

**QUESTIONS TO THE ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ORAL REPLY**

**1. Questions from Mr Philip Horton, on behalf of the Chelsfield Park Residents Association** (asked on Mr Horton's behalf by Mr Chris Torbet-Smith)

Mr Horton submitted the questions "*regarding the proposed deletion of parking restrictions around Chelsfield Station*".

a. If the intent behind the proposal to de-restrict parking on the flank boundary of 55, Oxenden Wood Road is to benefit the residents of the Chelsfield Park Estate, why have those residents not been consulted about the proposal?

**Reply**

The intent of the proposal is to moderate parking pressure in neighbouring roads where crowded crossovers causing impaired sightlines are causing significant upset and danger to other homeowners, whilst at the same time retaining as much parking stock as possible for public use in less intrusive places.

The six houses most directly affected by the change were informed of the proposal by post.

The scheme has since been modified twice in response to those residents expressed concerns.

**Supplementary Question**

Suggesting that residents of the six houses were not informed of the proposal, Mr Torbet-Smith enquired of the reasons for this.

**Reply**

The Portfolio Holder maintained that residents of the adjacent six houses were informed by letter.

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b. Would not such an intention be better achieved by different hour restrictions on opposite sides of the road (as in Windsor Drive)?

**Reply**

I do not believe so. Any restriction by definition inhibits the availability of potential parking stock and flank fences have been determined to provide the 'least worst' solution in this regard.

### **Supplementary Question**

Mr Torbet-Smith suggested that the Portfolio's response did not satisfactorily answer his question.

### **Reply**

In response, the Portfolio Holder indicated that he would be happy to provide an extended reply to Mr Torbert-Smith's question by email.

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c. If the proposal is driven by commuter parking demands, would it not be better to provide a worthwhile increase in provision to extend the existing car park on the Highway and/or make use of vacant space in close proximity to Chelsfield Railway Station?

### **Reply**

The idea to extend the existing car park on the Highway has been and continues to be investigated, notwithstanding that any proposal championing the relaxation of planning restrictions designed to protect the Green belt would most likely prove to be highly controversial in its own right.

With regard to the "vacant space", specific clarification as to the exact location you have in mind would be appreciated to enable a considered response to be provided to this point.

### **Supplementary Question**

Mr Torbet-Smith indicated that drawings were available and he would take forward provision of these following the meeting.

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## **2. Questions from Mr David Clapham**

a. Drawing ESD/11473-02 shows two distinct areas of consultation, specifically how do the results differ from those of Keston Village and the roads to the west of Westerham Road compared to those to the east of Westerham Road?

### **Reply**

A lot of thought was given to the consultation area in order to try and obtain a balance of views of residents and users of this street junction. A total of 33 roads were consulted, with 7 in the 'east' (mentioned above) where the majority of views supported the proposal.

As regards to 'west' area, 3 roads were of split views, 13 roads supported the proposal and 8 roads did not support the proposal.

Residents of Westerham Road itself supported the proposal.

In regard to absolute numbers of yes/no responses, these were as follows:

- Roads to the west of Westerham Road: Yes = 81 / No = 71
- Roads to the east of Westerham Road: Yes = 21 / No = 0
- Westerham Road itself: Yes = 29 / No = 4

### **Supplementary Question**

Of the responses from Keston Village residents, Mr Clapham asked if there was a higher proportion against the proposed scheme.

### **Reply**

The Portfolio Holder indicated that this was the case.

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b. Keston Village Residents' Association (KVRA) joined with the Friends of Keston Common (FoKC) and two other local groups to object to the proposed roundabout scheme and made comprehensive alternative suggestions. As these have not been made available to the public how will consideration of these be progressed?

### **Reply**

Council officers have prepared an extensive response to your paper which will be forwarded to you over coming days.

The contents are not regarded as an 'alternative' to the specific proposal being considered later this evening, rather a possible 'add on' to any potential safety measures which might prove to be forthcoming locally.

