
Meeting of Executive Members for City Strategy and Advisory Panel

14 July 2008

Report of the Director of City Strategy

Knapton Traffic and Road Safety Review

Summary

1. This report advises Members of the outcome of a study into traffic and road safety issues in Knapton. The report concludes that there are no significant problems to be addressed, and recommends that no further action is taken.

Background

2. In October 2007 this Executive Members and Advisory Panel (EMAP) considered a report on the receipt of two petitions from residents of Knapton. One petition requested the closure of Main Street at its junction with the A1237, and the other opposed the idea. Both petitions had a similar number of signatories. At the EMAP meeting Officers also presented some feedback from a consultation exercise the Parish Council had subsequently undertaken with local residents, which covered a wider range of traffic issues and possible actions. From all this information it was clear that many residents had concerns about traffic levels and speeds through the village, but there was a diverse range of views on what should, or should not, be done about it. Therefore Members asked officers to do a more technical appraisal to assess the scale of the problems raised and feasibility of possible measures to tackle these.
3. Following on from this, Halcrow were commissioned to carry out the requested traffic study. This was undertaken during January/February 2008. Their full report is available for viewing (see list of Background Papers at the end of this EMAP report), but the main study findings and conclusions are summarised below:-

Study Findings and Conclusions

4. Key Findings/Conclusions
 - Traffic flows through the village are light, and rarely exceed a two-way flow of 50 vehicles per hour. This level of flow is thought to be consistent with that likely to be generated locally by a settlement the size of Knapton, and suggests that no significant “rat-running” problem exists.

- Turning movements in and out of the Main Street/A1237 junction are low. In a survey of the morning peak hour 45 turning movements were recorded, and in the evening peak hour only 27 movements were observed.
- During these surveys, there was queuing on the A1237 towards the A59 roundabout, but only three right turn manoeuvres from the A1237 towards Knapton were observed. This provides further evidence that a significant rat-running problem does not exist.
- Police records show that there have been three injury accidents at the Main Street / A1237 junction over a three year period. Normally a history of at least four injury accidents over three years is needed to trigger consideration of a Local Safety Scheme.
- A full road closure, or banned right turn scheme, could help to reduce potential conflicts and lead to an improved safety situation at this junction. However, the re-routing of traffic would have the potential increase in conflicts in other locations, such as at the Bland Lane/Wetherby Road junction. The estimated cost of either option is approximately £25,000 - £30,000, allowing for physical works, traffic regulation orders, and professional fees.
- A full closure would also increase journey times and distances for people travelling to and from the north part of the village of Knapton. A demountable bollard system could be provided to facilitate emergency vehicle access, but would cause a slight increase in response time.
- The idea of banning right turn movements would not fully resolve the safety issues at the junction, and the Police have concerns over potential abuse and enforcement problems. This option would cause less inconvenience than a full closure for local residents in the northern part of the village, but would still result in increased travel times and distances for some journeys.
- An average traffic speed of around 26mph was recorded in the built-up section of the village. On Ten Thorne Lane, which is more rural in character, average speeds were 29mph. This level of speed, along with the low traffic flow, gives little justification for traffic calming measures to be introduced in the village (a scheme could cost £15,000 - £20,000 to implement).

- Although there is known to be local concern about increased pedestrian activity linked to the creation of a new playing field, it is expected that pedestrian numbers linked to this new facility will be low, and the volume/speed of traffic should provide ample opportunities to cross the road safely.
- On the basis of the evidence gathered within this study, Halcrow's overall conclusion is that there is little justification for making any changes to the existing highway arrangements in Knapton.

Consultation

5. A copy of the Halcrow report was sent for information and comment to the local Ward Councillors, the Shadow Executive Member for City Strategy (Cllr T Simpson-Laing at that time) and the Parish Council. The feedback received is summarised below.
 - Cllr B Hudson (Ward Councillor) is aware that there are mixed views on traffic matters within the village, as evidenced by the original petitions, and is happy that the Halcrow report clearly sets out the analysis of the problems. Therefore he is content with the conclusion that no action is justified, and hopes that this will put residents' minds at rest.
 - Mrs S Warden (Clerk to Rufforth and Knapton Parish Council) confirmed that the Parish Council have considered the Halcrow report and are happy to accept the conclusion that the existing highway arrangements should remain as existing. It was also noted that the Parish Councillors are aware of the mixed views in the village on traffic matters, and that this probably presents a no-win situation because some residents will be unhappy with whatever decision is reached.

Options

6. The following two options are put forward for Members to consider:
 - Option One - Do nothing (as recommended by Halcrow).
 - Option Two - To support some of the possible actions put forward in the Halcrow report, and seek the necessary funding for them to be taken forward.

Analysis

7. The technical assessment carried out by Halcrow led to the conclusion that there are no significant traffic or road safety issues in Knapton, and therefore little justification for changing the existing highway arrangements. This overall conclusion is accepted by the Parish Council and Ward Councillor B. Hudson.

8. Given this situation, and the fact that it is known that residents' views are very mixed on the issue of local traffic problems and possible solutions, Option One appears to be the most obvious route to follow.

Implications

9. **Financial** – There are no financial implications with Option One. As mentioned earlier in the report, there could be significant costs if any of the schemes looked at within the Halcrow report were to be taken forward. In this situation, funding would need to be secured within Local Transport Plan capital programme, and this would require a more detailed value for money assessment to be carried out on any detailed proposals.
10. **Human Resources (HR)** - No implications.
11. **Equalities** – No implications
12. **Legal** - no implications.
13. **Crime and Disorder** – no implications.
14. **Information Technology (IT)** - no implications.
15. **Property** – no implications.

Risk Management

16. In compliance with the Council's Risk Management Strategy, there are not thought to be any risks associated with the recommendations of this report.

Recommendations

17. That the Advisory Panel advise the Executive Member to accept Option One (maintain the existing highway arrangement in Knapton) as the best way forward.

Reasons: To respond to the findings of the technical assessment of traffic and road safety issues in Knapton, and to take account of feedback from the Ward and Parish Councillors.

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Specialist Implications Officer(s)

There are no specialist implications

Wards Affected: Rural West

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers

“Petitions concerning the junction of Main S, Knapton with the A1237” -- report to the Executive Members and Advisory panel on 29 October 2007.

“Knapton Traffic and Road Safety Review” -- report by Halcrow Group Limited (March 2008)