

Highways Committee

23 April 2008



A688/C30A/Unclassified Roads Evenwood Gate

Proposed amendment of a Speed Limit Traffic Regulation Order

Report of Roger Elphick, Acting Corporate Director, Environment

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To advise Members of the objection to the proposed amendment to the speed limit through Evenwood Gate (see attached plan).
- 1.2 This report requests that Members endorse the proposal for the setting aside of the objection and allow the scheme to be introduced.

2.0 Proposal

- 2.1 To make a Traffic Regulation Order to reduce the existing speed limit through Evenwood Gate on the A688 from derestricted (60mph) to 40mph.
- 2.2 The Order will also formalise a derestricted limit for an illuminated length of road between Evenwood and Evenwood Gate (C30A Evenwood Lane) and the short illuminated lengths of road either side of the proposed 40mph zone. An old, incorrectly described, Order for a short restricted length of the C30A Evenwood Lane will be revoked and a properly described Schedule to replace it will be introduced.
- 2.3 To support the major objective and to give added emphasis, it is intended to provide a highly visible gateway at each end of the proposed 40mph zone, improve the existing traffic islands and provide a new pedestrian refuge. These measures will be introduced with the intention of creating an element of traffic calming which should significantly reduce traffic speed.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The proposal follows representations from the Local Member for the area, the District and Parish Councils, local residents and Member of Parliament over a considerable period of time. The residents' concerns have been subject to press coverage following a traffic accident in June

2007. One resident has pointed out that their campaign has been on-going since 1989, (the same year that a nine year old child pedestrian was killed in a road traffic accident in the village). The A688 is a busy principal road linking the A1M Bowburn Interchange and Barnard Castle, skirting Spennymoor, Bishop Auckland and West Auckland.

- 3.2 Speed counts have been carried out and they confirm that the mean and 85 percentile traffic speeds are 45.6mph and 53.7mph respectively. It is considered that these are excessive and against the interests of road safety. It is proposed to reduce the speed limit with the aim of reducing average traffic speeds and to alleviate the residents' concerns. This reduction should also generally improve road safety and may reduce the possibility of a speed related traffic accident occurring.

4.0 Resident and Statutory Consultation

- 4.1 A consultation exercise has recently been completed and all of the residents of the village were given an opportunity to comment upon the proposals. I can confirm that no objections were received from them. The appropriate Statutory Authorities and other interested parties have been consulted and we have received one objection for strategic reasons.

5.0 Objection

- 5.1 Durham Constabulary have objected on the grounds that the proposal is not in keeping with current Department for Transport guidance and legislation and also our local Speed Management Strategy. They have suggested that the implementation of the proposals will 'open the floodgates' to the similar concerns of other named villages.

6.0 Response

- 6.1 *Officers have considered the strength of the residents' concerns and fears and the close proximity of their properties to the carriageway. The introduction of the gateways and other physical features will change the current 'feel' of the road which will result in a reduction in speeds.*
- 6.2 *In accordance with the Department for Transport Circular 01/2006 (Setting Local Speed Limits), it is not unreasonable to classify Evenwood Gate as a Village (i.e. having 20 or more houses within a minimum of 300m of frontage development). However, we recognise that a speed limit of 30mph through Evenwood Gate is inappropriate in respect of the nature of the road and the current average recorded traffic speed. It is, therefore, rational to propose a 40mph limit as a compromise.*
- 6.3 *Members may note that there are a further 13 properties planned for construction on the Brown Jug Public House site.*

7.0 Local Member Consultation

7.1 The Local Member, Councillor Priestley, has been consulted and has not objected to the proposal.

8.0 Recommendations and Reasons

8.1 It is **RECOMMENDED** that the Committee endorse the proposal to set aside the objection and proceed with the scheme to amend the speed limit(s).

8.2 Following implementation, it is intended to monitor the impact the proposals have made to the average traffic speeds in order that we can determine their effectiveness.

Background Papers

Correspondence, plans and Traffic Office file.

Extract from DfT Circular 1/2006 – Setting Local Speed Limits

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

Contact: Jackson Hackworth

Tel: 0191 383 4143

Appendix 1: Implications

Local Government Reorganisation

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

No

Finance

The Local Transport Plan Integrated Transport Block Speed Management budget will be used to fund the introduction of the speed limits and the implementation of the necessary physical works.

Staffing

None

Equality and Diversity

None

Accommodation

None

Crime and disorder

None

Sustainability

No noticeable effect.

Human rights

None

Localities and Rurality

As detailed in the report.

Young people

Vulnerable child pedestrians.

Consultation

As detailed within the report.

Health

None