

AGENDA NO:

**REPORT TO APPEALS
& COMPLAINTS
COMMITTEE**

19 JANUARY 2010

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT
AND NEIGHBOURHOOD
SERVICES**

**A177 DURHAM ROAD, STOCKTON – PROPOSED BUS & PEDAL CYCLE ONLY LANES
AND SPEED LIMIT REDUCTION TO 30MPH**

1.0 SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek Members' views on an unresolved objection, received following statutory advertising of a proposal to implement lengths of 24 hour bus and pedal cycle only lanes and to reduce the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph on A177 Durham Road (between Darlington Lane and Harrowgate Lane/B1274 Junction Road), Stockton.

It is not considered appropriate for the Acting Head of Technical Services to consider the objection as he would effectively be reviewing his own decision given this is an agreed scheme, being progressed by Technical Services Division.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:-

- (i) Members give consideration to the objection raised by a resident and also to the comments of the Acting Head of Technical Services both given in item 4.
- (ii) The local Ward Councillors and the objector be informed of the Committee's recommendation.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 In September 2009, details of Department for Transport 'Programme Entry' for a package of improvements known as the Tees Valley Bus Network Improvements were presented to Cabinet. A strategic business case was submitted as part of the bid. Permanent Traffic Regulation Orders are associated with the proposed improvements which were approved to be processed at that Cabinet meeting.
- 3.2 The proposals follow a major review of the bus network in 2004 covering the routes across the Borough of Stockton, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, Darlington and Hartlepool. A comprehensive package of measures was developed to address the long term decline in bus patronage and provide a real alternative to the private car.

- 3.3 During 2006, a list of infrastructure schemes designed to deliver the improvements for each corridor was developed, A177 Durham Road is one of the corridors within the Borough of Stockton. The list of proposals and infrastructure measures that formed the funding bid to Government was agreed between the five local Authorities and bus operators in 2007.
- 3.4 The proposals include improved passenger facilities and bus stops, priority routes for low floor buses and fare and ticketing improvements. Central Government is providing significant grants to contribute to the costs of the improvements. The business case was submitted in August 2009 and a favourable decision is anticipated in January 2010. Year 1 Schemes, including A177 Durham Road, will commence on site in 2010, subject to funding.
- 3.5 The issues specifically identified as part of the funding bid are that buses on Hardwick Road have difficulty joining the A177 Durham Road at peak times and can get delayed during occasional queuing on the A177, again at peak times.
- 3.6 The proposal advertised, was the intention to reduce the 40mph speed limit to 30mph between Darlington Lane 'Mile House' traffic signals and the 'Horse and Jockey' B1274 Junction Road/Harrowgate Lane roundabout. Also, to provide three lengths of 24 hour bus and pedal cycle only lane on both approaches to Hardwick Road/Redhill Road roundabout and on the southbound approach to the 'Mile House' signals. The existing south to west bus only filter lane at the Hardwick Road arm of the roundabout would be opened to all traffic and a new west to north general traffic filter lane would also be created as part of the scheme. (See drawings in **Appendix 1** - larger versions will be displayed at the meeting).
- 3.7 Following publication of the statutory Notices on site and in local press on 19th November 2009, one objection was formally received during the objection period which expired on 10th December 2009. The objection was received by the Director of Law and Democracy, an exchange of correspondence by email 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 DETAILS OF THE OBJECTION

- 4.1 Mr J W Latimer, Comondale House, 1A Countisbury Road, Norton, Stockton on Tees, TS20 1PY.

Mr Latimer is concerned about the potential impact of the proposals for A177 Durham Road upon the B1274 Junction Road. Mr Latimer has contacted various Council departments previously regarding his concerns about B1274 Junction Road.

The objection suggests that motorists seeking the quicker route will choose Junction Road, the B1274 since the proposed improvements are only for bus services and pedal cyclists using A177 Durham Road.

Mr Latimer asks if a specific study to investigate the impact of the advertised proposals upon the adjacent road network has been undertaken and also how the Council plans to discourage motorists using the B1274 instead of A177 if the scheme is implemented.

Copies of Mr Latimer's full concerns and objections are given in **Appendix 2**.

4.2 Response to objection

The issues identified as part of the grant bid are that buses on Hardwick Road have difficulty joining the A177 Durham Road at peak times and can get delayed during occasional queuing on the A177, again at peak times.

In addition to the 24 hour operational bus lanes, the proposed scheme includes measures to address congestion at the Hardwick Road/Redhill Road roundabout for general traffic, with the creation of a west to north filter lane on the roundabout and opening the existing bus only south to west filter lane to all traffic.

The bus lanes, as advertised, do not cover the entire length in both directions, there are three separate lengths (on both approaches to the Hardwick Road/Redhill Road roundabout and on the southbound approach to the Darlington Lane traffic signals). The affected length of A177 Durham Road is a single carriageway and thereby has one traffic lane operating in either direction at the moment, as part of the proposals a general traffic lane running parallel to the bus lane will remain in order to maintain vehicle capacity. No migration of traffic to other routes, including Junction Road where there are also queues at peak times, is anticipated and therefore did not justify or highlight a need to model the impact of the A177 Durham Road scheme upon B1274 Junction Road or other adjacent road network.

