

Moseley & Kings Heath Community Partnership Meeting
Saturday 11 November 2017 at Kings Heath Primary School, Valentine Road at 1pm

Present: - Councillor Lisa Trickett & Councillor Claire Spencer

Phil Edwards, Assistant Director, Transportation

Gill Brooks, Senior Transportation Officer – Transportation Behaviour Change

Kay Thomas, Community Governance Manager

There were over 130 local residents in attendance at the meeting.

1. **Welcome** – Councillor Spencer welcomed all to the meeting and explained the format.
2. **The School Road Issue** – the meeting watched a short video by the School Road Action Group which demonstrated the traffic issues affecting School Road.

A local resident commented that the traffic problems at the other end of School Road, ie by Moseley Church of England Primary School were equally as bad and therefore any solution had to concentrate on the road in its entirety. This view was endorsed by other residents.

Councillor Spencer referred to the walk about that had taken place prior to the meeting and that a car had been witnessed mounting the pavement between Prospect & Blenheim Roads which demonstrated that the proposal put forward would not alleviate the problems. Maintaining the status quo was also not an option.

School Road Action Group then made the following points;

- Cars were regularly driven along the pavement rather than motorists waiting for space to move along the road, endangering pedestrians
- Speeding vehicles were a danger
- It was acknowledged that there was an issue with ‘boy racers’ across the City and to some extent this could be designed out. However residents encountered problems day to day and the confined space of the immediate area added to the traffic issues
- The video show was not the only evidence. Residents had kept a diary for a week in June which reinforced that the problems were continual. A traffic scheme that made the environment safer and a better place to live was required.
- Registration details of cars travelling at high speed on School Road had been reported through 101 and the more people that did this a better picture could be built.

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Councillor Spencer referred to Google Drives set up each for Moseley & Kings Heath and that evidence could be stored in those. Councillor Spencer undertook to share the links.

Councillor Trickett referred to a comment book that was circulating for anyone wishing to make suggestions/comments.

Residents then made the following comments;

- School Road was a narrow, residential road with primary schools at either end.
- There were daily occurrences of high volume of traffic; congestion/gridlock; drivers mounting pavements and travelling along the pavement; excessive speed; road rage; intimidating behaviour; harassment of pedestrians, noise & air pollution
- Gathering evidence could be an issue as the attitudes of drivers in School Road was increasingly aggressive. Motorists seen mounting the pavement were, in some cases, doing so due to pressure and anger from the driver behind them.
- Blenheim Road Action Group had objected to the one way system due to the effect it would have on the lives of residents of Blenheim Road but also because it did not solve the traffic problems in the area. The main problems occurred from the roundabout towards Blenheim and therefore a no-entry sign at Blenheim Road would not assist.
- A resident of Valentine Road reported problems with speeding and said she had been abused over issues of parking. The police station had now closed and therefore the need for the road to be a blue route was no longer a priority.
- A Cambridge Road resident said that there was a need for a strategy for the whole area which needed input from professionals
- It needed to be clear that the traffic problems along the total length of School Road must be addressed.
- The lack of funding to the city council was acknowledged but a resident expressed the view that the council should demonstrate against the cuts as Bristol City Council had done.
- School Road was seen as a through route which needed to be prevented to reduce the numbers of cars travelling along the road. The most effective way of doing that was to make the road an unattractive cut through for speeding motorists, delivery vans and people passing through the area. The introduction of high level speed bumps, across the road at close intervals was a cost effective and simple solution to stop too many cars using the road all day. Parking issues could then be addressed.

In response to the proposal that had initially been put forward by Transportation Councillor Spencer stated that an initial scheme had been necessary to start a conversation. Objections had been raised and taken into account. It was noted that although there had been resident's objections to the scheme they had not been objections to change. To alleviate the issues successfully it was acknowledged that a scheme for the area needed to be developed although resources were limited so a staggered approach would have to be taken.

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Councillor Trickett said that the ultimate aspiration was for a Transportation Plan for the Moseley & Kings Heath area to deal with the many issues affecting the ward but lack of funding and the loss of staff that could assist meant that a starting point had to be determined with the community and the safety considerations for School Road gave an imperative to start there.

