



EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION

REPORT OF:	Executive Member for Growth and Development
LEAD OFFICERS:	Strategic Director of Environment & Operations
DATE:	11 April 2024

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:	Growth and Development
WARD/S AFFECTED:	Darwen South
KEY DECISION:	No

SUBJECT: Petition - Pole Lane, Darwen

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For Executive Board to consider a petition received from residents requesting the removal of the chicanes on Pole Lane, Darwen and a consultation exercise with residents regarding alternative traffic calming.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:

1. Notes the petition of the residents and this report;
2. Request that Network Management develop an alternative or additional scheme to further reduce speeds in the area; and
3. Request that officers inform the lead petitioner of the decision.

3. BACKGROUND

In 2021 a traffic calming scheme was introduced on Pole Lane in Darwen to address concerns regarding speeding vehicles along the route. The scheme comprised of a mini roundabout, two priority give way features and some marked speed cushions (not raised). A plan of the scheme can be seen in Appendix A.

Since the scheme was introduced the Network Management team have been contacted by a local resident ("lead petitioner") raising concerns about the scheme and campaigning for the priority give way features to be removed. In more recent months the lead petitioner has campaigned amongst local residents to sign a petition calling for;

- *A meaningful consultation and dialogue with the Council and residents to discuss alternative traffic calming measures which are acceptable to the residents.*
- *The removal of the chicanes on Pole Lane because of unforeseen problems they have caused. They have been ineffective at reducing speeding and have created new dangers and have a negative impact on residents' daily lives.*

A copy of the petition can be found in appendix B. The lead petitioner lives directly in the centre of one of the traffic calming features on Pole Lane.

The covering letter that was received with the petition claims that the traffic calming scheme has made Pole Lane more dangerous and they still experience very high speeds on the route. It is also alleged that the street is now more dangerous than it was prior to the installation of the features, although no evidence of this is provided. The letter states that no proper consultation with residents was carried out and residents did not agree with the installation of the give way features. It is also claimed consultation responses were misrepresented, as residents supported traffic calming measures but not chicanes as they foresaw the dangers of these. They request that the Council meets with residents to discuss alternative traffic calming, which is acceptable to residents. 167 residents signed the petition, not all of the residents live on Pole Lane, some live on the adjacent Stork Street and Craven Terrace, however they all use Pole Lane.

Funding for casualty reduction schemes is through the highways capital programme. This programme for 2024/2025 has been developed and approved and therefore there is no available funding in this financial year for any remedial measures on Pole Lane. If Pole Lane is to be prioritised in 2024 / 2025 then something would need to be taken off the programme which has already been approved or put a proposal forward for funding for the 2025 / 2026 capital programme. If a decision is made that the features on Pole Lane are to be removed it should be noted that there will be a cost associated with this although the probable costs have not been estimated.

Following complaints from the lead petitioner, the Council have undertaken investigations into vehicle speeds along Pole Lane. When undertaking assessments of speed in an area we use what is known as the 85th percentile speed to determine the severity of the potential speeding issue. This is the speed that 85% of vehicles are travelling at or below and is the industry standard test for assessing speed concerns.

Prior to the introduction of the traffic calming scheme on Pole Lane vehicle speeds in the area, in a survey undertaken in January 2021, were recorded as being the following;

- Oncoming (towards Marsh House Lane) – 85th percentile 39mph
- Average speed – 34mph
- Outgoing (towards Sough Road) – 85th percentile 37mph
- Average speed – 33mph

Following the enquiry from the residents we undertook a further speed survey in the area;

- Oncoming (towards Marsh House Lane) – 85th percentile 36mph
- Average speed – 31mph
- Outgoing (towards Sough Road) – 85th percentile 32mph
- Average speed – 27mph

Both of the speed surveys can be found in appendix C. The speed data collected this clearly shows that there has been a positive impact on reducing vehicle speeds along Pole Lane following the introduction of the traffic calming measures. Whilst there are some vehicles that are still travelling in excess of the speed limit, this is not the majority of vehicles. On this basis we would consider the traffic calming features to have been effective at reducing vehicle speeds on Pole Lane.

There is no evidence to suggest that the traffic calming scheme has made Pole Lane more dangerous, however we do appreciate that there is still an element speeding that takes place. On receipt of the petition we have looked at the traffic calming again on Pole Lane and there are

amendments that could potentially be made to the scheme, which do not include removing the features, that would help further address residents concerns about vehicle speeds along Pole Lane.

Members are asked to agree for Network Management to develop the existing scheme further and identify a funding source. Once the existing scheme has been developed further, it will be shared with residents via a consultation exercise once.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

No risks arising from this petition have been identified.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Should the recommendations in this report be agreed and further traffic calming features developed then funding would need to be allocated from the Highways Capital Programme to implement the scheme. This year's capital programme has already been approved, with no funds allocated to Pole Lane.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

For any amendments that are made to the scheme will require a statutory legal process to be followed. The necessary legal powers to implement this scheme are within the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984. The advertising of the proposals will enable any person to comment on or object to the proposals. Any comments or objections received will be considered at the end of the objection period, with a decision then made whether to make the scheme permanent, or abandon it and remove the accompanying features, signs and markings from site.

Should the traffic calming scheme be removed, the Council would carefully need to consider it's future risk of liability or claim should there be and collision on Pole Lane following the scheme removal.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

None

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. (*insert EIA link here*)

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. (*insert EIA attachment*)

10. CONSULTATIONS

Consultation with residents will be carried out if the Executive Board agrees to allow Network Management to formulate an alternative scheme.

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

VERSION:	1
-----------------	----------

CONTACT OFFICER:	Heather Farmer
-------------------------	-----------------------

DATE:	27 March 2024
--------------	---------------

BACKGROUND PAPER:	Appendix A – Existing Scheme Appendix B – Petition Appendix C – Speed Surveys
--------------------------	---