**Highways Committee**

**18th October 2024**

**C16A Delves Lane and C58A Stockerley Lane**

**Proposed Speed Limit Change**

**Ordinary Decision/Key Decision No.**

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**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:**

Delves Lane

## 1 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To request approval to progress the introduction of a 40mph buffer zone speed limit scheme on C16A Delves Lane and C58A Stockerley Lane.

1.2 To request that members consider the objections made during the formal consultation period.

1.3 In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Members are asked to decide, in principle only whether to proceed with the Speed Limit Change TRO, 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 Concerns have been raised regarding the speed of vehicles travelling through the 30mph limit of Delves Lane, Consett. The proposals are to introduce a 40mph buffer zone on the approach to the built-up area of Delves Lane, Consett, to allow the 30mph limit to commence at a more credible location.

The response from Statutory Consultees was fully in support of the proposals.

2.2 Having considered the points raised in the objections, Officers have responded to one objector but failed to contact the second objector. The objector that has been contacted has requested that their objection is formally recognised. Amendments have since been made due to incorrect distances being presented on notices. Objectors have not been contacted since amendments were made as the location plan provided showed the correct extent of the Buffer Zone and did not need amending.

2.3 All Local Members and Durham Constabulary have been consulted and there are no outstanding objections to the proposals.

2.4 Consultation Period:

| | From | To |
|---|---|---|
| Statutory Consultees/Informal Consultation | 23/06/2021 | 14.07.2021 |
| Formal Consultation | 08/06/2023 | 29/06/2023 |

## 3 Recommendation(s)

3.1 Committee is recommended to:

Endorse the proposal, in principle, to introduce the 40mph buffer zone speed limit scheme on C16A Delves Lane and C58A Stockerley Lane with the final decision to be made by the Corporate Director under delegated powers.

## 4 Proposal, Objections & Responses

4.1 The proposed location for the buffer zone that received objections during the consultation stages are detailed below.

Location – C16A Delves Lane and C58A Stockerley Lane (to introduce a speed limit change from 30mph to 40mph to act as a buffer zone at the South East of Delves Lane).

4.2 Proposal Background

It is therefore proposed to introduce:

- A 40mph speed limit on C16A Delves Lane from a point 15m southeast of Junction with Greenways for a distance of 300m southeast.

- A 40mph speed limit on C16A Butsfield Lane, 28m southwest from the junction with C16A Delves Lane.
- A 40mph speed limit on Unc 11.3 Iveston Lane, 6m from junction with C16A Delves Lane.

Items Number 1 and 4 on the consultation notice presented incorrect distances regarding the extent of the new speed limit so amendments have been made showing a reduction of the distances previously stated. Amendments were made after advertising and objections were raised.

**Item Number 1 Amendment**

Location: C16A Delves Lane

Description: From a point 15 metres south east of the junction with Greenways for ~~295~~ 240 metres in a generally easterly direction to the junctions with C16A Butsfield Lane and the Unc 11.3, Delves Lane.

**Item Number 2 Amendment**

Location: C58A Stockerley Lane

Description: From the junctions with the C16A Delves Lane and the C16A Butsfield Lane in a generally easterly direction for ~~160~~ 60 metres.

The increase in speed limit from 30mph to 40mph on the approaches to Delves Lane identified above is being proposed so that the 30mph speed limit can commence at a more credible location on both the C16A Delves Lane and for the residential. The introduction of this 40mph buffer zone should emphasise the reduction to 30mph further down Delves Lane.

It is anticipated that by introducing the buffer zone that vehicle speeds will reduce on the approach to the revised 30mph start point and therefore increase safety. This zone will help to increase the impact of the change down in speed to 30mph before the residential area.

The proposals were sent to Statutory Consultees (23/06/21) with Durham Constabulary and North East Ambulance Service fully supporting the scheme.

Delves Lane is located Southeast of Consett. The area for which the 40mph buffer is being considered consists of an industrial estate as well

a new housing project that is currently under construction. A crossroad is located on the southern section of road in which the buffer zone is being proposed. The northern extent of the proposed buffer zone becomes more residential in which the 30mph limit will commence to reflect this.

