

Highways Committee

September 2010

Proposed Traffic Calming Scheme Unc Helford Road & Southway, Peterlee



Report of Terry Collins, Director of Neighbourhood Services

1.0 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To advise members of representations received with regard to a traffic calming scheme on Helford Road and Southway, Peterlee.
- 1.2 This report requests that Members consider the representations received in relation to the proposals and endorse the recommendation.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Public concern regarding speeding on both Helford Road and Southway was highlighted by the local Members and through direct contact with the Council officers. As a result, Councillor Len O'Donnell requested that a traffic calming scheme be considered and to proceed with the usual consultation exercise for schemes of this nature.
- 2.2 A consultative meeting was held in the summer of 2009 to consider a petition raised by many residents with regard to the speed of traffic and increased volume resulting from redevelopment of the sports facilities. Following this meeting the speed and volume of traffic was monitored.
- 2.3 Speed surveys were undertaken on both Southway and Helford Road and indicate that whilst vehicle flows are not high, the percentage of vehicles travelling above the posted 30mph speed limit is inappropriate for the area. The results of the survey on Southway showed that 35% of vehicles travelled between 25 and 30mph and that 20% of vehicles were above 30mph, the overall average speed of traffic was 27mph. On Helford Road the figures were 27% and 6% respectively and the average speed was 24.5mph.
- 2.4 A draft scheme comprising of 4 No. sets of speed cushions on Southway and a combination of 2 No. sets of cushions and 2 No. full width humps on Helford Road was prepared for consultation. Letters were then distributed from 24 March 2010.

Each of the 327 properties on Helford Road and Southway including cul-de-sacs from the roads received a consultation letter, a plan of the scheme, a pre-paid reply card and a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) with responses. Residents were then invited to respond with their comments.

- 2.5 A total of 84 cards were returned, a response rate of 26%. Of these 89% (75) indicated support for the scheme and 11% (9) collectively raised a number of representations.
- 2.6 The formal advertisement of the proposal, in the press and on-site, started on 4 August 2010 and ended on 26 August 2010. During this period no objections were received.
- 2.7 Residences from which representations were received are shown on Drawing Nos. E197/3 attached.
- 2.8 The Police are in full support of the scheme.
- 2.9 The local Members Councillors Len O'Donnell and Joan Maslin are minded to support the scheme.

3.0 Representations

- 3.1 The general topic of representation is reported together with the County Council's response.
- 3.2 Representation 1

The proposals will impede emergency services and snow clearing

Response: The emergency services are consulted as part of the development of the scheme. The emergency services accept that there may be some slight reductions in response time but consider the improvements in road safety to be of importance especially if the potential for accidents is reduced.

If traffic calming is introduced the road will not be treated any differently during the winter than it is at present. Snow clearing operations are undertaken on a priority basis with the emphasis is on keeping the major road network clear as a priority. However it must be considered that periods of inclement weather occur for only short periods of the year.

- 3.3 Representation 2

The respondent considers the scheme to be a waste of money

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 £65k. 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.

3.4 Representation 3

The measures will create a pedestrian zone encouraging a cyclist play area

Response: The measures will not create a pedestrian zone as this can only be created by banning vehicles. What the measures should do is to reduce vehicle speeds to more acceptable levels for a residential area. The presence of cycles should be anticipated in residential areas and the measures aim to make it safer for them.

3.5 Representation 4

**The roads are not long enough to gain any speed
Don't think there is a need and the 30mph limit is adequate**

Response: The speed survey information confirms that there is a speed problem on both roads and that there is a significant percentage of vehicles exceeding the limit or driving at inappropriate speeds. The aim of the traffic calming is to target 55% of vehicles travelling above 25mph and reducing these speeds to the low 20s.

3.6 Representation 5

Make it a 20mph or 15mph speed limit and enforce it

Response: The principle provided by current relevant legislation states that 20mph zones should be self enforcing using suitable traffic calming methods. The County Council Policy for 20 mph Zones was approved by Cabinet on 27 November 2003. This Policy states that zones should be self enforcing using traffic calming measures. They may be introduced in areas with above average number of accidents, particularly where child accidents are involved.

3.7 Representation 6

The respondent has lived there for a long time and only very occasional trouble

Response: There has been 1 accident in the last 5 years at this location where a 9 year old cyclist was in collision with a vehicle fortunately only resulting in slight injuries. A history of road traffic accidents at a location is not always a requirement for the introduction of traffic calming however the possible prevention of future accidents is obviously desirable.

In addition it can be seen from the results of the speed survey that the issue of excessive and inappropriate speed is occurring on a daily basis.

3.8 Representation 7

They will park outside my property

Response: There is nothing to stop a motorist from parking a vehicle on a speed hump therefore there should be no change in the way people currently park vehicles.

3.9 Representation 8

Humps are outside my house and would be intrusive and an eyesore

Response: The proposed speed cushions were positioned in the most appropriate places that also took account of the many constraints along the road, such as driveways, junctions and bends. The cushions are also positioned to maintain spacing as even as possible within the constraints of the regulations.

All new housing estates are designed to include traffic calming features such as the proposals and they are considered useful when selling properties, as they are an enhancement to road safety within the estate. Speed humps do little to detract from the visual amenity within estates although individuals have differing views regarding what is considered unsightly within housing estates.

3.10 Representation 9

Speed cushions cause damage to vehicles

Response: The Highway Code advises in Rule 153 that motorists should reduce their speed when approaching traffic calming features that are intended to slow them down. Therefore the principle applies that if the speed cushions are negotiated at a reasonable speed they will not cause discomfort or constitute a danger to any road user or damage vehicles. 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

3.11 Representation 10

Speed humps don't work

Response: Before and After studies show that speed humps and cushions are an effective means of reducing vehicle speeds on residential roads.

4.0 Recommendations and reasons

- 4.1 It is recommended that Members consider the proposal and the representations and proceed with the proposals by setting aside the representations.
- 4.2 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.

5.0 Background papers

List as appropriate to comply with the Access to Information Act 1985.

Contact: David Battensby Tel: 0191 332 4404