### **Supplementary Question**

Mr Clapham enquired how investigations might be progressed.

### **Reply**

The Portfolio Holder indicated that safety matters would be considered e.g. in regard to Keston C of E Primary School and any possible consideration of converting Fishponds Road solely for one-way traffic. Thoughts on such matters would be arrived at later.

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c. B rated Heathfield Road travels through a narrow busy Conservation Area with a vibrant primary school and close to 6 specially designated areas. Residents complain continually about vehicle speeds and HGV's. Do you agree that the proposed roundabout will exacerbate these issues and reduce the significance of special areas?

**Reply**

This is something of a matter of subjecture and opinion, but I don't believe that necessarily to be the case.

If the scheme before us this evening is recommended for approval, the adaptation to the entrance of Heathfield Road at Westerham Road will ensure that average traffic speeds are reduced at that point.

If the right turning traffic exiting Heathfield Road into Westerham Road experiences less waiting time in future, queues should be reduced, and far less rat running at speed down Fishponds Road to 'beat the queue' should result.

To support this view, I am advised that the 7 day average northbound flow (5116 vehicles/day) is similar to the 7 day southbound average (5252).

This data does not suggest that drivers are currently put off using the southbound route because of the congestion, hence the southbound flow is believed unlikely to increase should the congestion be reduced by the introduction of the proposed roundabout.

It is acknowledged that average traffic speeds (the most recent survey recorded the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed at 35.7mph close to Keston Avenue) are faster than anyone would prefer to see, but such measurements are not abnormal for this class of road.

The local Police have been alerted to residents' on-going concerns in this regard.

**Supplementary Question**

Mr Clapham enquired how concerns related to the number of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) using Heathfield Road might be addressed. Mr Clapham referred to vehicles proceeding at high speed along the road.

**Reply**

The Portfolio Holder indicated that it was not possible legally to differentiate between vehicles permitted to be driven along Heathfield Road. He added that the speed of vehicles along Heathfield Road was a matter for the Police to enforce.

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### **3. Questions from Mr Michael Ormond**

a. Clearly this will make it beneficial to drive through the village as the pinch point will be removed. This will obviously result in more traffic, increased danger to school children and residents, already in fear of speeding HGV's and cars. Has the Council taken into account this specific point of risk displacement?

#### **Reply**

This is something of a matter of subjecture and opinion, but I don't believe that necessarily to be the case.

If the scheme before us this evening is recommended for approval, the adaptation to the entrance of Heathfield Road at Westerham Road will ensure that average traffic speeds are reduced at that point.

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This data does not suggest that drivers are currently put off using the southbound route because of the congestion, hence the southbound flow is believed unlikely to increase should the congestion be reduced by the introduction of the proposed roundabout.

#### **Supplementary Question**

Mr Ormand sought confirmation that in developing the scheme, consideration had been given to any increased traffic levels and consequent risks for village residents and children.

#### **Reply**

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that there has been such consideration.

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b. The congestion problem is minor and only really an issue driving south in the evening rush hour. Given budget restraints, is this really a priority spot for LBB over other congestion spots?

#### **Reply**

In addition to having a troubled safety history due to inappropriate speed along the length of Westerham Road, this particular junction has also been identified as a congestion 'hot-spot'.

The funds for dealing with priorities of this nature are provided by TfL via their London-wide 'LIP' (Local Implementation Plan) process.

The cost of the proposed roundabout is relatively low for this type of scheme which if approved would provide good value for money in terms of reduced congestion and increased safety both at the junction itself and also through the bends to the south of this location.

**Supplementary Question**

Mr Ormand suggested that the bends further south along Westerham Road were some distance away from the junction with Heathfield Road and if the bends were a safety problem, he suggested that the problem be dealt with in the location of the bends rather than at the junction with Heathfield Road.