4.4 Informal Consultation:

As the traffic works were part of a wider regeneration, there had been public engagement with residents, stakeholders, and businesses. We directly consulted with our list of statutory consultees and residents. The proposals were met with support from Durham Constabulary.

4.5 Formal Consultation:

| Consultation dates | Expressions in favour | Expressions against |
|---|---|---|
| 08/06/2023 – 29/06/2023 | 0 | 2 |

4.6 <u>Summarised objections & responses:</u>

4.7 Objections:

2 residents have objected to this proposal at the formal consultation stage and the reasons for their objection have been summarised below:

- “The local authority has approved a housing development project that is due to commence next to the area where the increased speed limit is proposed. This will endanger lives of the construction staff, goods vehicle drivers and members of the public.”

- “Increasing the speeds as per the proposal would make roads more dangerous and increase vehicle emissions.”

- “I believe this order is ill judged, misguided, ill-conceived and dangerous. I believe it will increase the risk to careful drivers, pedestrians, agricultural and equine activities that frequent these roads and so the potential for more frequent and possible more serious, even fatal, accidents to occur.”

- "At the precise location of the proposed speed limit increase there was a serious RTC yesterday, 28th June 2023. Had higher speed limits been in place then this could have been even worse."

4.8 DCC Response:

**Summary of responses sent to residents**:

Speed Limit changes are undertaken using guidance issued by the Department for Transport and our own considerable local experience of implementing speed limits within the County. We also work closely with Durham Constabulary when considering changes to speed limits.

A speed limit which lacks credibility results in a significant proportion of motorists ignoring the limit and potentially driving at even higher.

Department for Transport guidance is to ensure that speed limits are credible with the aim that they become self-evident and self-enforcing, by virtue of their surroundings.

I can confirm there has been 2 reported 'personal injury' accidents on the proposed section in the past 5 years. I can confirm that these accidents were not attributed to speed.

Speed Data collected in 2018 at this location found that the 85% Percentile Speed of traffic at this location was 40.9mph.

4.9 See appendix 3 for full details of the objection(s).

## 5 Conclusion

5.1 Having considered the points raised within the objection, it is not considered that the introduction of a 40mph buffer zone would be likely to result in more accidents and present more risk to residents. A 40mph limit at this location is more credible to the driver as reflected in the 2018 speed survey which showed an 85$^{th}$ percentile of 40.9mph. Officers have offered a substantive response to all the points. Accordingly, Officers remain of the view that it is necessary to introduce the proposals to enhance credibility of the road speed to drivers. It is therefore recommended that Members agree in principle to endorse the proposal to proceed with the implementation of the Traffic Calming TRO with the final decision to be made by the Corporate Director under delegated powers.

## 6 Background papers

6.1 Correspondence and documentation in Traffic Office File

**Author(s)-**


| | |
|---|---|
| [Regan Parker-Platt] | Tel: 03000 266236 |
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| [Dave Lewin] | Tel: 03000 263582 |

## 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

Regeneration

### Consultation

Is in accordance with SI:2489.

### Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

It is considered that there are no Equality and Diversity issues to be addressed.

### Climate Change

It is considered that there are no Climate Change issues to be addressed.

### 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

No impact on Crime and Disorder.

### Staffing

No impact on staffing.

### Accommodation

No impact.

