

Highways Committee

7th April 2022

Newton Aycliffe

**A167 50mph Speed Limit - Traffic
Regulation Order 2022**

Ordinary Decision/Key Decision No.



Report of Corporate Management Team

Amy Harhoff Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy & Growth

**Councillor Elizabeth Scott, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for
Regeneration, Economy and Growth.**

Electoral division(s) affected:

Aycliffe North & Middridge, Aycliffe West and Aycliffe East

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To advise Members of objections received to the consultation concerning changes to the speed limit Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) on A167, Newton Aycliffe.
- 1.2 To request that members consider the objection made during the informal and formal consultation period.
- 1.3 In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Members are asked to decide, in principle only, whether to set aside or uphold objections received, which will then guide the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth in the exercise of delegated decision making. The final decision is therefore one for the Corporate Director, under delegated powers.

2 Executive Summary

- 2.1 As part of a wider ongoing project, this location was identified, following analysis of collision and speed survey data, where the speed limit should be reduced from the existing derestricted speed limit to 50mph.

- 2.2 Having considered these requests, Officers have determined that the changes requested would be of benefit in terms of road safety and reducing congestion. It is therefore proposed to amend the current derestricted speed limit to allow for changes to be implemented.
- 2.3 All Local Members and Durham Constabulary have been consulted and raised no objection to the proposal.
- 2.4 Consultation Period:

	From	To
Statutory Consultees	22-Jan-21	22-Mar-21
Informal Consultation	19-Oct-21	09-Nov-21
Formal Consultation	17-Dec-21	07-Jan-22

3 Recommendation(s)

- 3.1 Committee is recommended to:

Endorse the proposal, in principle, to proceed with the implementation of the 50mph TRO. With the final decision to be made by the Corporate Director under delegated powers.

4 Background

- 4.1 A167, Newton Aycliffe

The section of the A167, Newton Aycliffe is situated to the north of Aycliffe Village. The area also includes a large industrial estate which is on the western side of the A167.

The authority was recently successful in securing funding from the Department for Transport's Emergency Active Travel Fund, in response to the pandemic and the shift in travel modes. The funding will be used for improving walking and cycling links to Newton Aycliffe town centre, Aycliffe Business Park and reducing severance to Aycliffe Village.

The proposals are part of a wider scheme which seeks to improve walking and cycling infrastructure between Moore Lane, the Business Park and Aycliffe Village. This wider project involves the installation of Toucan Crossings across the A167 and St Cuthbert's Way.

The proposal received one objection during the informal consultation period which was resolved and then a further objection during the formal consultation period.

5 Objections

5.1 A167, Newton Aycliffe

5.1.1 *Objection 1*

Objector 1 is a local resident who objected on the basis that the proposed speed limit would increase journey times to and from the A1(M). The objector also made comments relating to the validity of the claims that the proposals would improve the amenities of the area.

5.1.2 *Response to Objection 1*

Along this stretch of the A167 there is an average daily traffic volume in excess of 14,000, and at A167/B6443 St Cuthbert's Way signalised junction there have been 7 road traffic accidents in the past 5 years. This suggests that there is a historic, but persistent issue at this junction, which indicate that speed reduction interventions may be beneficial in potentially reducing collision frequency. By introducing a toucan crossing it will effectively act as a desire line linking Aycliffe Village to Newton Aycliffe and Aycliffe Business Park resulting in an increase in the number of pedestrians and cyclists crossing at this point.

