

## Highways Committee

12 June 2009

### C44 Newgate, Barnard Castle Proposed Speed Limit Order Amendment



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### Report of Terry Collins, Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services.

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#### 1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To advise Members of the objections to the proposed amendment to the speed limit on the C44 Newgate, Barnard Castle in the vicinity of Barnard Castle School (see attached plan).
- 1.2 This report requests that Members endorse the proposal for the setting aside of objections and allow the Traffic Regulation Order to be sealed and the scheme introduced.

#### 2.0 Proposal

- 2.1 To make a Traffic Regulation Order to reposition the existing 30mph speed limit closer to the Town Centre where presently the speed limit lacks credibility due to the lack of roadside development frontage.
- 2.2 The order will create a 40mph speed limit buffer zone covering all of the school entrance and exit roads. One entrance to the school was formally covered by the 30mph speed limit whilst the other entrance leading to the Prep. School was located within the Derestricted length of Newgate.
- 2.3 The School has recently secured planning consent for a further exit road onto Newgate associated with a pupil "drop off" and "collection" point car park. It is hoped this facility will be utilised by parents thereby ensuring less on-street parking on Newgate at the start and end of the school day.
- 2.4 The Annual Average Daily Traffic Flow (AADT) is recorded as 2,700 vehicles. A number of speed surveys were carried out in the vicinity of the school junctions. The 'Mean Average' speed was recorded in the range of 34.6mph to 38.3mph whilst the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds were recorded in the range of 43.5mph to 49.5mph.

### **3.0 Background**

- 3.1 At the request of Barnard Castle School the County Council and Durham Constabulary were asked to review the current speed limit arrangements on the C44 Newgate.
- 3.2 The speed limit review has been completed in accordance with current best practice guidance produced by the Department for Transport (DfT) known as Circular 1/06 'Setting Local Speed Limits'.
- 3.3 The County Council have adopted this guidance and incorporated this DfT document into 'The County Durham and Darlington Speed Management Strategy 2006 -2011 ensuring good practice is maintained countywide.
- 3.4 Research and experience gained at other locations within the County have proven that the installation of speed limits which are credible with the environment through which the motorist is travelling results in improved driver compliance. In the case of the C44 Newgate, the environment is mainly rural with open fields and some sporadic development on the south side of the road and the school grounds on the north side of the road. As such, the imposition of a 40mph speed limit is the most suitable speed limit for this location which hopefully will result in a reduction in "top-end" excess speed.

### **4.0 Statutory Consultation**

- 4.1 The Traffic Regulation Order was drafted and advertised as per the requirements of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 with the objection period ending 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009. The Teesdale Mercury also presented a front page article pertaining to the proposals.
- 4.2 The consultation exercise with the Statutory Consultees resulted in no formal objections being submitted.
- 4.3 The statutory legal notices within the local press and notices erected on site resulted in five letters of objection being received. Additional correspondence with two of the objectors has helped explain the Council's intentions in more detail. This leaves three substantiated objections remaining including an objection from the local Member of Parliament, Helen Goodman MP.
- 4.4 The residential properties in the immediate vicinity of the school were also consulted resulting in five responses, all of which supported the proposals.
- 4.5 Barnard Castle School Governors are supportive of the speed limit amendments with the School Bursar being particularly active during the schemes development.

## **5.0 Objections**

- 5.1 The current 30mph speed limit covering the Senior School side road should be extended further east to also cover the Prep. School side road.
- 5.2 Increasing the speed limit to 40mph outside of the school will have a negative effect on overall road safety as vehicles already have complete disregard of the speed limit and persist in breaking the speed limit.
- 5.3 The road is subject to heavy vehicle usage and these vehicles cause a perceived road safety risk therefore traffic calming should be a priority. When traffic is travelling slower, the objector reports this problem is significantly reduced.
- 5.4 Helen Goodman MP has asked the Highway Authority to reconsider its proposals having seen the article within the Teesdale Mercury and would welcome the introduction of a 20mph speed limit outside of the school.

## **6.0 Response**

- 6.1 *The speed limit review has been completed in accordance with current best practice guidance produced by the Department for Transport (DfT) known as Circular 1/06 'Setting Local Speed Limits'. A lack of roadside development frontage in the vicinity of the school is better served by a 40mph speed limit. A number of schools within the County have a 40mph speed limit immediately outside of the school gates*
- 6.2 *The County Council have been successful elsewhere in the County when raising speed limits which motorists consider to lack credibility. Research has shown that excess speeds are reduced as drivers are more willing to accept a speed limit which suits the environment they are driving through.*
- 6.3 *A 40mph speed limit allows the use of speed limit repeater signs which act as a visual reminder to motorists. Furthermore the scheme will involve the erection of additional signage and the location will also become a location where the Council will utilise its vehicle activated speed monitoring sign (Speedvisor Sign).*
- 6.4 *The Department for Transport encourage Highway Authorities to use 20mph zones outside of schools to address locations with a poor accident record. Research into Road Traffic Collisions in the vicinity of schools within County Durham has thankfully shown that collisions involving children are rare. This scenario is likewise represented outside of Barnard Castle School.*

## **7.0 Local Member Consultation**

- 7.1 The Local Members, Councillor Richardson and the late Councillor Mrs Fergus were both consulted and offered no objection to the proposals. Both Councillors were also involved with the initial meetings at the School where the proposals were discussed at length.

