

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Highways Committee** held in Committee Room 2 - County Hall, Durham on **Thursday 5 July 2018 at 9.30 a.m.**

Present:

Councillor C Kay in the Chair

Members of the Committee

Councillors D Bell, J Considine, S Dunn, S Hugill, O Milburn, S Morrison (Vice-Chairman), J Rowlandson, P Sexton, A Simpson, J Turnbull and M Wilson

Also Present

Councillor M McKeon

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors H Bennett, G Bleasdale, A Gardner, K Hopper, K Liddell, P Oliver, R Ormerod and J Shuttleworth.

2 Substitute Members

There were no substitute members present.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 May 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest in relation to any items of business on the agenda.

5 A67 Startforth - 40mph Speed

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services which proposed the relocation of the commencement of a 40mph speed limit on the A67, Startforth. The proposal would see the 40mph limit commence 50 metres further to the north-east towards Startforth Park where the verges were wider. This would allow the carriageway to be widened to accommodate a gateway feature. (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Committee were informed that the County Council had already initiated a number of road safety measures on the A67 between Bowes and Barnard Castle, with further improvements planned in the future. The improvements would be subject to the success of a funding bid that the council had submitted through the Department for Transport's (DfT)

£175m Safer Roads fund. The fund was available to address roads that had been assessed as a high risk section of road. The area in question fell within one of the country's top 50 high risk areas. Funding had also been made available through the local transport plan to support this project.

As part of the overarching road safety project it was proposed to create 30mph and 40mph gateway features on the A67 at Startforth. The gateway features would ensure that signage was more conspicuous and more visible to motorists with the aim of reducing vehicular speeds on the A67.

The Committee then received a presentation which comprised the following:

- location plan of the area;
- 40mph proposal; and
- Images of the Bowes Road area.

(for copy see file of Minutes).

No objections had been received from local members. The Senior Committee Services Officer informed the Committee that Councillor R Bell was unable to be present at the meeting and had sent an email expressing his support for the proposal detailed in appendix two of the report.

The Strategic Traffic Manager informed the Committee that the proposals were relatively minor in nature, would allow for a more physical, substantial gateway and believed that the measures would have more of an impact.

One objection had been received to the proposal from the neighbouring Barnard Castle Town Council. The Town Council felt that the current 40mph speed limit should be reduced to 30mph and subsequently the current 30mph speed limit be reduced to 20mph. The town council also considered that reducing the speed limit on the outskirts of Barnard Castle Town within the Startforth area would reduce traffic speeds through the town centre.

The Committee then listened to representations made by the Vice-Chairman of Barnard Castle Town Council. The Councillor explained that the area comprised many road junctions on a very fast road which served as one of the main feeder routes to the A66 between Durham and Cumbria. Traffic levels were increasing constantly as a result of new housing development with further potential for additional development in the future.

The Strategic Traffic Manager informed the Committee that the proposals sought to decrease vehicle speeds. The speed limit around the estate junctions was typically 30 mph which drivers would usually come to expect. Only in exceptional circumstances would a 20mph speed limit be introduced, providing it was a viable option. In this particular case it was considered that a 20mph speed limit would not be a viable solution. The recorded 'mean average speed' on the A67 within the current 30mph speed limit was 33.7mph and could not be considered for a 20mph speed limit.

Councillor Rowlandson informed the Committee that he often passed through the location and explained that the rural nature of the area meant that the current 40mph speed limit

was difficult to enforce. In relation to the comments made by the representative of Barnard Castle Town Council, Councillor Rowlandson felt that the suggestion of a 20mph in the area at the point concerned would simply not be enforceable by the authorities.

Councillor Rowlandson expressed his support for the scheme due to the high risk nature of the area and given the fact that there was government funding available. He felt that the proposal would make a real difference in bringing about reduced vehicle speeds and improve highway safety. Councillor Rowlandson moved the recommendation in the report.

In response to a query from Councillor J Turnbull regarding the traffic islands, the Strategic Traffic Manager confirmed that whilst the road would be widened, it would have a narrowing effect for road users. Councillor Turnbull seconded the recommendation.

Resolved

The Committee unanimously agreed that, having considered the objection, recommended that the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services proceed with the Traffic Regulation Order to make the speed limit changes as per the plan in Appendix 2 of the report.

6 Fishburn Parking and Waiting Restrictions Order 2018

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Service regarding objections received to a consultation concerning a traffic regulation order in Fishburn (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Strategic Traffic Manager informed the Committee that the council were committed to regularly reviewing traffic regulation orders to ensure that restrictions held within them were relevant and appropriate.

The Committee were informed that in 2013, the crossroads were subject to a road safety audit due to the volume of traffic accidents in recent years. There had been five accidents in five years prior to the audit taking place with six casualties being involved. The accident statistics were sufficient enough to warrant some form of intervention measures. The Committee were also informed of the ongoing road safety issues generated by vehicles parking on both sides of the road between a stop line and a traffic island.