National guidance for setting local speed limits advises that mean speeds should be used as an indicator of appropriate speed limits. The current mean speeds are approx. 48mph, indicating that a large volume of vehicles already drive at 50mph or less. To that end, this length of A167 has been assessed on a standalone basis, in line with national guidance on setting local speed limits, and it is felt that the appropriate speed limit in this location is 50mph (attached plan shows the extent of the proposed 50mph limit). As part of the ongoing detailed design, speed limit signs and speed roundel road markings will be frequently repeated on both sides of the carriageway to reiterate the speed limit to encourage compliance.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 Having considered the existing traffic data, which was collected during November 2021, the collision history and the objection to the proposal, Officers remain of the view that it is necessary to introduce the proposals in order to further accommodate the introduction of a wider proposal including a Toucan Crossing and Pedestrian and Cycle Infrastructure (associated Traffic Regulations Order being progressed on an individual basis). Accordingly, it is recommended that Members agree in principle to endorse the proposal to proceed with the implementation of the Newton Aycliffe: A167 50mph Traffic Regulation Order 2022, with the final decision to be made by the Corporate Director under delegated powers.

7 Background papers

- 7.1 Correspondence and documentation in Traffic Office File:

T:\01 Schemes (Active)\TIP-031-A167 EATF2/TRO

Author(s)

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

All orders have been advertised by the County Council as highway authority and will be made in accordance with legislative requirements.

Finance

The consultation and advertising costs would be approx. £1000. The capital costs of road markings and road traffic signs would be met with the Department for Transport funding as part of the construction works.

Consultation

Informal consultation has been undertaken with Durham Constabulary who are in support of the 50mph speed limit but would welcome the opportunity to comment on the detailed design in advance of construction. Durham Constabulary would also insist on additional repeater signs and speed roundel, which will be accommodated as part of the detailed design and is above and beyond the legal requirement to make the speed limit enforceable.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

It is considered that there are no Equality and Diversity issues to be addressed. Formal signalised crossing will provide betterment to vulnerable road users.

Climate Change

The improvements should bring about lessened congestion and improved air quality, with new dedicated facilities for non-motorised users' improvement, encouraging mode shift away from the car.

Human Rights

Any interference with human rights is considered to be necessary in accordance with the law and proportionate in order to address highway safety issues.

Crime and Disorder

The existing TRO will be amended to introduce an enforceable speed limit TRO as well as associated signs and road markings.

Staffing

Strategic Traffic to undertake consultation. Highway Operations to install required road traffic signs and road markings.

Accommodation

Transport Infrastructure Projects to undertake consultation. Legal Services to advertise the TRO and Commercial Group to facilitate the procurement and installation of the required road markings and road traffic signs.

