

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Highways Committee** held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham on **Monday 15 April 2024 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor R Ormerod (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors G Hutchinson (Vice-Chair), C Kay, J Higgins, J Howey, R Manchester, E Mavin, G Smith, A Sterling, F Tinsley, M Wilson, D Wood, P Jopling (Substitute) (substitute for D Oliver) and B Coult (Substitute) (substitute for A Simpson)

Also Present:

Councillors K Earley and S Robinson

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Abley and I Cochrane, D Oliver and A Simpson.

2 Substitute Members

Councillor P Jopling substituted for Councillor D Oliver and Councillor B Coult substituted for Councillor A Simpson.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Bridgehill, Proposed Traffic Calming

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth that requested Members to consider the objections received in response to a consultation on a proposal to introduce traffic calming measures on Pemberton Road in Benfieldside (for copy see file of minutes).

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Members were asked to decide, in principle only, whether to proceed with the Traffic Calming scheme, which would then guide the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth in the exercise of delegated decision making to make the final decision under delegated powers.

The Traffic Management Section Manager gave a detailed presentation to the committee that included a location plan of the proposals and the associated buildings along Pemberton Road, Benfieldside. He explained that in January 2023, officers from Durham County Council had held a meeting with the local member to discuss new traffic calming on Pemberton Road, to address concerns raised by the public regarding pedestrian safety. In consultation with Durham Constabulary the proposals were put forward to reflect the best solutions to the issues raised that included 6 equidistant speed humps at locations adjacent to St Mary's RC VA Primary School, 45 Pemberton Road, 15 Melrose Court, 23 Pemberton Road, Bridgehill Playing Fields and 1 Pemberton Road.

The traffic calming scheme was advertised in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and Statutory Instrument 2489. During the consultation process there were no objections received from statutory consultees, eleven responses in favour of the proposals and two objections from local residents that related to the flow of traffic and how the installation of the proposals would create congestion and increase the risks for pedestrians when crossing the road. He asked that Members set aside the objections and endorse the proposal.

The Chair thanked the Traffic Management Section Manager for the presentation and asked the Local Members for Benfieldside, Councillor's S Robinson and K Earley to speak in relation to the proposals.

Councillor S Robinson, local member addressed the committee in support of the proposed traffic calming scheme. He explained that the scheme had been motivated by major concern with child safety as the speed of the country road leading on to Pemberton Road was 60mph that dropped to 30mph within 100 yards of the school gates and the football pitch. Officers had made several other efforts to reduce the speed on the road by adding 'slow' signs, flashing lights and bollards at the top of the road but these had failed. During the original consultation there had been no objections from anyone that lived or ran a business on Pemberton Road and that everyone was in support of the proposal. He stated that the two objections received were from residents who did not live on Pemberton Road. He raised awareness that there had been several accidents on the stretch of road that had included a van that had smashed into a mini bus, a motorbike that had hit a car, a car that had been going too fast and ended up on its roof, two Karbon Homes vehicles on two separate occasions ending up in someone's garden and a child had been hit by a 4x4 vehicle who fortunately did not suffer any injuries.

Councillor S Robinson reiterated that there had been no objections from the shops, parents, the school or the lollipop lady who took her life in her hands every time she helped children across the road. These reasons highlighted the need for the traffic calming scheme as there was a need to slow traffic down.

Councillor K Earley, local member addressed the committee in support of Councillor S Robinson who he thought had done a sterling job working with DCC Officers and the police to develop the scheme. He thought that lollipop ladies had to have nerves of steel whilst doing their jobs so no wonder these roles were difficult to recruit. He noted that when travelling this route motorists came off the country lane at speed and did not see the slow signs or realise they had to slow down due to a school being in the vicinity. He thought the quicker the scheme was put in motion the better. He congratulated Councillor S Robinson on a job well done.

The Chair thanked the local members for attending the meeting and giving the committee a local perspective on the proposal. He noted that there were no registered speakers from the public and therefore asked members of the Committee for their comments and questions.

Councillor C Kay had read the report prior to the meeting and noted that it was not dissimilar to the issues he had in his ward. It was clear from the report that different views had been given throughout the consultation process. He supported the local members as they had researched the proposal and he did not think it was appropriate to go against the officer's recommendation. He **moved** to set aside the objections and endorse the proposal.

Councillor D Wood **seconded** to set aside the objections and endorse the proposal.

Councillor E Mavin reiterated Councillor D Wood's affirmation to second the proposal.

The Chair agreed that local members should be supported as it would only be under exceptional circumstances to go against officer recommendation.

Upon a vote being taken it was **unanimously**:

Resolved:

That the Committee set aside the objections and endorsed the proposal in principle, to introduce the traffic calming on Pemberton Road with the final decision being made by the Corporate Director under delegated powers.

6 Definitive Map Modification Application to upgrade Footpath 21 West Rainton to Bridleway

The Legal Officer (Planning and Highways) drew members attention to the email that had been circulated prior to the meeting in relation to agenda item 6 that following a review of the report (Modification Order application for FP 21 West Rainton) the Legal Officer and the Public Rights of Way Team had come to the view that there was insufficient evidence at this time to justify making this Order. Accordingly, the item was withdrawn and either a report would be brought back to the Committee at a later stage or it would be dealt with under delegated powers.