infrastructure may place some of the petition's objectives too far from reach given the realistic of cost. Despite the 20mph concept having detractors, it was certainly a visible alert to drivers to slow down and focus their minds to the circumstances in the immediate area. With qualified support he awaited the reflections of the Leader of the Council.

Councillor Brophy: The petition clearly showed the strength of feeling amongst residents for a 20mph zone and was another example of the feeling across the Borough. Spoke in favour of 20mph speed limit areas and the petitions objectives.

Councillor Leicester: Petition highlighted the public concern for road safety in general and specifically the issues of South Downs Road. Believed South Downs Road could be a major walking route between the south of Hale and the primary and secondary schools in Bowdon but for people being too frightened to use it. It had been an issue that people had tried to address before but one outcome, a school crossing patrol, did not address speeding vehicles, 20mph restrictions had been deemed too difficult and costly and a commitment for not suitable for HGV signs did not materialise. Also advised that the road was declassified which should affect traffic as it would no longer be a recommended route for satellite navigations systems but some mapping services had not updated and this was to be investigated by officers. Time had moved on and there were now new initiatives like the Greater Manchester Bee Network and Trafford's own design plan which set objectives around sustainable movements and connected neighbourhoods. In summary, supported the petition and asked that road safety be reviewed given the public appetite to improve the situation and the principle that school routes should be prioritised and as a Ward Councillor would welcome the opportunity to meet with Highway officers on site.

Following the discussion the Leader of the Council, Councillor Andrew Western thanked Bridget for bringing the petition and expressed that he did not feel it was an unreasonable request. However, he stated that the Council had limited funding for the implementation of 20mph zones so it would be assessed alongside of all the other requests received and a decision would be taken on the basis of need as determined by engineering specialists. At that point it was too early to say definitively either way weather or not the Council would be able to implement the request. The Leader recognised that it was a location that was problematic for a number of different reasons but also acknowledged the points made by Councillor Whetton not only about the financial constraints the Council found itself in but the particular geographical constraints of the location that could add significantly to the costs and stretch what was a limited budget.

The Leader thanked everyone that had signed the petition and confirmed that the request would be assessed by the Council's engineers and set against all other requests and if the budget allowed it would be taken forward.