

Highways Committee

5 July 2018

**Petterson Dale, Coxhoe
Traffic Calming**



Report of Ian Thompson, Corporate Director Regeneration and Local Services

Councillor Brian Stephens, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Local Partnerships

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To advise the committee of representations received in respect of proposed traffic calming speed humps within Petterson Dale housing estate in Coxhoe 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 traffic calming should be introduced.

Background

- 2 Petterson Dale, Coxhoe provides access to just under 200 properties and the local COOP food store. The former Local Councillor and some residents have aired their concerns in relation to the inappropriate speed of motorists through the estate. They are also concerned that there may be an incident involving one of the many children that cross the road to access properties.
- 3 The Council is proposing to introduce five 75mm high round top speed humps which will span the width of the carriageway between the kerbs. These are proposed to be provided at suitable spacing to maintain low vehicle speeds.
- 4 Research has found clear evidence that lower traffic speeds reduce collisions and casualties. Collisions occur less often and when they do happen, there is less risk of a serious or fatal injury. The introduction of traffic calming elsewhere across the UK has provided additional benefits including health benefits through increased walking and cycling, as well as quality of life and community benefits.
- 5 The previous Local Ward Member has provided some funding for the scheme through the Area Action Partnership. This will be 'topped-up' by the current Ward Members through their Neighbourhoods Budget.
- 6 There have been two recorded personal injury accidents which have occurred on Petterson Dale both of which were in 2014. The circumstances relating to both are that a motorist has pulled out of a side road into the path of another vehicle on Petterson Dale. The causation factors relating to both incidents do not indicate that excessive speed was an issue.

- 7 A traffic survey was undertaken on Petterson Dale to determine the existing vehicular speeds. The survey was undertaken using a radar speed detection box which was located to collect traffic data for a typical 7 day deployment period. The survey revealed that 8% of the traffic exceeded the posted 30mph speed limit. The mean speed was 23mph and the 85th percentile figure (which provides a good indication of the speed of the majority of motorists) was 28mph.
- 8 A consultation has been undertaken with all affected properties (185) and the statutory undertakers. The return rate for responses was high with 50% of properties providing a response. Of the responses we have received, 49 (53%) were in favour and 44 (47%) were against the proposals.

Proposals

- 9 The proposal is to introduce 5 full width speed humps along the length of Petterson Dale as shown on the plan in Appendix 2.

Consultation

- 10 The results of the informal consultation are as described above with the responses against the proposal outlined in the following paragraphs.

Objections and Responses

- 11 The following paragraphs provide details of the responses by the objectors to the proposed traffic calming scheme. Many of the responses received raised several reasons for their objection and these have been separated into a number of general themes. In each theme the number of respondents raising the issue is provided along with a response to the issue.

- 12 Objection 1. "Preposterous waste of money", "There must be greater financial priorities", "Better use of funds".
Raised by 13 respondents.

Response: The scheme is being funded from Local Member's Allowance and is considered to be a cost effective means of responding to the issues raised by residents. The national average cost of an accident is over £75k. If one accident is prevented, or the severity reduced as a result of the installation of this scheme, then it can easily be established as having been cost effective.

- 13 Objection 2. "Increased danger for motorists negotiating speed humps".
Raised by 1 respondent.

Response: The principle applies that if the speed humps are negotiated at a reasonable speed, then they will not cause discomfort or constitute a danger to any road user. There will be a warning sign provided at the entrance to the estate to raise a motorist's awareness to the presence of the traffic calming features.

- 14 Objection 3. "Should focus on speeding on the main street".

Raised by 1 respondent.

Response: Whilst there may be concerns regarding the speed of vehicles on other roads in the area, this scheme is proposed to address residents' concerns regarding vehicle speeds in the estate. The issues relating to other roads can be directed to the Police via their PACT meetings.

- 15** Objection 4. "Access to the COOP should be from the Village Hall car park".
Raised by 4 respondents.

Response: The connection between the two car parks is not an issue which the Council can action as it involves expenditure on works on private land which the Council has no control over.

- 16** Objection 5. "Inclement weather causes an issue on the estate without the added problem of negotiating the speed humps".
Raised by 7 respondents.

Response: Whilst it is accepted that inclement winter weather can create difficulties for motorists in housing estates particularly where there are hills, we are fortunate that this type of disruption is limited to a few days of the year. Traffic calming is provided as a measure to address the concerns of residents who have complained about the speed of traffic, which occurs throughout the year. Traffic calming is often provided on new estates as a preventative measure. During inclement weather, drivers would be expected to proceed along the road with due care and attention and in line with the conditions and characteristic of the road. We are not aware of humps or cushions causing significant difficulties in winter weather.

