

Individual Executive Member Decision

Title of Report:	Royal Avenue and Charrington Road, Calcot - Traffic Management Study
Report to be considered by:	Individual Executive Member Decision
Date on which Decision is to be taken:	10 September 2014
Forward Plan Ref:	ID2860

Purpose of Report: To inform the Executive Member for Highways and Transport of the results of the consultation on potential options to identify and address "rat run" issues in Calcot and allow a decision to be made as to whether to proceed.

Recommended Action: That no action be taken at this time and that the situation be reviewed following completion of the A4 Widening Improvements.

Reason for decision to be taken: To consider the responses to the above consultation and make a decision as to how to proceed.

Other options considered: As detailed in the report

Key background documentation: Consultation Survey results
Consultation Leaflet
Traffic Management Report

Portfolio Member Details	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Pamela Bale - Tel (0118) 9842980
E-mail Address:	pbale@westberks.gov.uk

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Jon Winstanley
Job Title:	Projects Manager
Tel. No.:	01635 519087
E-mail Address:	jwinstanley@westberks.gov.uk

Implications

Policy:	None
Financial:	None as part of this report.
Personnel:	None
Legal/Procurement:	None as part of this report.
Property:	None
Risk Management:	None

Is this item relevant to equality?	Please tick relevant boxes		Yes	No
Does the policy affect service users, employees or the wider community and:				
• Is it likely to affect people with particular protected characteristics differently?			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Is it a major policy, significantly affecting how functions are delivered?			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Will the policy have a significant impact on how other organisations operate in terms of equality?			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Does the policy relate to functions that engagement has identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics?			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Does the policy relate to an area with known inequalities?			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Outcome (Where one or more 'Yes' boxes are ticked, the item is relevant to equality)				
Relevant to equality - Complete an EIA available at www.westberks.gov.uk/eia			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Not relevant to equality			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Consultation Responses

Members:

Leader of Council:	Councillor Gordon Lundie has no objection to the recommendation.
Overview & Scrutiny Management Commission Chairman:	Councillor Brian Bedwell has no objection to the recommendation.
Ward Members:	Councillors Emma Webster, Peter Argyle, Brian Bedwell, Tony Linden, Manohar Gopal and Joe Mooney have no objection to the recommendation.
Opposition Spokesperson:	Councillor Keith Woodhams has no objection to the recommendation.
Local Stakeholders:	Residents as detailed in Appendices B and C.
Officers Consulted:	Mark Edwards, Andrew Garratt and Jenny Graham.
Trade Union:	N/A

Is this item subject to call-in?	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
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Supporting Information

1. Background

- 1.1 In conjunction with the proposed improvements to widen the A4 at Calcot, West Berkshire Council has committed to review the current traffic management issues in Royal Avenue, Charrington Road and Dorking Way, with particular attention to the issue of alleged rat running during the morning and evening peaks. At busy times drivers on the A4 may be tempted to use these roads as alternatives to the A4. Although the proposed widening of the A4 makes this less attractive, concerns still remain.
- 1.2 Royal Avenue is a parallel route through a residential estate north of the A4 between the Royal Avenue roundabout to the west and its junction with Langley Hill to the east and is the principal access to Calcot Junior and Infants schools.
- 1.3 Residential properties fronting Royal Avenue have limited off street parking. Restricted carriageway widths and substantial on street parking reduces significant lengths of the route to single file. This creates conflict and congestion between residents, rat running vehicles and parents accessing the schools. Previous investigations have resulted in the introduction of waiting restrictions (Double Yellow Lines) at both locations where Curtis Road meets Royal Avenue. It was determined at that time that any measures to regularise on street parking, with a view to creating passing places to reduce single file lengths, would have resulted in substantial reduction of on street parking provision, to the ultimate detriment of residents. It was decided that such action would result in undesirable displacement of vehicles into adjoining streets. Consequently this measure did not proceed and on street parking practices have remained unchanged to date, with little scope for improvement. There is a bus route, which runs via Royal Avenue/Garston Crescent/Royal Avenue, in both directions.
- 1.4 Charrington Road and Dorking Way are parallel traffic calmed (priority working) residential distributor roads south of the A4. Dorking Way connects the Sainsbury's roundabout to the west with Charrington Road, which runs between the Royal Avenue roundabout at its western end to its junction with Pollards Way to the east. Pollards Way (a cul-de-sac, except for buses) forms a junction with the A4 at the Langley Hill signal controlled junction.
- 1.5 In the past, both Charrington Road and Royal Avenue areas have been subject to requests for the introduction of entry restrictions to all traffic except residents and bona fide users. Restrictions of this type do not lend themselves well to areas where through routing is available, as enforcement under these circumstances is impractical at best.
- 1.6 Requests have also been received for the introduction of speed cameras in both areas. Current legislation clearly defines conditions where such measures are appropriate and they are where the introduction would have a direct and positive effect on accident reduction, where accident records indicate excess speed as a common causation. Accident records taken over the past 7 years in these areas show that in all except one case, excess speed was not a contributory factor. On that basis the introduction of speed cameras could not be justified (See Appendix D for accident history).

