

WARD Pedmore and Stourbridge East

DUDLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

STOURBRIDGE AREA COMMITTEE: 15th NOVEMBER 2004

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

RE: LOCAL SAFETY SCHEME – GRANGE LANE, STOURBRIDGE

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To review the effectiveness of measures introduced along Grange Lane, Stourbridge as part of the Council's 2003/2004 programme of local safety schemes.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 From its meeting on the 9th February 2004, this committee will recall that the proposals for the implementation of a local safety scheme along Grange Lane, Stourbridge formed part of the Council's 2003/2004 programme of works and that before giving further consideration to any additional measures that may be appropriate, the Committee requested a progress report on the effectiveness of the current scheme proposals in 6 to 8 months time.
- 2.2 The basic concept behind the measures introduced has sought, through the use of improved road markings to influence a more responsible and considerate driving behaviour from the motorist and also to reduce the opportunities for vehicles to overtake at high speeds.
- 2.3 This approach has essentially been achieved by channelling traffic along only one lane of the carriageway instead of the previous arrangements where the road layout permitted free flow traffic to run along two lanes.
- 2.4 Early indications and comments received on the effectiveness of these measures have been encouraging but from a more tangible perspective, traffic surveys taken along Grange Lane at both peak and off peak periods and in both directions also supports this view in that the speeds up to which 85% of vehicles were travelling in free flow conditions (ie the figure generally accepted as being representative of normal driver behaviour) have been found to be within the range of 39 to 45 mph for traffic travelling south towards Pedmore and 41 to 44mph for traffic travelling north towards Lye.

- 2.5 Indeed, given that Grange Lane, like the remaining sections of the A4036 route is currently subject to a speed limit of 40mph, it is unlikely that a lower speed limit would not only be inappropriate along this road but it would also necessarily require a disproportionate level of enforcement action having to be undertaken in order to ensure compliance.
- 2.6 Other monitoring initiatives on the effectiveness of the scheme will primarily focus on the recorded number of personal injury accidents which will normally be reviewed on an annual basis but assessed over a 3 year before and after period. This time scale has generally been found to reflect a more balanced perspective on the situation because assessments are not unduly influenced or skewed by single events.
- 2.7 Against this background and with the limited data presently available, it would be inappropriate to comment further at this stage on the effectiveness of the Grange Lane local safety scheme except insofar as to report on comments received from Local residents. Therefore, whilst the original concerns expressed about the potential accident problems have generally subsided since the measures were introduced, some complaints were received from those local residents whose property is most closely located to the 'rumble strip' area of the scheme, citing problems of increased levels of noise disturbance.
- 2.8 In order therefore to consider the reasonableness of this complaint, a noise survey has been carried out and whilst the results are to some degree subjective, the complaints were found to have some justification.
- 2.9 Therefore faced with the dilemma of not wishing to undermine the good work that had already been achieved and not wishing to introduce measures that only solved one problem at the expense of creating disturbance for someone else, proposals for minor modifications to the 'rumble strip' area were forwarded to the Local Ward Members and the Lead Member of Transportation in July 2004.
- 2.10 No adverse comments to these proposals were received and instructions have duly been issued to modify the existing scheme by removing the rumble strips and introducing a new buff coloured anti – skid surfacing material in its place so as to retain and yet still emphasize the 'channelling' effect of the measures in this section of the safety scheme. Appendix 1 Drawing No TM1957(A4) attached to this report refers.

3.0 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 That the Committee welcomes the early indications on the effectiveness of the local safety scheme along Grange Lane, Stourbridge and also supports the minor modifications subsequently introduced to mitigate concerns about noise disturbance.

4.0 FINANCE

- 4.1 Minor modifications to the Grange Lane Local Safety Scheme can be met from within existing budgets.

5.0 LEGAL

- 5.1 The Council has statutory responsibility for the promotion of road safety measures to reduce the number and severity of road accident casualties under the provision of Road Traffic (Consequential Provisions) Act 1988.
- 5.2 Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 empowers the Council to do anything calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of any of its functions.

6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

This report accords with the Policies of the Council on Equal Opportunities.

7.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 That the proposals set out a Section 3 of this report be agreed.

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John B Millar, Director of the Urban Environment

Contact Officers: G.E. Isherwood Ext 5459
 I.P. Withey Ext 4414

BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN THE COMPILATION OF THIS REPORT

1. In – house surveys and monitoring procedures.
2. Various correspondence from local residents.