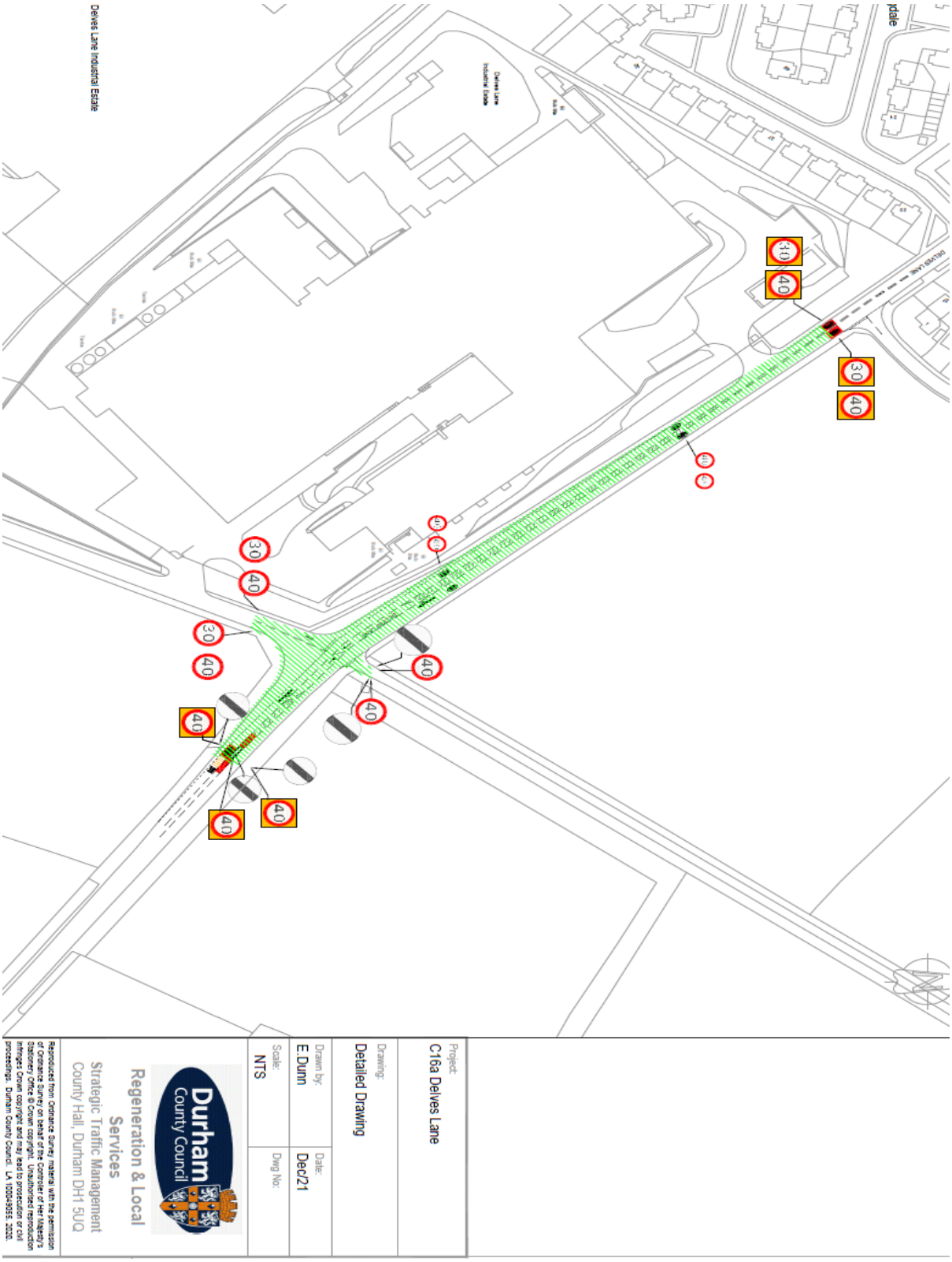
### Risk

Not Applicable.

### Procurement

Operations, DCC.

## Appendix 2: Location of Proposals



# Appendix 3: Objection Details

## Resident 1:

Sirs,

I wish to object to the above proposed order to increase the speed limit as indicated on the following grounds.