3. Background

Phil Edwards in response to comments said that the one-way system was what had been thought possible by the District Engineer but it was accepted that was not suitable. He had listened to the comments/suggestions made and it was evident that there needed to be some proposals that considered other aspects than response to accidents. Alternative funding also needed to be sought so that a project that addressed cars, cycling, public transport etc could be developed.

Residents commented that schemes that helped the area function were required as it was unlikely that the total amount of traffic could be significantly reduced as people would not give up their cars. When finding a solution it needed to be recognised that the road could not be changed; it was a residential road and needed to be respected as such; the road was used as a cut through by vehicles from outside the area; there was a high volume of pedestrian children going to school; School Road was a designated cycle path under the Moseley SPD; the safety of all must remain a priority; solving one issue might negatively impact on another and the solution must fall within the available budget.

4. Framing the Possible

Councillor Trickett said the District Engineer's proposal had been to close off Blenheim Road at one end but this was accepted that it was not a workable solution. 'Doing nothing' was not an option. Therefore as a community various options needed to be considered to find acceptable alternatives. Consultation would have to be undertaken when a scheme had been agreed.

Residents split into 2 groups to come up with solutions to the School Road problem as a whole and how it linked with the surrounding area.

5. Group Work

These were some of the comments that came from the group work;

- The proposed one way system would have only solved part of the problem. Suggested a further one way system in the opposite direction at Moseley School to stop through traffic but allow resident access.
- The original proposal would have moved the problems elsewhere – suggestion of barriers along School Road to prevent cars mounting the pavement & passing places.

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- Speeding and inappropriate parking was not confined to School Road – several roads around School Road needed to be included in a scheme
- put yellow lines down the west side of the road (side nearest to Kings Heath).
- This would significantly reduce the problems caused by the bend and lack of line of sight. It would not result in the problem being spread out into different streets. It would be cheap. It would not significantly affect the amount of parking available; at present, only one side is used for parking. If it didn't work, then it would have not taken any great effort to find this out.
- Residents raised the similar problems at the other end of School Road by Moseley C of E School.
- Appeal of planning permission for 123 School Road, APP/P4605/W/17/3185269 for a 3 storey building of 4 apartments.
- Serious problem of on pavement parking at bottom stretch of School Road. Lorne Court has many residents who use buggies who can't use the pavement to Wake Green Road because of vehicles parked on the pavement, some as close as a foot away from the walls. Sometimes it is hard to even walk past. This is not just at school times. Pavements should be a safe area for pedestrians to walk. The solution is to make barriers to actually prevent cars from being able to park on the pavement
- Higher kerb stones along School Road or fencing as potential solutions
- Extend the pavement to enable 'passing places' in the road
- Speeding is an issue in Cambridge, Clarence, Blenheim & Prospect Roads which needs a different perspective and possibly speed humps in all local roads
- Parking on the pavement also needed action in Valentine Road – parking bays?
- A large part of the problem is simply criminality by drivers which is largely unchallenged
- Enforcement in the area was vital
- Evidence: BCC's road safety strategy states Birmingham is worse than all comparator cities for pedestrian safety and Hall Green is one of the highest risk constituencies.
- By putting up a few signs, the council thought that was a done deal. David has opened up a can of worms. If the council was genuine with pollution, it would have got the stations in Moseley and Kings Heath opened years ago, which would have got rid of a lot of polluting 50 buses.
- To deter through traffic put large speed bumps from Oxford Road to Cambridge Road Methodist Church roundabout. To prevent cars using pavements to pass narrow sections where cars are parked – impose parking restrictions both sides of School Road from Oxford Road to Cambridge Road Methodist Church from 8am to 6pm and enforce.
- Any solution will need to be funded
- Speed cameras would be more effective than speed bumps. Speed bumps create pollution. Lorries will not be put off by speed bumps.

