

Highways Committee

8 March 2013

Unc Rotary Way, Pity Me, Durham



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 of further investigations of a petition request for a pedestrian refuge at the above location.
- 2 It is recommended that the Committee endorse the findings of the investigation.

Background

- 3 A petition was received requesting a pedestrian refuge be provided on the Unclassified road Rotary Way near the Arnison retail park serving residents of the Hag House Farm development. An appeal to the response to the petition was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board recommending that the results of further assessments be presented to the Highways Committee.
- 4 In around 1990 the road known as Rotary Way was constructed as part of the Arnison development. This road was built along the line of and to form part of a future Durham Northern bypass and as such is designed to the standards for a 100kph (60mph) road. No frontage development exists along this road with buildings set back behind planting areas and natural vegetation.
- 5 Around 2005, the farm buildings of Hag House Farm were converted to habitable dwellings and they were subsequently sold. There was no Planning requirement as part of this development to link it to the existing footway network.
- 6 The request outlined in the petition for a refuge was initially investigated and turned down due to the road not being suitable for a pedestrian refuge and that it would encourage the use of a trampled path through private land leading to a business loading area.
- 7 Following an appeal to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, further information was requested in the form of an Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Assessment with the conclusions being reported to the Highways Committee.
- 8 The Equality Impact Assessment is attached as Appendix 2.

- 9 The findings of the Assessments were reported to Highways Committee, however following debate and a subsequent site visit, the Committee requested that further investigation be undertaken.

Considerations

- 10 A further Risk Assessment was undertaken of the various options taking into account comments made by the Committee. Cost consideration for each option is also contained in the Assessment however there is no highways budget available to meet the costs of providing either islands or footway link.
- 11 It is noted that there have been a number of incidents recently which have involved traffic islands on the highway network. These incidents further support the practice of avoiding the provision of traffic islands on high speed roads where possible.
- 12 The traffic conditions associated with the Arnison Centre were observed during busy periods, particularly during the festive period. It was noted that on several occasions traffic backed up towards the A167 Pity Me roundabout and formed two lanes from before the Hag House Farm entrance. The provision of islands would restrict this practice resulting in greater congestion which is likely to back up to the A167 roundabout. It is also likely to divert more traffic onto Abbey Road as an alternative route to the Arnison Centre.
- 13 The vegetation to the rear of the footway from the Arnison roundabout to the Hag House roundabout has reached a level where it would require cutting back should the roundabout island be used as a crossing point. This work would improve visibility for pedestrians at this location.

Conclusions

- 14 The finding of the assessments is that islands should not be provided on Rotary Way at the Hag House Farm entrance. If provided they could create a hazard for motorists, increase congestion during busy periods and encourage use of an informal trampled path.
- 15 If a substantial improvement is to be made it should be in the form of a link footway on the north side of the road between the Hag House Farm entrance and the Hag House roundabout. Clearance of vegetation would be required adjacent to the roundabout to improve visibility of and for pedestrians. Such an improvement would have to be funded from a non-highways source.

Recommendations and Reasons

- 14 It is **RECOMMENDED** that the Committee note and endorse the findings of the assessments and the decision not to provide pedestrian refuge islands at this location.
- 15 The reasons are identified in the Risk Assessment contained in Appendix 3.

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – Funding for the scheme if provided would have to be found. Possible sources would be from the local Councillors budgets and/or residents

Staffing – None

Risk – None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty – As outlined in the Equality Impact Assessment

Accommodation – None

Crime and Disorder – None

Human Rights – None

Consultation – None

Procurement – None

Disability Issues – As outlined in the Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Assessment

Legal Implications – None

Equalities and Diversity Impact Assessment

Petition 110, Rotary Way, Pity Me, Durham



Durham County Council – Altogether Better equality impact assessment form

NB: Equality impact assessment is a legal requirement for all strategies plans, functions, policies, procedures and services. We are also legally required to publish our assessments.

You can find help and prompts on completing the assessment in the guidance from page 7 onwards.

