

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO APPEALS & COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE

2 MAY 2008

REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

LONG NEWTON VILLAGE, STOCKTON-ON-TEES - PROPOSED TRAFFIC CALMING SCHEME

1.0 SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek Members' views on outstanding objections received following statutory advertising of a vertical deflection traffic calming feature at a 'Gateway' proposed on the Elton-Long Newton Link Road at the eastern end of Long Newton village. It is not considered appropriate for the Head of Technical Services to consider the objections, as he would effectively be reviewing his own decision.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:-

- (i) Members give consideration to the objection raised and the comments of the Head of Technical Services.
- (ii) A recommendation on the merits of the objections is made to the Head of Technical Services.
- (iii) The local Ward Councillor, Parish Council and the objectors are informed of the Committee's recommendation.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 Stockton Council's Community Engineer worked alongside Long Newton Parish Council to investigate their requirements with respect to provision of traffic calming Gateways on the approaches to the village. The measures are to be funded by the Highways Agency as part of the A66 Long Newton Interchange scheme. At the eastern end of the village the Parish Council proposed a pinch point with one way working incorporating a speed cushion (see Scheme of Delegation Report TS.T.47.07 in **Appendix 1**).
- 3.2 The scheme was subsequently progressed through the relevant consultation procedure, including local Ward Councillor, public consultation and the police.

- 3.3 As a result, a Notice of Works for the speed cushion was advertised in the Evening Gazette and on site on 23 January 2008 with the objection period expiring on 25 February 2008. Following the publication of the statutory notices, the Director of Law and Democracy received three letters of objection from Mr A Coulthard, Mr C Coulthard, both of Smith House Farm, Elton, and Mr and Mrs Brown of Quarry House Farm, Coatham Stob, Elton. A letter of support for the objectors was also received from the Regional branch of the National Farmers Union. All letters are attached in **Appendix 2**.

4.0 DETAILS OF THE OBJECTIONS

- 4.1 The main grounds for objection in all cases is that it is alleged that the speed cushions provided in Elton Village are causing damage to agricultural vehicles. As the businesses will use the Elton to Long Newton Link Road in preference to the A66 they do not wish to encounter further vertical deflection traffic calming features.
- 4.2 Mr and Mrs Brown also allege that the current calming gateways in Elton have little effect on traffic speeds.

Discussion Response

- 4.3 The speed cushions in Elton measure approximately 2.0m long x 1.8m wide x 75mm high. They are in accordance with specifications detailed in the Highways (Road Humps) Regulations 1996. Previous claims for compensation from Mr C R Coulthard relating to damage to agricultural vehicles received by Stockton Council have therefore been denied.
- 4.4 It is, however, worth noting that given concerns from a significant number of residents in Elton with regard to the speed cushions, Elton Parish Council recently requested that residents be consulted on whether to retain, amend (by reducing the cushion width) or remove the cushions in their village. This consultation is programmed to take place in April.
- 4.5 The Department for Transport and the Transport Research Laboratory have indicated that traffic calming features such as speed cushions have not been significantly tested on agricultural machinery. The Council have therefore contacted North Yorkshire County Council to determine if they had received any complaints about damage to farm vehicles caused by speed cushions. They indicated that they were not aware of any such cases, and reasoned that such vehicles are designed for much worse terrain than a speed cushion. The National headquarters of the National Farmers Union also indicated that they were not aware of this being a significant issue for its members. However, the letter in support of the objectors from the NFU Stokesley and Cleveland Branch is also noted.
- 4.6 Notice of the objections being received was given to Long Newton Parish Council, it was suggested that Steve Lumb, the Community Engineer, be invited to attend the Parish Council meeting on 11 March to facilitate an informed discussion with Parish Councillors with regard to the advantages/disadvantages of retaining the speed cushion feature in light of the objections received. Instead the Parish Council requested that all information be provided to enable them to recommend whether to retain the cushion, remove it from their scheme, or to install the scheme without the cushion initially but reserve the right to install it at a later date should speeds not acceptable to the Parish Council be achieved.
- 4.7 Details of the objections, the letter of support from the local NFU branch, the history of complaints in Elton, comments received from the National NFU and North Yorkshire County Council were provided, together with a comparison of speeds at Elton (build out with speed cushion) and Carlton (build out, no speed cushion), detailed below.

Elton			
Location	Average Speed Before	Average Speed After	% Reduction
Town End Farm Eastbound	37.14	32.10	13.56
Town End Farm Westbound	37.33	34.06	8.75
East of Juniper Grove Eastbound	47.73	24.15	49.39
East of Juniper Grove Westbound	46.22	24.91	46.10
Carlton			
Redmarshall Road Eastbound	38.72	33.47	13.57
Redmarshall Road Westbound	34.94	31.01	11.27
Letch Lane Northbound	42.63	40.16	5.75
Letch Lane Southbound	41.21	37.41	9.21

- 4.8 The results of the speed surveys clearly indicate that the provision of a speed cushion has a marked impact on the speed of vehicles approaching this type of feature and this is particularly evident at the eastern end of Elton village. At Carlton (and at other locations where build outs are provided without speed cushions) complaints have been received that motorists approaching from the side that have to 'Give Way' accelerate to pass the feature before the arrival of oncoming traffic, this causes frustration, anger and potential head-on conflicts. The provision of the speed cushion deters this action as vehicles are required to slow down to pass over the cushion and is more likely to deter motorists speeding up to enter the village before a vehicle can exit.
- 4.9 Where reasonably high volumes of traffic use these features speeds can be reduced appreciably but if there are low volumes of traffic (the likely situation at Long Newton) the speed reduction can be minimal without the provision of a cushion and the potential for collisions at the build-out would increase.
- 4.10 At their meeting on 11 March, Long Newton Parish Council indicated that they wished the cushion to be retained as part of the scheme, and the objections to be considered by the Appeals Committee.

5.0 FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The manufacture and installation of the speed cushion would be funded by the Highways Agency as part of the A66 Long Newton Interchange scheme.

6.0 POLICY CONTENT

The proposals are consistent with the Community Plan (to ensure a safer Borough), the Council's Road Safety Plan and Local Transport Plan.

7.0 CONSULTATION

The scheme was developed by Long Newton Parish Council, working alongside Stockton Council's Community Engineer. A public consultation exercise resulted in 93% of the 99 respondees in Long Newton village indicating their support for the scheme. The police and emergency services have no objections to the proposals. The local Ward Councillor has indicated his support. Finally, statutory consultations involving advertising on site and in the local press were undertaken. This resulted in three objections and a letter of support for the objections from the local branch of the National Farmers Union being received. The objectors will be invited to the Appeals Committee meeting.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

The measures proposed should reduce traffic speeds which should in turn reduce the potential for accidents (or the severity of accidents which do occur).

Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services

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Environmental Implications

The scheme should reduce the potential for collisions thus ensuring that the Borough continues to be a safe, healthy and attractive place in which to live and work.

Community Safety Implications

Addresses road safety concerns amongst the local community.

Background Papers

Scheme of Delegation Report TS.T.47.07
Letter of objection from Mr & Mrs C D Brown, 23 February 2008
Letter of objection from Mr C R Coulthard, 19 February 2008
Letter of objection from Mr A J Coulthard, 19 February 2008
Letter of support for the objectors, NFU Stokesley & Cleveland Branch, 22 February 2008

Education Related Item?

No

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

Western Parishes : Councillor F Salt