

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO APPEALS & COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE

25 JUNE 2009

REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

SURBITON ROAD, STOCKTON PROPOSED SPEED CUSHIONS

1.0 SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek Members' views on an unresolved objection received following the statutory advertising of a proposal to install speed cushions at three locations on Surbiton Road (one location is associated with a pinch point) in the Fairfield/Hartburn area of Stockton.

It is not considered appropriate for the Head of Technical Services to consider the objection as he would effectively be reviewing his own decision.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:-

- (i) Members give consideration to the objection raised by a local resident and also to the comments of the Head of Technical Services.
- (ii) The local Ward Councillors and the objector be informed of the Committee's recommendation.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 In September 2008, approval was given by the Head of Technical Services and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transport to add Surbiton Road traffic calming scheme to the list of contenders for future Local Transport Plan funding. Approval followed a favourable consultation exercise on a scheme designed to reduce accidents and vehicle speeds. **(Appendix 1 TM/10/05B to be displayed at the meeting).**
- 3.2 Surbiton Road was selected for feasibility study from the traffic calming request 'B' list as part of the Capital Programme. It is an unclassified, local distributor road running north-south and has a 30mph speed limit imposed by virtue of street lighting. The series of bends and 13 cul-de-sac accesses should have the effect of reducing speeds, however, the wide grass verges on both sides give the impression the carriageway is open with good forward visibility.
- 3.3 Traffic survey information shows two-way 12 hour traffic flows to be in the region of 2,100 vehicles which is relatively low. However, traffic flows of this volume are much more likely to be free flowing which is conducive to higher speeds.

- 3.4 As a result of the speed survey results which recorded 85%ile speeds northbound at 38.4mph (32.4mph mean speed) and 85%ile speeds southbound at 35.4mph (29.1mph mean speed), Surbiton Road has been added to the complaint site list for mobile camera enforcement action by the Police Camera Partnership. This resulted in 20 tickets being issued between April and July 2008.
- 3.5 7 reported injury accidents, resulting in 14 (3 serious) casualties were recorded in the five year period prior to the study. The accident locations are distributed along the length between Kirkwall Close and Greenfields Way; 5 accidents were in the vicinity of a bend. None of the accidents involved a pedestrian or cyclist.
- 3.6 The approved scheme includes; two sets of speed cushions (3 abreast across the carriageway), a table top junction, a vehicle activated sign, chicanes and one pinch point inclusive of one speed cushion. The physical features are located on the length between Armadale Close and Greenfields Way because of the accident record and bend locations.
- 3.7 At residents' requests investigation into provision of speed cushions along the entire length (1430 metres) of Surbiton Road was conducted, this would have resulted in 12 sets of speed cushions. This option was not supported by the Police or local bus operators because of the potential impacts upon emergency vehicle response times and bus services. This option was thereby withdrawn.
- 3.8 A consultation exercise with residents of Surbiton Road and those of the 13 culs-de-sac was undertaken in March 2008. This exercise had a 45% response rate, of those 75% were in support of the scheme which did not include speed cushions. In response to residents comments a second option was developed which included the incorporation of speed cushions. Frontage residents of Surbiton Road were re-consulted on their preferred option. There was a 41% response rate, of which 45% preferred the speed cushion option, 25% preferred the original proposal and the remaining 30% did not support either option or did not indicate a preference. On the basis that 70% of respondents supported the traffic calming scheme and of those 45% supported the option incorporating speed cushions this was the option agreed with local Ward Councillors to be forwarded for approval.
- 3.9 Funding was allocated to the approved scheme from the Integrated Transport block of the Local Transport Plan and agreed in March 2009 to be constructed as part of the Capital Programme in Summer 2009. Following publication of the Statutory Notices on site and in local press on 15 April 2009, one objection was formally received during the objection period which expired on 21 May 2009. The objection was formally received by the Director of Law and Democracy, an exchange of correspondence has occurred but the objection could not be resolved and the objector has requested that the matter be referred to the Appeals and Complaints Committee. (Copies of correspondence in **Appendix 2**).

4.0 OBJECTION DETAILS

4.1 Mr A R Johnson, 14 Theakston Grove, Hartburn, Stockton on Tees, TS18 5PG Details of objection received 8 May 2009

Mr Johnson has a vehicle with low suspension kept on Surbiton Road and is unable to drive over speed cushions because of the potential for damage to the vehicle. Mr Johnson is concerned about emergency vehicle access and suggests the Council would be liable for any damage to his vehicle as a result of the installation of speed cushions, although he acknowledges a speeding problem exists created by a minority. Mr Johnson does not object to the raised table top junction.