Risk

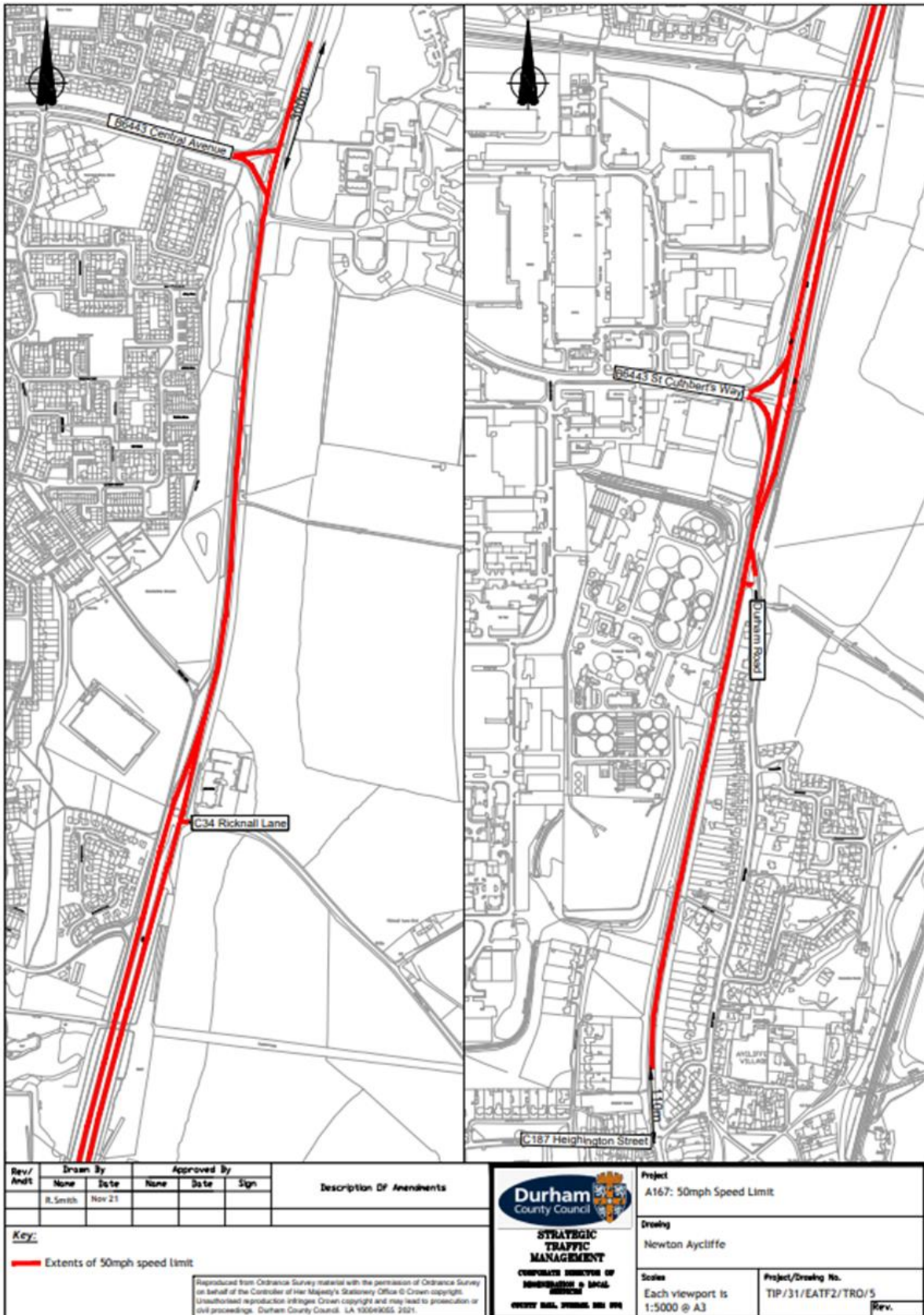
Low risk – the informal consultation undertaken in March 2021 and October 2021 was widely well received.

