

DELEGATED DECISION

REGENERATION AND LOCAL SERVICES

1st August 2017

TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER



Report of REGENERATION AND LOCAL SERVICES BRIAN BUCKLEY—STRATEGIC HIGHWAYS MANAGER

Purpose of the Report

To consider the introduction of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) on the A691, A692 and C10a, Leadgate to impose a 40mph speed limit.

Background

Prior to road re-alignment works associated with the removal of a bridge structure spanning a former railway line and currently the route of the C2C cycle network, the C10a was subject to a 30mph speed limit by virtue of having a system of street lighting. Prior to the road re-alignment the 30mph speed limit was self-evident and self-enforcing due to the overall road layout and traffic signals which were operational over the former bridge deck being subject of a weight restriction.

Since the road was re-opened the Police have received a significant number of complaints concerning speeding in the area, which has resulted in periods of targeted Police enforcement. The general feeling from the Police and drivers is that the new road layout and the associated 30mph speed limit is not self-evident to drivers due to the wide carriageway and lack of property frontage development. As such, drivers are confused with the open aspect of the road layout and are proceeding to use the road as if it was subject to a higher speed limit. This higher speed is often carried far into the built-up area of Leadgate before the motorist becomes aware of the need to adjust their speed to a more credible 30mph speed limit being typical of residential/commercial built-up areas.

Guidance from the DfT suggests that a speed limit which lacks credibility results in a significant proportion of motorists ignoring the limit and driving at higher speeds, and can also lead to greater risk taking. In addition, the imposition of non-credible lower limits, as in this case, can raise residents' expectations that the speeds of vehicles will be reduced, but this is seldom achieved in practice, thus creating further annoyance for both residents and motorists, and also unfair criticism of the police who have to enforce the speed limit.

Following a lot of careful consideration and discussions with Durham Constabulary, the proposal is to increase the speed limit on the newly constructed section of Leadgate Road from 30mph to 40mph, and to recommence the 30mph speed limit at a point near to the pedestrian refuge island which serves to accommodate the C2C cycle route crossing point. The introduction of a 30mph speed limit at this point leading into the settlement of Leadgate will be less confusing to motorists and much more likely to be observed.

The new proposals for a 40mph speed limit will allow for gateway features to be created upon approaching the C2C crossing point / zebra crossing with an aspiration that vehicular speeds will be reduced within the residential area. Additionally the introduction of a 40mph speed limit allows the Council to introduce 40mph "repeater" sign plates along the road as a reminder to motorists, which are not otherwise permitted within 30mph speed limit areas when a system of street lighting is present.

Details of any alternative options considered and rejected when making the decision

Consideration has been given towards leaving the current speed limit arrangement, but this would not address the concerns raised by the local residents concerning speeding in the area, and enforcement would prove to be resource intensive for the Police. Additionally, as per the DfT's guidance, and speed survey information, the current arrangement could be considered as being unfair to motorists who are clearly perceiving the road layout as being more appropriate for a higher speed limit.

Recommendations and reasons

It is recommended that a scheme to introduce the 40mph speed limits is progressed in accordance with Department for Transport guidance.

Decision

It is recommended to progress advertising of the TRO and subject to satisfactory consultation, proceed to seal the TRO.

Background Papers

Office folders

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance - To be funded by the C10a Front Street Leadgate realignment project

Staffing – Carried out by Traffic Asset Team

Risk – There may be objections to the scheme following consultation which will need to be considered through the TRO process.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty - N/A

Accommodation – N/A

Crime and Disorder – N/A

Human Rights – N/A

Consultation – Informal Consultation undertaken in the period 21st February– 17th March 2017.

Procurement – The Scheme will be delivered by existing DCC Staffing.

Disability Issues N/A

Legal Implications – The Council has the power as the local Highway Authority to introduce speed limit Traffic Regulation Orders under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (as amended).