

WATFORD BOROUGH

**RADLETT ROAD, WATFORD PROPOSED TRAFFIC CALMING - PETITIONS
FOR AND AGAINST**

Report of the Director of Environment

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Local Member: S Giles-Medhurst

1. Purpose

To consider petitions for and against the proposed traffic calming scheme.

2. Summary

- 2.1 Residents in the Radlett Road Community Association asked that traffic calming be implemented on Radlett Road to reduce traffic speed and make walking into Watford safer. The borough council started work in 2001/02 employing Mouchel as design consultants.
- 2.2 As part of an agreed action plan for dealing with termination of Borough agency arrangements, the project reverted to County Council responsibility in April 2002. By this time residents in the neighbouring Waterfields Residents' Association had expressed concern at the proposal that speed be reduced by the use of chicane road narrowing features.
- 2.3 Petitions for and against this technique of speed reduction have been received from each residents' group.

3. Conclusions

- 3.1 The preferred option for achieving effective speed reductions in Radlett Road is considered to be chicanes. In addition to reducing the speed on the stretch of road in question they provide a safer crossing point at the footpath from the Radlett Road estate. They are more acceptable to the emergency services than humps or cushions.
- 3.2 Members will have the opportunity to hear from representatives of both groups of petitioners at the committee meeting.
- 3.3 The officer recommendation is that the scheme should be implemented and monitored.

1. Background

Location

- 1.1 Radlett Road runs northeast from Queen's Road in Watford's Central ward, under the disused Croxley branch and West Coast main line railway bridges and north into Meriden ward before meeting Bushey Mil Lane.
- 1.2 The two groups of petitioners live in estates immediately to the south and north of the length of road to be treated. The area is shown I the plan at Figure 1.

The problem

- 1.3 Radlett Road runs parallel to the A4008 Stephenson Way. It is open on the eastern side and tends to attract traffic travelling above the 30mph speed limits. Concerns about traffic speed and the difficulties created for pedestrians walking along and attempting to cross Radlett Road were expressed through the established channels to the borough council and Area Highways Office. Under the aegis of the Central Watford Green Zone discussions took place in 1999 and 2000 with staff and governors at Central Primary School with a view to undertaking a Safer Routes to School project. Parents were consulted and further weight was added to the need to take action.
- 1.4 At the start of financial year 2001/02 developer funding was identified by the Area Highway Manager and local County Council Giles-Medhurst. Since Radlett Road is managed by the borough council as agents they added this to their programme for that year. Design work was undertaken by Mouchel TSC.
- 1.5 Watford Borough Council was unable to deliver the scheme during the last financial year. In April 2002 it was therefore passed to the Sustainable Transport projects group in the Environment Department. The same Mouchel staff carried on their involvement.

Proposed measures

- 1.6 The scheme sought to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety by reducing speed, providing safer crossings and a section of shared use footway towards the eastern end. Following objections raised during consultation this last element was dropped.
- 1.7 Traffic was to be coerced into obeying the existing 30mph speed limit through physical traffic calming features on the narrower stretch of Radlett Road between Orphanage Road and the railway bridge near the Waterfields' area. There are no buildings fronting this stretch so on-street parking provision is not an issue. There was a request from residents of the Radlett Road estate to provide a safe pedestrian crossing opposite the footpath from Brocklesbury Close.

Design development and consultation

- 1.8 Working for the borough council Mouchel undertook extensive consultation on a range of options. Unusually they were able to heed the request of the emergency services that speed reduction through vertical deflection (humps, tables and cushions) should be avoided if possible. By specifying chicanes the resultant road narrowing

provided better pedestrian facilities. This design was successfully safety audited by Mouchel's independent team.

