

**LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW**

**TRAFFIC AND ROAD SAFETY ADVISORY PANEL**

**TUESDAY 21 JUNE 2005**

**Petition Relating to Issues of Damage and Road Safety on Rayners Lane and Neighbouring Streets**

**Reference from Council – 21 April 2005**

- 1(i) At the meeting of Council held on 21 April 2005, the following petition relating to issues of damage and road safety on Rayners Lane and neighbouring streets was presented:

<u>Submitted By</u>	<u>Number of Signatures</u>
Councillor Harriss	54

- 1(ii) The petition stood referred to the Traffic and Road Safety Advisory Panel for consideration as follows:-

(Minute Number 304 (1)):

‘Submitted by Councillor Harriss, containing some 54 signatures of residents of Rayners Lane and neighbouring streets situated close to the Rayners Lane Estate Development, seeking answers from the Council to a variety of questions relating to (i) the lack of notification and consultation after planning applications were submitted to alter the originally approved scheme, (ii) the damage to property and the roads caused by the size and frequency of London Buses along Rayners Lane and (iii) drawing attention to road safety issues as Rayners Lane is the subject of weight restriction for heavy vehicles.

[Part (i) of the petition stood referred to the Development Control Committee and parts (ii) and (iii) to the Traffic Advisory Panel].’

- 1(iii) The petition is in the following terms:-

‘The residents would like answers from the Council of the London Borough of Harrow to a variety of questions relating to the lack of notification and consultation after planning applications were submitted to alter the originally approved scheme.

‘Secondly, they would like to notify the Council of their concerns relating to damage to property and the roads caused by the size and frequency of London Buses along Rayners Lane.

‘Finally they wish to draw attention to road safety issues, as this road is the subject of weight restrictions for heavy vehicles.’

[Note: Copies of the first page of the petition are attached as an appendix to this report. Immediately prior to printing, a further letter was received, attached as Appendix B, which the officers will address at the meeting].

2. The Director of Area Services, Urban Living advises as follows:
  - 2.1 The H12 bus route runs between South Harrow and Stanmore Station, via Rayners Lane. Double deck buses used this route until 1987 (route 209). The decision to change to smaller vehicles was a commercial decision related to the introduction of 'Hoppa' buses. However, this led to complaints about overcrowding. Despite a change to longer single deck buses, overcrowding on the route remained an issue.
  - 2.2 Following continued concern that some parts of the H12 bus route were overcrowded, particularly at school times, Transport for London took the recent opportunity of retendering this route to introduce a number of changes to the service. Earlier and later buses were introduced to serve earlier and later train times and single deck buses were replaced with fully accessible low floor double deck buses. The proposals were the subject of consultation during 2004 and detailed consideration at the council's Bus and Highway Liaison meetings. The suitability of the route for larger buses was examined at a route test involving the council, TfL, the police and the bus operator, Metroline. The changes were implemented in September 2004.
  - 2.2 Following complaints from local residents in March 2005, TfL explained the reasoning behind the change to double deck buses:
    - The size and frequency of buses specified by London Buses is based on the number of passengers using the service at the busiest point;
    - Route H12 serves a number of schools and colleges and the highest demand is when students are travelling;
    - Up to 2004, single decks were used with few supplementary double decks at the busiest time. This was still not sufficient and therefore the proposal to convert to all double decks;
    - Bids were invited from operators for single and double decks. The costs showed that continuing to provide a mixed bus service would cost approximately the same as all double decks without the ability to avoid overcrowding;
    - Passenger usage and service levels are continuously reviewed and mid life changes to contracts are negotiated with operators where appropriate.
  - 2.3 With regard to the weight restriction in the area, this applies to goods vehicles exceeding 7.5 tonnes gross weight, unless they require access to land or premises within the zone. In summary the restriction does not apply to buses or any vehicle, regardless of size or weight, that requires access to the area.

- 2.4 Rayners Lane is a local access road and whilst any weight of vehicle is permitted to use it for access, it's construction is not as strong as strategic or main distributor roads. Following the introduction of larger buses in September 2004 the road condition was inspected in January and again in February 2005 when no structural defects requiring maintenance were found. A further inspection since receipt of the petition has identified deterioration of the carriageway. Further investigation into the extent and programming of remedial maintenance is underway. Budgetary provision exists for local road maintenance. However, officers will investigate the possibility of a funding contribution from TfL towards the maintenance costs.
- 2.5 Councillor Harriss, who presented the petition, has advised of the road safety concern of buses trying to pass each other on the sharp bend at Rayners Lane/Thackeray Close, where there is evidence of vehicles mounting the pavement. The erection of bollards to prevent this seems appropriate and cost effective and Cllr Harriss has been consulted on this recommended action. An alternative course of action would be to introduce temporary waiting restrictions in the vicinity of the bend to allow use of the full carriageway width. Parking associated with the adjacent construction work on the Rayners Lane Estate currently interferes with flow around this bend.
- 2.6 In addition, officers in liaison with the operator, will investigate whether any further traffic management measures are appropriate in the interest of reducing the impact of buses. Following initial liaison, Metroline have instructed drivers to drive with particular care on this part of the route.
- 2.7 With regard to the concern about damage to properties, it is normal practice to carry out a preliminary investigation into any specific claims. Most commonly vibration caused by traffic is transmitted via airborne vibration and is rarely of a magnitude to cause significant damage. However, any specific claim can be looked into.
- 2.8 The section of Rayners Lane between Alexandra Avenue and Eastcote Lane was the subject of a recent local safety scheme. In the 3 years before the scheme there were 11 personal injury accidents. Since implementation in mid 2003, up to December 2004 (the latest month for accident statistics) there was 1 personal injury accident. Whilst it is too early to draw conclusions (3 years is the recommended study period) the early indication is that the scheme has been very successful in reducing accidents. None of the personal injury accidents, before or after the safety scheme, involved buses. As the council's accident records include only accidents involving personal injury, accident reports have been requested from the bus operator to ascertain whether there have been any damage-only accidents involving buses and if so whether there have been more since double deck buses were introduced.
- 2.9 In conclusion, the increase in the size and number of buses along Rayners Lane represents a welcome improvement in service level for bus passengers and is consistent with the council's policy to improve bus services and encourage greater use of public transport. This advantage has to be weighed against the adverse implications of larger buses using local roads. It is

accepted that buses can appear out of scale with the streetscene in smaller local roads and measures to reduce the impact and/or improve safety will be investigated.

- 2.10 It is recommended that the Panel note the on-going investigations with respect to safety and road condition and recommend the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport to authorise officers to implement remedial measures as part of the traffic management and road maintenance programmes as appropriate.**

FOR CONSIDERATION

Background Documents: Petitions presented to Council on 21 April 2005.  
Minutes of the Council meeting on 21 April 2005.

Contact: Laura Kell, Room 143, Committee Section.  
Direct Dial: 020 8424 1265.  
E-mail: [laura.kell@harrow.gov.uk](mailto:laura.kell@harrow.gov.uk)