Queuing and delays occur at the junctions along the road network rather than along the actual links, therefore the advertised reduction in speed limit from 40mph to 30mph and provision of bus lanes should not adversely affect the motorists choice to use the A177 or notably increase queues or delays when travelling along it, particularly since the scheme, as advertised, also includes improvements to address general traffic congestion at the roundabout along this link.

The Council is the local highway authority for all roads referred to in Mr Latimer's correspondence, as such it is progressing all necessary Traffic Regulation Orders for the schemes. If Mr Latimer contacted the Department for Transport directly to object, as he suggested, they would refer the concerns back to the local authority.

5.0 DISCUSSION

- 5.1 Mr Latimer has been advised that the Committee will only consider the merit of his objection to the proposals for A177 Durham Road against the benefits of introducing the scheme. Mr Latimer has previously received a full response in connection with the issues he raises regarding B1274 Junction Road from Technical Services and has been advised there is nothing further to add as these issues have been fully investigated.
- 5.2 Existing signing at the 'Horse and Jockey' roundabout (B1274 Junction Road/A177/Harrowgate Lane) indicates motorists should use B1274 Junction Road for Norton and A177 for Stockton Centre and the University Hospital of North Tees. The only destination signed along Junction Road on the A1027 at the Norton Green roundabout (B1274 Junction Road/A1027/Norton High Street) indicates motorists should use B1274 for Carlton. The signed destinations on the A1027 at the A177/Bypass Road/A1027 roundabout for the A177 are Sedgefield, Durham and the University Hospital of North Tees.

- 5.3** The signed destinations for the B1274 and A177 indicate the most appropriate routes, they are not the same, traffic is not likely to migrate to B1274 as a result of the proposed scheme since the proposals provide improvements for general traffic. It is not considered feasible that as a result of the scheme motorists would use B1274 instead of A177 to access Stockton Centre from Sedgefield at the 'Horse and Jockey' or that motorists travelling to Durham/Sedgefield from Stockton Centre or A1027 eastbound would continue along the A1027 to avoid the A177 route.
- 5.4** A scheme to address queues on the approach to the A1027 / B1274 Junction Road/Norton Green roundabout is on the list for investigation in Year 2 (2011). The scheme will involve public consultation and may include lengths of bus and pedal cycle only lane and amendments to pedestrian crossing facilities. A list of the proposed schemes for all 3 years is given in **Appendix 3**, the A177 Durham Road scheme is ref S21 and the B1274 Junction Road scheme is ref S24.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The costs specifically associated with advertising the Traffic Regulation Order are £3,363.

Funding for the entire £62 million Tees Valley Bus Network Improvement scheme is provided by the Department for Transport (£40 million) and public/private partnership of Tees Valley Councils and Bus Operators (£22 million).

The A177 Durham Road scheme actual costs are £225,152.

7.0 POLICY CONTENT

The proposals are consistent with National and Regional public transport policies and objectives. The Council's approved Public Transport Strategy is a Daughter Strategy of the Local Transport Plan, it encompasses plans for public transport including cross borough boundary issues. The Tees Valley Bus Network Improvements will contribute to agreed targets set for Local Transport Plan Indicators. Those indicators are included in the Council's Local Area Agreement as well as objectives contained within the Tees Valley City Region Transport Strategy.

The schemes associated with the bus network review have been identified as a priority by the interim North East Regional Transport Board, hence their inclusion within the Regional Funding Advice (RFA). They will ensure that the bus core routes strategy can deliver frequent and reliable bus services and meet bus punctuality targets and help deliver a step change in public transport provision to make it a viable alternative to private car travel.

8.0 CONSULTATION

The Officers Traffic Group and the Council's Cabinet including the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transport have indicated their support for the advertised proposal. There are no frontage residents along the affected length and therefore direct public consultation was not considered necessary.

One objection, from a local resident, was received during the statutory advertising and remains unresolved as part of the legal Traffic Regulation Order process.

9.0 CONCLUSIONS

The strategic business case submitted as part of the DfT Programme Entry ensures the proposals fit with local, regional and national transport policies.

The Tees Valley Authorities are collectively taking action to address the on-going decline in bus patronage across the sub-region.

If traffic capacity is less than the demand it is reasonable to accept drivers will seek to use other, alternative routes. The scheme does not reduce traffic capacity on A177, it makes improvements for all traffic at the roundabout along the affected length to address existing congestion issues experienced at peak times. There is sufficient road space to provide lengths of bus and pedal cycle only lane without reducing capacity and thereby the scheme should not adversely affect the motorists choice to use the A177. The B1274 Junction Road is an unlikely choice for traffic displacement since it suffers from similar peak hour delays to A177 Durham Road.

It is requested that the Committee recommend the objection is over ruled.

Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services

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Environmental Implications

The proposals improve the bus network to provide a real alternative to the private car. Increased use of public transport will help ease peak hour congestion on the Borough's road network.

Community Safety Implications

Reducing the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph will reduce the severity of any accidents that do occur.

Background Papers

Officers Traffic Group 277th meeting on 13 August 2009 (Ref: 153/09)
Cabinet Report dated 3 September 2009
Local Transport Plan 2 (2006 - 2011)

Education Related Item

No

Ward(s) and Ward Councillor(s)

Roseworth : Councillors Beall and Mrs Inman
Hardwick : Councillors Noble and Mrs Nesbitt
