

Highways Committee

10 October 2007

**B6291 The Avenue, Coxhoe
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 cushions and a priority give way with build out (see attached plans).
- 1.2 This report requests that Members consider the objections of the residents of The Avenue, Coxhoe and endorse the recommendations.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Representations were made by the residents of The Avenue to their County Councillor regarding a problem of vehicles travelling at excessive speed. Several requests for traffic calming have been received for The Avenue on which one injury accident has occurred in the past three years.
- 2.2 The Parish Council through the development of a Village Plan for Coxhoe identified The Avenue as a location that should be considered for traffic calming. The development of the Village Plan followed widespread public consultation.
- 2.3 The County Council worked with the Parish to progress the proposals and develop them into a scheme ready for consultation. The consultation included all residences situated on The Avenue in addition to the statutory consultees. Following a slight amendment to the location of the build out additional letters were sent to the affected properties.
- 2.4 Responses from the statutory consultees resulted in replies in favour of the proposals from Durham Constabulary and Coxhoe Parish Council. A letter of representation was received to this consultation from the County Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue and the Ambulance Service, raising concerns relating to vertical traffic calming measures, however not objecting to the proposals.

- 2.5 Durham Constabulary fully supports the proposals following some initial amendments to the location of the priority give way and build out.
- 2.6 Of 71 letters sent to residents of The Avenue enclosing reply paid comment cards, 39 were returned and of these 7 were opposed to the scheme. There were also 2 letters of opposition to the scheme.

3.0 Representations

3.1 Representation 1

A resident of The Avenue supports the use of cushions but not the position of the build out opposite their property citing that it will be an eye-sore and that they will lose privacy due to vehicles stopping outside their property. They are also concerned about possible pollution and suggest the use of a speed camera as an alternative.

Response: The proposed build out is located on the opposite side of the road to the property and of similar construction to those installed throughout the County. It is proposed that the give way is also located on the opposite side of the road to the property and drivers will be concentrating on the flow of traffic whilst waiting at the give way. Research has shown that if motorists maintain a constant lower speed through a traffic calming scheme, then vehicle pollution will actually decrease.

It is not the current policy of Durham Constabulary to use fixed speed cameras. Speed cameras should be used at locations where there is a history of speed related accidents. In County Durham the police use a mobile safety camera unit at such locations, however, Coxhoe does not have a speed related accident history.

3.2 Representation 2

A resident of The Avenue advises that vehicle access to and from their property will be affected.

Response: The proposed traffic calming should reduce the number of vehicles travelling at inappropriate speeds and therefore this should improve access and egress from properties. The proposed traffic calming will not reduce access from its present level.

3.3 Representation 3

A resident of a nearby farm suggests that the scheme will cause chaos due to the road being narrowed by parked vehicles.

Response: The road will not be any narrower than at present when vehicles park on the road side.

3.4 Representation 4

Two residents of The Avenue suggested that there will be a problem in wintry conditions and suggest that traffic calming measures would become a hazard.

Response: During icy weather the B6291 is gritted as part of the priority route network. We are not aware of traffic calming measures causing significant difficulties in winter weather.

3.5 Representation 5

A resident of Blackgate East suggests that nothing has been tried e.g. speed cameras and that accidents will occur at the build out.

Response: The issue of speed cameras is covered in the response to Representation 1. The build out is located to allow the maximum forward visibility whilst maintaining an effective position near the commencement of the 30 mph restriction. The build out features will be enhanced to maximise its conspicuity to approaching motorists.

Experience has shown that some accidents occur at traffic calming features, however these are usually as a result of driver error, criminal activity, inappropriate speed or a combination of these factors. Experience also shows that traffic calming measures of this nature do not increase the likelihood of an accident, but have the reverse effect. It should be noted that traffic calming is being provided as a measure to address the concerns of residents who have complained about the speed of traffic on The Avenue.

3.6 Representation 6

The Ambulance Service and The Fire & Rescue Service have responded giving their usual reservations regarding the effect on response times. A resident has also raised the issue of emergency vehicle response times.

Response: It is well known that both the Fire and Ambulance Services have reservations about traffic calming measures. They have both expressed their usual concerns regarding traffic calming but have not formally objected to the proposals and support improvements to road safety.

3.7 Representation 7

A resident of The Avenue whilst supporting the scheme objects to the position of cushions being placed directly outside the property and suggests that it is moved midway between neighbouring properties. The resident is considering further development on the property and seeking outline planning approval.

Response: The proposed location of cushions is mid way between existing vehicular accesses, however, the suggested location would be directly opposite an access to the property on the opposite side of the road.

4.0 Local Member Consultation

4.1 The Local Member, Councillor Dennis Morgan has been consulted and fully supports the proposal.

5.0 Recommendations and Reasons

5.1 It is recommended that Members endorse 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 by the Parish Council with a contribution from the Local Area Program.

Staffing

None

Equality and Diversity

None

Accommodation

None

Crime and Disorder

The measures will reduce the problem of inappropriate driving along The Avenue.

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 speeds.

Consultation

Consultation on the proposed measures was undertaken.

Health

None