

Brierley Hill Area Committee - 31st January 2008

Report of the Director of the Urban Environment

Local Safety Scheme 2007/2008 – The Boulevard, Merry Hill

Purpose of Report

1. To seek Committee's views on proposals to introduce traffic calming measures and a 20 mph speed limit along The Boulevard, Merry Hill.

Background

2. A Local Safety Scheme in The Boulevard, to replace the existing Pelican Crossing (near to the roundabout serving the MFI Superstore) with a raised Pelican Crossing has been approved.
3. In view of the existing road layout, the introduction of a raised Pelican Crossing is not considered appropriate unless complementary traffic calming measures are also introduced in order to reduce the approach speeds of vehicles.
4. Further measures under consideration include the use of anti-skid surfacing and the possibility of introducing a 20 mph speed limit.
5. Members may recall that proposals to deter "boy racers" by the introduction of a 20 mph speed limit along The Boulevard arose initially in relation to the section of The Boulevard between Mill Street and The Embankment.
6. Experience shows that unless the existing speed of traffic is already relatively low, say 22 to 24 mph, the introduction of a 20 mph speed limit is, in itself, unlikely to be effective in reducing the speed of traffic unless it is also supported by complementary traffic calming measures.
7. Whilst, one pair of speed cushions and a central refuge have previously been introduced along the western section of The Boulevard (near to the KFC restaurant and drive-through service) there would realistically need to be a more robust system of traffic calming measures put into place if a reduced speed limit of 20 mph is to be effective.

8. The extent of the traffic calming measures required for the full Length of The Boulevard between Mill Street and Merry Hill exceeds that envisaged as part of the original Local Safety Scheme. Notwithstanding this the opportunity has been taken to advertise the introduction of traffic calming measures and/or a 20mph speed proposals for the full length of The Boulevard.
9. No objections have been received to either the traffic calming measures or the proposed 20mph speed limit shown on the attached drawing number HD2548D so that more detailed consideration can now be given to the implementation of any of the measures that have been advertised.
10. Therefore, notwithstanding any further approvals that may still need to be granted in relation to the funding and phasing of those works that go beyond the scope of the original local safety scheme, it is felt appropriate at this stage to advise the Area Committee of the current position and also seek its views on the various elements of the overall scheme so that, in due course, these can be taken into account.
11. Consultation details are set out in appendix A.

Finance

12. Whereas funding for the works envisaged as part of the original local safety scheme can be met from the existing approved programme funds, discussions are currently taking place with third parties, who have previously expressed both interest and general support for the traffic calming measures being introduced, for funding towards the overall works for the full length of The Boulevard. Progress on this issue will be reported further at the Area Committee meeting.

Law

13. The Council is empowered to improve highways under Section 62 of the Highways Act 1980.
14. The Traffic Calming Act 1992 amends the Highways Act 1980 to allow works to be carried out to promote safety and to preserve or improve the environment.
15. Traffic Regulation Orders are made under Section 1 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
16. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 empowers the Council to do anything that is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of any of its functions.

Equality Impact

17. The proposals contained within this report comply with the Council's equality and diversity policy and seek to improve road safety for all classes of road user including the most vulnerable categories of young children, the elderly, pedestrians, cyclists and those with impaired mobility.

Recommendation

18. That the Area Committee notes the contents of this report and supports the implementation of traffic calming measures and a 20 mph speed limit for the full length of The Boulevard, Merry Hill.
19. That the Cabinet Member for Transportation be recommended to introduce the scheme supported by the Area Committee subject to the necessary resources being available.



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List of Background Papers

1. Highways Minor Works Capital Programme approved by Council 20th. February 2007.
2. Public Advertisement for 20mph speed limit 1st to 26th December 2006.
3. Public Advertisement for traffic calming measures 23rd June to 31st August 2007.
4. Consultation letters to Ward Members, emergency services, bus operators and local businesses 15th June to 9th July 2007.
5. Various meetings with Ward Members, Emergency Services, Local Community and Westfields plc.

Consultation

1. Proposals to introduce a 20mph speed limit along The Boulevard were advertised in the Express and Star on the 1st December 2006 and on-street between the 1st.December 2006 to 26th December 2006.
2. Proposals to introduce traffic calming measures along The Boulevard were advertised in the Express and Star on the 23rd.July 2007 and on-street between the 23rd.July 2007 to 31st August 2007.
3. Appropriate letters and plans were also circulated on the 15th June 2007 to Local Ward Councillors, the emergency services, public transport operators, Westfields plc (owners of the Merry Hill Shopping Centre) and Link 51, which is a haulage company having an access that fronts directly onto The Boulevard. This period of consultation for the receipt of comments remained open until the 9th July 2007.