- 1.9 Proposals for the scheme were discussed at a range of meetings and residents consulted several times. All of this is detailed in the chronological report compiled by CC Giles-Medhurst attached to this report at Appendix A.
- 1.10 The Radlett Road Community Association became aware of the objections being raised by the Waterfields group to the measures in the stretch between the railway and Orphanage Road and raised a counter-petition.
- 1.11 In the minutes of their meeting on Monday 2 September the Radlett Road Community Association record: "It was generally felt that as this was a road safety issue for pedestrians, most of whom wishing to cross that section of road were likely to be from our estate, our residents wishes should hold sway when the County Council consider a pro chicane petition and anti chicane petition on 17th Sept.

2. Petitions received

Petitions submitted by Waterfields Residents' Association

- 2.1 Adrian Morgan of the Waterfields Residents' Association (WRA) sent a petition to Watford Council and HCC in April 2002.
- 2.2 This petition states: 'We the undersigned call on Watford Council with the attached petition of 110 signatories to scrap the proposed road humps on Radlett Road between Orphanage Road and the railway tunnel and also to scrap the proposed dual use pathways for cyclists and pedestrians on the Radlett Road between Colonial Way and the Link Road'.
- 2.3 A second petition was sent to CC N Brooks in July by Residents' Association Secretary Jane Hooper.
- 2.4 This petition states: 'We, the undersigned local residents, strongly object to the proposal to locate chicane road obstructions in Radlett Road, between Orphanage Road and the northern portal of the railway tunnel. We demand Hertfordshire County Council conduct a proper consultation exercise with local residents in Ottoman Terrace, Ebury Road and Shaftesbury Road before introducing any form of road obstruction in Radlett Road'.
- 2.5 The petition has been signed by 99 residents most, if not all, of whom had signed the earlier one.

Petition submitted by Radlett Road Community Association

- 2.6 The Radlett Road Community Association sent a petition to CC Giles-Medhurst in September 2002.
- 2.7 This petition is headed 'Yes to Radlett Road road safety improvements petition'. It

states: 'We the undersigned support plans to improve road safety on Radlett Road between Orphanage Road and the Radlett Road bridge. We believe the proposed road narrowing will help pedestrians cross the road as well and ask the County Council to go ahead with these works'.

2.8 The petition has been signed by over 200 residents.

3. Financial implications

3.1 The £15,000 to fund the traffic calming features, associated lining and signing has been allocated from Phase 4 of the Central Watford Green Zone as identified in the current year's Integrated Works Programme.