**Reply**

The Portfolio Holder referred to the need to reduce vehicle pollution (from congestion) and increase road safety. Westerham Road is a fast road and measures have been put in place to help address excessive speeds in the location of the bends. The scheme at Heathfield Road junction was, in effect, an extension of measures already in place to help curb high speeds at the bends.

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c. LBB has just approved building at Keston School, which included the need for traffic calming measures. Why not combine this with what to do at the end of Heathfield Road and the high number of accidents at "chicken farm bends", and work with the school and residents to find a cost effective, holistic solution?

**Reply**

All/any issues concerning highway safety around Keston School will be considered separately and do not feature as part of the proposal being considered this evening.

**Supplementary Question**

Mr Ormond suggested delaying a decision on the Westerham Road/Heathfield Road scheme and consulting with Keston Village residents.

**Reply**

The Portfolio Holder indicated that he was not pre-disposed to judge what the Committee's recommendations would be on the scheme.

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#### **4. Questions from Mr Chris Torbet-Smith**

(With reference to drawing 11051-112 detailing changes in parking arrangements in Oxenden Wood Rd)

a. Can we have the full results of all related safety surveys/investigations which have been conducted relating to this proposal? If these are insufficient/incomplete can we rely on those responsible to ensure the plan is not implemented?

#### **Reply**

As part of the safety considerations various site visits were conducted to investigate the location and road width.

Swept Path Analysis was also commissioned, also visibility splay. Relevant records are available for viewing on request.

As such, I am advised that there is no technical reason to delay the implementation of the proposal.

#### **Supplementary Question**

Mr Torbert-Smith referred to safety considerations and parked cars, suggesting that it is not possible to provide a full safety survey without including any effects of parked vehicles. How was it possible to rely on advice from engineers when some advice appeared to be missing?

#### **Reply**

The Portfolio Holder referred to a number of visits by engineers to the location – two had taken place and there were two more proposed visits. It was accepted that a three car solution could impede exit. Parked cars in side streets provide a “build-out” helping to lower travel speeds, particularly at junctions. This provided a safety benefit.

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b. Why is there such determination to push this through under ‘flank’ policy in order to generate parking for non-residents to the detriment, and against the wishes of, those directly affected?

#### **Reply**

The intent of the proposal is to moderate parking pressure in neighbouring roads where crowded crossovers causing impaired sightlines are causing significant upset and danger to other homeowners, whilst at the same time retain as much parking stock as possible for public use in less intrusive places.

The six houses most directly affected by the change were informed of the proposal by post.

The scheme has since been modified twice in response to those residents expressed concerns.

**Supplementary Question**

Mr Torbert Smith sought to understand why the Council appeared to be focussing on such a small space for non-resident parking.

**Reply**

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that the six households were informed of the proposal by post. Following this objections had been received.

Such roads are part of the public highway for the benefit of the borough as a whole. Some people would use Chelsfield station and park. Use of the Flank Fence Parking Policy can offer some parking relief (in view of pressure for parking spaces) and such flank fence spaces can be used in less busy locations. Such parking spaces would be facilitated for the greater good of borough residents.

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c. As we have never been consulted on this matter we wish the proposal to be deferred until all avenues/options have been explored, including awaiting the results of changes to Orpington station.

**Reply**

I feel I must refer you to my answers at 4'a' and 4 'b' above.

**Supplementary Question**

Mr Torbert-Smiith maintained that a full consultation was needed with residents and residents consulted on the "full picture".

**Reply**

The Portfolio Holder indicated that the normal consultation process had been slightly foreshortened by the Local Government election in May 2014. Prior to the election a consultation paper, with a wide circulation, had been sent to residents. Although Chelsfield Park was initially omitted, residents in the area were subsequently consulted on the flank fence policy as it would affect Chelsfield Park. Five parking spaces were initially proposed for Oxenden Wood Road, but the number of spaces proposed had been reduced subsequent to consultation.