- 17** Objection 5. "Reduce the speed limit", "Introduce a 20mph speed limit".
Raised by 5 respondents.

Response: The principle provided by current relevant legislation states that 20mph zones should be self-enforcing using suitable traffic calming methods. If motorists are ignoring the current 30mph speed limit they are not likely to reduce their speed due to the provision of a lower speed limit alone. Whilst most motorists drive within the current speed limit, it is those that don't who are most likely to be involved with or cause an accident, therefore the proposed traffic calming measures are aimed to bring those higher speeds down to more appropriate levels.

- 18** Objection 6. "Should try advisory signs or road markings first".
Raised by 4 respondents.

Response: Advisory signs are only effective if the motorist is willing to be responsive to them whereas speed humps are able to influence the driving behaviour of almost all motorists.

- 19** Objection 7. "Speed humps do not slow persistent offenders", "Vehicles will speed over them anyway".
Raised by 4 respondents.

Response: Before and After studies have shown that speed humps are an effective means of reducing vehicle speeds on residential roads.

- 20** Objection 8. "Speed humps cause damage to vehicles".
Raised by 17 respondents.

Response: The Highway Code advises in Rule 153 that motorists should reduce their speed when approaching traffic calming features that are intended to slow them down. The proposals are based upon national guidance for traffic calming measures and these take into account all types of vehicles likely to encounter these features. In addition, motor manufacturers design their vehicles to cope with the rigours of everyday motoring which includes encountering traffic calming features on the road.

- 21** Objection 9. "Need Give Way sign at COOP exit".
Raised by 1 respondent.

Response: The provision of such a sign will be for the owners of the COOP site to provide. However, this would not address the concerns of residents with regard to the manner of driving on the remainder of the estate.

- 22** Objection 10. "Already noisy and speed humps will make this worse".
Raised by 3 respondents.

Response: Research has shown that overall traffic noise is actually reduced when traffic calming is implemented on roads where the traffic flow consists mainly of light vehicles.

- 23** Objection 11. "Improve the mini roundabout".
Raised by 4 respondents.

Response: The mini roundabout is constructed in accordance with highway requirements and all signage and road markings are present and correct.

- 24** Objection 12. "Already too many speed humps in Coxhoe".
Raised by 6 respondents.

Response: Traffic calming schemes are introduced following representations about vehicle speeds from the public. The schemes are designed to reduce vehicle speeds to more appropriate levels for a built up area.

- 25** Objection 13. "Not aware of any instances of speeding", "In all the time living in Petterson Dale have never considered there to be a problem", "There have been no accidents".
Raised by 9 respondents.

Response: Traffic calming is provided as a measure to address the concerns of residents who have complained about the speed of traffic. The speed survey indicates that there are 8% of motorists who drive at speeds above the posted 30mph speed limit. In addition there have been 2 recorded personal injury accidents on Petterson Dale in the previous 4 years, this being the standard period for consideration.

- 26** Objection 14. "Speed humps cause structural damage to properties".
Raised by 1 respondent.

Response: It is extremely rare for traffic calming features to contribute towards structural damage of properties. For this to occur the property will need to be very close to the feature and there to be particular soil/rock types linking the feature to the property. These situations are not found in Petterson Dale and therefore the proposed features would not be the cause of structural damage to properties.

- 27** Objection 15. "Speed humps cause inconvenience to householders".
Raised by 3 respondents.

Response: The delay to residents will be minor and probably only amount to seconds rather than minutes however the improvement in road safety, especially for vulnerable users due to reduced speeds is considered more important.

- 28** Objection 16. "They create further hazards to road users".
Raised by 1 respondent.

Response: Experience shows that traffic calming measures of this nature do not increase the likelihood of an accident, but have the reverse effect.

- 29** Objection 17. "There are too many proposed humps".
Raised by 1 respondent.

Response: The number of speed humps proposed is based on recommendations set down by the Department for Transport for the introduction of traffic calming measures. These recommendations suggest that the first feature should be within 50m of the start of the scheme and thereafter features should be sited between 60-80m apart, with the aim of maintaining constant vehicle speeds. In this particular instance the spacing is generally around 75m however in order to position them in locations which least affect directly adjacent properties, the distance to the second hump had to be reduced to 55m.

