

# PETITIONS COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held via Confero and in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 19 April 2023

## **Chair:**

Councillor Alistair Fulton

## **Councillors Present:**

Councillor Robert Brown (*substitute for Councillor Norman Rae*), Councillor Mary Donnelly, Councillor Mark Horsham, Councillor Susan Kerr, Councillor Eileen Logan, Councillor Graham Scott, Councillor Helen Toner

## **Councillors' Apologies:**

Councillor Richard Nelson, Councillor Norman Rae

## **Attending:**

### **Community and Enterprise Resources**

S Carle, Traffic and Transportation Team Leader; S Laird, Engineering Manager (Transportation Engineering); C Park, Head of Roads and Transportation Services

### **Finance and Corporate Resources**

C Lyon, Administration Officer; G McCann, Head of Administration and Legal Services; L Wyllie, Administration Assistant

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## **1 Declaration of Interests**

No interests were declared.

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## **2 Petition Requesting Traffic Calming Measures at Westwood Hill, East Kilbride**

A report dated 4 April 2023 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on a petition lodged by K McFadyen (Lead Petitioner) requesting traffic calming measures at Westwood Hill, East Kilbride.

The Petition had been assessed and met the criteria for being considered by this Committee.

Comments had been received from Roads and Transportation Services and were highlighted in the report. Comments from the Lead Petitioner, who was present at the meeting, were also detailed in the report.

In support of the petition, the Lead Petitioner made reference to the following:-

- ◆ that in the half mile distance of Almada Street down to Burnbank Road there were 12 pedestrian crossings and going by Council criteria there must have been a lot of death and carnage in that half mile distance
- ◆ there was not one pedestrian crossing or one piece of road engineering in the entire Westwood area and the community questioned why they were so undeserving
- ◆ there were measures in other areas of East Kilbride but not in Westwood
- ◆ there was a lot of anger and pessimism in the community because they had pleaded with the Council for years to do something to introduce traffic calming measures or pedestrian crossings in Westwood Hill but had been unsuccessful
- ◆ he challenged the roads information in the report as the same repeated nonsense which they were told year after year and stated that officials had hidden behind disingenuous statements and statistics for years

- ◆ he had knocked doors to speak to people and not one disagreed that Westwood Hill was dangerous and unsafe to cross
- ◆ referred to the roads response in the report and indicated that by their own admission the Council only considered pedestrian safety as a consideration after people were injured or died and even then they only might possibly introduce safety measures at some time in the future but this was only at a very marginal percentage of identified locations – this year is only 5%
- ◆ he had contacted Collette Stevenson, who was now an MSP, who had visited Westwood Hill and she advised that she would push for a pedestrian crossing for Westwood Hill but there were financial restrictions
- ◆ the road was just as dangerous when the traffic was at a low level as drivers think it's safer to speed
- ◆ that the GAP assessment took no account of disability, mobility scooters or wheelchairs users, people with hearing or visual impairment
- ◆ there was a blind summit on Westwood Hill and some drivers accelerated over it and there was no reference to the blind summit in the GAP assessment
- ◆ the GAP assessment seemed to say that pedestrians don't have a right of way, they had to assess a gap of speeding traffic to see if it was safe to cross – it was a risk assessment
- ◆ the GAP assessment was carried out in September 2021 which was during the pandemic and not a true reflection on traffic on the road
- ◆ he had a neighbour who used a mobility scooter who cannot cross the road
- ◆ he advised that he had made an FOI request on whether a disability assessment had been carried out but had not yet received a response
- ◆ there was a speed limit of 30mph on Westwood Hill but the majority of driver speed, some at speeds of 50-60mph and it was a regular occurrence
- ◆ the Council consistently passed the buck to the Police Scotland which was a dishonest approach as they did not have the resources to monitor Westwood Hill 24/7
- ◆ he had tried contacting Police Scotland and could not get through on the phone and get no response when reported online
- ◆ pedestrian safety should be vital in road planning engineering rather than not even being an afterthought
- ◆ the Council had opportunities whilst resurfacing to install traffic calming measures but had not done so
- ◆ the Council stated that it works with organisations but there was no mention of Westwood Hill community or Community Council and in his opinion the Council didn't listen or speak to the local community
- ◆ he appreciated there were funding difficulties but suggested that the measures could be done incrementally over a few years instead of doing nothing
- ◆ drivers also parked cars on Westwood Hill and found pulling out into speeding traffic quite perilous due to the blind hill
- ◆ indicated that traffic must have grown in East Kilbride as the town has expanded massively over the years and most houses own 2 cars
- ◆ elderly residents don't cross the road, they walk to the bottom of the hill to cross, but this was dangerous during the winter months as ice formed due to water run off
- ◆ the Council needed to change its priorities and be proactive, it was only a matter of time before someone was seriously injured on Westwood Hill