Section one: Description and initial screening

Section overview: this section provides an audit trail.

Service/team or section: Strategic Highways, Technical Services, Neighbourhood Services

Tracey Gleason Planning and Policy Officer, Neighbourhood Services

Start date:
21.06.2011

Lead Officer: David Battensby Area One Traffic Manager, Strategic Highways, Technical Services, Neighbourhood Services	16.10.2011
Tracey Gleason Planning and Policy Officer, Neighbourhood Services	Reviewed 28/11/2011
<p>Subject of the Impact Assessment: (please also include a brief description of the aims, outcomes, operational issues as appropriate)</p> <p>Road safety issues - Petition 110, Rotary Way, Pity Me, Durham</p> <p>A petition with the title "Road Safety Issues: Rotary Way, Pity Me, Durham was received by Democratic Services on 3 March 2011 requesting a reduction in the speed limit to 40mph on Rotary Way, Pity Me and a re-design of the highway to include a pedestrian refuge. Neighbourhood Services Representative's response to the petition was sent to the petition organiser on 1 April 2011. Stating that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 60mph speed limit was appropriate for the location and in accordance with the Department for Transport Circular for setting of speed limits. • There were no frontage views, the site was rural in location, was a single carriageway and there was a segregated footpath on the southern side of the road. • There had been no Personal Injury Accidents recorded for the last three years and no increase in the volume of traffic in the last five years. • The mean speeds on the road were mid 40mph between the roundabouts at either end with a general spread of vehicle speeds. • There was an informal arrangement travelling east bound where cars pulled into the hatched areas to turn right at the entrance to the farm. • If a traffic island was installed, the adhoc trampled path through the vegetation to the Pets at Home car park could be seen as creating a formalised crossing into the Arnison Centre on land not owned by the County Council. • To provide a footpath and crossing at the roundabout was a similar cost to a pedestrian island. <p>Subsequently an e-mail request was received from the petition organiser requesting an appeal to Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and this petition was considered by the Board on 20 May 2011.</p>	
Who are the main stakeholders: General public / Employees / Elected Members / Partners/ Specific audiences/Other (please specify) – Residents, Highway Users	
Is a copy of the subject attached? Yes / No If not, where could it be viewed? Contact Strategic Highways, Technical Services, Neighbourhood Services	
<p>Initial screening</p> <p>Existing Environment and Features</p> <p>There is an existing footway which follows the road from Pity Me roundabout to the Hag House Farm roundabout on the opposite side to the development. This footway then follows the road from the Hag House Farm roundabout to the Arnison roundabout where it crosses the access road into the Arnison complex and continues along the road towards Newton Hall Estate. Dropped crossings are provided on all four legs of the Arnison roundabout utilising the splitter islands to break the crossing distance. A footway link suitable for wheelchairs, pushchairs and motorised buggies has been provided into the Sainsbury's car park from this footway. There is no footway link from the Arnison roundabout to the petrol filling station. The route pedestrians have made opposite the Hag House Farm development travels through the densely planted screening area for the Arnison complex. This route is not a formalised footway, running through private land and is in the form of an undulating trampled path weaving through and round the</p>	

vegetation. It is not accessible or wide enough for a wheelchair or motorised buggy. There is not a suitable dropped crossing on the Arnison side (within the 'Pets at Home' car park). On several inspections there was no evidence of usage by wheelchairs, pushchairs or motorised buggies. Where pedestrians are crossing from Hag House Farm development, the traffic on the main road is likely to be at its fastest giving the least amount of time for pedestrians to cross.

Considerations

The provision of an island at Hag House Farm would encourage pedestrians to cross at this location. Given that the traffic speeds are at their highest this will present the greatest difficulty for pedestrians to cross. There are drawbacks with crossing where speeds are greatest, the time between vehicles is less due to the speed, the perception of speed of the approaching traffic is sometimes difficult to assess and may put vulnerable people at risk and the consequence of an accident is likely to be severe. The visibility at this location is at the minimum required for the design speed. However an island would provide for splitting the crossing in two stages. Crossing through the vegetation could pose issues for personal security especially for vulnerable people. The vegetation is dense and shields the path from light spill from nearby street lights. The trampled path emerges into a service area for the 'Pets at Home' store which is not overlooked by shop/building frontage or windows. There are no footways connecting to the emerging trampled path and this service area is likely to experience HGVs moving including reversing. This route would not meet DDA standards and is within private ownership.