4.2 Network Safety Response to objection dated 13 May 2009

Speed cushions and road humps are one of the most effective traffic calming measures available to local authorities. Each 1mph reduction in average vehicle speed as a result of traffic calming has been found to reduce accidents by around 5%. A scheme to introduce 12 sets of speed cushions was withdrawn and the advertised proposal is for speed cushions at 3 locations along the length of 1430 metres.

The Government's traffic calming policies are evidence based and thereby undergo extensive tests and trials before they are introduced nationally. Regulations relating to the dimensions of road humps and speed cushions can be found in 'The Highways (Road Humps) Regulations 1999'. This legislation provides that the features must be between 25mm and 100mm in height. A height of up to 100mm is permissible although the Department for Transport recommends the use of 75mm high. The proposed speed cushions on Surbiton Road will not exceed 75mm in height.

Provided the features conform to the dimensions specified in the Regulations, vehicles travelling over them at appropriately low speeds should not suffer damage and the Council, as Highway Authority, would not be liable for any damage caused to vehicles.

The Police and Emergency Services have been consulted at each stage in the feasibility study process via the Officers' Traffic Group and also through receipt of formal statutory Notices from Legal Services, no objections to the approved scheme were raised.

5.0 DISCUSSION

- 5.1 Speed cushions are a form of road hump, occupying part of the traffic lane in which it is installed. The most effective forms of traffic calming usually involve some degree of vertical deflection, speed cushions were designed to allow emergency vehicles to straddle the cushion while remaining in its lane. Speed cushions are also the preferred vertical measure on bus routes.
- 5.2 A Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) study tested various designs of road humps with a range of standard and modified vehicles. The current Department for Transport guidance on the design of vertical deflection measures is appropriate for current vehicles. An appropriate speed for driving over speed cushions is less than 20mph and TRL studies have shown that the speeds vehicles travel over cushions and road humps are around 14mph.
- 5.3 There is no legal minimum ground clearance limit for vehicles under UK law so cars could, in theory, be lowered down to any height. Lowered vehicles will be at risk of hitting elevated sections of road, including vertical deflection measures although they would also be likely to hit kerb stones when accessing private driveways.
- 5.4 Mr Johnson's address is on Theakston Grove and it is possible for Mr Johnson to access his property by alternative route to Surbiton Road such as Ellerton Road – Birkdale Road – Darlington Road or by using Upsall Grove – Fairfield Road – Bishopton Road West. There are no vertical deflection measures on these routes. Mr Johnson's vehicle is kept on Surbiton Road. (See location plan in **Appendix 3**).

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The costs of implementing the scheme is £111,400 and is to be funded from the Integrated Transport block of the Council's Local Transport Capital settlement. The financial cost to society for traffic accidents can be calculated using figures issued by the Department for

Transport. The cost of accidents in Stockton, in the latest casualty review was over £40 million which gives an average cost of £98,737 per injury accident. Therefore, if just one injury accident is prevented by the proposed scheme, the costs of implementing the scheme would be justified in cost/benefit terms.

7.0 POLICY CONTENT

The proposals are consistent with the Community Plan (to ensure a safer Borough) and the Council's Local Transport Plan Speed Management Strategy. Reducing road accidents is a key objective of the Council's Public Service Agreement.

8.0 CONSULTATION

An extensive public consultation exercise was undertaken, amendments to the original scheme were made as a result of residents views. Directly affected residents selected the option which incorporated speed cushions. The Officers' Traffic Group, local Ward Councillors and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transport have indicated their support for the scheme.

One objection was received during the statutory advertising process and remains unresolved.

9.0 CONCLUSIONS

Physical measures are considered necessary in order to reduce vehicle speeds along Surbiton Road. Directly affected residents have been consulted and were presented with two options, the preferred option included speed cushions.

The speed cushions will be constructed in accordance with the appropriate Regulations and will not exceed 75mm in height. The Council will not be liable for vehicle damage. Generally, vehicle damage should not occur if appropriate speeds are adopted when travelling over the cushions as concluded in TRL studies.

The scheme aims to reduce vehicle speeds and the number of accidents on Surbiton Road.

Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services

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Environmental Implications

The proposed scheme aims to reduce vehicle speeds and road traffic accidents on Surbiton Road thus ensuring the area is a safe, healthy and attractive place to live.

Community Safety Implications

Addresses current road safety concerns and excessive vehicle speeds on Surbiton Road as confirmed by the injury accident record.

Background Papers

Cabinet Member Report TS.T.63.08
Officers' Traffic Group meeting (21.02.08, 15.05.08, 19.06.08)

Education Related Item?

No

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

Fairfield : Councillors M Perry and W Woodhead
Hartburn : Councillors K Lupton and T Laing