

REPORT: Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 21/1/2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Environment

SUBJECT: Petition Relating to Traffic Conditions in Dale Street, Runcorn

WARDS: Grange

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To report receipt of a 26 signature petition requesting engineering work be carried out in Dale Street, Runcorn, to create a turning area within the cul-de-sac head and to improve drainage within the same unadopted road area. Also to report on the outcome of a subsequent site meeting.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

[1] The report be noted

[2] The request for engineering works to be carried out be declined as the land in question is not an adopted highway and responsibility for maintaining or improving the area rests with the owners (currently unknown)

[3] The necessary steps be taken to establish ownership of the unadopted road area (including the retaining wall) and once this is done, the owners be contacted with a view to expressing this Council's concerns over various aspects of the area's condition

[4] Once ownership is established, all matters associated with the unadopted area be referred to the local Area Forum for consideration

[5] Officer action in ordering road markings to assist in turning traffic and the future introduction of parking restrictions at the Dale Street/Norman Road junction be endorsed

[6] The petitioners be informed accordingly

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The majority of Dale Street, Runcorn is adopted highway, though the area fronting numbers 33, 35, 26 and 28 plus the adjacent area used for turning, is not. Plan no. 8231 as Appendix 'B' refers. The unadopted area is not surfaced to adoption standards but is in a state of severe neglect and subject to

flooding due to lack of drainage facilities. The eastern perimeter of the area is supported by a retaining wall of unknown condition which backs onto the gardens and nearby properties in Hawthorn Avenue.

3.2 A petition carrying 26 signatures has been received from residents of Dale Street, Runcorn, requesting works be carried out to surface and convert the eastern, unadopted area into a functional turning area with adequate surface water drainage, in order that vehicles entering the street can turn around more easily before exiting safely back onto Norman Road, thus removing any necessity to reverse out. The petition is shown in Appendix 'A'

3.3 A site meeting was arranged with Cheshire Police and a resident from Dale Street in order to discuss the petition. At the meeting the resident requested that Halton Borough Council formally adopt the area of land at the east end of Dale Street, adjoining Hawthorn Avenue and provide adequate drainage stating that local children have been seen playing in the water. The resident had recently been advised by Cheshire Police to avoid reversing out from Dale Street into Norman Road, but stated that due to the lack of available space in Dale Street, caused by parked vehicles and a narrow carriageway width, there was no other option.

3.4 Ownership of the area of land in question is not known at this stage though it is not believed to be a local individual or company. Previously, the Council has laid aggregate onto the land to improve drainage but due to the uncertainty regarding the load-bearing capacity of the retaining wall and the close proximity of the houses on Hawthorn Avenue, this is no longer an option. The cost of bringing the turning area up to an acceptable standard is estimated to be in excess of £50,000 and there are currently no funds available for private highway works.

3.5 Police records show no injury accidents at the junction of Dale Street and Norman Road for the previous five years. At the site meeting, Cheshire Police advised that, whilst reversing into Norman Road is not illegal, it would not be advisable due to the restricted visibility at the junction and the speed of traffic on Norman Road. However, a traffic calming scheme for Norman Road, part funded through LTP Local Safety Scheme monies and the local Area Forum, is due to be implemented in January 2009. It is anticipated that the scheme will significantly reduce vehicle speeds on Norman Road.

3.6 Following a separate written request from a local resident, it is intended that parking restrictions be introduced at the junction of Norman Road and Dale Street, to increase visibility, subject to successful consultation. To reduce costs such schemes are advertised in the press in large batches, twice yearly. The next such advertisement of proposed Orders is programmed for April 2009 and this area will be included.

3.7 An inspection of Dale Street during the site meeting revealed two alleyways on either side of Dale Street, both with recessed alley gates. The resident stated that due to parked vehicles blocking the alleyways they often cannot be used as turning areas for cars. Subsequent to the meeting, 'H' bar markings have been ordered that will cover the width of the alleyways and thereby discourage the parking of vehicles. It is also proposed to letter drop all

properties in Dale Street, requesting that they allow sufficient space to permit vehicles to turn round safely using these alleyways.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The cost of implementing the 'H' Bar lining scheme which has already been ordered is £100 and the cost of marking double yellow lines at the junction with Norman Road, subject to a successful public consultation, is approximately £500. These costs will be met from existing Traffic Management revenue allocations.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 A Safer Halton and Halton's Urban Renewal: Installing 'H' Bar markings at the alleyways will help to keep them clear of parked vehicles, thereby allowing cars to exit Dale Street without the need to reverse into Norman Road. The installation of parking restrictions at the junction will allow greater visibility for vehicles emerging from Dale Street.

6.2 Children & Young People in Halton and A Healthy Halton: Draining the land and removing litter may create a safer and healthier environment for young people, if the land owners can be traced and they agree to carry out the necessary works.

6.3 Employment & Learning Skills in Halton: No implications

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The proposed parking restrictions will be subject to approval from the emergency services and public consultation, but are advisable in order to reduce the risk of collisions at the Dale Street/Norman Road junction. The risk of not being able to determine ownership of the land is that problems associated with the poor surface and the retaining wall (flooding, possible damage to vehicles etc.) are likely to continue.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None

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

Background information held in the Traffic Management Section, Environment, Rutland House, Halton Lea, Runcorn, WA7 2GW. Contact: I. Saxby ext. 3011