## **8.0 Recommendations**

- 8.1 It is **RECOMMENDED** that the Committee endorse the proposal to set aside the objections and proceed with the implementation of the Traffic Regulation Order.

### **Background Papers**

Area Traffic Office Scheme File.

Department of Transport Circular 1/06 – Setting Local Speed Limits.

The County Durham and Darlington Speed Management Strategy 2006 to 2011.

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**Appendix 1: Implications**

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**Finance**

The scheme is being funded using the Local Member Area Allowance.

**Staffing**

None

**Equality and diversity**

None

**Accommodation**

None

**Crime and disorder**

None

**Sustainability**

None

**Human Rights**

None

**Localities and Rurality**

As detailed in report.

**Young people**

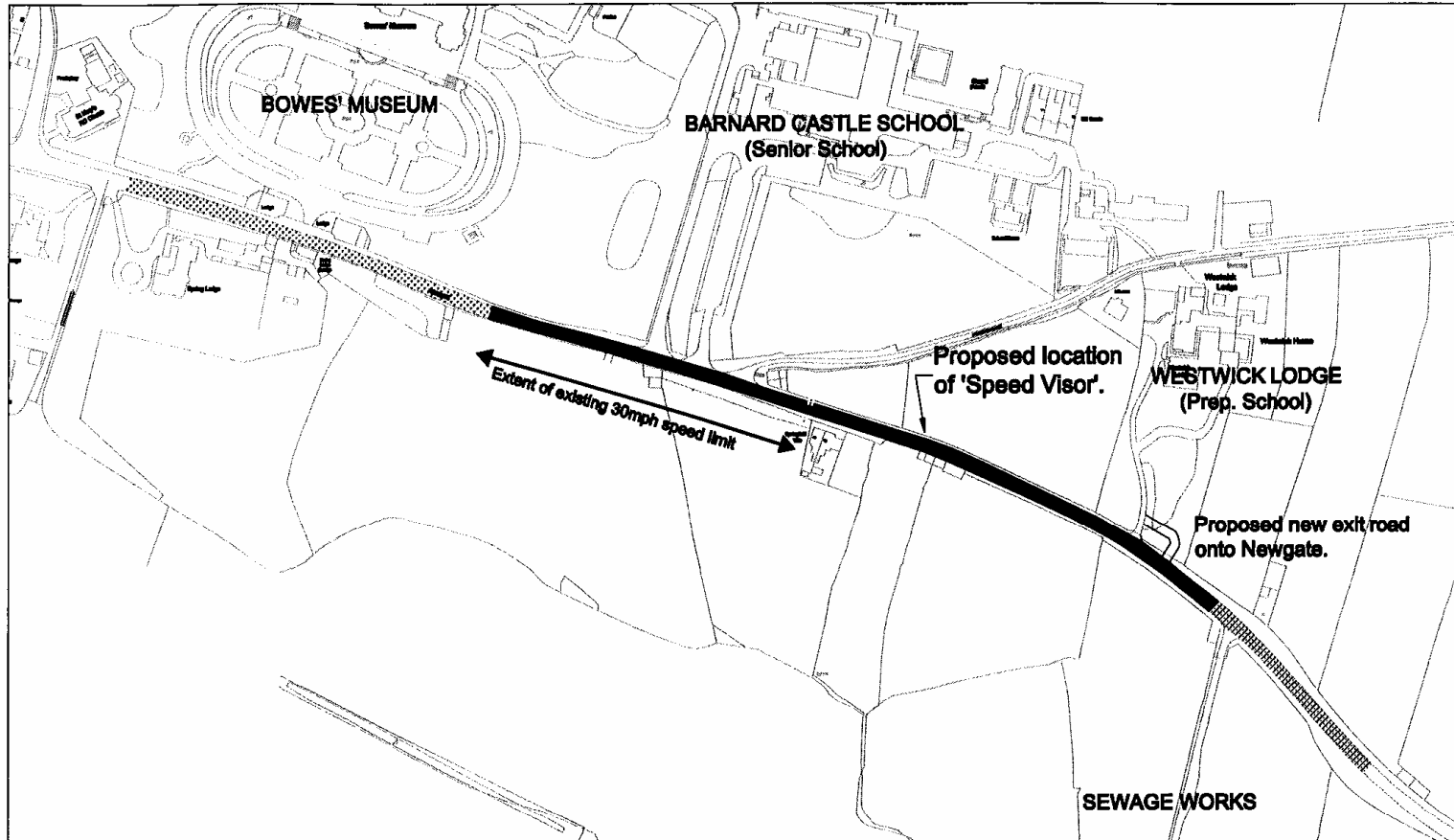
None




**Consultation**

Completed in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

**Health**

None



-  Proposed 30mph speed limit.
-  Proposed 40mph speed limit.
-  National Speed limit.

Rev/ Amnt	Approved By			Description Of Amendments
	Name	Date	Sign	

**DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**  
 Making a difference where you live  
**HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT SERVICES**  
 JOHN RICHARDSON  
 CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT  
 COUNTY HALL  
 DURHAM DH1 5UQ

**Project**  
C44 Newgate, Barnard Castle

**Drawing**  
Proposed 40mph Buffer Zone - Consultation Plan

**Scale**  
N.T.S.

**Project/Drawing No.**

**Rev.**