

Highways Committee

8 March 2013



Proposed Traffic Regulation Order.

**C17 Woodland Road, Auton Stile,
Toll House Road and
Aldin Grange Terrace, Bearpark; and**

C18 Whitehouse Lane, Ushaw Moor

Report of Terry Collins, Corporate Director of Neighbourhood Services

Councillor Bob Young, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Strategic Environment

Purpose of the Report

1. To advise committee of the representations and objection received in respect of the proposed changes to the speed limits in and around Bearpark.
2. It is recommended that the Committee endorse the proposals having considered the representations and objection; and proceed with the implementation of the advertised changes to the speed limits.

Background

3. Requests have been received from various sources to investigate the possibility of amending the speed limits on the C17 and C18 to accord with the character and environment of the road and also to enhance compliance and enforcement of the speed limits.
4. The Council, in conjunction with Durham Constabulary, reviewed the roads and agreed to seek consent to the implementation of 40mph buffer zones, combined with relocating to more appropriate sites the 30mph terminal traffic signs to assist in enhancing compliance with the speed limits.

Proposal

5. It is considered that the proposals will have a beneficial effect on road safety by better reflecting the character and environment of the road. Experience of where the speed limit reflects the type of road has revealed a reduction in the higher speeds and an overall reduction in the lower speeds.

C17 Woodland Road

6. It is proposed to amend the current speed limit of 30mph to 40mph on Woodland Road to the west of the C18 Whitehouse Road and to the east of the C18 up to the commencement of the western extents of the settlement of Bearpark. This will reinforce the transition, in the mind of the motorist, to the change in the road's environment from rural to semi-urban and will also allow the erection of 30mph signs at the start of the existing 30mph on Woodlands Lane which is being retained. This should lead to enhance compliance with the speed limit through the predominantly residential area. The average speed measured at this location is 44mph despite it being within the posted 30mph limit.

C18 Whitehouse Lane

7. The proposal is to amend the existing 30mph speed limit to 40mph from the junction of the C17 Woodland Road to the start of the settlement of Ushaw Moor at a point north of Whitehouse Court (southern access). This will allow the erection of 30mph speed limit signs to reinforce the 30mph speed limit when the road's environment changes from rural to semi-urban, and the motorist will have better recognition of the reason for the change in speed limit and consequently enhanced respect for it. The average speed measured at this location is 33mph.

C17 between Auton Stile and Toll House Road

8. The proposal is to reduce the speed limit from Unrestricted (60mph) to 40mph between the eastern extents of the Bearpark settlement and the west extents of Toll House Road. This will also include extending the 40mph to the eastern extents of the settlement to replace the existing 30mph as this will be the location where motorists will perceive a change in the road's environment from rural to semi-urban and therefore should lead to better compliance with the limit whilst retaining the 30mph through the built-up area. The average speed measured at this location is 37mph.

C17 Toll House Road

9. It is proposed to retain the exiting speed limit of 30mph on this road as it is considered to be appropriate for its character and environment.

Consultation

Representations

10. There were 19 number responses in favour of the proposal relating to the C17 between Auton Stile and Toll House Road.
11. There have been 7 responses to the consultation in respect of the proposal to amend the current speed limit on Woodlands Road C17 and Whitehouse Road C18 from 30mph to 40mph where the correspondents are against the proposal.

12. Representation 1

“A number of minor accidents”

Go North East Bus Company state that there are a “number of minor accidents” at the junction of the C17 / C18 and the increase in the speed limit will result in vehicles entering the Ushaw Moor and Bearpark residential areas at inappropriate speeds.

Response: It is not considered that the proposal will result in an increase in vehicle speeds; however, it does allow for the speed limit on the major road to be reduced in steps from Unrestricted (60mph) to 40mph then to 30mph as traffic enters the village where the speed limit signs will have maximum impact. It is proposed to relocate the terminal point of the 40mph limit west of the current 30mph limit terminal point providing the motorist greater opportunity to reduce speed before entering the built-up area.

13. Representation 2

“Durham University say there will be an increase in staff and student numbers”

“Both as pedestrians and cyclists, in this area when it uses the former Ushaw Moor College premises from September 2012.”

Response: It is expected that the proposal, if implemented, will result in vehicle speeds converging to an overall reduction which will benefit cyclists and pedestrians in the area. The extension of the lower limit, to the west, should also be beneficial.

14. Representation 3

“Five respondents (residents) support the proposal in principle”

However, their comments range from “it will suburbanise the road”; “junction accident blackspot”; “Station House houses three seriously autistic children” and “dangerous junction”.

Response: The above comments, except that relating to Station House, are subjective and are not supported by evidence which has been produced by this review.

Objection

15. Point 1

“That the speed limit will be increased to 40mph across the junction of two roads (Whitehouse Road / Whitehouse Lane) named above;

One objection was received to the increase in the speed limit from 30mph to 40mph on Whitehouse Road / Whitehouse Lane on the following grounds;

Response: It is agreed that part of this proposal is to increase the speed limit across the junction although it is not considered that this will result in an increase in vehicle speeds; however, it does allow for the speed limit on the major road to be reduced in steps from Unrestricted (60mph) to 40mph then to 30mph as traffic enters the village where the speed limit signs will have maximum impact.

16. Point 2

“Whitehouse Lane has a downward gradient into Ushaw Moor Village”

“Only a few metres beyond the end of the 40mph limit is a school crossing patrol;

Vehicles travelling south (downward) on Whitehouse Lane have just negotiated the “T” junction at Woodland Road Lane;

That the proposed raised limit will run down Whitehouse Lane, across the junction with Whitehouse Court / bracken Court which is the main exit road for Deerness Business School”.

Response: The erection of 30mph speed limit signs and enhanced road markings will reinforce this limit when the road’s environment changes and the motorist will have better recognition of the reason for the change in speed limit and consequently enhanced respect for it. There is a School Crossing Patrol which is approximately 50metres within the 30mph speed limit and will benefit from the speed limit signs erected on this road.

Statutory Representations

17. From the statutory consultees list, responses of support were received from the North East Ambulance Service and Durham Constabulary.

Local Member Consultation

18. Councillors Rev Crooks, Jean Chaplow, Grenville Holland, Nigel Martin, John Wilkinson and Mark Wilkes are minded to support the proposal.

Recommendations and reasons

19. It is recommended that the Committee endorse the proposal, having considered the representations and objection; and proceed with the implementation of the Traffic Regulation Order.
20. The proposed scheme is expected to have a positive impact on road safety on the C17 and C18 by introducing speed limits which are relevant to the roads and which will be enforceable by Durham Constabulary. The use of the 40mph buffer zones allow for a stepped reduction in speed and the provision of further enhanced signage at the 30mph speed limit terminal locations.
21. Experience in revising speed limits, on other similar roads in the County, has shown an appreciable improvement in compliance with the posted speed limit when the principles used in this assessment have been applied.

Background Papers

22. Correspondence on Office File
23. Copies of Correspondence have been placed in the Members’ Resource Centre.

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance - Funding for the scheme is from the Member's Neighbourhood Budget and that carried forward from the Local Area Programme

Staffing - None

Risk - None

Equality and Diversity - Improved road safety

Accommodation - None

Crime and Disorder - None

Human Rights - None

Consultation - As described in the report

Procurement - None

Disability Discrimination Act - None

Legal Implications - The proposals will allow Durham Constabulary to enforce the speed limits