- 30** Objection 18. "Going over speed humps causes a lot of pain due to medical condition".
Raised by 1 respondent.

Response: The principle applies that if the speed cushions are negotiated at a reasonable speed, then they should not cause discomfort or constitute a danger to any road user. Unfortunately there may be occasions where occupants of vehicles suffering from some chronic conditions will find undulations in the road painful or uncomfortable. The design of round top humps is the best compromise in vertical traffic calming features to minimise this effect.

- 31** Objection 19. "Cars will use village hall car park instead of COOP car park".
Raised by 1 respondent.

Response: It is possible that some motorists will consider using the village hall car park rather than driving through the housing estate to the COOP. Whilst this has an effect on the capacity of the village hall car park, currently motorists use this car park to access the shops and other facilities in the centre of Coxhoe. Conversely it is probable that some village hall users may use the COOP car park when the village hall car park is full.

- 32** Objection 20. "Use a speed camera and fine people".
Raised by 1 respondent.

Response: It is not Durham Constabulary's policy to use fixed speed cameras but favouring the use of mobile safety cameras which can be deployed more efficiently. It has been found that fixed speed cameras are only effective over a short distance whereby motorists slow down over the length of road where the camera targets vehicles. The mobile safety camera is used where there is a history of a large number speed related accidents or where speed enforcement campaigns are carried out, subject to a safe location being available.

- 33** Objection 21. "Use alternative traffic calming measures", "Would prefer the use of speed cushions instead of full width humps".
Raised by 3 respondents.

Response: Before and After studies show that speed humps are an effective means of reducing vehicle speeds on residential roads.

Alternative methods of speed reduction were considered but, taking all factors into consideration, it was decided that speed humps were the most appropriate cost-effective solution which will reduce speeds of all sizes of vehicles. Speed cushions are generally limited to roads which are bus routes to enable buses to straddle the feature however this does mean that larger vehicles and 4x4s can also straddle the features thereby making them less effective.

- 34** Objection 22. "Proposed hump is too close to the junction".
Raised by 2 respondents.

Response: The proposed speed humps were positioned in the most appropriate places that also took account the many constraints along the road, such as driveways, junctions and bends. The requirements on the spacing of the humps means that in some places the location must be a compromise in order to meet the spacing criteria and maintain constant vehicle speeds.

- 35** Objection 23. "Cause problems for emergency services".
Raised by 2 respondents.

Response: It is well known that both the Fire and Ambulance Services have reservations about road humps. These two organisations were consulted concerning this scheme along with the Police. Durham Ambulance Service has expressed their usual concern regarding traffic calming but has indicated their support due to the potential road safety improvement. The Fire and Rescue Service did not respond to the consultation but generally offer their

support for traffic calming as a means to improve road safety and accident prevention.

- 36** Objection 24. "Why should the majority suffer for the minority".
Raised by 1 respondent.

Response: The necessity or otherwise of a traffic calming scheme is somewhat subjective depending upon one's viewpoint. However, the County Council is confident that, if it is implemented, vehicle speeds will be reduced which will be an improvement in road safety terms, especially for pedestrians and other vulnerable road users. It is statistically significant that a small minority of road users generate circumstances which lead to accidents however there is no efficient way to target only this minority. Therefore cost-effective measures such as traffic calming have to be employed to improve road safety for all users.

Local Member Consultation

- 37** The three local County Councillors have been fully consulted and are supportive of the proposals being progressed.

Recommendations and reasons

- 38** Under part 3A of the Council's Constitution, the final decision on whether to proceed with the scheme is delegated to the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services, having regard guidance form the Committee.
- 39** Accordingly, it is recommended that, having considered the objections that the Committee recommends to the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services to introduce the traffic calming as per the plan in Appendix 2.
- 40** The proposal will provide an improvement in road safety for the local residents.

Background papers

- 41** Correspondence on Office File.

Contact: Brian Buckley Tel: 03000 268097

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – Funding will be provided by the local Members' Neighbourhoods Budget.

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

Risk – None.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty – None.

Accommodation – None.

Crime and Disorder – None.

Human Rights – None.

Consultation – All traffic calming schemes need to be consulted upon and any objections to the introduction of road humps that cannot be resolved informally need to be considered by Highways Committee to which this report forms part.

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

Disability Issues – None.

Legal Implications – Traffic calming schemes should reduce the number of motorists contravening speed limits.