The Portfolio Holder explained that he had written to the Chelsfield Park Residents Association to apologise that the consultation had not been undertaken as a pure consultation. The next stage of the process would include the proposals being advertised e.g. in local press, when further opportunity would be provided for residents to present comments.

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## **5. Question from Mr Chris Mulinder**

Given the costs involved, inconvenience of implementation and the impact to the local area, has there been a thorough evaluation of traffic calming measures, improvements to the A-Road route and Keston Mark Junction and restrictions to traffic through the village to reduce the congestion at this junction?

### **Reply**

Funding across London for road safety schemes is provided from TfL.

It is dispersed across the Boroughs on the basis of whether the funds will maximise the reduction of historic injury accidents, particularly serious and fatal accidents.

Thankfully in almost every regard, without ever becoming complacent, it has to be noted that Heathfield Road's current safety record is such that it does not qualify for such funding at this time.

In respect to the operation of the signals at the Keston Mark, Bromley is lobbying TfL heavily for improvements to be made to the timing of the lights to significantly improve traffic flow.

### **Supplementary Question**

In view of Heathfield Road being a B Road through Keston Village, and congestion only occurring during peak times, Mr Mullinder asked whether it would not be better to look at the Keston Mark junction to determine the extent to which traffic uses the A road.

### **Reply**

The Portfolio Holder indicated that it was not his position to guide the Committee (in making its recommendations).

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At this point the Chairman had provided a period of 30 minutes for questions and replies. In view of the substantive business on the Committee's agenda, the Chairman sought views from Members on whether a further 30 minutes should be given to hearing remaining questions and replies. The matter was put to a vote and by a majority it was agreed that sufficient time had been allocated for questions (15 minutes more than required by the Council's Constitution). This was supported by the Chairman who confirmed that the remaining questions (detailed below) would receive a written response from the Environment Portfolio Holder.

## **6. Questions from Mr Toby Blythe**

a. Any proposals to improve the junction of Westerham Rd and Heathfield Rd surely have to be considered taking into account the excessive amount of traffic that uses Keston Village as a cut through from both directions. What measures will be introduced to REDUCE cut through traffic using Keston village?

### **Reply**

I can't promise that any measures 'will' be introduced given that they are very difficult indeed to engage or convince on such matters, but Bromley is lobbying TfL heavily for improvements to be made in the timing of the lights at Keston Mark to significantly improve traffic flow through that particular junction.

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b. Keston Village is the quickest route south or north, but it is still a B road and a small village. The levels of daily traffic are comparable if not higher than many surrounding A roads causing huge disruption. What considerations for this roundabout proposal will address this inextricably linked issue?

### **Reply**

The 'consideration' is that there will be no direct effect on Keston Village should the roundabout proposal be progressed.

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c. Keston village evidently eases the traffic volumes on the surrounding A roads – do LBB acknowledge this and why therefore is the focus on the junction in question in isolation when it is obvious more significant measures are needed at various surrounding junctions in particular at the Keston Mark?

### **Reply**

To a point yes, albeit as you have identified yourself in 'b' above, the route through Keston Village cuts off two sides of the A232 'triangle' defined by the Keston Mark junction and is therefore and will remain the logistically preferred route for many motorists irrespective of any delays which might be occurring/improved upon at that junction.

The Heathfield Road junction scheme is designed to reduce congestion at that specific location and also contribute to road safety more widely along Westerham Road by lowering average traffic speeds.

With respect to the junction at Keston Mark, I refer you to my answer at 'a' above.

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## **7. Questions from Michelle Blythe**

a. Why are you investing in a Roundabout at the end of Heathfield Road, when clearly there is an urgent requirement to re-design the junction at the Mark/Croydon Road?

### **Reply**

The Heathfield Road junction scheme is designed to reduce congestion at that specific location and also contribute to road safety more widely along Westerham Road by lowering average traffic speeds.

In respect to the junction at the Keston Mark, Bromley is lobbying TfL heavily for improvements to be made to the timing of the lights to significantly improve traffic flow.

