

Executive Member for City Strategy
Councillor Steve Galloway

01 September 2009

Dear Coun. Galloway,

The most striking matter that both the report before you and the Councillor Call for Action interim report both fail to address is the crucial element – residents' views. The petition presented to Clifton Ward Committee showed that 88% of residents living on Westminster Road gave their support to a point closure on Westminster Road, as did over 50% of residents fronting onto The Avenue.

Clifton Ward Committee has had record numbers in attendance.

This is a direct result of increased traffic using this route as a "rat run" following the changes at the junction at Water end and the A19 at Clifton Green. Residents have not taken that decision lightly.

I have consulted with residents and my submissions incorporate their comments.

The Statistics

At a special Ward committee in June a "flawed" traffic count showed an increase of traffic by over 50%. (It was considered that this count was flawed because of its positioning and under-recorded the number of vehicles.) This count did however confirm a count undertaken by residents.

The statistics in the report before the Executive Member show that there has been a 97% increase is the headline figure for numbers using the roads. Through traffic is 96% from Water End and becomes 45% when averaged with through traffic flowing the other way. (see origin and destination analysis at ANNEX D).

There is reference to no speeding problems but at para 13 (p82) the report states an 85th percentile at 30/31mph; that clearly points to 15% exceeding the speed limit. (See Annex D, first table). I would remind the Executive Member that the speed of vehicles is made worse because the uneven concrete road surface creates a rumble.

The unpublished counts that Jon Pickles did only focused on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. All other days are ignored so people just think its a working day problem with peaks.

20mph zone

In this location this is not the answer. Council Officers have placed signs in this location to advise drivers that this is a 20 mph zone, however, this has not worked. The reinstatement of the speed humps may reduce the speed of traffic but it is unlikely to reduce volume as significant (and effective) speed humps still exist on The Avenue.

The Neighbourhood Policing Team has made attempts to educate drivers – largely to no avail.

Residents experienced significant problems before the removal of the speed humps. Drivers are unlikely to change their habits as travelling at 20 mph through Westminster Road and the Avenue is still quicker than waiting in traffic to go to Clifton Green.

Empirical Research

I would invite the Executive Member to visit Westminster Road. It is not just the volume and the speed but also the attitude of drivers. Drivers have waited some considerable time before being able to make “use” of the “rat run” at Westminster Road and The Avenue. They are not tolerant and frequently drive without consideration of driving in a family residential environment.

I need not remind the Executive Member of the impact this traffic has upon residents’ lives and on the environment.

Time For Action

I would ask the Executive Member to chose Option G. Residents have already endured months of disruption to their lives. We have the opportunity to do something now.

If this cannot be accepted then a temporary interim closure should be undertaken to assess the impact.

Clifton Ward Committee were advised on the 21st April 2009 that “the [Water Lane] Scheme is due to undergo a safety audit and funds have been set aside to address problems identified by the audit.” Some of those funds should be used towards the Point Closure on Westminster Road.

If the Point Closure was positioned at the appropriate place then disruption to other surrounding residential streets can be minimised.

In addition I would ask that the left turn lane be reinstated at Clifton Green as promised by the Executive Member at the EMAP in October 2009.

The Executive Member now has enough information to make a decision. However, if any further surveys are to be undertaken they should be 7 days a week and 24 hours a day.

Yours sincerely

Councillor David Scott
Clifton Ward