

REPORT TO CABINET

Title: **PETITION: NORDEN ROAD, IMPROVEMENT TO FOOTWAY UNDER RAILWAY BRIDGE**

Date: **18TH DECEMBER 2008**

Member Reporting: **Councillor Rayner**

Contact Officer(s): **Stephen Brown, Head of Highways & Engineering
Tel: 01628 796770**

Wards Affected: **Boyn Hill, Oldfield**

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Council received a petition presented by Councillor Mrs Herdson on behalf of Dr Alan Smith containing approximately 250 signatures requesting that the Council considers safety improvements to the footway below Norden Road Railway Bridge. The front page of the petition is attached as appendix A.
- 1.2 The petition highlights the difficulties experienced by pedestrians using the footway underneath the bridge as well as crossing the road at this location and intimates increased heavy traffic due to the nearby industrial estate and claims no improvements have been made to address this problem.
- 1.3 Councillor Mrs Herdson of Boyn Hill Ward and Councillor Wilson of Oldfield Ward both support measures to address these concerns.
- 1.4 This report sets out short and long term options to respond to the issues highlighted in the petition.

2. RECOMMENDATION: That:

- a) **The Council approves the implementation of a scheme as detailed in option 1 at a cost of approximately £5000 to £10000 subject to there being no major utility services present.**
- b) **Officers to monitor the effectiveness of the works carried out above.**
- c) **That the lead petitioner and Ward Councillors be notified of the resolution to this report.**

| What will be different for residents as a result of this decision? |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safety of pedestrian traffic through this tunnel (including wheelchairs and pushchairs) will be improved by provision of additional railings.• The scheme could be implemented relatively swiftly and with minimum disruption to road users or local residents.• The scheme is likely also to prove the most cost-effective to implement. |

3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

Norden Road Railway bridge is built over a narrow, single-lane stretch of Norden Road. Traffic lights on either side manage the flow of vehicular traffic. The road beneath the bridge is 4.2m wide at its narrowest point. A footpath is provided on the west side of the road only.

Pedestrian Barriers sited near the kerb either side of the tunnel (3m in length on the south side and 2m length on the north) offer a degree of protection to pedestrians but stop short of the tunnel due to the restricted width of the footway within it (1.2m at its widest point).

Whilst the concerns about road safety in the vicinity of the Norden Road railway bridge are clearly understood, particularly in relation to pedestrians using the relatively narrow footway, our road safety data would indicate that there have been no recorded injury crashes at the bridge or on the immediate approaches over the past five years. However, there have been six crashes within 200 metres of the bridge. Three of these related to turning manoeuvres at adjacent junctions, one involved a shunt-type crash involving queuing vehicles on the approach to the traffic signals, whilst two involved pedestrians crossing between moving vehicles. Damage-only crashes and 'near-miss' incidents are not recorded.

The petitioners claim that heavy road traffic has increased since the Vandervell Business Park was established some years ago, but that no improvements to the management of traffic were undertaken to alleviate the situation.

Officers have checked the situation on site and concluded that it would not be practicable to improve the current road layout or bridge position.

The petitioner asks that the Council consider one or more of the following options to overcome the problem:

- 1 – 4. Install a barrier on the footway under the tunnel to screen pedestrian traffic from vehicular traffic and attach a spray screen to protect pedestrians from car spray, narrow the road or widen the pavement.
5. Divert large lorries to alternative routes.
6. Install a pedestrian crossing to link the footway with the footpath/cycleway leading to the station, and reduce road speed through the tunnel by having a chicane or hump at the pedestrian crossing.
7. Remove the high kerb opposite the footpath to the station.
8. Prepare plans for a pedestrian tunnel to be built on the west side of the bridge.
9. Prepare plans for a pedestrian tunnel to be built from Boyn Valley Road to the allotment site where it would link to the footway to the station.

4. OPTIONS AVAILABLE AND RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 Options

| | Option | Comments | Financial Implications |
|----|---|--|---|
| 1. | Install pedestrian barrier at the edge of the existing footway retaining the existing full width for use by pedestrians. Provide spray screen, install two bollards with reflective strips, provide 600mm red coloured surfacing adjoining footway to guide vehicles away from footway and replace yellow lines. Install dropped kerbs at north and south of the bridge and provide pedestrian crossings together with increased all RED traffic signal timing. | <p>This option is considered as the appropriate solution to the problem in the short to medium term and the scheme could - subject to approval - be implemented within existing budgets in 2009/10.</p> <p>RECOMMENDED OPTION</p> | Cost of implementation of this option will be approximately £5000-£10000. subject to there being no underground services present. |
| 2. | Widening of footpath, install pedestrian barriers, spray screen, introducing pedestrian phase to traffic signals, pedestrian crossings and taking measures to divert large lorries | <p>Diversion of large lorries may move the problem to another sensitive location. The nearest alternative to the east would be the Braywick Road bridge which would direct traffic along Shoppenhangers Road – a speed-restricted route which would take vehicles past two local schools.</p> <p>The nearest alternative to the west would be the tunnel on Cannon Lane necessitating a lengthy extra journey through the Cox Green residential area via Woodlands Park Road and passing the new special school entrance. The only other road available is Highfield Lane which includes another narrow, weight-restricted bridge and would also take vehicles past two schools.</p> | Cost is expected to be very high. Detailed investigation, design and costing is required. |

| | Option | Comments | Financial Implications |
|----|-------------------|--|--|
| 3. | Pedestrian subway | This option would require permission of the Rail Authority and it is very unlikely it could be achieved in the foreseeable future. | Cost is expected to be extremely high. Approx. £300,000 - £500,000 Detail investigation, design and costing is required. |

4.2 Risk assessment

Due to the restrictions imposed by the shape of the bridge and the road layout there are limited options available to improve the facilities for pedestrians and substantially reduce the risk of an accident at this location. Proposed option 1 will be a substantial improvement to the current situation at a reasonable cost and could be implemented from existing budgets and with minimum disruption to pedestrians and other road users. The presence of services adjacent to the kerb line could increase the cost in implementing this scheme.

5. CONSULTATIONS CARRIED OUT

- 5.1 The recommendations of this report respond to the concerns of the community raised in the petition and those of the ward councillors. Discussions were held with the lead petitioner and the ward councillors prior to drafting this report.

6. COMMENTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

- 6.1 This report will be considered at the Overview & Scrutiny Panel on 15th December. A verbal update will be available for Cabinet on 18th December.

7. IMPLICATIONS

The following implications have been addressed where indicated below.

| Financial | Legal | Human Rights Act | Planning | Sustainable Development | Diversity & Equality |
|------------------|--------------|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |

Background Papers:

Copy of petition submitted via Dr Alan Smith

