

Highways Committee

9th February 2011

Proposed Traffic Calming
B1287 North Road ,Seaham.



Report of Terry Collins, Director of Neighbourhood Services Councillor Bob Young, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Strategic Environment and Leisure

1.0 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of the representations received with regard to a traffic calming scheme and 20mph speed limit proposed for B1287 North Road, Seaham (see attached plan).
- 1.2 Having considered the objections, the Committee is recommended to endorse the proposal as outlined in the report.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Representations have been made by County Councillors, Seaham Town Council and members of the public with regard to the issue of vehicle congestion and the increase in pedestrian activity in the area as a result of visiting tourists and recent housing developments.

3.0 Proposal

- 3.1 Following these concerns a review of the existing traffic calming was undertaken and a scheme was prepared which comprises alterations/removal of the existing road narrowing features, a series of sets of speed cushions (mix of pairs and triples) along the length of North Road, a humped zebra crossing, the introduction of a 20mph speed limit with associated signing and road markings and a rationalisation of existing signs to reduce roadside clutter.

4.0 Consultation

- 4.1 A consultation was undertaken with residents/businesses on North Terrace, North Road, Marquess Point and a selected number of properties on Tempest Road, Bath Terrace and Runswick Drive. A total of 96 properties were issued with details of the proposed scheme. In addition, statutory consultees, including the emergency services, were sent a copy of the proposals and given the opportunity to

comment. The consultation period was from 10th September to 4th October 2010.

- 4.2 A 'drop in' session was held at Seaham Town Council Offices on the evening of 15th September 2010 to allow a wider community to view the proposals and share their comments with officers. The proposals were also displayed in the local library where people could register their comments.
- 4.3 As a result of the 96 letters sent out to properties adjacent to the proposals and the 'drop in' session a total of 52 responses were received. Of these, 47 (90%) were in favour, and 5 (10%) were against. Nine of the responses received were from people who reside outside of the area of the proposed scheme (including 1 against the scheme). The remaining consultees who did not respond are deemed to have no preference.
- 4.4 The proposals were formally advertised from 2nd December 2010 to 23rd December 2010 and no further responses were received.
- 4.5 With regard to statutory consultees, responses of support were received from the North East Ambulance Service, Durham Constabulary and Seaham Town Council.

5.0 Public Representations

5.1 Representation 1

“Speed humps cause damage to vehicles and the noise caused by heavy vehicles going over them is stressful for residents”

Response: It is proposed to use speed cushions and not full width road humps in this scheme. The principle applies that if the speed cushions are negotiated at a reasonable speed, then they will not cause discomfort, damage or constitute a danger to any road user. The proposals are based upon national guidance for traffic calming measures and these take into account all types of vehicles likely to encounter these features. Research has shown that overall traffic noise can be reduced when traffic calming is implemented on roads where the traffic flow consists mainly of light vehicles. As a small number of the HGVs that use this road are likely to be empty when passing over the cushions, it is possible that there may be some noise generated as a consequence, however, it is acknowledged that motorcycles and larger vehicles, including HGV's, are less affected by road cushions, due to their wider wheelbase.

5.2 Representation 2

“The Scheme will not slow drivers down”

Response: ‘Before and After’ studies show that speed cushions are an effective means of reducing vehicle speeds on residential roads. As this scheme includes a reduction in speed limit and other features it is anticipated that lower speeds will be maintained along the length of road and overall road safety improved.

5.3 Representation 3

“30mph is ok if everyone stuck to it, we need crossing lights”

Response: It is often the case that, where the road environment is open in nature, vehicle speeds tend to increase which can create a speed problem despite the posted speed limit. The police do not have the resources to be present at this location all the time to ensure compliance. Therefore the existing traffic calming features (build-outs with priority give ways) were introduced to assist in reducing vehicle speeds many years ago. This proposal includes different measures to assist in reducing speeds but takes account of the change in traffic flows since the previous scheme was installed. The use of speed cushions would allow two way flow of traffic thereby reducing the congestion generated from the priority Give Way build-outs, but maintaining this traffic flow at reduced speeds.

A survey of pedestrian movements on the northern section of road showed that a formalised crossing could not be justified due to the much lower numbers of people crossing and did not reach the required threshold set out in the Council’s policy for the provision of a crossing. Parts of the existing build outs have been maintained to assist pedestrians to cross the road which are combined with the traffic calming measures. A “humped” zebra crossing is being provided on the section of road outside the shops which will provide a safe and useful crossing facility where the predominant pedestrian movements exist. This is an improvement over the existing arrangement where there are no formal crossing facilities.

5.4 Representation 4

“Reduce speed signs should be enough. Humps are most uncomfortable for drivers. Not sufficient onus put on to pedestrians to be sensible and speeding drivers should be charged.”

Response: The principle provided by current relevant legislation and Durham County Council policy states that 20mph zones should be self enforcing using suitable traffic calming methods. The measures proposed should provide a positive reduction in speed and raise

awareness of the environment. These proposals are fully endorsed by Durham Constabulary.

The measures are designed to be as sympathetic to the surroundings as possible but maintain the distinction between footways and carriageway to encourage road safety by all users.

5.5 Representation 5

Extend the 20mph limit along the full length and provide a light controlled crossing near the care home

Response: The 20mph speed limit has been applied to the location where the majority of pedestrian movements occur. This is where the shops, green area and main car parking areas are located. The buildings at this location are much closer to the road making the area more confined and conducive to a lower speed limit. The section of road to the north is much more open with no development on one side and the properties set well back from the road giving a much more open feel where a 20mph speed limit is unlikely to be respected. The proposed traffic calming for this area will however assist in keeping vehicle speeds to a much more appropriate level.

The issue of a crossing on the northern part of the road is addressed in the response to Representation 3.

In addition there is existing signage positioned at suitable locations warning motorists that elderly or frail persons may be encountered on this section of road. These signs will remain as part of the scheme.

6.0 Statutory Representations

6.1 The Ambulance Service and Durham Constabulary both responded offering their support to the proposals.

7.0 Local Member Consultation

7.1 Local members, Councillors Bleasdale, D Myers, Arthur and Walker were included in the consultation and are minded to support the proposal.

8.0 Recommendations and Reasons

8.1 Members are recommended to endorse the proposal to set aside the representations and proceed with the scheme.

8.2 The reduction of the speed limit coupled with the presence of traffic calming will reduce/maintain lower traffic speeds along the route and help alleviate the congestion currently occurring at the build-outs. The

overall scheme and the provision of a humped zebra crossing will improve road safety and promote a more attractive environment for use by pedestrians. The benefits expected through the implementation of the scheme outweigh the negative comments received to date.

9.0 Background Papers

Correspondence on Office File
Copies of correspondence have been placed in the Members' Resource Centre

Contact: David Battensby Tel: 0191 332 4404

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance - 1

Funding for the scheme is from the Local Area Programme, local Councillors' Neighbourhoods Funds, Seaham Town Council and Durham Heritage Coast

Staffing - 2

None

Risk - 3

Local Area Program funds must be committed before the end of March 2011.

Scheme should ideally be completed before the tourist season commences at Easter 2011.

Equality and Diversity - 4

Improved pedestrian facilities

Accommodation - 5

None

Crime and Disorder - 6

None

Human Rights - 7

None

Consultation - 8

As described in the Report

Procurement - 9

None

Disability Discrimination Act - 10

Improved pedestrian facilities

Legal Implications - 11

None