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Rushton Parish Road Safety Petition

Dear Cllr. Mike Brightman

Thank you for submitting your petition, together with the detailed supporting report, regarding road safety concerns within Rushton Parish. I would also like to recognise the 272 residents who have signed the petition and the considerable time and care that has clearly gone into compiling the evidence presented.

The Council fully acknowledges the range of issues raised, including concerns relating to traffic volumes, speeding, school-time congestion, drainage, road condition, signage, visibility, verge maintenance and street lighting. The submission provides a comprehensive picture of the challenges being experienced locally, and I would like to thank residents for setting these out so clearly. We have carefully reviewed the petition alongside available traffic data, speed information and recorded injury collision data for the parish.

Overall Position

Recent speed surveys indicate that average vehicle speeds within the village are approximately 21mph, with an 85th percentile speed of 27mph, suggesting that most drivers are travelling at speeds appropriate to the environment.

In the three-year period from 1 March 2023 to 28 February 2026, there have been eight recorded injury collisions within Rushton Parish (excluding the A43), comprising one serious and seven slight collisions.

A review of these collisions indicates that they are generally linked to individual driver behaviour or circumstances - such as loss of control, misjudgement or weather conditions - rather than a clear or consistent pattern associated with the layout of the highway network.

That said, I recognise that statistics do not always reflect lived experience. Concerns about near misses, perceived risk and quality of life are important, and it is right that these are raised and considered.

Working with the Parish

We are committed to working closely with town and parish councils as key partners in managing the highway network. An important part of this is our programme of parish walkabouts, which are attended by our Highway Community Liaison Officer alongside the Kier Community team. These visits allow issues to be reviewed on site with local representatives, helping us to understand concerns in context, agree priorities, and identify practical and proportionate solutions. I would encourage Rushton Parish Council to continue engaging through this process so that we can progress matters collaboratively.

Responding to the Key Issues Raised

Traffic management and speeding

The petition raises concerns regarding increasing traffic volumes, speeding and requests for traffic calming measures.

Based on current data, there is no evidence at present to support the introduction of traffic calming measures, such as speed humps or chicanes, which must meet national criteria and be evidence-led.

Requests to change speed limits can be considered through the Council's formal review process, and enforcement remains a matter for Northamptonshire Police, based on their operational thresholds.

However, we will consider whether targeted measures, such as improved signage or Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS), could help reinforce appropriate driver behaviour.

Junction concerns

Concerns have been raised about a number of junctions within the village, including Station Road / Manor Road and Station Road / Desborough Road.

I can confirm that there have been no recorded injury collisions at these junctions in the last three years. Proposals such as converting "Give Way" to "Stop" would require detailed assessment against national standards, including visibility requirements. Finally, I can confirm that the use of mirrors on the public highway is not permitted.

While the available evidence does not currently support significant changes, we will consider whether localised improvements to signage or road markings could assist.

School related congestion and parking

The challenges associated with school drop-off and pick-up times are clearly recognised, particularly in relation to congestion, parking pressures and pedestrian safety. Measures such as double yellow lines or other restrictions can be progressed through the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process, including consultation with residents and stakeholders. Alongside this, continued engagement with the school and local community will be important in helping to manage behaviours and improve safety. Specific areas of concern should be raised and discussed with the CLO Team

Flooding and drainage

A number of locations across the parish have been identified where flooding occurs. The Council operates a cyclical maintenance programme for highway drainage assets, including the regular cleansing of gullies and culverts within the highway boundary. It should be noted that roadside ditches and watercourses, which many of these systems outfall into, are typically the responsibility of the adjacent landowner under riparian ownership responsibilities. Effective drainage therefore often relies on the appropriate maintenance of both highway and third-party systems.

In addition to routine maintenance, the Council has allocated elements of its capital highways maintenance budget to deliver targeted improvements to highway drainage infrastructure where required. The prioritisation of these schemes is undertaken using the Council's multi-criteria

assessment tool (HEAT), in accordance with our Highway Asset Management Strategy, ensuring that investment is directed to locations of greatest need and risk.

Road condition and vegetation.

We recognise concerns regarding potholes, general carriageway condition and the impact of vegetation on visibility across the parish.

Safety defects are addressed in line with the Council's Highway Maintenance Inspection and Response Framework (HMIRF), which has recently been strengthened to promote a "right first time" approach. This ensures that when defects are identified, they are repaired to a standard that reduces the need for repeat visits and avoids leaving residual issues on site.

Alongside reactive maintenance, we are continuing to embed a preventative approach, including an expanded surface dressing programme from this year onwards. This will help extend the life of carriageways and improve overall network condition in a more cost-effective and sustainable way. Locations for more significant interventions, such as resurfacing, are prioritised using condition data and risk-based asset management principles.

In relation to vegetation, the Council undertakes cyclical verge cutting throughout the growing season to maintain visibility and network safety. However, it is important to note that hedgerows are the responsibility of the adjacent landowner. While we do not routinely cut hedgerows, where vegetation is identified as causing an obstruction to the highway or affecting visibility, we will contact the relevant landowners and request that necessary works are carried out.

Street lighting

The Council recognises concerns regarding levels of street lighting within parts of the parish. Street lighting is provided in accordance with the Council's [Network Management Plan](#) and national standards, and it is important to note that there is no statutory duty on highway authorities to provide street lighting.

Provision is therefore based on a risk-based and needs-led approach, with higher levels of lighting focused on locations such as busy routes, areas with significant pedestrian activity, or junctions where there is a demonstrated safety requirement.

In rural areas such as Rushton, lower levels of lighting are typical and reflect both the character of the environment and wider considerations including cost, energy use and light pollution.

Where additional lighting is requested beyond the Council's standard provision, this may be considered in partnership with the Parish Council; however, this would normally require local or third-party funding for both installation and ongoing maintenance.

Conclusion and Next Steps

I fully recognise the strength of feeling expressed through this petition and the importance of maintaining a safe and welcoming environment within Rushton Parish.

While the available data does not currently support large-scale engineering interventions, we are committed to:

- Progressing maintenance related issues
- Considering targeted, proportionate improvements
- Supporting the Parish Council in progressing formal requests where appropriate
- Continuing local engagement through parish walkabouts and liaison

We will continue to monitor the situation and work with the Parish Council and local members to ensure that concerns are addressed in a proportionate and evidence led manner.

Thank you again for bringing these matters to our attention.

Yours sincerely

Iain Smith
Director of Regulatory Services
North Northamptonshire Council