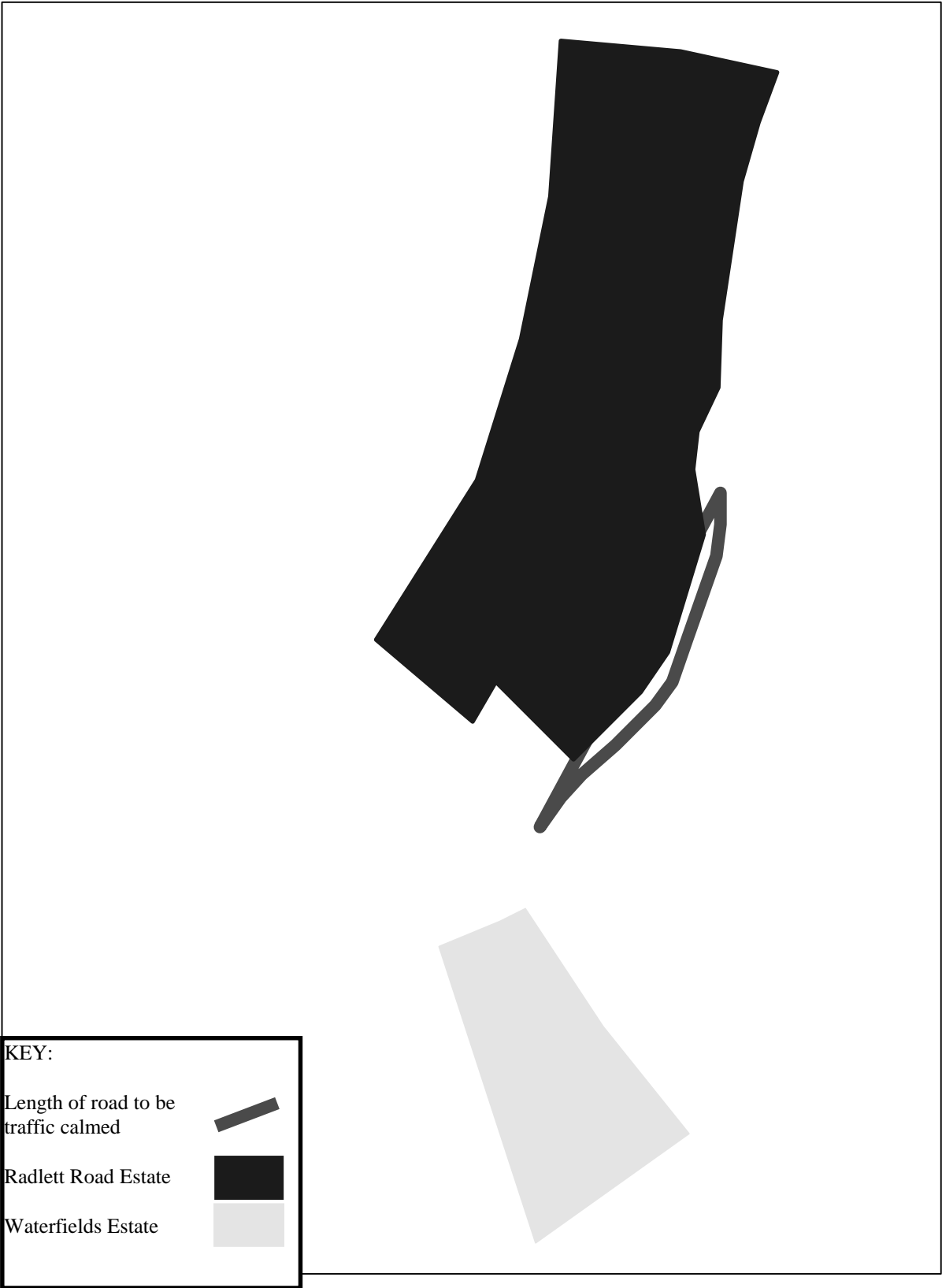
4. Conclusions

4.1 The scheme proposed consists of chicanes. These would reduce the speed on the stretch of road in question and provide a safer crossing point at the footpath from the Radlett Road estate. They are more acceptable to the emergency services than humps or cushions.

4.2 Members will have the opportunity to hear from representatives of both groups of petitioners at the committee meeting.

4.3 The scheme as detailed on the display plan offers the best option to improve the problems of excessive speed bearing in mind road geometry and proximity of property. In addition, the use of chicane features offers an opportunity to improve pedestrian facilities whilst not offering unacceptable calming features for emergency vehicles.

FIGURE 1
RADLETT ROAD LOCATION PLAN



APPENDIX A

Chronological diary of events prepared by CC Giles-Medhurst in July 2002

2001

Pre April 2001- Radlett Road Community Association (covering some 400 houses and 800 residents) and Cllr Rabi Martins (Borough Councillor) press for improved pedestrian and road safety measures on the Radlett Road. These are the only residents who face or back on to the Radlett Road.

April 2001 - Herts County Council allocates £60,000 to Watford Council for a road safety scheme.

April 2001- Lib Dem's survey residents on the Radlett Road estate (the area covered by the association). Responses from the survey show that resident's want improved pedestrian facilities the length of Radlett Road.

June 3rd - Petition from residents calls for improved pedestrian facilities.

June - Upon election Cllr Giles-Medhurst (SG-M) asks Watford Council what progress is being made on this.

July and August - further chaser letters to Watford Council - answers are "sorry for delay we are investigating".

7th September - Watford Observer exposes delay in designing a scheme.

13th September- Watford Council designs and sends out a questionnaire and sends it out in conjunction with the **Radlett Road Community Association** seeking the views of 600 residents in the area.

