

## Portfolio Holder (Transport and Environment) – Decision Making Session

### Minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2017

#### Present

#### Members of Warwickshire County Council:

Councillors    Jeff Clarke                      Portfolio Holder for Transport and Environment  
                    John Cooke  
                    Keith Kondakor  
                    Dave Reilly  
                    Dave Shilton

#### Officers:

Shirley Reynolds    Team Leader (Highways)  
Chris Round           Engineer  
Graham Stanley     Senior Engineer  
Louise Varney       Senior Technician  
Paul Williams       Democratic Services Team Leader

#### Public attendance:

Nineteen members of the public were present.

#### 1.      **Members' Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**

Councillor Jeff Clarke (Portfolio Holder for Transport and Environment) informed the meeting that he is the local Councillor for Eastboro Way, Nuneaton (agenda item 2).

Councillor Dave Shilton informed the meeting that he is the local Councillor for Leyes Lane, Kenilworth (agenda item 3).

#### 2.      **Objections to Proposed Traffic Signals at A4254 Eastboro Way, Nuneaton**

Note – The meeting was taken out of order with item 3 being considered before item 2. However, for the purposes of these minutes, business is set out as per the agenda.

Having been welcomed to the meeting by the Chair Mrs Narinder Soor (a resident whose house is adjacent to the site of the proposed signals) explained her concerns over the proposals to install traffic signals on Eastboro Way. Problems of increasing traffic levels and congestion were discussed as was the increased pressure on the highway system that additional housing development in the area would produce. Mrs Soor explained that she had recently extended her house and that the proposal before the Portfolio Holder would mean that the view from her house would be blighted. She also suggested that if the signals are installed traffic will queue adjacent to houses with a resulting reduction in privacy and an increase in pollution for those residents.

The need for three sets of signals in close proximity was challenged. Mrs Soor stated that she was unaware of a similar situation elsewhere.

Councillor Jeff Clarke (Portfolio Holder for Transport and Environment) explained that the proposals resulted from the grant of planning permission for development made by Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council. The County Council is expected to co-operate in its implementation of the proposals unless there are exceptional circumstances that would require the Borough Council to review its approach.

It was suggested by Mrs Soor that some residents were not aware of the proposals and that were the traffic signals to be installed there will be considerable upset.

Councillor Keith Kondakor suggested that with no local plan in place the Borough Council is having to respond to planning applications and the ramifications of development rather than being able to plan in a co-ordinated way. More should be done to encourage modal shift and greater consideration should be given to the location of schools and access to them. The meeting was informed that a proposed crossing into the Barratt Homes development had been abandoned owing to financial constraints.

In response to a question from Mrs Soor regarding any form of appeal against the Council's decision she was informed that this was largely limited to matters of mal-administration.

### **3. Proposed 20mph Speed Limit and Traffic Calming Measures for Leyes Lane, Kenilworth**

Following introductory remarks the Chair invited those present to share their views on the proposals before him.

Mr Bob Green observed that since submitting his original statement of objection he had learned that local authorities such as Manchester City Council had concluded that speed bumps and speed platforms made no difference in terms of speed management .

Mr Maurice Holden questioned whether it would not be better to focus road safety measures on primary schools. He added that he was not aware of any injury accidents occurring to school children on or near Leyes Lane.

Councillor John Cooke (speaking in his role as Leader of Kenilworth Town Council) stated that when Kenilworth Town Council had considered this proposal it had concluded that whilst it had no objection to the introduction of a 20mph speed limit on Leyes Lane, consideration should be given to alternatives to the vertical speed reduction measures proposed. For example a different colour of tarmac could be used to make the distinction between speed limits more apparent.

Councillor Felicity Bunker (speaking on behalf of Kenilworth Town Council) reminded the meeting of proposals to relocate Kenilworth School to a new site. In her opinion speed tables would not be effective. The current school should consider an in and out driveway arrangement that would enable parents/carers to drop children off away from Leyes Lane.

Mr Chris Jackson expressed concerns over the potential air pollution that vehicles decelerating and accelerating to negotiate the vertical speed measures would generate.

Mr Bob Simpson stated that in his opinion the pedestrian crossing over Leyes Lane was wrongly located. It should be moved westwards. The school has expressed a wish for two crossings, one at either end of Leyes Lane. This would accommodate the situation that although Kenilworth School is a single school it is divided into upper and lower. In addition the entrance to the Tiltyard carpark is too narrow and requires widening.

Mr Martyn Taylor questioned the sense in installing traffic calming measures adjacent to a school that would shortly be relocated. He added that with growing evidence that speed humps add significantly to air pollution the government will soon require their removal.

Mr David Shand questioned why the scheme was being promoted at a time when the relocation of Kenilworth School is being considered. He suggested that any traffic calming measures will need to be removed as part of pollution reducing measures.

