

Highways Committee

8 March 2012

A690 Kepier Crossing, Gilesgate



Report of Terry Collins, Corporate Director Neighbourhood Services

Councillor Bob Young, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Strategic Environment

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To advise Committee of the findings following consideration of the request to consider lowering the speed limit on the A690 and introduce street lights at the crossing point.
- 2 It is recommended that the Committee endorse the findings of the investigations.

Background

- 3 A report was presented to the Highways Committee in November 2011 outlining the recommendations following the public consultation process regarding the crossing point on the A690.
- 4 The recommendations agreed by the Committee have now been implemented on site and have significantly improved identification of the crossing point both in daylight and darkness.
- 5 Following the debate the Committee requested that consideration be given to the request to lower the speed limit on the A690 and also provide street lights at the crossing.

Considerations – Speed Limit

- 6 The road was assessed jointly with Durham Constabulary using the criteria issued by the Department for Transport and taking into account all the factors relating to this length of road.
- 7 The A690 is one of the major vehicular routes in and out of Durham City, leading to the A1(M) and to Sunderland in the east and linking to other major routes in the west. It is a high standard unlit rural dual-carriageway with a 70mph speed limit.
- 8 There are no at grade junctions between Gilesgate roundabout and the junction of the very minor road leading to Maureen Terrace and the motorway compound, immediately west of the A1(M) interchange at Carrville.

- 9 There have been comparisons made with the section of the A690 between Carrville and East Rainton which is subject to a 50mph speed limit. This speed limit was introduced due to the regular occurrence of serious and fatal accidents at the at-grade junctions at the Raintons. These were mainly due to large numbers of right turning traffic crossing the carriageways from the side roads but particularly the numbers of large HGVs and buses, which often had to stop in the central reserve partly projecting into the offside lanes. Therefore this situation is not comparable to the location at Kepier.
- 10 The investigation found that since 1997 there had only been one other accident involving a pedestrian at the location of the recent fatal accident. The County Council had not received any complaints or notifications of concern regarding this crossing point over the last three and a half years until the recent tragic accident.
- 11 The consequences of any accident at 50mph involving a pedestrian are likely to be very severe.
- 12 The rural nature and high standard of the road create a driving environment which is expected to have a 70mph speed limit. Experience has shown that where a non-credible speed limit is imposed by signs alone compliance with the speed limit is poor even with Police enforcement action.
- 13 Vehicle speeds were found to be generally at or below the posted 70mph speed limit. Visibility for motorists is above the minimum requirements.
- 14 There is a likelihood that a reduced speed limit would affect traffic flow and also reduce the gaps for pedestrians to cross safely. This could lead to greater risks being taken by pedestrians to cross the road leading to an increased probability of an accident occurring.
- 15 A reduction to 50mph would require significant enforcement by the Police to ensure compliance with the speed limit as it is highly likely to be ignored by motorists.

Considerations – Street Lighting

- 16 Consideration has been given to the provision of street lighting at the crossing point. If introduced it would be necessary to install 4 Street Lighting Columns of 10 metre mounting height on the approaches either side of the dual carriageway to light the general area. The crossing point itself would be further illuminated by specific high intensity lighting. All road lighting columns and poles would be passively safe and fitted with the CMS control system.
- 17 The cost of such a scheme has been estimated, including an electrical power supply, to be between £25 and £30k

Conclusions

- 18 Following consideration of all the relevant factors and environment it is felt that the current speed limit is appropriate to the road and that a reduction would be unworkable in this location due to the resources needed for enforcement and would be subject to significant abuse by motorists.

- 19 The benefits of introducing a system of lighting would usually be to improve pedestrian visibility and reduce night time accidents with no glare to drivers. However, in this case the lack of lighting actively discourages pedestrians to use the crossing point and the provision of lighting may encourage pedestrians to use the crossing point when in fact it does not lead to a lit path.

Recommendations and reasons

- 20 It is **RECOMMENDED** that the Committee note the findings of the assessment and endorse the decision to retain the existing speed limit and that street lighting is not introduced at the location of the crossing point.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – None

Staffing – None

Risk – None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty – None

Accommodation – None

Crime and Disorder – None

Human Rights – None

Consultation – None

Procurement – None

Disability Issues – None

Legal Implications - None