All equality characteristics

The suggested route could have a potential negative impact on all equality characteristics. Providing a crossing at this location would encourage people to cross at this point where the visibility through the densely planted screening area for the Arnison complex is poor. This could create a perceived feeling of lack of personal safety and security.

Age

The suggested route could have a potential negative impact on carers of young children with pushchairs and older people who are more vulnerable when crossing roads. Introducing a pedestrian crossing at the desired location will not alleviate any difficulty crossing the road. In fact it would encourage crossing at a location where vehicle speeds are at their highest and therefore the least safe for a person who is likely to be the least able to cross the road within a reasonable time.

Disability

The suggested route could have a potential negative impact on disabled persons including wheelchair users who are more vulnerable when crossing roads. Introducing a pedestrian crossing at the desired location will not alleviate any difficulty crossing the road. In fact it would encourage crossing at a location where vehicle speeds are at their highest and therefore the least safe for a person who is likely to be the least able to cross the road within a reasonable time. If pedestrian crossing was to be provided at the desired location dropped crossings would be used. However the unofficial route does not suit wheelchair users, pushchairs or persons with impaired mobility. The route crosses where vehicle speeds are at their highest and also crosses through a car park with no pedestrian provision.

Mitigation

An alternative consideration to the provision of an island would be to provide a footway alongside the carriageway from the Hag House Farm junction eastwardly to the Hag House roundabout. At this point the existing splitter island can be modified to provide for a footway crossing. This route would benefit from good lighting coverage and natural surveillance from passing traffic. The route would connect directly to the existing footway network at the roundabout. Visibility at the crossing

point is superior to the location at Hag House Farm and vehicle speeds will be at their lowest.

Prompts to help you:

Who is affected by it? Who is intended to benefit and how? Could there be a different impact or outcome for some groups? Is it likely to affect relations between different communities or groups, for example if it is thought to favour one particular group or deny opportunities for others? Is there any specific targeted action to promote equality?

Is there an ~~actual~~ potential negative or positive impact on specific groups within these headings?

Indicate :Y = Yes, N = No, ?=Unsure

Gender	Y	Disability	Y	Age	Y	Race/ethnicity	Y	Religion or belief	Y	Sexual orientation	Y
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How will this support our commitment to promote equality and meet our legal responsibilities?

Reminder of our legal duties:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination & harassment
- Promoting equality of opportunity
- Promoting good relations between people from different groups
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people and taking account of someone's disability, even where that involves treating them more favourably than other people
- Involving people, particularly disabled people, in public life and decision making

What evidence do you have to support your findings?

Highways Act 1980(as amended)

Road Traffic Regulations 1984(as amended)

Road Traffic Act 1988 (as amended)

Guidance Notes - Circulars (Department of Transport)

Data Acquisition and Analysis

In order to investigate this issue factual data has been obtained by utilising speed surveys at the location and a pedestrian crossing count over two days. Previous speed surveys have been used at the same location to provide comparisons over a number of years. Site inspections were also undertaken to consider the walking routes. The results of the speed survey showed a slight reduction in the mean speed of traffic but remaining reasonably consistent with previous surveys. The issue of traffic flows had been raised suggesting that traffic volumes have considerably increased. The speed surveys provide a snap shot of traffic flows and the results of previous surveys were compared with the recent survey. The results showed that there had been a slight decline in overall traffic volumes during week days, although the volume remained constant on Sundays. The figures revealed that there has been an increase in traffic on a Saturday. The pedestrian crossing survey returned results as follows:

- On the Friday of the survey seven pedestrians crossed the road at various times between 8:30am and 9:30pm these were all made by individual adults.
- The Saturday results indicated that three pedestrians crossed the road between the times of 0:40am and 8:45am again all were made by individual adults.
- The survey also included an assessment of time gaps between the five vehicles immediately before and after the pedestrian crossed the road. In many cases there was a gap of comparable time or greater than the shortest

one used by one of the pedestrians.