In response to a comment from Mr Roger Chapman the meeting was informed that over the preceding five years there had been six injury accidents involving school children travelling to or from Kenilworth School. This information had been provided by Warwickshire Police. Graham Stanley (Senior Engineer) offered to make available such accident data as was appropriate (ie without breaching confidentiality). This was welcomed. The point was made that children are at risk when they cross between parked cars or where they walk four abreast and stray onto the carriageway. Speeding, it was suggested, was not necessarily an issue as, during the peak times for dropping off and picking up children, it is not possible to exceed 20mph along Leyes Lane.

The meeting was informed of the work of the Safer Routes to School Task Force. It was explained that of all the schools in Warwickshire, Kenilworth School has the highest accident rate for pupils. Two speed surveys covering 24 hour periods have been undertaken which indicated that between the hours of 8am and 9am speed limits average the high 20s.

Councillor Felicity Bunker supported the idea that pupil behaviour can be a contributing factor. She stated that this has been mentioned to the school and recently a member of staff had been positioned outside the school at peaks times to help ensure appropriate behaviour by pupils crossing the road.

Mr Dickson stated that he is a parent who takes his children to Kenilworth School. He has often witnessed near-misses and observed that an accident is regrettable regardless of its cause.

In response to a further question concerning engagement with the school over this issue, Graham Stanley confirmed that discussions have been held with the Headteacher and Board of Governors. Messages from these discussions have been fed back to students.

Mr Howard Easton expressed his gratitude to Kenilworth Town Council for requesting that alternatives be considered. In his view the problems at Leyes Lane were attributable to poor driving by parents/carers. He suggested that the whole of Kenilworth should have a blanket 20mph speed limit. This would remove confusion and leave drivers in no doubt of what was expected of them. Mr Easton added that any road humps would reduce the physical wellbeing of people having to negotiate them in a vehicle.

Mrs Elaine Clarke stated that in her opinion local people had not been consulted sufficiently over the proposals adding that the local councillor had refused to meet with her on site to discuss them. The proposal to narrow the entrance to The Wardens was not sensible. The traffic signage around the area was inadequate and out of date and needs reviewing whilst parking and stopping restrictions are required close to bus stops. Mrs Clarke had requested that signals be put on the crossing over Leyes Lane but she stated that she had been informed that this was not justified on the basis of the amount of traffic using the road. In addition signalled crossings attract complaints from local residents

owing to their noise and flashing lights. The Chair was asked to consider the use of different road surfaces such as those installed recently at Balsall Common.

Mr John Osborn suggested that traffic calming measures are a distraction. Drivers will focus on these rather than looking out for pupils crossing the road. In addition a car parked with one wheel on a road hump will have its headlights elevated thus dazzling oncoming road users. Speed tables can be confusing to some people who believe them to be crossings. This can lead to pedestrian/vehicle conflict.

Mr Martin Belcher, a retired traffic engineer, explained that evidence indicates that the only way to significantly reduce traffic speeds is to install vertical measures such as humps and tables. Signage alone will not work. An effective solution is the use of speed cushions which can be straddled by vehicles thus reducing their rise and fall.

John Whitehouse informed the meeting of his previous role as Chair of the School Safety Zone Task Force and also his role running the Kenilworth Speed Watch Scheme. He affirmed the view that signage does not work as effectively as physical measures. Leyes Lane is one of eight areas of concern regarding speeding. Very high speeds have been recorded along that road. One resident had stated they were so concerned for the safety of their children they were considering moving house.

Mrs Claire Bradley observed that the current government, recognising that road humps can contribute to pollution is moving to see them abandoned. She stated that she had no objection to the establishment of a 20mph speed limit but the root of the problem is parents dropping of their children and children distracted by earphones and mobile phones. In her opinion the proposal was a waste of money.

Mr David Bradley considered that the proposals were seeking to address an issue that does not exist at peak school times. The problems are created by drivers.

Mr Peter Gebbels, focusing on speeding, supported the idea of a blanket 20mph speed limit across the whole of Kenilworth.

Mr Bob Simpson stated that the measures proposed would lead to pollution and have a negative impact on the street scene. He had a letter of objection from his neighbour, Mr Hardy. This was delivered to the Chair.

Councillor John Cooke acknowledged the concerns of local residents regarding the proposals and suggested that in the light of these and the likely relocation of Kenilworth School, to install the traffic calming measures at this time would be premature. 20mph signs could be installed quickly and at less cost than the overall scheme. If the Highway authority does not act and a pedestrian gets injured then the Council will be blamed.

Councillor Dave Shilton stressed the need to ensure the safety of children adding that traffic is an issue at all schools in Kenilworth. Councillor Shilton asked that the needs of the elderly population should not be forgotten and suggested that the crossing should be moved as a matter of urgency. He recognised that the Safer Neighbourhood Team is working hard to encourage cycling and walking to school but it was also recognised that neither the Police nor the Council have the resources to enforce speed limits.

Final comments from visiting residents included the observation of the school Caretaker that Leyes Lane is almost gridlocked at 15.30 on a school day, that the relocation of the school will not see an end to pupils using Leyes Lane and that children want to see the crossing signalled to make it safer to use.

The Chair thanked those who had attended the meeting and stated that he would make his decision in the forthcoming days.

The meeting rose at 12.26pm.

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Chair