

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the Highways Committee held at County Hall, Durham on
Thursday 2 December 2010 at 10am

Present:

Councillor J Robinson

Vice-Chair (In the Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors A Bainbridge, Hugill, Morgan, Stradling, L Thomson and Woods.

Officers:

D Wilcox (Strategic Highways Manager), P Holding (Legal Adviser), D Battensby (Area Traffic Engineer) and D Roberts (Democratic Services)

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Arthur, Bleasdale, Burn, Foster, Hancock, Naylor, Shiell, T Taylor, Wright and R Young

Also present: Councillors O'Donnell, Holroyd and Southwell.

Before the meeting started Councillor Robinson paid tribute to all Council staff who had worked so hard clearing the roads and providing assistance to the public during the recent spell of severe weather; he also thanked Trudi Smith for keeping members informed of the situation in recent weeks.

***Note:** The order of business on the agenda was varied to allow item 8, where speakers had registered to address the Committee, to be heard first. It was further noted that consideration of item 5 was to be deferred to a future meeting.*

A1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

A2 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2010 were agreed as a correct record subject to the following wording replacing the resolution to minute A3:

RESOLVED:

That the proposal to retain the existing speed limit of 40 mph on that part of the B6282 road passing through Etherley Grange, Bishop Auckland be not supported and that it be reconsidered but that the remaining amendments to the Order be approved.

A3 Proposed Traffic Calming Scheme: C5 Front Street, Ouston, Chester Le Street

***Note:** Councillor Morgan arrived at the meeting during consideration of this item and so did not take part in the debate or vote thereon.*

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services advising of objections received with regard to a proposed traffic calming scheme for C5 Front Street, Ouston, Chester Le Street.

The report summarised the background to the proposal, which was the result of ongoing concern about the speed of vehicles; speed surveys had been carried out and a public consultation on the proposed traffic calming scheme had resulted in 26 objections being received from those directly consulted, with a further 36 from people not directly consulted.

The objections raised were detailed in the report and the Committee was also addressed by Mr S Cochrane and Mr E Henry, objectors. Mr Cochrane expressed the view that the response to his letter of objection did not adequately cover any of the points he had raised. He believed that there would be significant problems from noise and vibration, particularly as one of the proposed speed humps was less than 15 metres from his property. Whilst he favoured the control of speeding vehicles he felt that other measures should be brought in. He feared that his car would be damaged as he would need to cross one of the cushions at an oblique angle; he queried whether snow clearing would still be able to take place and suggested that property values would be adversely affected and that the scheme could delay the progress of emergency vehicles, particularly police and paramedic cars.

Mr Henry noted that he had lived in Ouston for 40 years; he believed that, whilst the nature of the road had not changed, the volume and speed of traffic certainly had. He felt that there were insufficient 30mph signs on this stretch of road. He also referred to noise levels, which he felt would greatly increase as a result of the proposed scheme, and didn't believe that anyone would want to buy a property on a road with so many speed humps/cushions. He also referred to problems caused by vibration and suggested that alternatives to speed humps should be considered, for example additional signage, 'rumble strips' and a permanent speed visor.

In responding to the points made by the objectors and to comments and questions from members, the Strategic Highways Manager and the Area Traffic Engineer noted that they did not believe that there would be undue problems from noise or vibration; that other traffic calming measures would not be feasible or appropriate; that less than 10% of the traffic was HGVs; that the response from the Ambulance Service included paramedics; that regulations precluded the provision of more 30mph signs and that provision of a permanent speed visor would lead to it being ignored by motorists.

RESOLVED:

That the objections be set aside and a traffic calming scheme be introduced on C5 Front Street, Ouston, as outlined in the report.

A4 A67 Darlington Boundary to Bowes (A67 East of Gainford): Proposed Speed Limit Order

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services advising of representations received with regard to the proposed amendment to the speed limit on the A67 east of Gainford, in the vicinity of the former Greenacres nursing home.

The report summarised the background to the proposal, which had been made following a speed limit review, to impose a 40mph speed limit at this location. It was anticipated that the setting of a suitable speed limit would result in a reduction in 'top end' excess speed and improved compliance with the speed limit. Speed surveys had shown that compliance with the 30mph speed limit improved within the built-up area of the village. The proposal would involve the repositioning of the existing 30mph speed limit sign closer to the start of the built-up area and the creation of a 40mph 'buffer zone'. Consultations had been carried out with the parish council, police and local residents. There were two remaining objections and these were outlined in the report, together with the Council's response. Members commented on the proposal and officers confirmed that the expectation was that the 30mph speed limit would be reinforced by the introduction of the 40mph buffer zone.

RESOLVED:

That the objections be set aside and that the necessary Traffic Regulation Order be implemented, as outlined in the report.