Early October- Survey responses show top priority is improved crossing facilities on Radlett Road improved lighting in the tunnels and improved road safety.

Early October - initial discussions with Councillors on what might be in the scheme as Watford commissions Mouchel to carry out the design.

November- Chaser letters to Watford to ask how the design is being progressed.

15th November - Deputy Leader of Watford Council (Labour) given draft plans- prior to these going to the County Councillor for the Division.

Late November - E-mails indicate the items that might be in the plans go to County Councillor and Borough Councillors.

Late November - Waterfields' Residents Association (which does not cover Radlett Road) newsletter from Mr Dowdle says that the road may be closed - totally untrue.

29th November. Both **Radlett Road** and **Waterfields Residents Associations** Officers written to and invited to a meeting to discuss and seek their views on a draft plan that has been drawn up by Mouchel. Letter says, "We would like to seek your associations views".

11th December - Meeting at Watford Town Hall with officers of both residents groups including Mr Dowdle. Cllr Giles-Medhurst present but no Labour councillors turned up. Officers from Mouchel and Watford explained that the scheme and showed draft plans detailing the scheme, although the scheme was still draft and still the subject of a safety audit. The scheme showed at that stage two chicanes as the best way of achieving reduced speeds and enabling residents from the estate to cross in that section of the road- between Orphanage Road and the tunnel. No objections raised to chicanes, which are on the plans.

2002

14th January - Sweep test of tunnel in Radlett Road carried out by emergency services showed that the request by the Radlett Road Association to widen the pavement here to make it safer could not be achieved. Deleted from the scheme.

28th January - Mr Morgan, Chair of the **Waterfields Residents' Association**, and the Chair of the Radlett Road Association written to with final draft plans of the scheme and a covering letter explain the scheme. Chicanes included.

2nd and 4th Feb - Emails and letters from Chair of the Waterfields Residents' Association. Neither objects to chicanes although raise queries about other aspects. Association raises objections about humps not being wanted.

4th Feb- Plans on display at the **Radlett Road Community Association** quarterly meeting open to all residents held at Centre Point. Residents on the estate circulated with notice saying that there would be a presentation on the scheme at the meeting. Watford Officer attends open meeting of the Radlett Road Community Association to explain in detail the scheme. The chicanes designed to fit in with two of the footpaths from the estate to enable residents to cross that action of Radlett Road between Orphanage Road and the tunnel safely and thus reducing difficulties that residents and children have. Mr Dowdle present although not a member of the Community Association. Meeting and Association support plans.

11th Feb - Meeting between councillors, officers and officers of the two residents associations to discuss feedback on the scheme cancelled at very short notice by Cllr Muspratt.

13th Feb - Rescheduled meeting takes place. Cllr Muspratt leaves before Waterfields residents turn up. Mr Dowdle raises concerns about the chicanes and some other issues about widening the pavement near Ebury Road. The pavement issues are resolved by deleting it. This is the first time SG-M recalls opposition to the chicanes being raised and then just by Mr Dowdle who asked why other measures had not been used. It was pointed out at this stage that the Chair of the Waterfields Association had objected to humps as residents in the area had use of ambulances.