The Strategic Traffic Manager then provided a presentation to the Committee which provided background to the measures previously introduced in the area in 2013. The presentation also provided images of some of the road safety issues occurring in the area (for copy see file of Minutes).

The affected frontages located on Fishburn crossroads and all statutory consultees had been informally consulted on proposals to introduce waiting restrictions on the C26/B1278 crossroads in November 2017.

Two objections had been received, both from local businesses. The location of one business, on the corner of the junction, had proved problematic. One of the objectors explained that the introduction of parking restrictions would have a detrimental impact on their business by restricting parking for both staff and customers. The other objector felt that the restrictions were a waste of taxpayers' money and that funds should be used to

create additional parking facilities in the village. The objector had been advised that the creation of additional parking facilities was outside the scope of the consultation.

As a result of the statutory consultation process, the area Traffic Engineer recommended the inclusion of a prohibition of loading as well as waiting to prevent parking (including disabled badge parking), boarding/alighting and loading/unloading.

The Committee then listened to representations from a Member of Fishburn Parish Council. The Councillor explained that there had been many 'near misses' with alarming regularity at the location concerned, however, the parish council appreciated that the incidents would not be captured during the accident data. The parish council had also received constant complaints from local residents and felt that the only solution to the problem was the introduction of parking restrictions. Comments regarding the lack of parking in the immediate area had been noted, however, there was no vacant land to give consideration to the creation of a parking area.

The Strategic Traffic Manager explained that all parties were in agreement that the introduction of parking restrictions in the area were long overdue.

Councillor Turnbull moved the recommendation contained in the report and asked if the restrictions, if introduced, would be targeted for enforcement given that some road users would attempt to ignore the restrictions. In response, the Strategic Traffic Manager confirmed that targeted enforcement would take place.

Resolved

That the Committee set aside all objections and endorse the proposal to proceed with the implementation of the Fishburn parking and waiting restrictions Order 2018, with the final decision to be made by the Corporate Director under delegated powers.

7 Unclassified Petterson Dale, Traffic Calming

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services regarding representations received in respect of a proposed scheme of traffic calming speed humps within Petterson Dale housing estate in Coxhoe (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Strategic Highways Manager informed the Committee that the estate provided access to just under 200 properties and a food store. Concerns had been expressed by local residents of the inappropriate vehicle speeds of motorists and the potential for an incident involving one of the many children that cross the road to access properties.

The proposal would see the introduction of five 75mm high round top speed humps spanning the width of the carriageway between the kerbs. The humps would be provided at suitable spaces to promote and maintain low vehicle speeds.

The Committee then viewed a presentation detailing the following:

- location of Petterson Dale;
- current speeds and accident data; and
- proposed location of traffic calming and road hump locations.

(for copy see file of Minutes).

The Strategic Highways Manager informed the Committee that a consultation had been undertaken with all affected properties (185) and the statutory consultees. The return rate for responses was high with 50% of properties providing a response. Of the responses received, 49 (53%) were in favour and 44 (47%) were against the proposals. Some of the comments did not refer to the scheme and some comments fell outside the scope of the consultation. The objections detailed in the report were summarised for the Committee.

In terms of the responses made regarding vehicle speeds, the Strategic Highways Manager informed the Committee that there had been two slight accidents in 2014. Neither incident was speed related. Any warning signs referring to traffic calming would be strategically placed and well away from the frontages of any properties.

Councillor S Dunn, local Councillor placed on record his thanks to local residents for engaging and responding to the consultation. Councillor Dunn explained that the development naturally attracted many vehicle movements arising from residents and delivery vehicles. The speed of traffic travelling through the area was of concern and had been for a lengthy period of time.

Councillor Dunn also felt that the responses could be grouped into differing categories, explaining the importance of distinguishing those responses which were valid objections, those which fell outside of the scope of the consultation and those which should not affect consideration of the matter.

Councillor M McKeon, one of the other local councillors for the area explained that the strength of feeling from local residents on an extremely emotive issue had persuaded her to provide financial support towards the scheme.

Councillor J Turnbull whilst not objecting to the scheme, had concerns relating to emergency ambulance vehicles having to negotiate a number of full length road humps. Councillor Turnbull was aware that certain conditions and injuries made it impossible for the ambulance service to transport a patient in an emergency vehicle over road humps.

The Strategic Highways Manager informed the Committee that the road hump design was in accordance with national standards and if negotiated correctly, would not cause a problem. There was an acceptance that certain illnesses and injuries could have an effect on the way a patient was transported, however it was felt that such instances would be few and far between. The emergency services also accepted that the Council would install road humps which may cause minor difficulties, however, this was balanced with the notion that safety for road users and pedestrians was ultimately being improved.

Councillor Milburn seconded the proposal.

Resolved

That having considered the objections, the Committee unanimously agreed to recommend the introduction of a traffic calming scheme as detailed in appendix two of the report given the proposal would provide an improvement in road safety for local residents.