A5 A690 Moor House Lay-by, Rainton Gate: Prohibition of Driving Order

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services on the outcome of investigations into proposals to introduce a Prohibition of Driving Order to a lay-by located adjacent to the northbound carriageway of the A690 to the south of Rainton Gate.

The report summarised the background to the proposal, which had been made following concerns being raised about serious anti-social behaviour by some users of the lay-by, in particular some of those using it as an overnight stop. As a result it was proposed to close the lay-by for vehicular use by means of a Prohibition of Driving Order, which would be self-enforcing as the restricted section of road would have lockable gates at each end. Provision would be made for those requiring access to the restricted area by means of exemption.

Following formal advertising of the proposed Order one objection had been received, which was detailed in the report together with the Council's response. It was noted that the police, whilst not objecting to the proposal, had requested that monitoring of the level of accidents on the A690 and the possible displacement of overnight parking of HGVs to the road behind the filling station in West Rainton be undertaken. It was noted that local members were minded to support the proposal.

Councillor Thomson suggested that Belmont Parish Council should have been consulted on the proposal as he believed that the parish, which bordered the area concerned, could be adversely affected. Councillors Holroyd and Southwell were in attendance and addressed the Committee.

Councillor Holroyd expressed concern about the proposal and expressed the view that, as he represented an adjacent electoral division, he should have been included in consultation on the matter. He suggested that the problem of cars parking at the filling station at Carrville could be worsened if this proposal was approved and suggested that this closure might only serve to move the anti-social behaviour to

nearby lay-bys; he asked that the Committee consider alternatives to the making of this Order.

Councillor Southwell was firmly opposed to this proposal; he suggested that locals would be disadvantaged because of the behaviour of some HGV drivers and that 'portaloos' and additional litter bins should be provided. He felt that the police and the Council should be dealing with any anti-social behaviour. This lay-by was well-used by local people and should be retained.

The Strategic Highways Manager responded to the comments of members; he confirmed that the filling station at Carrville could be included in any monitoring. There had been extensive discussions with the police, neighbourhood wardens and street scene staff about the problems caused by anti-social behaviour and additional bins had already been provided. The current levels of anti-social behaviour were unacceptable and were having an adverse effect on local residents.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the proposal be supported and that a Prohibition of Driving Order be introduced on Moor House Lay-by, Rainton Gate, as outlined in the report.
- b. That monitoring of the sites referred to above be carried out.
- c. That the accident record on the A690 in the vicinity of the lay-by be monitored.

A6 Proposed Traffic Regulation Order: Lombard Drive, Chester Le Street

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services advising of representations received with regard to a proposed Traffic Regulation Order (waiting restrictions) at Lombard Drive, Chester Le Street.

The report summarised the background to the proposal, which had been made following expressions of concern about inconsiderate parking associated with school drop-off/pick-up times.

Parking/congestion issues had been discussed with the police, following which a series of waiting restrictions had been proposed to supplement the 'school: keep clear' road markings. The subsequent consultation exercise had resulted in one objection being received, which was outlined in the report together with the Council's response, which included a revision of the waiting times originally proposed.

RESOLVED:

That the proposal, as detailed in the report, be approved and that the appropriate Traffic Regulation Order be implemented.

A7 Proposed Traffic Calming Scheme: Mickle Hill Road, Blackhall Rocks

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services advising of representations received with regard to a proposed traffic calming scheme at the above location.

The report summarised the background to the proposal, which had been made following expressions of concern about vehicle speeds near the junction with the A1086 and associated pedestrian safety.

A consultation exercise had resulted in 3 objections being received and these were summarised in the report, together with the Council's response. Local members, the Ambulance Service and the police were supportive of the proposal.

RESOLVED:

That the representations be set aside and that a traffic calming scheme be introduced on Mickle Hill Road, Blackhall Rocks, as outlined in the report.

A8 Unclassified Princess Road, Seaham: Proposed Puffin Crossing

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services advising of the outcome of investigations into proposals to provide a formal light-controlled pedestrian crossing (Puffin Crossing) on Princess Road, Seaham.

The report summarised the background to the proposal, which had been made following repeated requests for the introduction of a formal pedestrian crossing on Princess Road, in the vicinity of the primary school. Following an investigation, including a site survey, it had been concluded that it would be appropriate to provide a Puffin Crossing, to be funded other than from Highways budgets. It was noted that the proposed crossing would provide a safe crossing point for pedestrians and help to regulate the speed of traffic, thus making a significant contribution to improving road safety.

A public consultation exercise had resulted in 2 expressions of concern from local residents about not being able to park near their homes if a crossing was introduced; it was noted, however, that there would be no change to the existing parking arrangements. It was further noted that local members and the police supported the proposal.

RESOLVED:

That the proposal to introduce a Puffin Crossing on Unclassified Princess Road, Seaham, as outlined in the report, be supported.

The meeting closed at 12noon

CHAIR