

Sent: 01 December 2019 21:46

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Subject: PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS TO WOOD VALE, SE23

Importance: High

Dear Cllr Livingstone,

I have just completed the online survey regarding the proposed improvements to Wood Vale, and am writing to you as the relevant Cabinet member to express my objections to the scheme. I have read the letter sent to residents and have looked at the plans in detail, and feel that the proposal is incredibly badly thought-out, and, rather than helping to reduce speed, is likely to make what some residents perceive as an issue much worse.

I have lived in Wood Vale for almost 45 years, and while there had definitely been an increase in traffic over the years, I really do not feel that it is a significant problem. A small percentage of cars have always driven too fast down the road, as unfortunately they do everywhere, but I don't believe this is a more serious problem in Wood Vale than anywhere else.

I discussed the proposals with Joanna Redshaw, one of the project officers, and suggested that consideration could be given to installing speed cameras as an alternative to the proposal. She explained that the installation of cameras would have to be agreed by Transport for London and the Police, and was an expensive option. I find it hard to believe that installing cameras would be more expensive than the current proposal, and if there is sufficient evidence to support the need for traffic calming measures, then this would surely be enough to get the support of TfL and the Police.

Ms Redshaw mentioned that there is evidence to show that speed cameras only slow traffic down for a short distance, and that vehicles then speed up again once they have passed the cameras. Whilst I accept that this could often be the case, Wood Vale is not a very long road, and if cameras were installed midway along the section from Forest Hill Road to Langton Rise, traffic would not have had time to speed up again before having to slow down at the mini roundabout at the junction with Langton Rise. The large number of parked cars between Langton Rise and Melford Road help to slow down vehicles in that section of the road, and also in the section from Melford Road to Lordship Lane.

I am deeply concerned by the proposal to remove the traffic islands from the road, and the danger this would potentially pose to pedestrians wanting to cross Wood Vale. At present, cars have to moderate their speed to an extent when passing the islands because of the effect that they have in narrowing the road. If the islands and speed cushions are taken away and replaced by speed tables, I believe this will increase speed – the precise opposite of the purpose of the supposed improvements.

From my own driving experience, cars do not generally have to slow down significantly to cross speed tables, whereas most cars do slow down for the speed cushions we have at present. Furthermore, the plans show that the speed tables may overlap the crossovers of some properties, which is unacceptable.

There is a historic and ongoing problem with subsidence in Wood Vale, and a large proportion of houses have been underpinned or undergone structural repairs in the years that I have lived here, including my house and my neighbours. The vibrations in my house are alarming when cars hit the speed cushions, but at least they generally do so at a relatively low speed because they have to slow down with the traffic island. If the islands are taken away, and replaced by speed tables, I believe that traffic speed will increase, and cars will hit the speed tables at higher speed, causing much more significant vibration, and thus leading to further structural damage.

I am also concerned about the proposal to introduce priority working in the two locations between Melford Road and London Road. Long queues of traffic already build up at the end of Wood Vale at peak times, and I think the priority working will lead to much more congestion, with far more cars queueing along this part of the road, possibly backing up to the mini roundabout and beyond as a result of the installation adjacent to no 40. In addition, this will also have an impact on air pollution if cars are idling while waiting in a queue to give way to oncoming traffic from London Road.

I think the proposed measures are extraordinarily ill thought out, and will make what is not a significant problem much worse. While the proposals may deter some through traffic from using the London Road end of Wood Vale, the traffic will still need to go somewhere, and there will be a substantial increase in the volume of traffic using Melford Road and Underhill Road. Have the residents of these roads been consulted on the proposals?

I would welcome the footway refurbishments referred to in the consultation letter. I understand that it would be some time before a final decision will be made on the proposal and in the meantime I would hope that the very large potholes in the road are addressed as a matter of urgency.

Yours sincerely,