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b. If plans go ahead, what will you offer Keston Village by way of a safe crossing facility as drivers will start to use Heathfield Road as a "short-cut" and traffic will increase? We have a school in Keston Village, and no crossing facility (as all other schools have in the Borough).

### **Reply**

Consideration can be given to this if a suitable location and the local footfall demand achieve the necessary criteria. It is however incorrect for you to suggest that "all other schools have" same.

Regarding "traffic will increase" that remains something of a matter of subjecture and opinion, but I don't believe that necessarily to be the case.

To support this view, I am advised that the 7 day average northbound flow (5116 vehicles/day) is similar to the 7 day southbound average (5252).

This data does not suggest that drivers are currently put off using the southbound route because of existing congestion patterns, hence the southbound flow is believed unlikely to increase should the congestion be reduced by the introduction of the proposed roundabout.

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c. What traffic calming measures will you introduce as a result of the likely increase in traffic?

### **Reply**

Funding across London for road safety schemes is provided from TfL.

It is dispersed across the Boroughs on the basis of whether the funds will maximise the reduction of historic injury accidents, particularly serious and fatal accidents.

Thankfully in almost every regard, without ever becoming complacent, it has to be noted that Heathfield Road's current safety record is such that it does not qualify for such funding at this time.

Regarding "likely increase in traffic" that remains something of a matter of subjecture and opinion, but I don't believe that necessarily to be the case.

To support this view, I am advised that the 7 day average northbound flow (5116 vehicles/day) is similar to the 7 day southbound average (5252).

This data does not suggest that drivers are currently put off using the southbound route because of existing congestion patterns, hence the southbound flow is believed unlikely to increase should the congestion be reduced by the introduction of the proposed roundabout.

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## **8. Questions from John Algar**

a. Keston village is classified as a rural village, with small shops, post office and Keston CE Primary School. Heathfield Rd is a B road which runs through the heart of the village. A roundabout will only increase traffic and speed. Why cannot measures be proposed to reduce traffic speed?

### **Reply**

This is something of a matter of subjecture and opinion, but I don't believe that necessarily to be the case with regard to either traffic or speed.

If the scheme before us this evening is recommended for approval, the adaptation to the entrance of Heathfield Road at Westerham Road will ensure that average traffic speeds are reduced at that point.

If the right turning traffic exiting Heathfield Road into Westerham Road experiences less waiting time in future, queues should be reduced, and far less rat running at speed down Fishponds Road to 'beat the queue' should result.

To further support this view, I am advised that the 7 day average northbound flow (5116 vehicles/day) is similar to the 7 day southbound average (5252).

This data does not suggest that drivers are currently put off using the southbound route because of the congestion, hence the southbound flow is believed unlikely to increase should congestion be reduced by the introduction of the proposed roundabout.

Specific to reducing traffic speeds, funding across London for road safety schemes is provided from TfL.

It is dispersed across the Boroughs on the basis of whether the funds will maximise the reduction of historic injury accidents, particularly serious and fatal accidents.

Thankfully in almost every regard, without ever becoming complacent, it has to be noted that Heathfield Road's current safety record is such that it does not qualify for such funding at this time.

It is acknowledged that average traffic speeds (the most recent survey recorded the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed at 35.7mph close to Keston Avenue) are faster than anyone would prefer to see, but such measurements are not abnormal for this class of road.

The local Police have been alerted to residents ongoing concerns in this regard.

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b. UDP Policy 5.51 states that road safety consideration needs to influence decisions regarding traffic management policy. How will a roundabout improve safety when funds could be better spent on traffic calming?

**Reply**

Roundabouts lower the average traffic speed of all approaching vehicles.

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c. UDP policy 3.2 of the London plan is to achieve a 40% reduction in carbon emission, particularly in a residential area. Westerham Road is classified as a main A road. With fewer residents, why should this road not have priority for traffic flow?