Background – I have been a resident of this village since 1998 and my wife's family have resided in the village since the village was created in the late 1890's The village now has to contend on a round-the-clock 24 hour basis of industrial and retail traffic (cars, buses, LGVs and HGVs) which, on many occasions, do not adhere to the current 30 mph limit in place. In addition in the last 10 years there have been at least 10 accidents involving speeding or out of control vehicles on Butsfield Lane alone, due to drivers exceeding the speed limit (excessively in some cases), dangerous road conditions such as snow, ice and/or heavy rain, aggressive driving such as tailgating or overtaking either up or down and failing to observe agricultural activities (believe it or not it is a rural road that acts as an access to 4 agricultural businesses/premises). There have been at least 3 accidents resulting in injuries to either drivers or pedestrians (one a child) as well as 5 accidents involving damage to resident's vehicles with at least 3 being written off (including my own).

I object to the specific points of the order as follows:

1. **C16a Delves Lane from a point 15 metres south east of the junction with Greenways for 295 metres in a generally easterly direction the junctions with C16A Butsfield Lane and the Unc 11.3, Delves Lane**

The proposal is for the 40mph limit to start almost immediately after the junction with Greenways and to run down towards Hurbuck past a well-used factory entrance, a busy crossroads at the lower end and exceptionally close to the entrances of 2 residential estate areas – Greenways and Sunningdale. This road currently has 4 bus stops which serve the residents of lower Delves Lane, Knitsley and Boggle Hole. Not only that but there also plans in place to soon start building more than 280 new houses on the 3 fields adjacent to this road with the only access/egress to that estate directly onto this road. This is tantamount to creating an accident potential of serious consequences - drivers will start to increase to the 40mph limit well before the signs (you are misguided if you think otherwise) with the high likelihood of some less sensible drivers overtaking slower vehicles before the crossroads and national speed limit signs. Residents coming out of the new estate will take risks to "beat the traffic" in order not to get stuck behind a bus or slower vehicle. I also fail to see how a 40mph to a 30mph at the Hurbuck end will reduce driver speeds as it doesn't happen now. A few extra signs and road marking will make no difference.

2. **C16a Butsfield Lane from the junction with C58a Stockerly Lane for 28 metres in a generally southerly direction**

This proposal is for a 28 metre section of Butsfield Lane to be at 40mph with the remainder from the end of that section to be 30mph. I fail to see how any driver will slow down to 30 once they've hit 40mph for 28 metres. I must remind you that this section is directly prior to an exceptionally busy delivery entrance to a factory with HGVs frequently extending partway onto the lane whilst waiting for security clearance. Cars belonging to the factory workers consistently park on one side

of the road narrowing the top section of Butsfield Lane until the entrance to the official factory car park. This causes blockages at the top end of the lane nearest the crossroads which HGVs coming and going and school buses twice a day filled with school children coming into the village must negotiate. Again this is tantamount to putting in place an accident potential of serious consequences, possibly involving children, and is not necessary.

**3. Unc 11.3 Delves Lane from the junction with the C58a Stockerly Lane in a generally northerly direction for 6 metres**

The proposal is for a 6m(?) section of this road to be 40mph. Is this an error in the proposal? Who in their right mind sees this as a serious attempt to slow down vehicles along the start of that road? This road is frequently used as a “rat run” for factory workers who have no intention of sticking to any speed limit. On numerous occasions I’ve witnessed vehicles speeding up Butsfield Lane, not stopping at the crossroads and continuing across the main road and along this lane without considering any other traffic or slowing down to any degree. Yet again this is a rural road with access to a number of agricultural enterprises and is in much of its length barely safe for 2 vehicles to pass safely side by side – one normally has to stop and pull over. Another accident potential.

**4.C58a Stockerly Lane from the junctions with the C16A Delves Lane and the C16A Butsfield Lane in a generally easterly direction for 160 metres**

Again the proposal is to extend the limit past its current end point just beyond the crossroads. Although it moves the national speed limit away a little from the crossroads it will not prevent speeding up taking place and drivers will increase speed as soon as the crossroads is cleared. To think otherwise is misguided. Not only that but this part of the road is at a slight angle to the rest and drivers cannot see around the angle as to whether there are any obstructions or works on this road. Also when coming out of the unc 11.3 onto this road, failure by the council to cut the grass at each side of the junction for a reasonable distance impairs the view of those trying to exit onto the main road forcing them to pull out past the junction end to see whether the road is clear. Increasing the speed limit to 40mph will make this a more dangerous manoeuvre and again raise the accident potential.