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- Transportation needs to be much more active in rising issues about planning applications when there is a proposal for a use that will generate much new traffic/air pollution – eg the building on the corner of Valentine Road/School Road that has been given permission to be a day nursery – but will exacerbate all the problems being discussed today when opened.
- Suggestion to block off School Road at Paton Grove, and at Blenheim Rd – that would stop School Road being any kind of cut through. Residents can access their houses even if that means going a bit out of the way. Alongside that, try to move traffic down Wake Green Road and Billesley Road, but there would need to be protection for Cambridge Road. Valentine Road might suffer and some action would need to be taken to address
- The School Road issues need to be solved and then a strategy for the wider area could follow. Also any underlying solutions need to be pedestrian/cyclist orientated. Birmingham including Kings Heath & Moseley gives priority to vehicles, drivers, congestion, traffic flows. Pedestrians, cyclists, people with disabilities, children, safety, less pollution are far more important than vehicles.
- Pedestrian/Pelican crossings on Billesley Lane (by One Stop) and School Rd (Ashfield /Prospect Rd junction) to increase pedestrian safety.
- Railings/bollards to protect pedestrians between Greenhill Rd and Methodist Church
- Chicanes on School Rd to slow traffic. Traffic calming needed in addition to one way School Rd.
- One Way' down School Road might work well. From half way down School Rd (opposite Paton Grove) apart from in the rush hour there is not a great problem with the traffic up until Blenheim Rd. Light up signs that show your speed (and a smiley face if you're within the speed limit) might deter speeding. It is imperative that the problem re. cars mounting the pavement at the bottom end of School Rd is sorted out. There have been far too many incidents and a tragedy could happen any time.
- Make part of the streets one way
- One way system at Blenheim Road would displace traffic therefore solution would be to have a one way system at the top of School Road at the church. Traffic was already travelling along Ashfield Road therefore there would be little extra traffic as the traffic travelling along School Road would be that trying to avoid the High Street.
- Suggestion to block the road to all traffic except cyclists, at School Road (Moseley School), Cotton Lane, Ashfield Road and School Road by Cambridge Road. This would return the area to a residential area. Acknowledged that there would be a knock on effect therefore make Valentine Road and Poplar Road one way to the High Street. Counteract increased traffic on Billesley Lane with speed humps and make Cambridge Road access for residents only.
- Design in parking areas on the one way streets as natural chicanes to counter act speeding

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- Use of bollards/plant pots on the pavement instead of railings to discourage parking.
- There were roads that did not have resident's associations/groups and these residents needed to be encouraged to find a voice.
- Timescales for action/reporting back

6. Summing Up and Next Steps

Councillor Trickett stressed that at this time it was about collecting ideas to be taken back and evaluated against key principles. Numerous ideas had come from the group work and these would be pulled together but the outstanding priority would be safety and safety of children would be the paramount problem to solve.

Councillor Trickett acknowledged comments about not all residents being aware of the meeting and undertook to leaflet the immediate area to explain what was taking place.

Councillor Spencer said that one of the main issues was around school run times and suggested that West Midlands Combined Authority was working on workplace health and the idea to encourage alternative start/finish times in the workplace would lessen the need for commuters to travel at the same times. The opening of the Kings Heath train station could be the opportunity for a fresh start on travel. Moseley & Kings Heath councillors had also expressed an interest in next phase of the speed camera pilot programme.

Councillor Trickett concluded that the comments from the meeting had been noted and the work/suggestions highlighted on the maps and in the work groups would be added to the comments. There would be a window of 2 weeks ending 25 November for additional comments to be sent to kay.thomas@birmingham.gov.uk thereafter officers would consider all the suggestions put forward and meet with the councillors to discuss before Christmas. A further meeting would then be arranged for January (date to be confirmed) for further discussion with the community.

Residents who had attended the meeting were asked to spread the word to their neighbours.

In response to a question Phil Edwards said that any work would need to be on a phased approach but that if a broadly acceptable scheme could be agreed in January it would be possible to look at an experimental TRO by March. Gill Brooks referred to a resident tool kit being launched as part of the 20mph limit which would show what communities could do to promote the scheme.

Meeting ended at 3.10pm