**Reply**

The introduction of a roundabout at the junction will reduce congestion and therefore reduce carbon emission.

'A' roads obviously do stand higher in the road hierarchy than 'B' roads, but both are very important routes and drivers are perfectly at liberty to use either.

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**9. Question from Councillor Kevin Brooks**

What policy options are being explored to solve bags of refuse being dumped outside of properties on High Streets due to lack of appropriate room in flats to store refuse. If none are being explored, why? As something that increases High Street refuse, how often is rubbish cleared from outside business premises?

## **Reply**

Where this problem has been identified, attempts are made to identify the properties that the waste has come from. In such cases, the resident will be sent a notice stating that simply dumping their refuse on the street is an offence, and that they will be fined if this happens again.

Our Waste Advisors will visit properties where there is a problem caused by the lack of outside space for storage of refuse. In many cases, arrangements have been made with the ground floor occupants to provide storage space, sometimes enabling several residents to share this facility. In other cases, arrangements have been made with commercial properties occupying the ground floor for shared space in their commercial collection containers.

Hence, rather than a specific policy being applied, we look to assist residents in finding a solution based on the practicalities at their specific address.

With regard to clearance from business premises, the Council's trade waste collection service operates on a daily basis. However, businesses are free to choose how often their waste is collected. In addition, not all businesses utilise the Council's service – they are free to utilise any of the licenced commercial trade waste collection services.

If waste from a business isn't properly contained, Waste Advisors are able to serve a notice requiring that it be properly contained and only placed on the highway for collection on the appropriate day.

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## **QUESTIONS TO THE ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

### **10. Questions from Mr Trevor Goodman**

Mr Goodman asked the following questions *“with reference to the proposal to eliminate parking restrictions in Oxenden Wood Road”*.

a. According to the Highways team there is a 2m clearance between a parked car and the curb in the area affected. The lorries using the estate are 2.55m wide and will have to mount the grass verge to pass. Why does the Council feel this is safe?

## **Reply**

Parked vehicles serve as unofficial 'build outs'. Build Outs assist in lowering average traffic speeds.

The road width here is 5.4m so when a wide car or van is parked there remains a clearance of over 3m, which is sufficient for a lorry to pass by without mounting the grass.

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b. Why was there no consultation for local residents about this scheme?

**Reply**

The six houses most directly affected by the change were informed of the proposal by post.

The scheme has since been modified twice in response to those residents expressed concerns.

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c. There have been scores of objection to the scheme and not one advocate. Why are you thinking of going ahead?

**Reply**

The Council's 'flank fence' parking policy is designed to moderate parking pressure in neighbouring roads where crowded crossovers causing impaired sightlines are causing significant upset and danger to other homeowners, whilst at the same time retain as much parking stock as possible for public use in less intrusive places.

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**Question from Mr Zieminski**

What is the classification of Heathfield Road and what physical traffic calming measures could the Council introduce to reduce the number of vehicles (including HGVs) that exceed the speed limit along it on a daily basis?

**Reply**

Heathfield Road is a mixed use classification, which included it being a local distributor road. It is a highway and therefore HGVs also make use of it, although less than 1% of traffic flow along Heathfield Road is by HGVs. Waste vehicles, buses and removal vehicles all use it along with delivery vehicles for local residents .

Regarding speeding traffic, it is acknowledged that average traffic speeds (the most recent survey recorded the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed at 35.7mph close to Keston Avenue) are faster than anyone would prefer to see, but such measurements are not abnormal for this class of road.

The local Police have been alerted to residents ongoing concerns in this regard.

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**Question from Mr Colin Willetts**

Since the early October repair schedule has gone and having received a further email from Mrs Skeggs 21/10/14 in that there are now weeds growing over the damaged brickwork (Brooksway canal bridge), can you supply a new date for rectification?

**Reply**

These works could begin as early as next week, dependent on the delivery of the specialised hand crafted bricks required to complete the task.

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