I cannot believe that this order is being proposed when other councils such as Borders and East Lothian have successfully implemented 20mph urban speed restrictions in the last 18 months within most of their major towns and villages which have reduced the potential for and actualities of accidents involving vehicles and pedestrians.

National research also shows that:

- Accidents in 2021 reported involving vehicles increased above those reported in 2020
- Fatalities as a result of vehicle accidents in 2021 increased above those reported in 2020
- More deaths occur on rural roads than on urban ones. In 2019, there were 931 fatal accidents on rural roads compared to 627 on urban roads. Two of the roads for which a 40mph speed limit is proposed are rural (RoSPA March 2021)
- Per mile travelled, rural roads are the most dangerous roads for all kinds of road user, with more than half of fatal crashes in Britain occurring on rural roads (Brake)
- Speed is a major contributing factor to a large number of deaths and serious injuries on our roads (Direct Line/Brake 2018)
- The majority of residents and drivers support 20 mph limits (OECD Road Safety Report UK 2021)
- The #1 most common cause of car accidents in Great Britain is the driver (or motorcycle rider) failing to look properly—this factor contributes to 37.8% of car accidents. The next most common causes of car accidents is the diver or rider failing to judge another person's path or speed (a factor in 19.7% of accidents) and the driver or rider being careless, reckless or in a hurry (18% of accidents) (NimbleFins 2022)

- Current police reports suggest the biggest cause of road deaths is poor observation, with the second biggest cause being 'loss of control'. Excess speed and driver carelessness come equal third (Auto Express 2022)

In addition here are some of my personal observations and experiences of using the roads indicated since the notice went up at the current, adequate speed limit.

- 12.48 12/06/23 – LGV overshot junction to DL industrial estate due to speeding and had to reverse 25m back up Butsfield Lane against oncoming traffic to make the turn
- 09.26 14/06/23 - DCC van speeding down Butsfield Lane (over 30mph) had to brake quickly and sharply to allow 2 horses and riders coming up the hill to continue without incident or scares.
- 18.30 24/06/23 – overtaken by grey Audi just after Erwin Hymer entrance on Delves Road travelling towards Lanchester who then had to swerve back in and brake sharply due to roadworks at crossroads
- 19.15 25/06/23 – black Vauxhall (old style, modified) exceeding speed limit down Butsfield Lane. Counted seconds until it cleared the bottom speed limit signs and approximated that it was travelling at almost 50mph.
- 08.40 27/06/23 – HGV overshot junction to Delves Lane Ind estate causing rear trailer wheels to lock and skid on wet road caused by driver either not paying attention or exceeding speed limit down Butsfield lane. One car travelling up Butsfield Lane had to stop to allow HGV to reverse and turn into junction.
- 17.55 27/06/23 – Elddis transport HGV travelling towards Lanchester exceeding 30mph and had to brake sharply to meet red light at roadworks at crossroads
- All day 27/06/23 – red supermini type car parked partly on grass verge directly opposite Erwin Hymer entrance on Butsfield Lane causing vehicles travelling in both directions to veer into middle of road.
- Time of accident unknown but noticed at 11.15am 28/06/23 – Blue SUV type (Police aware sticker on driver side window) and white supermini type car (Police aware sticker on rear window) in head to head collision at crossroads causing severe damage to both cars, likely caused by excessive speed and impatience due to roadworks and traffic lights just after the traffic island
- 11.45 29/06/23 – white Vauxhall SUV type parked part on road, part on pavement just above entrance to Erwin Hymer offices and just below Greenways junction (this is a twice daily occurrence with up to 5 vehicles at a time parking like this to drop off/pick up workers)
- 16.20 29/06/23 – dark coloured SUV exceeding speed limit up Butsfield Lane
- 17.39 29/06/23 – white Audi exceeding speed limit down Butsfield Lane
- 17.47 29/06/23 – black Ford Fiesta (old style model) exceeding speed limit up Butsfield Lane

I have no doubt that this objection will fall on deaf ears, that the council thinks it knows best when it comes to speed limits in semi rural areas, that the "advice" the council is weak and that none of the officials or local councillors have to deal with the traffic in this area on a daily basis so have no idea of exactly what happens.