- None of the pedestrians involved used wheel chairs, motorised scooters or push chairs.

Speed Limit Assessment

The speed limit has been assessed in accordance with the Department for Transport Circular for setting of speed limits. The result of this assessment after taking all factors into account is to retain the 60mph speed limit. The design of the road is of a high standard and to the 60mph design speed. There are other locations where pedestrians cross roads (including public rights of way) where the posted speed limit is 60mph.

Pedestrian Crossing

It is not normal practice to introduce pedestrian refuges on roads with a derestricted speed limit due to the likelihood that they will be run into by vehicles. Such refuges are not normally expected or anticipated by motorists and past experience supports the view that on road safety grounds islands are not introduced. Splinter islands have been introduced on the A167 between Croxdale and Thinford however this was a safety issue as there was a history of vehicles overtaking those which were turning right resulting in collision or in the worst cases head on accidents. Splinter islands physically enforce areas where overtaking is not desirable and they are not pedestrian refuges. However these islands have been previously damaged by motorists not anticipating their presence and driving into them. The location of the requested island is on a bend in the road currently with hatching to advise against overtaking due to the tightness of the bend.

A risk assessment of the possible options has also been carried out and is available upon request.

Decision: Proceed to full assessment – No
21/06/2011, 16/10/2011, 28/11/2011

Date:

If you have answered 'No' you need to pass the completed form for approval & sign off.

Section two: Identifying impacts and evidence- Equality and Diversity

Section overview: this section identifies whether there are any impacts on equality/diversity/cohesion, what evidence is available to support the conclusion and what further action is needed.

	Identify the impact : does this increase differences or does it aim to reduce gaps for particular groups?	Explain your conclusion, including relevant evidence and consultation you have considered.	What further action is required? (Include in Sect. 3 action plan)
Gender			
Age			
Disability			
Race/Ethnicity			
Religion or belief			
Sexual Orientation			

How will this promote positive relationships between different communities?
N/A

Section three: Review and Conclusion

Summary: please provide a brief overview, including impact, changes, improvements and any gaps in evidence.

The nature of the issue is typical of residential development which occurs in areas which have a more rural aspect. These developments generally do not benefit from the usual linkages to and facilities of built up areas. It is often the case that residents desire these features to be retro-fitted to the highways once they have taken up residence. It is not considered appropriate to introduce a pedestrian refuge which would encourage crossing at a location where vehicle speeds are at their highest and therefore the least safe for a person who is likely to be the slowest to cross the road. It would also introduce a hazard for motorists, a feature which would not normally be provided and has been found to ultimately result in accidents occurring. This could further compound the safety issues for pedestrians. The provision of a footway alongside the road to the roundabout and utilising the existing splitter island would provide the safest location to cross the road. This route would serve all users and provide linkage to the existing highway footways. It would not encourage the use of an unofficial trampled path through undergrowth/planted area which could be considered unsafe in terms of personal safety, especially in dark conditions. The conclusion is that **if** any provision is to be made, it should be in the form of an additional footway alongside the carriageway from Hag House Farm junction to the Hag House roundabout.

