

## **Title – Narrowing and Greening of Ravenhurst Rd**

**Summary** – A proposal to narrow a section of Ravenhurst Road, a residential road on the Moor Pool Estate in Harborne, including the creation of a crossing point, parklet and speed table. It will improve road safety for the local community by reducing through-traffic speeds and providing a safe place to cross the road, uniting the two sides of the Estate and connecting with a new area of green space.

### **Background & Justification**

Ravenhurst Road is the major road on Moor Pool Estate in Harborne, running approximately north to south from Gillhurst Road to Wentworth Road. At 10m wide, it is the Estate's widest road, being approximately double the width of all other roads on the Estate. Its width and straight-line shape have resulted in the perennial and worsening problem of speeding through the Estate. Two recent studies (September 2024 and November 2024) revealed that at least 90% of cars travelling along the stretch of road in 'the dip' or basin between Park Edge and Moor Pool Avenue exceeded the speed limit of 20 mph, with some vehicles exceeding 40 mph. At least two car collisions have occurred at the junction with Moor Pool Avenue in the past few years. A scheme to reduce speeds when approaching this complicated road junction would benefit pedestrians and all road users.

The road is 1,000 metres long but does not have a single safe crossing point. All residents who walk from one side of the Estate to the other must cross this road, as do many schoolchildren walking to school during the busy rush hour. Both the Moor Pool Residents Association (MRA) and the Moor Pool Heritage Trust (MPHT) acknowledge that this is a dangerous road to cross. It is simply too wide and dissects the whole of the Estate, creating an unnecessary barrier that endangers local residents and visitors. We believe that a solution can readily be found to address these issues without adversely affecting residents' parking, bus services or waste collection.

### **Proposed Solution, Benefits & Impact**

Our Better Streets for Harborne and Quinton proposal is for a section of Ravenhurst Road to be narrowed near to the junction with Winterbourne Lane (see Scheme below). This is the section of road at its lowest point in 'the dip' right next to the Moor Pool, where the wide basin encourages the worst speeding. As outlined below, the design must include a road narrowing but could be enhanced by other features:

- [essential narrowing, optional speed table] A narrowed section through the creation of two grass verges and installation of a crossing point. Our design will at least halve the width of the road for approximately 20 metres along a stretch of Ravenhurst Road, starting just south of Winterbourne Lane. A clear crossing point (ideally on a speed table) will ensure that pedestrians

will be able to cross safely. Our preferred choice is that the narrow section contains verges on both sides and is one-lane only to maximise the safety of the crossing point.

- [optional but recommended] A parklet. The crossing point will connect with an existing paved area containing a bench that looks over the Moor Pool. Our scheme will integrate this area into a larger parklet on the western side of the road, containing trees and other shrubs. The planting scheme will be designed to absorb water from pools that can accumulate in the basin. The parklet will act as a new meeting place on the estate, turning the existing grey bench area into a greener and more people-friendly place. Low hedges will be planted to help reduce the toxic particulate emissions from passing cars. On the right-hand side, a verge with trees can also be introduced.

[optional but recommended] A speed table. Speed tables are an acknowledged solution to speeding, being the most effective traffic calming treatment (<https://www.trafficchoices.co.uk/traffic-schemes/speed-table.shtml>). The speed table will be sufficiently long with an appropriate gradient so that buses can travel along it without any difficulty. Buses are used on other roads in Birmingham that contain speed tables (e.g. X22 on Edgbaston Park Road). A major advantage of speed tables is that they can also be designed to be used as a crossing point for pedestrians, which is relevant to this proposal.



Figure 1. Location (left) and an illustrative diagram (right) of the proposed scheme.

### Benefits & Expected Impact

- First and foremost, the scheme will improve the safety for local residents by reducing speeds along what is currently the fastest stretch of road and providing them with a safe crossing point from one side of the Estate to the other.
- The scheme will improve community wellbeing and provide environmental benefits in reducing pollution through the creation of a green parklet at the centre of the Moor Pool Estate. The introduction of trees and green verges would be in keeping

with the character of the Estate and start to align Ravenhurst Rd with the style of its other roads (i.e. ca. 5m wide, with grass verges).

### **Cost Estimate, Feasibility & Maintenance**

- Cost estimates are as follows:
  - (i) road narrowing for 20m with new verges on both sides of the road, £10k;
  - (ii) parklet, including trees, hedges and benches, £10k;
  - (iii) speed table and crossing point, £15-20k, according to <https://www.trafficchoices.co.uk/traffic-schemes/speed-table.shtml>;Total cost £40k.

It is important to note that the scheme is modular in that the length of the speed table can be increased or decreased depending on monies available. There could even be no speed table at all in the narrow section (or one just for the crossing point alone) to reduce costs even further. It could also be moved to include the junction with Winterbourne Lane if this is a better safety option. A new verge could be installed on the left hand side only to reduce verge installation costs.

- In terms of feasibility, care would have to be taken to ensure the works do not impact on the pool outflow. The planting scheme could in fact help to mitigate flooding and poor surface water drainage that can occur in this location. The loss of road parking is not a major issue for this 20m section of road, being next to the Moor Pool rather than having housing on both sides. We would not recommend parking for the 20m narrow section to ensure the crossing is visible, although other roads with a width of 5m, such as Moor Pool Avenue, do have parking on one side. The need to assign priority, and from one direction or the other, would be done in consultation with local highways engineers.
- The green spaces and parklet will be maintained by local volunteers including members that care for the Nettlefold Garden, a pocket park at the bottom of Margaret Grove.

### **Community Support & Stakeholder Input**

- This scheme has the full backing of both the MPHT and the MRA. The MRA states: *"It calms speeding, gives a safe crossing point which people have never had on Ravenhurst, and encourages community-led planting."* In addition several local residents living on Ravenhurst Road in the affected section are supportive. One resident has written *"As parents of young children, we're concerned about the speed of vehicles on Ravenhurst Road which has persisted despite a reduction in the speed limit to 20mph. We are supportive of these measures which will help reduce risk in an environmentally sensitive manner"*.

### **Conclusion**

- In conclusion, we are proposing a modular scheme for narrowing Ravenhurst Road, that will reduce speeding on this road and create a new parklet and crossing point that will connect the two main areas of the Moor Pool Estate.

- The request for councillors to approve the proposal is summarised as follows:
  - Narrowing works (new grass verges) for up to 20m of road, ideally on both sides
  - Crossing point, ideally to be placed on a speed table
  - Parklet (optional)
  - Speed table within the narrow section (optional size, with no table a further option)