

Highways Committee

2nd December 2010

A67 Darlington Boundary to Bowes (A67 East of Gainford) Proposed Speed Limit Order



Report of Terry Collins, Director Neighbourhood Services Cabinet Portfolio Holder Councillor Bob Young

Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To advise members of objections to the proposed amendment to the speed limit on the A67 East of Gainford in the vicinity of the former 'Greenacres Nursing Home'.
- 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.

Background

- 2.1 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'.
- 2.2 The County Council has 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.
- 2.3 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. The environment to the east of Gainford is mainly rural with open fields and some sporadic development on either 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 and improved compliance with the intended speed limits.

Proposal

- 3.1 To make a Traffic Regulation Order to reposition the existing 30mph speed limit closer to the build up area, as currently the evidence gathered shows the speed limit lacks credibility to the motorist due to limited roadside development frontage.
- 3.2 The order will remove the existing 30mph speed limit and this will be repositioned closer to the commencement of the built up area of the village. The section of road that was covered by the 30mph speed limit will be replaced by a 40mph speed limit buffer zone commencing at a position near to the former 'Greenacres Nursing Home'. See plan at Appendix A.
- 3.3 Speed surveys were carried out in 2008 and 2010 in the vicinity of the property named Sentosa and the Health Centre. The survey outside the Health Centre shows compliance with the 30mph speed limit is better within the built-up area of the village

Date of speed survey 7-14th February 2008

	Outside Sentosa	Outside Health Centre
Total Weekly Traffic Flow	43,692	40,984
Mean speed	36 mph	30.8 mph
85 th Percentile	42.5 mph	37 mph
Above 30mph	32,749 (74.95%)	23,868 (40.98%)
Above 35mph	17,567 (40.20%)	10,673 (26.04%)
Above 40mph	6,916 (15.82%)	3,710 (9.05%)

Date of speed survey 1-8th October 2010

	Outside Sentosa	Outside Health Centre
Total Weekly Traffic Flow	42,887	42,862
Mean speed	36.3 mph	33.5 mph
85 th Percentile	42.7 mph	39.8 mph
Above 30mph	36,108 (84.19%)	31,851 (74.31%)
Above 35mph	21,902 (51.06%)	15,594 (36.38%)
Above 40mph	9,438 (22%)	4,952 (11.55%)

During both recording periods the speed surveys show that vehicles approaching the built up area of Gainford village are reducing their speeds in line with the road's environment.

Statutory Consultation

- 4.1 A site meeting was undertaken on the 30th September 2010 with members of Gainford Parish Council, Durham Constabulary and Durham County Council to discuss the proposal further. The Parish Council members who attended the site meeting were going to discuss

the matter at a full Parish Council meeting before offering an opinion on the proposal but no further contact has been forthcoming.

- 4.2 The residential properties in the immediate vicinity of the proposal were likewise consulted on the proposal. Responses were received from eight properties, all of which were opposed to the proposals. Response letters were sent to the eight objectors offering more information in an attempt to address the concerns that were raised. Two outstanding objections now remain which are the subject of this Highways Committee report.
- 4.3 The Traffic Regulation Order was drafted and advertised as per the requirements of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 with the objection period ending 27th October 2010.
- 4.4 The consultation exercise with statutory consultees resulted in no formal objections being submitted. Durham Constabulary, being a key partner and the enforcement authority who deal with speeding offences, are supportive of the proposals.

Objections

- 5.1 On a number of occasions when residents indicate to turn into their private driveways (which are located midway along the length of road which is proposed to be increased to 40mph) there have been near miss collisions due to vehicles behind travelling too close. Increasing the speed limit to 40mph means the risk of an accident will be increased. Furthermore, when trying to exit the property onto the A67 it will be more difficult when the speed limit is set at 40mph.
- 5.2 It is stated that a number of children walk along the pathway from Morley Bank. Increasing the speed limit would increase risk and danger.
- 5.3 Another objector has requested that the 40mph speed limit be introduced beyond the current 30mph speed limit within the rural area.

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 is better served by a 40mph speed limit, being more credible to the motorist. A number of schools and residential properties within the County are located within 40mph speed limit zones and function without compromising road safety.*
- 6.2 *The County Council has 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. Repeater signs and road markings will be used at this location to support the 40mph speed limit.*
- 6.4 *The children who walk this footpath to school from Morley Bank will already have walked down the roadside where the speed limit is currently de-restricted.*

Local Member Consultation

- 7.1 The local members, Councillors Richardson and Rowlandson were both consulted. Councillor Richardson was supportive of the proposal; no representations have been forthcoming from Councillor Rowlandson.

Recommendation

- 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

Local Government Reorganisation

None

Finance

The scheme is being funded using the LTP2 'Speed Management' budget.

Staffing

None

Equality and diversity

None

Accommodation

None

Crime and disorder

None

Environment

None

Human rights

None

Localities and rurality

None

Young people

None

Consultation

Completed in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.