

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Report of Corporate Director of Enterprise, Tourism and
the Environment

To

**Traffic & Parking Working Party & Cabinet
Committee**

On

10th January 2013

Agenda
Item No.

Report prepared by:
Cheryl Hindle-Terry - Team Leader, Parking, Traffic
Management and Road Safety Team

Petition Regarding Traffic Calming – The Fairway
Executive Councillor: Councillor Cox
A Part 1 Public Agenda Item

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To advise Members of a petition received from 249 signatories calling for action to reduce the speed limit to 20mph for a distance of 750 yards (685m) either side of the school or remove The Fairway from the designated distributor route hierarchy and direct all traffic to Bellhouse Lane.

2. Recommendation

That the Traffic & Parking Working Party and the Cabinet Committee:

- (i) Note the petition and the officers observations on the issues raised.**
- (ii) Note that a speed warning sign has already been provided at this location and is being monitored.**
- (iii) Agree to add this location to the list of priority roads for installation of the Mobile Variable Messaging signs**
- (iv) Agree to take no further action at this time**

3. Background

- 3.1 Following a road traffic collision in July 2012, a petition was received requesting the above measures. Officers have investigated the road traffic collision history of the street, undertaken speed monitoring and considered the requests.
- 3.2 Collision data has been investigated and a breakdown of the findings is included in Appendix 1 to this report. In summary, the data indicates there is little similarity between the causality factors of the collisions and no reference is made within the collision reports that speed was considered a factor. The one common link between the collisions is that road user error, for example, inattention, failure to look or carelessness is included as a likely contributory factor to each collision whether on the part of the driver or other party involved.

- 3.3 A total of 9 collisions have occurred in the study period and of these, 1 collision resulted in serious injury and the remaining 8 in slight injury.
- 3.4 The times of all the collisions have been examined and 2 collisions occurred within peak school drop off or pick up periods.
- 3.5 The details of these particular incidents have been examined; the first involved a vehicle pulling out in front of a motorcycle forcing the motorcyclist to swerve and resulted in slight injury. The second involved a driver under the influence of alcohol ignoring a red light and striking a child on the pedestrian crossing resulting in slight injury. Speed is not considered a causality factor.
- 3.6 Traffic calming is considered where speeds are in excess of the normal speed limit and collision data evidences that 3 or more fatalities or serious injuries have resulted from collisions where speed is a factor.
- 3.7 Where isolated collisions occur and the data does not indicate any common factors, intervention is exceptionally difficult. It is also appropriate to say that improper and unjustified intervention can lead to an adverse impact on causalities. Whilst all accidents of this nature are regretted and all possible efforts are made by the Council through engineering and education and training interventions, it is sometimes difficult to create an impact on isolated incidents. It is also important that with the limited budgets, intervention is prioritised and targeted at those locations where there is a clear indication and statistical evidence that collisions can be reduced through such interventions and the impact will be positive.
- 3.8 Reducing the speed limit or introducing a variable speed limit where the speed is set at 20mph during peak school periods has merit. However this relies on enforcement by the Police. The Police will not generally regard speed enforcement as a high priority amongst their other serious crime responsibilities and generally request that any speed reduction projects are self enforcing, i.e. include features to slow drivers such as humps to reduce speed.
- 3.9 Vehicle speeds have been monitored and there are 14% of vehicles exceeding the speed limit of 30mph. This issue has been highlighted previously and in response, a vehicle activated sign which illuminates if a vehicle is detected approaching the sign at a speed of 31mph or over, was provided.
- 3.10 Further more, new mobile variable message signs have been purchased and it is planned to install these on a temporary basis in roads where more than 10% of vehicles are travelling in excess of the speed limit. This location can be added to the current list of routes for the signs to be installed.
- 3.11 Distributor routes are selected based on several factors such as the location, links to strategic routes and nature of the street along with the desirability for traffic and the capacity of the street to accommodate high traffic volumes such as the carriageway structure. Once designated these streets will be inspected at higher frequencies than non distributor routes and maintained to suitable standards considering this designation.

- 3.12 Removing the Fairway from the designated distributor route is possible and needs the Department of the Transport approval. However, it is not envisaged to have limited benefits as there is no indication from the traffic and accident data that the excessive traffic flows are a contributory factor.
- 3.13 Road signing to direct vehicles to Bellhouse Lane could be provided. However few local drivers take note of such direction signage as they rely on their local road knowledge. Many drivers also rely on satellite navigation systems and unless these are regularly updated, any advisory changes to the routes are not conveyed. This option is unlikely to be effective.
- 3.14 The suggestion that the junction of The Fairway and A127 is physically closed forcing all vehicles onto the Bellhouse Lane. Signal engineers have analysed this option and consider that the capacity of junction of A127/Progress Road would be vastly improved by the reduced phase but the Bellhouse Lane/A127 junction would not be able to cope with the additional capacity.

4. Other Options

- 4.1 Implement the measures as proposed by the petitioners- As above, removing The Fairway from the designated distributor route would adversely impact on the traffic movement and is not considered appropriate. Similarly introducing 20mph speed limit is unlikely to have any impact on any collisions as speed is not a contributory factor in accidents.

5. Reasons for Recommendations

- 5.1 The recommendation has been determined using data regarding collisions and traffic flows.

6. Corporate Implications

6.1 Contribution to Council's Vision & Corporate Priorities

- 6.1.1 The recommendations are consistent with the Council's Vision and Corporate Priorities in that any strategic route amendments may adversely affect business and that reducing the speed limit is unlikely to increase road safety.

6.2 Financial Implications

- 6.2.1 The recommendations involve no additional financial commitments.

6.3 Legal Implications

- 6.3.1 None

6.4 People Implications

- 6.4.1 None

6.5 Property Implications

- 6.5.1 None

6.6 *Consultation*

6.6.1 Any proposals to regulate traffic require full consultation in accordance with statutory requirements.

6.7 *Equalities and Diversity Implications*

6.7.1 None specific

6.8 *Risk Assessment*

6.8.1 None

6.9 *Value for Money*

6.9.1 N/A

6.10 *Community Safety Implications*

6.10.1 The proposals contained in this report are intended to assist in improving community safety.

6.11 *Environmental Impact*

6.11.1 None specific

7. Background Papers

7.1 None

8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1- Traffic Collision Data Analysis