Action to be taken	Officer responsible	Target Date	In which plan will this action appear
When will this assessment be reviewed?	N/A		
Are there any additional assessments that need to be undertaken in relation to this assessment?	A highway risk assessment considering the two options has been undertaken and accompanies this report		
Lead officer - sign off:			Date:
Service equality representative - sign off: Mary Readman Policy Performance and Communications Manager			Date: 2 Dec 2011

Appendix 3

Petition 110 : Rotary Way, Pity Me

Risk Assessment / Comparison of Options

Issue	Proposed Option			
	Islands at Hag House Fm	Do Nothing	Warning Signs	Footway to Roundabout
Vehicle speed	Vehicle speeds are likely to be at their highest at the proposed location.	Vehicle speeds are likely to be at their highest at the proposed location.	Vehicle speeds are likely to be at their highest at the proposed location.	Vehicle speeds will be at their lowest at the roundabout crossing point.
Congestion	Will increase congestion by reducing the length of the informal two lanes of traffic approaching the roundabout during busy periods. Risk of backing up onto A167 Pity Me roundabout during busiest periods.	Does not affect congestion.	Does not affect congestion.	Does not affect congestion.
Desire line	Route is on the residents' requested line but linking to an unofficial route through the perimeter planting. This unofficial route is not within the public highway or Council owned land. There is no specific provision within the Arnison development to accommodate this route.	Maintains current use and route. Does not encourage use of unofficial path.	Maintains current use and route. Does not encourage use of unofficial path.	Route does not provide the desired shortest route. Route links to adopted highway footways to Arnison development.
Provision for Disabilities	Dropped crossings would have to be provided. The unofficial route does not suit wheelchair users, pushchairs or persons with impaired mobility. Route crosses where vehicle speeds are at their highest. The route also crosses through a car park with no pedestrian provision. A refuge of minimum width (2.0 metres) would have to be provided. Pedestrian refuge allows road to be crossed lane by lane.	No provision for people with disabilities.	Provides information to motorists.	Dropped crossing would have to be provided. Route crosses at location where vehicle speeds are at their lowest. Route would be suitable for wheelchair users, pushchairs or persons with impaired mobility. The splitter island is much wider and provides for better segregation from traffic whilst waiting to cross individual lanes. Probability of courteous drivers allowing crossing of road. Lane width each side is slightly greater.

Personal Security	Unofficial route through established perimeter vegetation is not considered suitable for personal security. This route is not illuminated. The route exits into a business loading area and car park.	Unofficial route through established perimeter vegetation is not considered suitable for personal security. This route is not illuminated.	Unofficial route through established perimeter vegetation is not considered suitable for personal security. This route is not illuminated.	Route is wholly within a street lit area with natural surveillance.
Accident history	There are no recorded personal injury accidents in the previous three plus current year at the crossing locations under consideration. There is no history of pedestrian accidents on this road.			
Impact on traffic	The islands (refuge) are proposed on a high quality derestricted road where they would not normally be expected. This has resulted in collisions with the islands in similar situations therefore not normally recommended or provided. Provides a protected turning area for the farm. Potential congestion as indicated above.	No impact on traffic flows or movements.	Provides advance warning. Signs could be ignored by motorists due to the very low numbers of pedestrians crossing the road.	No impact on traffic flows or movements.
Visibility	Visibility is to the minimum required for a 60mph design speed.	Visibility is to the minimum required for a 60mph design speed.	N/A Visibility is to the minimum required for a 60mph design speed.	Visibility is in excess of the 60mph design speed however speeds will be much less than this.
Other uses (other than pedestrian)	Location is at a bridleway crossing but islands would not accommodate equine traffic and would not benefit this use.	None.	N/A	No other uses are envisaged at this location.
Maintenance	Future maintenance to illuminated signs will be expected due to vehicular collisions with the islands as has been the case where islands have been provided on derestricted roads. Illuminated signs will require regular scheduled maintenance	White lining requires renewal periodically.	Life expectancy of signs is 10+ years unless the sign is damaged.	Life expectancy of the footway would be many years before any maintenance would be required.
Revenue Cost	Illuminated signs provided on each island/refuge will require energy to power the lanterns. Annual maintenance of lanterns.	Minimal.	None.	None.
Additional Requirements	None	Refresh existing road markings.	Refresh existing road markings.	Cut back of vegetation behind footway to improve visibility between the roundabout crossing point and the Arnison roundabout.
Cost of Option	£42,000	£1,500	£2,500	£15,000

