

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Highways Committee** held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham on **Friday 9 November 2012 at 10.00 am**

Present:

Councillor G Bleasdale in the Chair

Members of the Committee:

Councillors J Robinson (Vice-Chair), B Arthur, A Bainbridge, D Marshall, A Naylor, J Shiell, P Stradling, L Thomson, R Todd, E Tomlinson, J Turnbull, C Woods and R Young

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Burn, D Hancock, S Hugill, J Maslin, T Taylor and A Wright

Also Present:

Councillors J Blakey and M Williams.

1 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 September were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest in relation to any items of business on the agenda.

3 Unc.27.1 Tail Upon End Lane (Henry Avenue), Bowburn - Proposed Traffic Calming Scheme

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services regarding a proposed traffic calming scheme for three sets of two speed cushions and a chicane on the unclassified 27.1 Tail Upon Lane, commonly known as Henry Avenue, Bowburn (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Committee were informed that the scheme was for three sets of two speed cushions and the installation of a chicane in the area between 32-34 Henry Avenue, Bowburn. Thirteen responses to the consultation were received, with 3 replies against the proposed restrictions which were summarised in the report. The Strategic Highways Manager informed the Committee that another objector had come forward since the publication of the report and was present at the meeting.

The spokesperson for those objectors in attendance at the meeting explained to the Committee that they were not opposed to traffic calming in the area, but felt that the scheme presented was expensive. There was a specific objection to the proposed

chicane which, if introduced, would create a hazard for emergency vehicles, buses and children who played in the area. It was also felt that a chicane would create congestion and encourage motorists to 'rat-run' through the immediate area. The objectors also expressed concern that work on the scheme had seemingly already commenced given that on two occasions over the past week residents had witnessed Durham County Council vehicles, sub-contractors and temporary traffic management facilities on site.

The Strategic Highways Manager informed the Committee that the sequence of events referred to by the objectors was purely coincidental and confirmed that the Council had no scheduled work in the area, however, British Gas had been carrying out temporary ongoing work in the since 3 November. Durham County Council vans had been present onsite in preparation for the scheme if it were to be agreed and was standard procedure for possible traffic calming schemes.

Councillors Blakey and Williams, local councillors for the area informed the Committee that they did wish to introduce traffic calming in the area given that a speed survey had indicated that 82% of traffic had travelled over the speed limit. The Parish Council had also raised the issue with the Councillors on numerous occasions. There had also been a number of unreported accidents that had taken place. There was a feeling that but felt that the installation of speed cushions would have been considered acceptable, however, the installation of a chicane was a 'step too far'.

Councillor Williams also added that the activity witnessed by local residents, coincidental or otherwise, that had taken place prior to the Committee meeting had not portrayed the Council in a particularly good light.

Councillor Stradling commented that it was clear from discussions that local residents and councillors were not opposed to the merits of the scheme and was minded to support the wishes of the local councillors and residents and suggested that the scheme could be implemented without the chicane and the scheme be monitored accordingly.

The Committee discussed the various other options at length, including the use of rumble strips, gateway features and speed visor signage. The Strategic Highways Manager informed the Committee that the original scheme was to introduce speed cushions over the entire stretch of road, however, the cost of scheme was very expensive.

Resolved

- (i) That the installation of speed cushions be progressed in accordance with the scheme detailed in the report;
- (ii) That the proposed chicane be omitted from the scheme at the present time, but that the situation be kept under review.

Prior to the consideration of the following item, the Committee took a break in proceedings for those who wished to attend the Remembrance Day service taking place in the Council Chamber foyer.

4 C5 / C94 Newfield - Proposed Traffic Calming & Speed Limit

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services regarding a proposed traffic calming scheme on the C5 and C94 in Newfield (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Strategic Highways Manager informed the Committee that the proposed scheme was a local road safety scheme devised following concerns by local residents and councillors about speeding traffic. Concerns had also been raised about extra traffic near the two village schools and a large housing development. Officers had worked closely with the local residents group which had seen the proposed scheme split into two phases. The first phase of the scheme comprised of footpath widening, pedestrian guardrail and build-out to assist the primary school and crossing patrol, had been completed. The second phase of the scheme comprised traffic calming and a reduction of the speed limit had met with objections, some of which had been resolved.

Mr and Mrs Buckham, local residents of Pelton Lane Ends made a number of representations to the Committee seeking the omission of the speed cushion outside their property highlighting that the road running from Edward Terrace and Newfield Terrace was busy during the day, with buses tending to use the route every 30 minutes. Emergency vehicles also used the road. The set of proposed speed cushions at Edward Terrace would be positioned outside their property and would abut a parking area which would make it extremely difficult for people to park their vehicles.

The Strategic Highways Manager informed the Committee that the cushion would not be placed in the parking area and would not prevent residents from parking at the location and confirmed that legally the cushion could be omitted from this particular location, however, there would be a danger that traffic would divert into a vacant parking lay-by in an attempt to avoid the next nearest speed cushion, which would have to be kept under review.

Councillor D Marshall sympathised with the residents and highlighted a number of areas across the County where similar problems have been encountered which has lead to the speed cushion being omitted from the scheme and proposed that this could be done at the location concerned.

Resolved

- (i) That the scheme be agreed as per the recommendation contained in the report, with the omission of one speed cushion located at Edward Terrace, Pelton Lane Ends.
- (ii) That the success of the scheme be monitored over 12 months and, if necessary, consider the installation of the omitted cushion should any problems be identified.

5 C135 Durham Road, Wingate - Traffic Calming

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services regarding the proposed implementation of traffic calming cushions along the C135 Durham Road, Wingate (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Strategic Highways Manager informed the Committee that the traffic calming scheme had been drawn up following numerous ongoing complaints from the local community, County Councillors and the Parish Council. Traffic investigations had shown that there was a degree of traffic travelling at excess speed at the location. A number of objections received from local residents were summarised.

In response to a question from Councillor Naylor regarding the siting of speed cushions immediately upon the speed limit sign, the Committee were informed that legislation determines that motorists must have an opportunity to slow their vehicle down before any vehicle hits a set of speed cushions. It was also explained that the proposed speed cushions at the western end do not require a speed reducing feature due to the presence of the 'no entry' at the A181 junction.

Resolved

That the recommendations contained in the report be agreed.