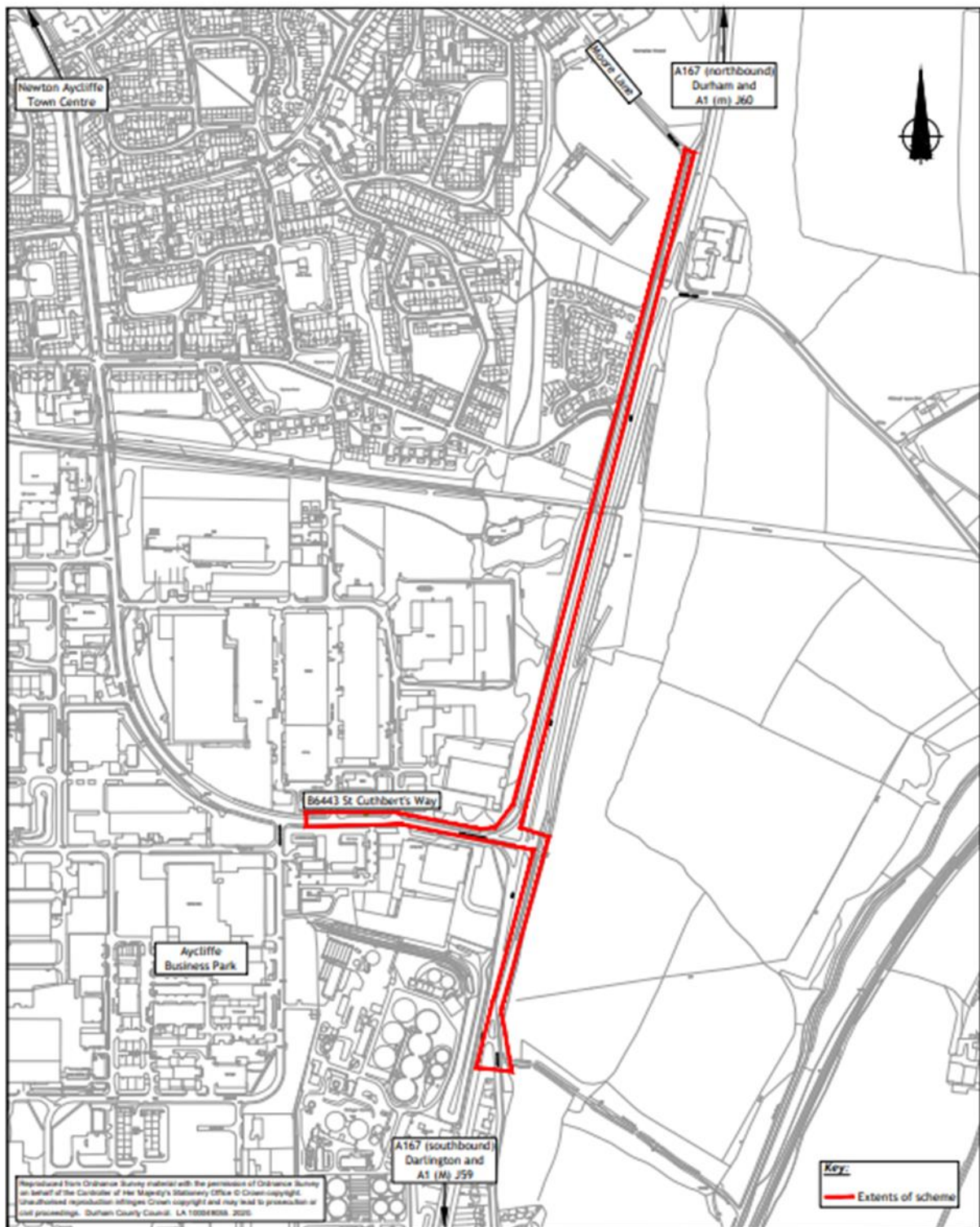
Low risk – non-compliance with TRO: Mean speeds indicate drivers are mainly travelling below 50mph already. Increased road signs and road traffic markings will look to reinforce the speed limit and encourage compliance. As part of the overarching project, a police bay will be introduced on the approach to Aycliffe Village crossroads at the request of Durham Constabulary to allow for effective speed monitoring.

Procurement

Durham County Council frameworks for road markings and road traffic signs.

Appendix 2: Location of Proposals






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Key:
 Extents of scheme

Rev/Amend	Drawn By		Approved By			Description of Amendments
	Name	Date	Name	Date	Sign	
	R. Smith	Dec 20				



STRATEGIC TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT
 CORPORATE DIVISION OF
 INFRASTRUCTURE & LOCAL SERVICES
 COUNTY HALL, NEWTON AYLCLIFFE, DURHAM

Project
 Newton Aycliffe:
 EATF2 - A167/St Cuthbert's Way/Aycliffe Village

Drawing
 Location Plan

Scale
 1:5000 @ A3

Project/Drawing No.
 TIP/018/DU01/FNA/1

Rev.

Appendix 3: Objection and Objection Response

Objection - [Mr S] (Received 28/12/2021)

I strongly object to the imposition of a 50mph speed limit on the proposed section of the A167. This is a section of road I use regularly and is my main route to the A1(M), Darlington and Teesside from my home in Newton Aycliffe. Indeed part of the reason I chose my home was because of its proximity to the A167 as a swift means of access to my place of work.

The single carriageway section is marked with white diagonal warning lines in the centre. These thwart overtaking. The only place to overtake is on the dual carriageway. Reduction of the speed limit on this section will prevent progress of faster moving traffic, frustrating drivers stuck behind slow moving vehicles.

