

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

Meeting:	Traffic and Road Safety Advisory Panel
Date:	22 September 2004
Subject:	Old Church Lane and Abercorn Road – Traffic Conditions
Key decision:	No
Responsible Chief Officer:	Interim Head of Environment and Transportation
Relevant Portfolio Holder:	Environment and Transport
Status:	Part 1
Ward:	Stanmore Park and Belmont
Enclosures:	Appendix 1 – Location Plan Appendix 2 – Accident and Traffic Volume Statistics

1. **Summary/ Reason for urgency (if applicable)**

- 1.1 Concern has been expressed about traffic conditions, particularly speed and volume of traffic, in Old Church Lane and Abercorn Road. An investigation into traffic speed and possible measures to reduce it is recommended.

2. **Recommendations (for decision by the Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder)**

- 2.1 **That the Panel recommends the erection of speed activated sign(s) as a means of reducing traffic speed.**

REASON: To improve road safety

3. **Consultation with Ward Councillors**

- 3.1 The matter was raised by ward members following a meeting with residents. A subsequent meeting between officers and Cllrs D. Ashton and Nickolay has taken place to clarify the issues.

4. **Policy Context (including Relevant Previous Decisions)**

- 4.1 The designation of these roads as borough distributor roads (formerly known as local distributor roads) has been challenged at the last two Unitary Development Plan Inquiries. However, on both occasions the Inspector has recommended the retention of

its status in the road hierarchy and this has been confirmed by the Council, most recently in July 2004.

5. **Relevance to Corporate Priorities**

- 5.1 Proposals to improve road safety would contribute to enhancing the environment in Harrow.

6. **Background Information and options considered**

- 6.1 Following a meeting with local residents, a ward member has raised concerns about the speed and amount of traffic using these roads. A location plan is attached as Appendix 1. Details of traffic flow and accident history are set out in Appendix 2, including comparative data with other nearby borough distributor roads.

Traffic Volume

- 6.2 The matter was raised after the schools broke for the summer holidays so it has not been possible to carry out recent surveys. The data in the final table in Appendix 2 sets out the latest data available and indicates that the flows are not abnormal for a borough distributor road. It is appreciated that residents are concerned about the volume of traffic, particularly given the character of the northern part of this route where the road is narrow and passes through a conservation area. However, given its status it is not considered appropriate to investigate traffic reduction measures.

Traffic Speeds

- 6.3 The police are scheduled to carry out a speed survey shortly and this will inform further work.
- 6.4 In the absence of speed data, the accident history of these roads has been researched and is set out in Appendix 2. There have been 6 personal injury accidents in the last 3 years, which in terms of accident rate per length of road is less than other borough distributor roads in the area.
- 6.5 A number of speed reducing measures have been suggested by residents/ward members:

Speed cameras – the Police/Transport for London criteria relates primarily to the number of serious and fatal accidents. The criteria is not met.

30 mph speed limit roundels on the carriageway – these require special authorisation from the Department for Transport who advise that they would not be approved at sites where the speed limit does not change.

Traffic signals – The average accident rate for a signal controlled junction in Harrow, 7 per 3 years, is higher than the total accidents along Old Church Lane and Abercorn Road. Signals would also have the disadvantage of encouraging traffic to use the side road(s).

- 6.6 Residents have expressed greatest concern about the northern section of these roads where yellow lines prevent parking which in turn facilitates higher traffic speeds. The ongoing review of Stanmore CPZ proposes an extension of the yellow lines southwards

from their current limit at about 30 metres north of Wolverton Road to roughly the middle of Abercorn Road. The proposals are currently the subject of consultation and if agreed could result in higher speeds if no counter measures are proposed.

6.7 Members may recall that Transport for London recently explored the feasibility of extending the H17 from Harrow town centre to Stanmore station via this route. Although the proposal was dropped by TfL, the benefits in terms of public transport accessibility, which are poor in this area, were supported by the Council. It therefore remains an aspiration that buses, probably of the Hoppa variety, will be introduced on this route in the future. Any physical restrictions to traffic flow would therefore need to be considered very carefully and not prejudice a future bus service.

6.8 An alternative to road layout changes could be the erection of speed activated signs. Discussions have recently commenced with TfL and the Police about the roll-out of a DfT funded initiative to provide a number of mobile speed activated signs (probably 4) to each borough. These illuminated signs are triggered by vehicles approaching the sign above a certain speed. They would not remain at one site permanently. It is currently understood that the siting of the signs will be at the Borough's discretion and not subject to TfL/Police criteria.

7. **Consultation**

7.1 None to date. Consultation likely to be appropriate with local residents in the vicinity of the siting of any speed activated sign.

8. **Finance Observations**

8.1 The capital cost of the speed activated signs will be funded by the Department for Transport. The installation and running costs can be contained within the Traffic Management budget.

9. **Legal Observations**

9.1 Speed activated signs can be erected under the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002.

10. **Conclusion**

10.1 The flow on these roads is typical for a borough distributor road and measures to reduce or divert traffic are not considered appropriate. Accident data indicates that the safety record is better than average for borough distributor roads, indicating that traffic speed is not translating into an undue accident problem. However, the possible extension of yellow lines as part of the Stanmore CPZ review could have the effect of facilitating higher speeds.

10.2 The potential for significant road layout changes appear limited. However, a new initiative to introduce temporary speed activated signs is imminent and this location could be one of the first sites.

11. **Background Papers**

11.1 None

12. **Author**

12.1 Steve Swain, Transportation Manager,
Tel no: 020 8424 1538
Email: steve.swain@harrow.gov.uk