- 1.7 Prior to the main consultation, a Traffic Management study was undertaken into conditions and issues associated with Curtis Road, Calcot, centred on problems associated with Calcot Infants and Junior Schools activities. This investigation was undertaken in association with the Councils' Road Safety team allied to their Safer Routes to Schools programme, which included such issues as Park and Stride, Walking Bus etc. Possible improvements and alterations on Curtis Road are also being discussed with the Schools. This is currently a work in progress, which may need to be the subject of a separate report.

2. Option Details

- 2.1 Each route has been reviewed and options have been considered to try and resolve the issues identified. This section of the report describes the options and the potential advantages and disadvantages that they have and are as detailed in the leaflets circulated throughout the Charrington Road/Dorking Way and Royal Avenue areas as part of the consultation process described in Section 3.

Charrington Road and Dorking Way

- 2.2 **Option 1 - 20mph Speed Limit** - Based on the results of the speed surveys undertaken between the 24th and 28th April 2014, it would be necessary to introduce additional traffic calming measures on Charrington Road and Dorking Way to reduce the average speeds to bring them into compliance with the introduction of a 20 mph speed restriction. Whilst additional calming features would introduce increased inconvenience to through routers and possibly discourage many from utilising this route, it also increases inconvenience for the residents, who are the majority users.

Charrington Road Traffic Speeds

	85%ile (mph)		Average Speeds (mph)
Westbound	34	Westbound	27
Eastbound	33	Eastbound	27

- 2.3 **Option 2 - Point No-Entries** - The introduction of short lengths of one way, also known as point No Entry restrictions (with an exemption for buses), placed on Charrington Road at a point slightly west of its junction with Fernhurst Road, preventing westbound movements from that point, and on Dorking Way preventing access from the A4.

These features would prevent the use of Charrington Road westbound and the similar feature on Dorking Way would prevent eastbound movements from the A4 at all times. Under this option, PM eastbound movements (which are the heavier flows) could not be prevented on Charrington Road, as although the feature on Dorking Way would prevent use of that route, through vehicles could continue to secure access to Charrington Road via the Royal Avenue roundabout and exit via Pollards Way as at present. It would also restrict residents' movements westbound for that part of the community living east of the restriction.

- 2.4 **Option 3 - Camera Controlled Bus Gate** – A Bus Gate is a restriction that prohibits the passage of all motor vehicles except buses. Enforcement of the restriction could be carried out by West Berkshire Council using an automatic

number plate recognition (ANPR) camera. The introduction of such a restriction, placed on Charrington Road, slightly to the west of its junction with Fernhurst Road, would eradicate all rat run manoeuvres in both directions on Charrington Road and on Dorking Way (given that the majority of rat run vehicles on this adjoining route enter or exit via Pollards Way). A bus gate at any point on Charrington Road would result in splitting the community as far as vehicular access is concerned. Therefore, the location of this feature has been chosen to minimise the number of residents affected by the requirement to access the eastern part of Charrington Road via the A4 and Pollards Way.

- 2.5 Option 4 - Take No Action at this time** - Review driving practices following completion of the A4 widening works.

Royal Avenue

- 2.6 Option 1- 20mph Speed Limit** - Based on the results of the speed surveys undertaken between the 22nd and 28th April 2014, the introduction of a 20 mph speed limit based on the measured average speeds, could be justified. It would commence on Royal Avenue at a point northeast of its junction with Highview to its junction with Langley Hill and would include all other estate roads between those points. In this situation where self enforcing traffic calming measures would be preferable but not legislatively required, there is concern that low priority on enforcement as described in Article 4.2 of this report could lead to some abuse of a reduced speed limit.

Royal Avenue traffic Speeds

	85%ile (mph)	Average Speeds (mph)
Westbound	27	Westbound 20
Eastbound	23	Eastbound 19

- 2.7 Option 2- Point No-Entries** - The introduction of a point No Entry (with exemption for buses) preventing eastbound movement could be placed on Royal Avenue at a point adjacent to its eastern junction with Garston Crescent. Also in conjunction with this option the introduction of a No Entry restriction on Conway Road at its junction with Garston Crescent would be necessary to prevent circumnavigation of the Point No Entry on Royal Avenue.

This option, if introduced, would address eastbound rat run manoeuvres but would have no effect on westbound movements. The general road layout within this estate area determines the location suiting such a feature. The location chosen for this option is considered the most suitable as the number of residents and bona fide users requiring access to the eastern part of the estate via the Royal Avenue/Langley Hill junction would be minimised. Given the proximity of this junction to the A4 signal controlled junction and traffic volumes on Langley Hill and the A4, particularly during peak hours, congestion at the Royal Avenue/Langley Hill junction could be considerable at these times.