- 14th Feb - Central Watford Green Zone Forum** Separate Traffic sub group meeting prior to the start of the forum. The Green Zone includes the Waterfields Area but not the Radlett Road area, which is outside of the area covered by the Green Zone. This meeting is publicised locally. Mr Dowdle chaired the Traffic sub group that night and 40 residents attended as well as SG-M two of Watford Borough councillors and Council officers. As SG-M and Cllr Martins who was also present recall three residents including Mr Dowdle raised objections to the chicanes once officers has explained why they were proposed. Mr Dowdle wrote the minutes of this part of the meeting and wrongly quoted the cost of the chicanes and the minutes have had to be corrected.
- 28th Feb** - Cllr Muspratt sends e-mail to Watford Officers instructing them to delete chicanes- there was no consultation either with locals members or residents groups on this.
- 1st March** - Officers respond to Cllr Muspratt informing him that a pair of chicanes with dropped kerbs for pedestrian access is the best option given earlier objections to humps from offices of the Waterfields Association.
- 5th March** - Meeting arranged for 9am on 7th March to discuss way forward i.e. re the chicanes. Meeting cancelled the night before by Cllr Muspratt.
- 7th March** - Officers ask if other works i.e. moving the traffic lights can go ahead. Councillors say yes.
- 15th March** - Officers inform Cllr Muspratt that chicanes were the only viable option to reduce traffic speeds and potential accidents. Details of e-mail follow.
- 16th - 22nd March** - Speed checks on Radlett Road in two sections show that speeds of vehicles in the section where chicanes are proposed is on average over a 24 hour period 34.8 mph northbound and 35.3mph southbound with over 1,700 vehicles using this section of the road.
- 22nd March** - re planned officer member takes place. Cllr Muspratt present with Borough Councillor Ruth Atkins and SG-M. Meeting agreed that residents in Waterfields be circulated with a letter explaining the scheme and giving the option of humps instead of chicanes. All present agreed that no action was not an option.
- 26th March** - SG-M sent a letter to residents in the Waterfields area explaining the delay, except Mr Dowdle and the Chair of the association due to their rude letters and misleading information to residents. This letter sought residents' views on the scheme and described the shape of the "s" type hump. This is an option officers had come up with as an alternative to the chicanes and the normal humps.
- 1st April - Radlett Road Community Association** Chair writes to the County Council again asking what is happening about the requested safe means of crossing Radlett Road particularly for children.
- 7th April** - 110-signature petition from the **Waterfields Residents' Association** sent to Cllr Muspratt office at Watford objection to road humps. Copy never sent to Cllr Giles-Medhurst by the Association.

12th April - Letter from Watford Borough Council sent to all residents in the Waterfields and Radlett Road Community Association area seeking their views by way of a reply pre paid slip on Chicanes, “s” type humps, speed cushions, or flat top humps. Replies to be back by 26th April.

May - 60 replies received from residents with a larger number from the Waterfields area than the Radlett Road estate- although there might have been problems with delivery to some flats on the Radlett Road estate. Of the replies the largest number of those responded wanted chicanes (including residents in the Waterfields area) with various degrees of support for the road humps measures. Over 70% of those who responded to the Watford Council survey wanted some traffic speed reduction measure. Either chicanes or humps.

April - County Council allocated Watford Council its highways maintenance programme, which includes £60,000 for resurfacing works in parts of Radlett Road; this includes the tunnel by Waterfields.

22nd May - E-mails to Watford Council from Highways at County to link the signal works at the tunnel to the road resurfacing. This tied in with previous e-mails regarding this to co-ordinate the works.

23rd May - Central Watford Green Zone meeting- Reported that Radlett Road scheme was being reviewed but that the traffic lights would be moved as pre the agreed scheme and resurfacing was needed by the tunnel. No objections raised.

28th May - Meeting at County Hall with Mouchel and Herts CC officers. By now due to Watford inability to progress schemes it had been agreed that Herts CC would take responsibility for the Radlett Road schemes, including works on the Radlett Road Estate. This meeting agreed that in view of the petition about humps and that as the largest number who responded to Watford’s official survey wanted chicanes that the chicanes scheme designed last year would be progressed and residents would be written to about this.

11th June - Central Watford Green Zone management group meeting. Green Zone officers informed about Radlett Road works.

13th June - Email to County from Watford Borough informing them that the road (Radlett Road) would be closed as from 1st July for 12 days.

26th June - Letter from Nick Gough to residents explains the position on the Radlett Road scheme.

29th June - Letter from Watford Council goes out about road closure for resurfacing under the railway bridge.

29th June - Mr Dowdle says that the chicanes are “road obstructions” and collects petition again them.