If this does go ahead then I recommend that:

- Double yellow lines run from the works entrance on Butsfield Lane up to the crossroads and up the factory side of the road to the Sunningdale estate junction to prevent vehicles parking and obstructing views/causing nuisance
- Double yellow line to run down from Greenways junction on field side to the crossroads to prevent parking up

- Additional signs and road markings for the top of Butsfield Lane where the 40mph limit ends and the 30mph limit starts clearly identifying the reduction in speed is required. Also yellow rumble strips to painted on the same road between the 30mph signs and the factory car park as added protection

I believe this order is ill judged, misguided, ill conceived and dangerous. I believe it will increase the risk to careful drivers, pedestrians, agricultural and equine activities that frequent these roads and so the potential for more frequent and possible more serious, even fatal, accidents to occur. Also I find it ignorant and typical of this council not to initially consult with the residents of Knitsley prior to the notice going up – yet another example of how this council fails to uphold its own plan for the county and include residents in decision making.

I ask the council not to approve this order and maintain the speed limits as they currently are.

Yours faithfully

## Resident 2:

27th June 2023

Dear

Please accept this letter as an objection to the proposed speed limit changes in the Delves Lane area reference 35139.

The Delves Lane area of Consett has been suffering more dangerous roads in recent years which has resulted at least one high profile death. The MP and local counsellors held a meeting on 7th July 2021 with an action plan to request lower speeds and other safety measures.

I have begun to be involved in local PACT meetings to try and improve the local area. The second meeting for the area is planned for 13th July 2023 and I will raise this for discussion, however, it is my plan to apply for a reduction in speed limits for the area. An increase would be a financial investment in making roads more dangerous. Improving road safety is one of the three PACT priorities that have just been set and the proposal conflicts with our plans.

Professionally I work as a Road Transport Consultant and part of the work I do is for This is because I believe in changing driver behaviour for safer roads and a better environment. Increasing the speeds as per the proposal would make roads more dangerous and increase vehicle emissions.

The local authority has approved a housing development project that is due to commence next to the area where the increased speed limit is proposed. This will endanger lives of the construction staff, goods vehicle drivers and members of the public. Goods vehicle drivers working in the construction sector currently have the most dangerous job in the UK and we do not need to add to that risk.

Upon completion of the housing project there will be more family homes with more children in the area. The proposal would increase the risk to children in the area. Children below twelve years old are very poor at judging speed and distance, however, the risk of fatally injuring a child of the same age is very high.

Please do not waste public finances on making roads more dangerous.

Yours faithfully,

Good day,

Further to my correspondence on the 27th June 2023 there has been further development with reference to the planned speed limit change reference 35139.

At the precise location of the proposed speed limit increase there was a serious RTC yesterday, 28th June 2023. Had higher speed limits been in place then this could have been even worse. I am unaware of the severity of injuries or if there have been fatalities at this time, however, I can confirm that I was at the scene shortly after the incident and the vehicles were very severely damaged.

The proposal will require a minimum of 20 new road signs and the installation of 4 posts to accommodate new signs. This is a costly plan to increase the risk of people dying unnecessarily.

I have an alternative proposal to decrease speed limits across a larger area that incorporates the whole of the area in the plans reference 35139. The implementation of my proposal would only

require 16 signs and no posts. This would therefore require a smaller capital investment and would also have a full return on investment and net saving within 36 months inline with the 20splenty investment and cost saving algorithm. The plan will be discussed with the local councillors on 13th July 2023.

I strongly object to the planned changes and ask that they are rejected or delayed until an alternative proposal can be considered.

Kind regards,