

Highways Committee

23 April 2008



Consideration of Traffic Calming B6291 West Terrace and Coronation Terrace, Coxhoe

Report of Roger Elphick, Acting Corporate Director, Environment

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 West Terrace and Coronation Terrace, Coxhoe (see attached plan no. N3823/02).
- 1.2 This report requests that Members consider the representations received in relation to the proposals and endorse the recommendations.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Speed surveys were undertaken to determine the nature of the problem and these demonstrated that there is a significant number of vehicles (43%) exceeding the 30 mph speed limit and 10% exceeding 35 mph.
- 2.2 Residents from Coxhoe have previously approached both the Local Member, Councillor Morgan and the County Council with regard to the problem of speeding vehicles on the B6291 through Coxhoe. Members may recall a similar report for traffic calming measures in The Avenue, Coxhoe brought to the Highways Committee in October 2007.
- 2.3 The Parish Council, through the development of a Village Plan for Coxhoe, identified West Terrace and Coronation Terrace as a location that should be considered for traffic calming. The development of the Village Plan followed widespread public consultation.
- 2.4 The County Council worked with the Parish to progress the proposals and develop them into a scheme to introduce a chicane at Commercial Road West where a proposed cycle route will cross. This scheme was trialled, however, it did not produce favourable results.
- 2.5 Following the trial, a second scheme was prepared where it was proposed to construct 7 sets of speed cushions with additional signing and specific road markings. This scheme was then presented to the public during a consultation process.

- 2.6 The consultation included all residences situated on West Terrace and Coronation Terrace in addition to the statutory consultees. Each of the 60 properties received a letter, a plan of the scheme and a pre-paid reply card inviting them to inform us of their comments. The letter also stated that if the pre-paid reply card was not returned then the resident would deem to be in favour of the scheme.
- 2.7 A total of 24 (40%) cards were returned. Of these, 7 (12%) indicated support for the scheme and 17 (28%) raised at least one point of issue and the remainder who did not respond (60%) were deemed to also be in support of the scheme.
- 2.8 The formal advertisement of the proposal, in the press and on-site, started on 29 November 2007 and ended on 24 December 2007. Following this formal consultation, seven emails of support were received and one email opposed to the scheme was also received. An additional 2 letters opposing the scheme were received from residents who had previously returned cards, one letter was accompanied by a petition signed by 27 signatories, mainly from Coronation Terrace. The majority of the responses are shown on the plan, however 8 supporters and one petition signatory are from surrounding parts of the village and therefore not shown on the plan.
- 2.9 The Police have indicated their support for the proposals and the Fire Service and the Ambulance Service provided their general support for the road safety improvements but raising awareness of response times.
- 2.10 Analysis of the responses indicates that most residents of Coronation Terrace opposed the scheme by either responding directly and/or signing the petition. An amendment to the scheme was produced installing a pinch point and road markings in place of the two sets of cushions in front of Coronation Terrace (see attached plan N3823/03). This amendment was presented to the Local Member and the Parish Council who indicated that their preferred option is the initial scheme. However, they considered that this represented a fair compromise to allow the scheme to progress.
- 2.11 It is not proposed to alter the current no waiting at any time restriction that runs along the main road to the frontage of Coronation Terrace. Currently parking is available for these properties either in the layby opposite or there is limited availability in the rear street.
- 2.12 Following a Member Consultative Meeting, it was agreed to progress the revised scheme, issue a letter to residents of Coronation Terrace and consult with the residents of four properties affected by the proposed build-outs. A letter was sent to residents of Coronation Terrace on 29 February 2008 informing them of the revised scheme and asking if they would withdraw their objections. Officers visited the four properties next to the proposed build-outs. We received one letter supporting a previous objection and residents of three of the four properties remained unsupportive of the proposals.

3.0 Representations

Since the number of respondents is high and most raised several different issues with the scheme, each topic of representation will be reported together with the number of respondents who raised the particular issue and the County Council's response.

3.1 Representation 1

“Would cause congestion”

This point was raised by two respondents.

Response: Some delays may be expected which may encourage motorists to find an alternative route. Flows also tend to be tidal with lighter opposing flows, therefore it is not expected delays would be excessive.

3.2 Representation 2

“Wouldn't speed cameras be better?”

This point was raised by one respondent.

Response: It is not Durham Constabulary's policy to use fixed speed cameras – the mobile safety camera is used where there is a history of a large number of speed related accidents or where speed enforcement campaigns are carried out, subject to a safe location being available.

3.3 Representation 3

“Traffic calming measures will increase noise, emission and vibration from vehicles” and “Excessive noise from large wagons, particularly when empty”

This point was raised by eleven respondents and the latter point was raised in a letter with a petition attached.

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, however it is noted that there is a large flow of HGVs along the B6291. As a number of these HGVs are likely to be empty when passing over the cushions, it is possible that there may be some noise generated as a consequence. The County Council and the Parish Council have been working closely with some of the HGV operators and secured agreements to avoid this area. It is hoped that these proposals will assist in persuading other operators to also find alternative routes, especially once the new road is opened. Research has also shown that if motorists maintain a constant lower speed through a traffic calming scheme, then vehicle pollution will actually decrease.

3.4 Representation 4

“Speed cushions cause damage to vehicles”

This point was raised by two respondents.

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, 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.

3.5 Representation 5

“Traffic calming is a waste of money” or “money could be better spent”

This point was raised by five objectors.

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. The scheme is being funded by the Parish Council and Local Area Programme and is considered to be a cost effective means of responding to the issues raised by residents of the village. 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 be easily established that the scheme has been cost effective.

3.6 Representation 6

“The proposals are in the wrong place”

This point was raised by one respondent.

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.

3.7 Representation 7

“The proposals do not resolve the problem of HGVs travelling through Coxhoe”

This point was raised by four respondents.

Response: This proposal is part of a package of measures designed to make the alternative routes more attractive for HGVs to use in addition to reducing vehicle speeds. The traffic calming measures in Coxhoe and Quarrington Hill will supplement the construction of the new Wheatley Hill to Bowburn Link in providing attractive alternative routes. We have also been in discussions with hauliers to gain their agreement to use the alternative routes and it is pleasing that we have had some success in this direction. It is also probable that the current weight restriction will be included with the Civil Enforcement scheme due to start in October 2008 which may increase the level of enforcement of the restriction.

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 Members are recommended to endorse the proposal to set aside the objections and proceed with the revised scheme as proposed.

Background Papers

Correspondence on Office File
Report to Highways Committee on 10 October 2007 Item No A3
Highway Code Rule 153
Copies of correspondence have been placed in the Members' Resource Centre.

Contact: Dave Battensby Tel: 0191 332 4404

Appendix 1: Implications

Local Government Reorganisation

(Does the decision impact upon a future Unitary Council?)

No

Finance

Funding will be provided by the LTP Local Area Programme contributing £8,750, with the balance being provided by the Parish Council.

Staffing

None

Equality and diversity

None

Accommodation

None

Crime and disorder

Reduction in excessive speed.

Sustainability

Improved pedestrian environment due to reduced vehicle speeds.

Human rights

None

Localities and Rurality

As detailed in the report.

Young people

None

Consultation

Usual consultation with affected residents in addition to statutory bodies.

Health

None