- 2.8 Option 3 - Camera Controlled Bus Gate** - The introduction of a camera controlled bus gate on Royal Avenue at a location adjacent to its eastern junction with Garston Crescent would prevent all through manoeuvres in both directions along

Royal Avenue. However, it would be necessary to reconfigure the junction to enable space to be created to locate this feature. It would also be necessary to cul-de-sac Conway Road at its junction with Garston Crescent to prevent circumnavigation of the bus gate via Empress Road, St Birinus Road and Conway Road. This location is considered the most suitable for a bus gate as it would split the community at a point where vehicular movements at the difficult Royal Avenue/Langley Hill junction would be minimised and would require the majority of the community lying west of the bus gate to enter and exit via the Royal Avenue roundabout on the A4, which has the configuration and capacity to more readily accept these changes.

2.9 Option 4 - Take No Action at this time - Review driving practices following completion of the A4 widening works.

3. Consultation

- 3.1 Leaflets with a four-option questionnaire were circulated to residents and business properties in the areas and to other stakeholders (The consultation leaflets can be seen in Appendix A). The consultation commenced on the 13th June 2014 and ended on the 18th July 2014. A total of 885 leaflets and questionnaires were circulated to the Charrington Road/Dorking Way areas and 660 circulated to the Royal Avenue area. A detailed report on the options was also publicized on the Council's "Consultation Finder" website. Residents were invited to return the questionnaires by post, complete the questionnaires on-line or return a copy to WBC's Calcot (Sainsbury's) Office.
- 3.2 Of the 885 leaflets circulated in the Charrington Road/Dorking Way area 153 responses (17% response rate) were received. Of these 35.3% supported Option 1, 21.6% supported Option 2, 17% supported Option 3 and 26.1% supported Option 4.
- 3.3 Of the 660 leaflets circulated in the Royal Avenue area 60 responses (10% response rate) were received. Of these 38.3% supported Option 1, 26.7% supported Option 2, 23.3% supported Option 3 and 11.7% supported Option 4.
- 3.4 Appendices B and C contain summaries of all responses received with officer comments. The most significant concerns are summarised below.

4. Consultation Responses and Officer Comments

Royal Avenue Area

Parking problems on Royal Avenue are contributing to issues along this route

- 4.1 Paragraph 1.3 of this report refers to past investigations into parking problems along Royal Avenue.

Option 1 a 20 mph Speed Limit would not be observed without a means of enforcement

- 4.2 It is preferable that 20 mph Speed Limits be associated with physical self-enforcing features such as speed humps, build outs or chicane systems. Whilst Speed Limits can be introduced without such features where average speeds are at or close to

the speed limit recommended (as in this case), Police enforcement within such areas is likely to carry a low priority.

Options 2 and 3 would add significant inconvenience to all residents of the area

- 4.3 An unfortunate consequence of these options is that most residents would be required to change their driving practices. Depending on the individual origin and destination and their direction of travel, journey times could increase for many increasing running costs and carbon footprint and could consequently increase the volume of traffic on the through alternative routes available to them, particularly the A4.

Charrington Road/Dorking Way Areas

Option 1, a 20 mph Speed Limit would not be observed without a means of enforcement

- 4.4 Charrington Road and Dorking Way are both subject to a series of Traffic Calming measures; however, current speed survey figures (Article 2.1.1 of this report) indicate that average speeds continue to be significantly above the threshold for the introduction of a 20 mph Speed Limit. Additional traffic calming measures (as yet undefined) would be necessary to achieve a suitable reduction in average speeds. Again, Police enforcement is likely to be allocated as a low priority.

Options 2 and 3 would add significant inconvenience to all residents of the area

- 4.5 As paragraph 4.3 of this report.

There is no rat run problem on Charrington Road/Dorking Way

- 4.6 Approximately 40% of the responses received stated that they did not perceive any rat run problems, however, approximately 60% stated the opposite. It is possible that the perception of traffic problems may be related to the chosen routes of individual drivers and the times they travel these routes. Whilst it is accepted that during the morning and afternoon peak periods traffic volumes do increase along this route (as supported by Origin and Destination surveys carried out in November 2013) and can at those times create some inconvenience to resident users, compounded in part by the series of Vehicle Priority build outs, it does not indicate that the road capacity is incapable of accepting the increased volume at these times.

5. Equalities Impact Assessment Outcomes

- 5.1 This report is not relevant to equality.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The consultation response levels for Royal Avenue at 10% return and Charrington Road/Dorking Way at 17% return, are very low.
- 6.2 Whilst the survey responses received give an indication of the opinions and wishes of those residents who chose to respond to the consultation, the response level is far too low to establish a general consensus. It would not be factually accurate to

assume that an extrapolation of the responses would reflect the opinions of a larger consultation response.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1 Given the level and content of consultation responses received and that there is no clear consensus from those that did respond, it is recommended that no action be taken on any of the consultation options until after completion of the A4 widening works. However, this should not preclude the further investigation and possible implementation of separate measures on Curtis Road as suggested by the Traffic Management Study (paragraph 1.7)
- 7.2 This will provide the opportunity to re-evaluate traffic movements on the routes in question and to identify whether the A4 improvements have had an impact on use of Royal Avenue, Charrington Road and Dorking Way.

Appendices

Appendix A – Consultation Leaflets

Appendix B – Royal Avenue Consultation Summary

Appendix C - Charrington Road/Dorking Way Consultation Summary