

Davenham Parish Council

Meeting with Mr Richard Flood, Vale Royal Area Highways Engineer, Cheshire County Council On Monday 30 October 2006

Meeting Notes

The DPC Chairman welcomed Mr Flood and explained that there were several highway matters which are of longstanding concern to the Council.

These are:

Phasing of the traffic lights at Kingsmead/London Road
Adoption issues for Laburnum Road & Kingsmead roads
High level of accidents on both carriageways of the A556 in the vicinity of Hartford Road
Safe walking route to The County High School, Leftwich
Yellow line parking restrictions at the junctions of London Road & Green Lane/Church Street

Highway Improvements Kingsmead/London Road

The main problem is the lack of a right turn phase for traffic leaving London Road for the Davenham bypass. RF explained that a new controller has been purchased but installing and programming it is a complicated task. It is anticipated that the work will form part of a project for several other improvements.

These include traffic calming in the vicinity of the new Miller Homes Development, rephasing the lights at the Art College junction and the introduction of a 40mph limit on the spine road. Measurements have shown that the mean speed on this road is well over 40mph and there is a difficulty in enforcing the lower limit. Motorists are uncertain of the correct limit which can lead to dangerous overtaking. The design criteria for the road were for a higher limit than the current 30mph. Research has shown that the introduction of a 40 mph limit will bring the average speed down. It will also enable 40 repeater signs to be installed as well as 30mph signs at the junction of side roads. This has the effect of reducing speeds on those roads which is where the main speeding problems occur.

The lack of a left turn filter for Manchester bound traffic leaving the Davenham bypass is due to the need to preserve a safe pedestrian route.

Laburnum Road

As part of its development plans for the Laburnum Road recreation field DPC has promised to investigate the possibilities for bringing the road up to adoption standard. This has proved frustrating; particularly the claim that a turning circle would have to be formed by taking some of the field. The highway contact is Warren Chatterton.

Kingsmead adoption Issues

The Highway authority has been trying to get the Kingsmead Developers to bring all the various roads up to adoption standard for some considerable time. The spine road which is part of the A533, has now been adopted which will facilitate the improvements mentioned above. It is hoped that the side roads will soon follow suit. RF will ask Warren Chatterton, who looks after highway adoption issues, to keep the DPC Clerk informed on progress.

A556 Accidents

The police and Cheshire County Council accident Investigation team look at the causation for all RTAs involving injury. The high level of collisions which have occurred over the past few years is causing concern. It is not felt the 70mph speed limit per se is the root cause. The road has had this limit for decades before the present spate of accidents started. Criteria for speed limits are set by central government and include the number of private access points. The A556 meets the criteria for the national speed limit for dual carriageways. The County is introducing a number of improvements on a phased basis to deal with the problem. These include roadside direction chevrons, surface improvements and warning signs. It was pointed out that the highway authority has several other sites where the frequency of accidents causes concern. The available budget has to cover all these. There are 27 sites in the County with 7+ accidents in a 3 year period in Cheshire. This stretch of the A556 is one of them. For every 10 damage accidents there is 1 personal injury accident on average.

It was pointed out that while the installation of crash barriers might allay residents' fears it would not actually tackle the root causes and could make increase the severity of some incidents.

Safe Walking Route to The County High School & safe crossing of the A556 by Davenham Roundabout.

The County is currently looking to install pedestrian barriers along the roadside used by children on the way to the High School. The underpass route allows safe access to the school grounds without a long detour.

The point was made that pedestrians from Leftwich or Kingsmead, especially the elderly, find it intimidating to cross the A556 near the roundabout. They are also subject to an extra walk of several hundred metres if they use the Davenham Bypass underpass route.

The same arguments regarding speed limits mentioned earlier also apply to this stretch of road. A lower limit cannot be applied just to the roundabout.

Yellow line parking restrictions at the junctions of London Road & Green Lane/Church Street

RF explained the process for introducing parking restrictions. This is lengthy because of the statutory requirement for public consultation. The Davenham scheme was given formal approval to join the formal consultation phase at the July meeting of the joint Highway Committee. At present it is 10th out of 15 in the queue. The joint Highway Committee must consider any objections against road safety and traffic capacity standards before a decision to proceed can be taken. It is anticipated that the process should be complete within 6 months.