

Highways Committee

5 July 2018

A67 Startforth - 40mph Speed Limit



Report of Ian Thompson, Corporate Director Regeneration and Local Services

Councillor Carl Marshall, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Economic Regeneration

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To advise the committee of an objection received in respect of proposed changes to the existing 40mph speed limit on the A67 at Startforth and to make a recommendation to the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services to guide the exercise of his delegated powers as to whether such TRO should be made.

Background

- 2 The County Council is proposing a series of road safety measures on the A67 between Bowes and Barnard Castle being subject to the success of a funding bid that the Council has submitted through the Department for Transport's (DfT) £175m Safer Roads Fund to address roads that have been assessed as being one of the country's 50 highest risk sections of road. Funding has also been made available through the Council's Local Transport Plan to support this project.
- 3 As part of this overarching road safety project being developed for the A67, it is proposed to create 30mph and 40mph gateway features on the A67 at Startforth. The gateway features will ensure that the signage is more conspicuous and more visible to motorists with the aim of reducing vehicular speeds on the A67.

Proposals

- 4 It is proposed to relocate the commencement of the existing 40mph and 30mph speed limits on the A67 at Startforth, as per appendix 2.
- 5 The proposal is to relocate the commencement of the 40mph speed limit a distance of 50 metres further to the north-east towards Startforth Park, where the verges are wider to allow the carriageway to be widened to accommodate the gateway feature, as per appendix 2.
- 6 It is also proposed to relocate the commencement of the 30mph speed limit a distance of 61 metres further south-west towards Startforth Park where the verges are wider to allow the carriageway to be widened to accommodate the gateway feature, please refer to Appendix 2.

- 7 Traffic Surveys have been undertaken at a number of locations on the A67 at Startforth. These surveys have been undertaken using radar speed detection boxes which have been located to collect traffic data for a typical 7 day deployment period.
- 8 The traffic data has been analysed by Durham Constabulary and the Councils Traffic Engineers to verify that the section of road in question satisfies the Department for Transport's national guidance and best practice on the setting of local speed limits.

Consultation

- 9 On the 18th & 23rd October 2017 the Council held a Public Consultation Event at the Town Council Offices in Barnard Castle allowing members of the public to visit and make any comments on the overall project. The Event was attended by approximately 60 people.
- 10 The statutory consultation as part of the legal Traffic Regulation Order making process was carried out between 4th April 2018 and the 24th April 2018, which included advertising the Traffic Regulation Order through the use of public notices on-site and in the local press.

Statutory Consultation Representations

- 11 The statutory consultation as part of the legal Traffic Regulation Order making process was carried out between 4th April 2018 and the 24th April 2018, which included advertising the Traffic Regulation Order through the use of public notices on-site and in the local press.
- 12 Durham Constabulary has offered their full support to the speed limit changes.
- 13 Startforth Parish Council being the authority for this ward area has offered their full support to the speed limit changes.

Local Member Consultation

- 14 Local Ward Members have made no formal comment on these proposals.

Objection and Response

- 15 The statutory consultation resulted in receipt of one formal objection from Barnard Castle Town Council, being a neighbouring authority to the Startforth Parish Council ward area.
- 16 Objection – By Barnard Castle Town Council

Barnard Castle Town Council being a neighbouring Town Council authority have objected to the proposal

The objection is based on two reasons;

- 1) The current 40mph speed limit should be reduced to 30mph.
- 2) The current 30mph speed limit should be reduced to 20mph.

They consider that reducing the speeds limit on the outskirts of Barnard Castle Town within Startforth's ward area will reduce traffic speeds through the Town Centre

Response (Item 1)

The Council is required to set speed limits following guidance and best practice set by the Department for Transport (DfT).

DfT circular 01/2013 'setting local speed limits' outlines the criteria for a 30mph speed limit, It suggests that reasonable minimum criteria for the definition of what constitutes a village, for the purpose of applying a village speed limit of 30 mph, would be that there were:

- 20 or more houses (on one or both sides of the road); and*
- a minimum length of 600 metres".*

Where a 30mph speed limit is not suitable, the criteria for a 40mph speed limit, can sometimes be satisfied and it may be appropriate to consider an intermediate speed limit of 40 mph prior to the 30 mph terminal speed limit signs at the entrance to a village, in particular where there are outlying houses beyond the village boundary or on roads with high approach speeds.

Upon entering Startforth from the Bowes direction this part of the A67 has no direct frontage property development, but high approach speeds thus the current 40mph speed limit is deemed to be appropriate.

Response (Item 2)

In February 2016, the Councils Cabinet agreed its revised policy on the introduction of 20mph speed limits and zones. This policy was written in accordance with national guidance from the DfT, in circular 01/2013 on the 'Setting of Local Speed Limits'

The guidance and best practice on the imposition of 20 mph speed limits and zones can be summarised as follows:

20 mph Speed Limits – These involve the erection of 20 mph traffic signs only. This type of speed limit may be suitable for residential estate roads and side streets and also Town Centres streets where the nature of the road tends to result in naturally low average 'mean' speeds of less than 24 mph. Research indicates that limits achieve an average speed reduction of 1 mph.

20 mph Speed Limit Zone - These involve the erection of 20 mph traffic signs plus physical traffic calming measures to ensure that the 20 mph limit is self-enforcing. In order that drivers are aware of the zones, traffic signs must be erected at every entrance/exit to the zone. Research indicates that a 20 mph speed limit zone can result in speed reductions of around 10 mph.

The recorded 'mean average speed' on the A67 within the current 30mph speed limit is 33.7mph and therefore cannot be considered for a 20mph speed limit.

In addition to the above, it should also be noted that when travelling on the A67 from Startforth towards Barnard Castle there is a standard 'T' junction (A67/B6277) requiring vehicles to give way thus creating a speed reducing feature. Furthermore, as vehicles proceed towards the Town there is a permanent set of traffic signals at the County Bridge followed by a 90 degree bend prior to Bridgegate and upon entering Barnard Castle via The Bank, there is a 20mph speed limit upon entering the commercial area of the Town.

Recommendations and reasons

- 17** Under part 3A of the Council's Constitution, the final decision on whether to make a TRO is delegated to the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services, having regard guidance form the Committee.
- 18** Accordingly, it is recommended that, having considered this objection, that the Committee recommends to the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services that a Traffic Regulation Order be made to amend the 40mph speed limits as per the plan in Appendix 2.
- 19** The proposal will provide what will be self-evident and self-enforcing speed limits thus satisfying the Department for Transport. It is recommended that the Committee, having considered the objection, endorse the proposal to proceed with the implementation of the speed limit changes, as per the plan in Appendix 2.

Background papers

- 20** Correspondence on Office File.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance –Funding will be made available through the Council’s Local Transport Plan for the initial background work, allowing a timely commencement on site should the DfT’s Safer Roads Fund bid be successful.

Staffing – The project is being delivered by existing staff supported by our supply chain of competitively procured contractors.

Risk – There is a risk that the Department for Transport’s Safer Roads Funding bid may not be successful and therefore the scheme may not proceed.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty – None

Accommodation – None

Crime and Disorder – None

Human Rights – None

Consultation – All changes to speed limits need to be consulted upon and any objections to the introduction of mandatory speed limits that cannot be resolved informally need to be considered by Highways Committee to which this report form part.

Procurement – Schemes are delivered by existing staff supported by our supply chain of competitively procured contractors.

Disability Issues – None

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