

Highways Committee

8 August 2007



Unc Eliza Street / Thomas Street Sacriston Traffic Calming

Report of John Richardson, Corporate Director, Environment

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To advise Members of the objections received with regard to a proposal to install traffic calming humps in this residential area (see attached plan).
- 1.2 This report requests that Members consider the objections of the residents of Eliza Street and Thomas Street, Sacriston and endorse the recommendations.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Representations were made by the residents of Eliza Street and Thomas Street to their County Councillor regarding a problem of 'rat-running' through their narrow streets to avoid the signal controlled crossing at the centre of Sacriston. Concerns were also raised regarding the volume of 'school run' traffic using these streets.
- 2.2 Following site meetings, consideration was given to the request and a draft scheme was prepared to close the through route beyond the northern end of Eliza Street. An initial consultation was carried out for this scheme, however the objections raised resulted in this proposal being abandoned in favour of a potential traffic calming scheme.
- 2.3 A further consultation was carried out on a revised scheme using four road humps, two in each of Thomas and Eliza Streets. Letters were sent to the 86 householders of Thomas Street, Eliza Street, Sowerby Street, Mafeking Terrace, Kirkwood and Fernwood, in addition to the statutory consultees. 25 responses were received and of these there were 20 (80%) in favour of the proposal and 5 (20%) raised objections.
- 2.4 Responses from the statutory consultees resulted in 7 responses and of these 5 were in favour including Durham Constabulary, Chester-le-Street District Council and Sacriston Parish Council. Two letters of representation were received to this consultation from the North East Ambulance Service and the County Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters, both raising concerns relating to vertical traffic calming measures.

3.0 Representations

3.1 Representation 1

A resident of Thomas St suggests that the proposal won't stop through traffic and that vehicles travel fastest along the top of the street and not down the streets.

Response: The proposed traffic calming was requested by residents to deter the rat running situation rather than a reduction in speeds of vehicles. The provision of traffic calming in the area behind Mafeking Terrace may be resolved as part of the requirement for redevelopment of the grassed area.

3.2 Representation 2

A resident of Mafeking Tce advised that vehicle access is already limited and that no further measures are called for or needed.

Response: The proposed traffic calming should reduce the number of vehicles exiting / entering Mafeking Terrace and improve accessibility. The proposed traffic calming will not reduce access from its present level.

3.3 Representation 3

A resident of Sowerby St raised a concern about the cost of the scheme.

Response: The scheme is being funded from the Local Area Measures Allowance and is considered to be a cost effective means of responding to the issues raised by residents.

3.4 Representation 4

A resident of Thomas St suggested that there will be a problem in the snow and suggests that humps would make it almost impossible to get up. He also states that he is not aware of a speeding problem.

Response: During inclement weather residents have the alternative option of access / egress from the northern end of Eliza and Thomas Street onto the Front Street. We are not aware of humps or cushions causing significant difficulties in winter weather. The background to the report indicates that the measures are required to ease a 'rat run' problem, however the humps will also reduce vehicle speed.

3.5 Representation 5

A resident of Thomas St suggested that there is not a traffic problem in Thomas Street and that he "needs a traffic hump outside my bedroom window, like I need a hole in the head".

Response: Research has shown that overall traffic noise is actually reduced when traffic calming is implemented on roads where the traffic flow consists mainly of light vehicles as in this case. Research has also shown that if motorists maintain a constant lower speed through a traffic calming scheme, then vehicle pollution will actually decrease.

3.6 Representation 6

The North East Ambulance Service and The Fire & Rescue Service have responded giving their usual reservations regarding the effect on response times.

Response: It is well known that both the Fire and Ambulance Services have reservations about road humps. Durham Ambulance Service have expressed their usual concerns regarding traffic calming but have not formally objected. A similar letter has been received from the Fire and Rescue Service.

4.0 Local Member Consultation

4.1 The Local Member, Councillor Anne Wright, has been consulted and fully supports the proposal.

5.0 Recommendations and Reasons

5.1 It is recommended that Members consider the proposal to set aside the objections and proceed with the scheme.

Background Papers

Correspondence on Office File.

Copies of correspondence have been placed in the Members' Resource Centre.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance

To be funded from Member's 2007 / 08 Local Area Measures Allowance.

Staffing

None

Equality and Diversity

None

Accommodation

None

Crime and Disorder

None

Sustainability

Possible improvements in the residential amenity.

Human Rights

None

Localities and Rurality

As detailed in the report.

Young People

Possible safer highway environment due to reduction in traffic.

Consultation

Consultation on the proposed measures was undertaken.

Health

None