An official from Roads and Transportation Services advised that the majority of his response was in the papers that members of the Committee had, but highlighted the following:-

- ◆ the petition before us today was part of their core business and numerous similar enquiries were received by officers and elected members on a daily basis
- ◆ the responses in the first 3 bullet points reflected that of the Road Traffic Act whereby local authorities were obliged to carry out studies into the cause of road accidents and take appropriate measure to prevent accidents

- ◆ a proactive approach was taken in reducing casualties and this was reflected in Committee approved policies and actions in relation to the current Local Transport Strategy and it should be noted that these tied into targets set out within Scotland's National Transport Strategy along with how these would be delivered
- ◆ measures the Council had adopted in relation to casualty reduction had been presented and endorsed by the Council's Road Safety Forum and outlined the Council's annual assessment process that identified potential locations, sections of road or areas where detailed assessment was merited which could then lead to measures and initiatives being provided to reduce the frequency and severity of casualties
- ◆ it should be noted that this approach had resulted in the ongoing reduction of casualties over a number of years and was recognised in 2022 where the Scottish Transport Awards category for Most Effective in Road Safety and Traffic Management and Enforcement was won by the Council
- ◆ there had been zero injury accidents on Westwood Road in the latest 3 year period
- ◆ in context the annual assessment for casualty reduction had identified approximately 120 locations throughout South Lanarkshire, with detailed analysis required for consideration of measures or initiatives to reduce accidents
- ◆ those locations were a mixture of cluster locations, sections of rural road where accidents were higher than the national average and areas within built up areas
- ◆ resources were allocated towards a small number of locations and this approach had been proven to be successful in reducing casualties in South Lanarkshire and in the period 2004 to 2021, had reduced from over 1,000 to just under 300
- ◆ if there was a justified need to implement traffic calming measures in Westwood Hill and the surrounding area then those schemes would be developed - the road itself was just over a mile long and to implement road safety measures that comply with design standard would cost in the region of £200,000
- ◆ members would be aware that the Council was in a difficult financial period and the current financial year's funding for casualty reduction measures was £150,000 and the Council was currently waiting for any additional funding from Transport Scotland
- ◆ resources were currently being allocated to areas with a much higher priority than Westwood Hill in terms of casualty reduction
- ◆ there was a responsibility on all road users to drive responsibly and in compliance with the highway code and traffic laws in place
- ◆ Police Scotland had given a commitment to continue to undertake enforcement action on this section of road
- ◆ the Council tried to encourage 20mph speed limits as a way of ensuring built up areas had an appropriate speed limit and were in the process on undertaking an assessment through funding from Transport Scotland to potentially identify areas where the speed limit could be reduced from 30mph to 20mph and could be in place in parts of South Lanarkshire by 2025
- ◆ various traffic counts had taken place over recent years, along with traffic modelling and East Kilbride was separated into a number of zones and Westwood Hill had been fairly static over recent years. Traffic data suggested that the daily flows of traffic are currently similar to what they were pre-pandemic.
- ◆ in terms of controlled pedestrian crossings, the GAP acceptance methodology was essentially national criteria used by many local authorities to establish where controlled crossings were justified – this process did consider the speed of pedestrians actually crossing the road and what facilities were in and around the area
- ◆ GAP surveys were conducted by specialist companies appointed by the Council
- ◆ regular requests were made for controlled crossings throughout South Lanarkshire and this methodology was used to ensure that resources were allocated appropriately
- ◆ a commitment had been given to undertake another GAP survey which would be scheduled in the coming months

- ◆ as part of the East Kilbride Active Travel survey all residents of East Kilbride, Community Councils and elected members were given the opportunity to provide comment for 2 consultation exercises for that process and a lot of points in relation safety were taken on board in order to create a more attractive environment for cycling and walking
- ◆ the Council was currently ready to appoint a consultant to take forward the next local Transport Strategy and there would be opportunities to review existing policies and actions that were in the current document and there would be an opportunity for all members of the community to comment and be part of the consultation process
- ◆ the Council wants zero accidents on the roads and if funding was available then it would look to take schemes to various other locations on the road network

**The Committee decided:**

- (1) that the following action be undertaken by the Roads Service prior to submission of a report to the Roads Safety Forum:-
  - ◆ liaise with Police Scotland on additional enforcement action at the location
  - ◆ undertake a further GAP survey and to engage with pedestrians while on site
  - ◆ liaise with the school crossing patrol officer
- (2) that the outcomes from the Roads Safety Forum on this Petition be used to influence the Road Safety Policy which would be reviewed as part of the Local Transport Strategy in spring 2024; and
- (3) that the Lead Petitioner be kept up to date on progress.

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### **3 Urgent Business**

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There were no items of urgent business.