

1 July 2019

Petition – Wood End Road

I am writing to you in response to your e-petition, that ran from 13 May to 12 June 2019 that gained nine signatures, which was as follows.

“We, the undersigned, petition the council to Introduce appropriate speed reducing measures (speed bumps, speed tables) to assist in reducing the problem of speeding vehicles along Wood End Road, Wednesfield. This follows a large number of serious crashes and incidents over the last 5 years which appear to be becoming more and more frequent.

There are currently no speed reducing measures in place along Wood End Road. There are Schools, a Church, Multiple Shops and Public Houses as well as a large number of domestic dwellings that along with their owners/ users are all at risk due to the high speeds that vehicles are able to reach along Wood End Road”.

As Service Lead Traffic and Road Safety, I hold responsibility for investigating the issues you have raised and responding to your petition. My response is therefore set out below:

Following receipt of your petition the Traffic and Road Safety Team have carried out investigations to assess whether any road safety interventions could be justified at Wood End Road. As with all enquiries the first stage involves interrogation of the Transport for West Midlands Data Insight System (DIS) to ascertain the number of personal injury accidents (PIA) along all parts of Wood End Road that have occurred in the last five years. This system holds all records of accidents logged by West Midlands Police where there has been any associated injury. Comparing PIA data is the nationally recognised methodology of comparing the safety record of roads and for prioritising road safety interventions and associated resources.

Our investigations show that there have be four PIA along the 0.96 km length of Wood End Road. This equates to a modest PIA accident rate of 0.86 PIA per km/year. Three of the four PIA's were classified as resulting in “slight” injuries and one classified as “serious”. The serious PIA involved a pedestrian walking across the access to the Castle Public House being hit by a vehicle turning right into the access. The three slight accidents all involved two vehicles being in collision. The PIA are at various locations along Wood End Road and the data records do not show any common causation factors to link the recorded PIA. Speed was recorded as a contributory factor in just one of the four PIA.

The Road Safety Team have also commissioned speed surveys to ascertain whether there are significant speed issues on Wood End Road. Due to the length of the road, Automated Traffic Count Speed Surveys (ATC's) have been put in place at three locations along the route. The survey data was gathered using pneumatic tubes placed across the entire width of the road. The tubes recorded vehicle volumes and speeds in both directions over a minimum of 7 days/24 hours a day at each location. This methodology provides the most reliable and representative data to assess traffic speeds. A summary of the recorded speed data is shown in the table below:

Wood End Road	Direction	Northbound		Southbound	
		Mean (mph)	85 th % (mph)	Mean (mph)	85 th % (mph)
ATC Site	Speed Type				
Site 1	Beech Tree Ave/Blackhalve Lane	30.9	36.0	31.8	36.1
Site 2	Moathouse Lane West/Jayne Close	28.8	33.2	29.5	34.1
Site 3	Wollaston Crescent/Henfield Close	28.9	33.2	29.5	34.3

The mean and 85th percentile speed values are the nationally recognised methodology used to compare speeds at differing locations. The latter value is the speed at which 85 % of drivers are travelling at or below.

Wood End Road is classified as a Local Distributor Road on Wolverhampton's Highway Network and as such is an important connective route on the eastern side of Wolverhampton. This classification of road is expected to carry significant levels of traffic and would not usually be considered suitable for physical traffic calming measures such as humps, tables or similar vertical measures, due to related impacts on traffic flows.

The speeds recorded at sites 2 and 3 do not raise any significant concerns when compared to other roads of similar classification to Wood End Road. The 85th percentile speeds at site 1 are slightly higher than desirable but such values are not uncommon on connective roads that provide strategic links across the city.

City of Wolverhampton Council as a Highways Authority have a responsibility to implement programmes of activities to reduce the number of personal injury accidents across the city. In undertaking this duty, the Road Safety Team must prioritise our limited resources to intervene at those locations where the road safety risk is highest based on statistical evidence. Responsibility for enforcing speed limits falls to West Midlands Police, who carry out various enforcement activities across the City including mobile speed camera operations and Community Speed Watch. The latter can be arranged by contacting local area sergeant.

Having compared the above data with other roads across the City of Wolverhampton, the introduction of traffic calming could not be justified along this route; both in terms of statistical data and classification of Wood End Road as a local distributor road. I am aware that there have been a number of non-injury accidents on or near to the bend at the junction of Wood End Road and Moathouse Lane West. As these collisions did not result in personal injury they are not recorded by West Midlands Police and so are not on the DIS database. The speed survey data also

suggests that the vast majority of drivers are travelling at appropriate speeds in the vicinity of the bend and so the loss of control accidents are likely to be associated with a minority of drivers who choose to travel at inappropriate speeds, wherever they drive. This unfortunately is not a situation that is unique to Wood End Road but is replicated across both Wolverhampton the rest of the UK. This is not to say that other interventions cannot be considered, however these will need to be proportionate and affordable. I have therefore considered further what alternative interventions would be appropriate and have outlined my thoughts as follows.

I am aware that there were some chevron signs located on the grass verge at the junction of Wood End Road and Moathouse Lane West but that these are no longer in situ. This may be contributing to the non-injury/loss of control accidents in the vicinity of the bend. The Traffic and Road Safety Team will therefore look to replace the chevron signs as soon as possible as these will highlight the presence of the bend to approaching drivers. Additionally, I will ask my team to arrange for the installation of a variable message sign that warns drivers of the bend ahead, when approaching from the south, and the need to reduce their speed accordingly.

As the 85th percentile speeds are above 30mph I will also ask for Wood End Road to be regularly included in our static 30mph speed reminder sign campaign where we display speed reminder posters on lamp columns along roads for a period of 3 months, on a rotational basis. These signs have been proven to be effective at reducing traffic speeds over a reasonable time period by cognitively influencing driver behaviour.

Due to the higher 85th percentile speeds recorded at site 1 (Beech Tree Avenue - Blackhalve Lane) I will also ask my team to look to install some speed indicator variable message signs along this section of Wood End Road. These signs flash to remind drivers of the speed limit and to slow down. The signs are activated only when vehicles are travelling above the speed limit. These signs will be procured later this financial year as part of a wider programme for this initiative.

I trust the above is both informative and helpful. If you wish to discuss anything further, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours Sincerely

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