

Highways Committee

29 June 2010

Proposed Traffic Calming Acre Rigg Road, Peterlee.



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

1.0 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To advise members of the representations received with regard to a traffic calming scheme recently proposed for Acre Rigg Road, Peterlee (see attached plan).
- 1.2 This report requests that members consider the representations to the proposals.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Representations have been made by the Town Council, County Ward Members and members of the public from the largely residentially populated area of Acre Rigg Road with regard to the issue of vehicle speeds and pedestrian safety.
- 2.2 Following these concerns a traffic calming scheme was entered onto the Local Member's Pool List of schemes for future consideration. The scheme will involve the installation of a series of 6 sets of speed cushions (pairs) along the length of Acre Rigg Road, small sections of pedestrian guardrail (adjacent to Chester Place) and associated signage.
- 2.3 The speed surveys taken in October 2007 showed that at a point near to the junction of Warwick Place and Acre Rigg Road there were 26% of vehicles travelling between 26 and 30mph and 47% of vehicles exceeding 30mph. The average speed of traffic was 30.3mph.
- 2.4 A consultation was undertaken with residents of Stafford Place, Chester Place, Lancaster Hill, Pembroke Place, Warwick Place, Gloucester Place and a selected number of properties on Buckingham Road where all properties, a total of 410, were issued with details of the proposed scheme and invited to make comment. In addition, the statutory consultees such as the emergency services were also written to with regard to the proposals and inviting their comments.

- 2.5 Out of 410 letters sent out to residents, a total of 82 replies were received from individual properties. Of the 82 replies, 56 were in favour, 26 were against and the remaining 328 who did not respond are deemed to have no preference.
- 2.6 With regard to the statutory consultees, responses of support were received from the North East Ambulance Service and Durham Constabulary.

3.0 Public Representations

- 3.0 Since the number of respondents is high and some raised several different representations to the scheme, each topic will be reported together with the number of respondents who raised the particular issue and the County Council's response.

3.1 Representation 1

“Speed cushions cause damage to vehicles”

This point was raised by two respondents.

Response: 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. Also, two wheeled vehicles could manoeuvre between the cushions.

3.2 Representation 2

“The installation of speed humps will result in increased congestion”

This point was raised by two respondents.

Response: There is insufficient traffic flow on Acre Rigg Road to cause congestion outside of peak times.

3.3 Representation 3

“Waste of tax payer's money”

This point was raised by two respondents.

Response: The scheme is being funded from Local Member's Allowance and is considered to be a cost effective means of responding to the issues raised by residents. The national average cost of an accident is over £70k. If one accident is prevented, or the severity reduced as a result of the installation of this scheme, then it can easily be established as having been cost effective. In the last three full years (including available statistics for 2010) there have been

3 recorded injury accidents (slight) along Acre Rigg Road between its junction with Burnhope Way and the frontage of Acre Rigg Junior and Infant School.

3.4 Representation 4

“The scheme, if implemented, will raise the likelihood of an accident during inclement weather”

This point was raised by one respondent.

Response: First, the motivation for this type of scheme is not the accident record of the road, or roads, in question. Traffic calming is provided as a measure to address the concerns of residents who have complained about the speed of traffic. It is also provided on new estates as a preventative measure. During inclement weather, drivers would be expected to proceed along the road with due care and attention and in line with the conditions and characteristic of the road.

Experience shows that traffic calming measures of this nature do not increase the likelihood of an accident, but have the reverse effect.

3.5 Representation 5

“Traffic calming is unnecessary / there is currently no problem”

This point was raised by six respondents.

Response: The necessity or otherwise of a traffic calming scheme is somewhat subjective depending upon one’s viewpoint. However, the County Council is confident that, if it is implemented, vehicle speeds will be reduced which will be an improvement in road safety terms, especially for pedestrians and other vulnerable road users.

4.0 Statutory Representations

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

5.0 Local Member Consultation

5.1 The County Council Members, Councillor Ralph Liddle and Barbara Sloan, are minded to support the proposals.

6.0 Recommendations and Reasons

6.1.1 Members are recommended to endorse the proposal to set aside the representations and proceed with the scheme. The presence of the traffic calming measures will reduce traffic speeds along the route to a

more acceptable level thus increasing road safety. The benefits expected through implementation of the scheme outweigh the negative comments received to date.

7.0 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

Funding will be provided by the County Councillor Local Area Measures Allowance.

Staffing

None

Equality and diversity

None

Accommodation

None

Crime and disorder

The proposal is likely to result in a reduction of some anti-social speed related offences

Environment

None

Human rights

None

Localities and rurality

As described in the Report

Young people

None.

Consultation

Consultation with affected residents in addition to statutory bodies.