

WANDSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE – 10TH SEPTEMBER 2009

EXECUTIVE – 14TH SEPTEMBER 2009

Report by the Director of Technical Services on a petition by local residents requesting the removal of the raised table from the zebra crossing in Merton Road, SW18 (Southfields) near the junction with Brookwood Road.

SUMMARY

Background. A petition bearing the signatures of 23 residents of Hanford Close, SW18 (Southfields) has been received which requests the removal of the raised table from the zebra crossing in Merton Road near the junction with Brookwood Road. The residents complain the raised table is causing them great disturbance, especially at night.

Policy. The Council designed and constructed the raised zebra crossing in accordance with DfT design guidance. The measure was implemented as part of a Local Safety Scheme, which was designed to reduce road traffic accident casualties. Casualty reductions achieved by these schemes contribute to the achievement of the Government's National Road Traffic Casualty Reduction Targets and the Mayor of London's Casualty Reduction Targets included in London's Road Safety Plan, endorsed in the Council's Road Safety Plan. These targets are to be met by the year 2010.

Issues/Proposals. It is proposed that remedial works be undertaken to the ramps of the raised zebra in order to lessen the effect of noise caused by traffic.

Director of Finance Comments. The cost of the measures proposed, estimated at up to £5,000, can be met from the provision of £200,000 in the capital programme in 2009/10 for Traffic Management measures.

Conclusions. The retention of the raised table element of the zebra crossing will continue to have a speed-reducing effect on traffic in Merton Road. Reduced traffic speeds have a positive effect in reducing both the numbers and severity of traffic accidents in Merton Road. The remedial works to the ramps is intended to reduce the noise experienced by the residents of Hanford Close.

<u>GLOSSARY</u>	
DfT	Department for Transport

1. **Recommendation.** The Overview and Scrutiny Committee are recommended to support the recommendations in Paragraph 3.
2. If the Overview and Scrutiny Committee approve any views, comments or recommendations on the report, these will be reported to the Executive for their consideration.
3. The Executive are recommended to: -
  - (a) note the terms of the petition received from residents in Hanford Close requesting that the raised speed table be removed from the zebra crossing;
  - (b) agree that the raised table should be retained and that remedial works to the ramps be undertaken with the aim of reducing vehicular traffic noise; and
  - (c) instruct the Chief Executive and Director of Administration to write to the organiser of the petition to advise the petitioners of the decision of the Executive.
4. **Introduction.** A petition bearing 23 signatures of residents of Hanford Close SW18 (Southfields) and accompanying letter from Mr Stuart King, the petition organizer, was presented to the Council by Councillor Osborn on 10th December 2008.
5. **Petition.** The petition was in the following terms: -

“I the undersigned support Stuart King’s campaign to flatten the raised crossing in Merton Road at the junction with Brookwood Road. The raised crossing causes great disturbance as large vehicles speed over it, especially in the early hours of the morning when we are trying to sleep. There was no need for or evidence that supported raising the crossing in the first place and there is no reason why it should not be lowered now.”
6. **Background.** Merton Road, SW18 (Southfields) links Wandsworth High Street to Durnsford Road. It is classified as a local distributor in the Borough’s road hierarchy, forms an important north-south route through Southfields and carries a high volume of traffic.
7. The zebra crossing in Merton Road near the junction with Brookwood Road was converted to a raised zebra crossing in 2006 as part of a Local Safety Scheme for Merton Road (Paper No. 05-691). The measure was introduced in

order to slow approaching vehicular traffic, raise driver awareness, improve intervisibility between vehicles and pedestrians and allow pedestrians to cross the road at one level. There is a school nearby and many of the pupils use this crossing.

8. Since the raised zebra crossing was introduced the Director of Technical Services is only aware of one complaint from a resident of Merton Road regarding vibration. This was satisfactorily resolved following a site meeting when it was explained that minor ground borne vibrations do not result in structural damage to properties.
9. **Accident records.** Before the zebra crossing was raised in February 2006 there were 3 personal injury accidents in the previous 3 years recorded in Merton Road within 50m of the crossing all of which were recorded as slight and resulted in 3 casualties. Two accidents involved pedestrians hit crossing the road and one involved a right turning vehicle hitting another vehicle.
10. A review of the latest road traffic accident casualty records from February 2006 to November 2008 shows that there have been three personal injury accidents recorded in Merton Road within 50m of the crossing, resulting in three casualties, two of which were recorded as slight and one was serious. Two of the accidents occurred within 50m of the site of the proposed crossing. One serious and one slight collision involved pedestrian casualties who were not using the crossing. For both collisions the contributory factor was listed as pedestrian failed to look. The third collision involved 2 vehicles.
11. **Comment.** The original Local Safety Scheme investigation that was reported in Paper No. 05-691 noted high traffic speeds on Merton Road, the 85th percentile speed (a recognized traffic criterion) being 39mph along the section being investigated. Traffic flows were high with a two-way peak flow of 1,703 vehicles per hour.
12. The aim of raising the existing zebra crossing is to reduce traffic speeds. Such traffic calming measures have proven beneficial effects at reducing traffic speeds and lessening the occurrence and severity of road traffic accident casualties thereby making roads safer.
13. Whilst the most recent three-year road traffic accident statistics for the area close to the zebra crossing are similar to the previous period, the casualty severity of the vehicle collision accident is recorded as of greater severity. This should not be taken to be an indication that the raised zebra is not having a positive effect here, as reduced vehicular traffic speeds are achieved from such measures, as mentioned above.
14. The zebra crossing is close to Southfields Community College and is used by many school children. The Council has previously received expressions of concern from parents about vehicular traffic speeds on this section of Merton Road and requests for traffic calming measures. Therefore, retaining the raised platform for the zebra is considered important.

15. However, it is recognized that large vehicles can cause increased noise, especially from those that are not carrying a heavy load and are travelling too fast, such as an empty skip bouncing on a skip lorry or a partly loaded scaffolding lorry. It would be detrimental to completely remove the raised platform of the zebra crossing and would enable traffic to drive more quickly, but some changes to the ramps on either side of the crossing could be made with the aim of reducing noise issues whilst retaining speed reduction.
16. **Action.** It is proposed that the gradient of the ramps on either side of the crossing be reduced to ameliorate the noise experienced by residents of Hanford Close.
17. **Comments of the Director of Finance.** The cost of the measures proposed, estimated at up to £5,000, can be met from the provision of £200,000 in the capital programme in 2009/10 for Traffic Management measures.
18. **Conclusion.** The provision of the raised crossing has a beneficial traffic calming effect and assists pedestrians, especially those with pushchairs and wheelchairs, to cross the road in safety.
19. The raised crossing is in accordance with policies relating to road safety and walking in the Council's Local Implementation Plan.
20. The remedial action proposed to the ramps of the raised table aims to reduce the noise experienced by residents of Hanford Close.

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2nd September 2009

### **Background Papers**

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: -

1. Accident statistics February 2003 to November 2008; and
2. DfT Traffic Advisory Leaflet 6/96 Traffic Calming: traffic and vehicle noise.

All reports to Overview and Scrutiny Committees, regulatory and other committees, the Executive and the full Council can be viewed on the Council's website ([www.wandsworth.gov.uk/committ](http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/committ)) unless the report was published before May 2001, in which case the Committee Secretary (Mr. F. de Lima – 020 8871 6488; email [fdelima@wandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:fdelima@wandsworth.gov.uk) can supply it if required).