During busy times it is impossible to attain speeds in excess of 50mph. In fact, large sections of the road are almost at a standstill, so a 50mph speed limit would be irrelevant.

When the road is quiet, it is perfectly safe to travel on the national speed limits for single and dual carriageways. A 50mph speed limit would unnecessarily hinder progress.

The reasons offered for the imposition of a 50mph limit are to avoid danger or prevent the likelihood of danger to persons or other traffic, to facilitate passage of any class of traffic (including pedestrians), and to preserve or improve the amenities of the area through which the road runs.

There is always potential danger when vehicles are involved, but there has to be some common sense judgement balancing the risk against the benefits. I am aware of no reason to think this section of road is disproportionately dangerous. No statistics are offered to substantiate the implied assertion that it is.

Inter city trains travel at much higher speeds than cars, and anyone who gets on the line and steps in front of one is highly likely to be killed (and quite a few people use them to commit suicide). This risk is mitigated by fencing off the tracks and making it illegal to trespass on the line, but some people still do it. As far as I know, nobody is arguing that train speeds should be reduced to 50mph to reduce this risk. A few less people might be killed, but hundreds of 3 thousands of train users would be wasting many more hours of their lives on trains. The same logic should be applied to the road in question.

I do not see how the proposal would 'facilitate passage' of any class of traffic, and strongly argue that it would do precisely the opposite for the vast majority of road users.

I do not see how the proposal would 'improve the amenities' of the area in any way.

Mr S

Officer Response - (Sent 12/01/2022)

Thank you for your response to the proposed 50mph speed limit on A167.

The proposed 50mph speed limit is part of a wider project which will see walking and cycling infrastructure being improved between Moore Lane, the Business Park and Aycliffe Village as well as introducing toucan crossings across A167, providing accessible links from Aycliffe Village to the town centre, business park, education and retail links. Along this stretch of the A167 there is an average daily traffic volume in excess of 14000 and, at A167/B6443 St Cuthbert's Way signalised junction, there have been 7 road traffic accidents in the past 5 years suggesting that there is a historic but persistent issue at the junction of A167 and B6443 St Cuthbert's Way, which could indicate that speed reduction interventions may be beneficial. Studies have found that there is a strong correlation between speed and likelihood of collision. The Department for Transport quantifies that for every 1 mph reduction in average speed, collision frequency may reduce by around 5%. Therefore, even a small reduction in speed has safety benefits in potentially reduced collision frequency. By introducing a toucan crossing with dedicated green time for NMU's (non-motorised users) it will effectively act as a desire line linking Aycliffe Village to Newton Aycliffe and Aycliffe Business Park and it can be confidently assumed that there will be an increase in vulnerable road users crossing at this point.

National guidance for setting local speed limits advises that mean speeds should be used as an indicator of appropriate speed limits. The current mean speeds are approx. 48mph indicating that a large volume of vehicles already drive at 50mph or less. To that end, this length of A167 has been assessed on a standalone basis, in line with national guidance on setting local speed limits and it is felt that the appropriate speed limit in this location is 50mph (attached plan shows the extent of the proposed 50mph limit). As part of the ongoing detailed design, speed limit traffic signs and speed roundel road markings will be frequently repeated on both sides of the carriageway to reiterate the speed limit and to encourage compliance.

I hope the above provides adequate explanation as to why the 50mph speed limit is being pursued. If you could confirm in writing by no later than 21 January 2022 if your objection is now satisfied, it would be gratefully received.

If you don't feel your objection can be removed, could you please confirm in a response to this email please? You will then be invited to attend Highways Committee. At that point a panel of Elected Members will be given a copy of the proposed speed limit, the background into the proposed speed limit and a copy of your objection. They will then decide on whether the speed limit

should be introduced or not. The Highways Committee date is to be confirmed. You will be invited to attend the committee but will not be required to speak. I will arrange for all future correspondence relating to the Committee