

**REPORT TO:** Environment and Urban Renewal  
Policy Performance Board (PPB)

**DATE:** 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2021

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and  
Resources.

**PORTFOLIO:** Environment & Urban Renewal

**SUBJECT:** Petition requesting speed limit change on  
Runcorn Road, Moore (40mph to 30mph)

**WARDS** Daresbury, Moore and Sandymoor

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To present to the Board a request, via electronic petition (see Appendix 1), to change the speed limit on a section of Runcorn Road, Moore from 40mph to 30mph. Photographs and a map of the relevant section of road are contained in Appendix 2.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDED: That**

- 1. following careful consideration and site inspection, Officers advise that the posted speed limit should remain at 40mph for the reasons set out in this report; and**
- 2. a request be made to Cheshire Police to consider this location for regular speed enforcement activity.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The relevant section of Runcorn Road is located at the western side of Moore Village, Runcorn and is currently subject to a 40mph speed limit. This section is 690m long and runs between the overbridge carrying the A558 Daresbury Expressway, to approximately 30m east of the Six Acre Lane junction.

3.2 This section of Runcorn Road is relatively straight, flat and has open fields to the southern side. The northern side comprises low-density housing, set well back from the carriageway. Carriageway widths vary between 6.3m and 8.5m, but the majority of the road is approximately 6.5m wide, with a standard broken centre line marking. Footway widths vary between 0.95m and 3m, with the narrowest sections of footway located at the eastern end of the 40 zone. Traffic data indicates that on average 2100 vehicles per day traverse the road. Pedestrian movements across the carriageway are minimal.

3.3 The road is generally in good repair, it is well lit, and is subject to an environmental 7.5 tonne weight restriction. Although the overwhelming majority

of properties do have off-street parking provision there is a low-level of on-street parking within the 40mph zone, especially at the eastern end, where housing density increases. There is no evidence or complaints of vehicles mounting the kerb and obstructing the footway.

- 3.4 In 2009 the Cheshire Road Safety Group, Cheshire Police and external consultants undertook a speed limit review in Halton and identified a number of roads requiring a reduction in their speed limits. This Borough-wide audit did not recommend any change to the speed limit along Runcorn Road.
- 3.5 Since 2009, automatic traffic counters have been installed here on two different occasions. In 2011 in response to public complaints about speeding, a counter was positioned at the western side of the 40 zone, adjacent to the riding school. Average speeds were found to be 30.8mph. In 2014, following complaints about an increase in volume of traffic associated with ongoing roadworks on the A558 Daresbury Expressway, a counter was located at the eastern side of the 40 zone, close to the junction with Six Acre Lane. Average speeds were found to be 29.7mph. This slight reduction in traffic speed was probably due to the increase in traffic using this route.
- 3.6 Reviewing local collision data supplied by Cheshire Police, there has been one recorded injury collision within the relevant section of road since 2009. This was a serious collision resulting in one casualty, and the causal factors were cited as 'driving too close' and 'learner / inexperienced driver'. By comparison, the 1290m long section of Runcorn Road subject to a 30mph speed limit, has seen three recorded injury collisions (all slights).
- 3.7 At the request of the Council, Cheshire Police Traffic Management Unit have undertaken a site assessment and provided an opinion that, while they understand the desire of residents for a lower speed limit, they are concerned that the removal of the change in speed limit would not reflect the character of the road. It was the opinion of the Constabulary that the 40mph section felt open in nature and as such, 40mph is an appropriate speed limit.
- 3.8 The Department for Transport's Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (2016) provides no capacity to install 30 repeater signs on roads with a system of street lighting. With this in mind, reducing the speed limit of this 40mph section would require the removal of the existing 30 terminal signs and roundel road markings, leaving no signage in place to order drivers to slow down as they enter the more urbanised section. Indeed, removing this short section of 40mph road may well result in higher speeds in the existing 30 zone, a concern given the close proximity of Moore Primary School.
- 3.9 Cheshire Police have confirmed that the 30mph section of Runcorn Road is on their list of speed enforcement sites, and they have indicated that enforcement will be undertaken in the 40mph zone.
- 3.10 Setting appropriate local speed limits is very much dependent on evidence collated from site inspections, traffic / speed counters, collision history, and the technical details of the road, taking into account visibility, amount of vehicle

traffic, and cyclists / pedestrians use. Based on the advice from Cheshire Police traffic specialists and the Council's road safety engineer, it is felt that retaining the existing 40mph speed limit remains appropriate for this section of road, and a reduction in the speed limit is unlikely to provide any additional benefits for road users or residents.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Under the Traffic Management Act 2004, the Council has a network management duty to “*secure the expeditious movement of traffic on the authority's road network*”, to ensure the “*efficient use of their road network*”, and to undertake “*the avoidance, elimination or reduction of road congestion or other disruption to the movement of traffic on their road network.*”

4.2 A balance must be struck between road safety and maintaining an efficient and free flowing road network. Road safety is a topic that regularly comes before this Policy and Performance Board, and Halton's track record for road safety is very good. In the case of the petition that is the subject of this report, there is no evidence to support the supposition that a lower speed limit here would improve road safety.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None.

#### **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 Good transport networks are fundamental to economic growth, health, employment, and sustainable communities. A safe and efficient road transport network is a core priority for the Council.

#### **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 N/A

#### **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 None.

#### **9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

N/A