

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO APPEALS & COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE

15 DECEMBER 2010

REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

SURBITON ROAD, FAIRFIELD PROPOSED SPEED CUSHION

1.0 SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek Members views on three unresolved residents objections received following the Statutory advertising of a proposal to install one speed cushion to complete a speed reducing feature at the northern end of Surbiton Road, Fairfield.

Construction of a local safety scheme was completed in December 2009. A post construction Road Safety Audit was conducted in January 2010. One of the recommendations made in the Audit Report was to complete the pinch point in order to create a speed reducing feature for southbound vehicles. The pinch point is considered incomplete because it was previously part of a chicane feature created by two triangular build outs (see **Appendix 1**). The necessary removal of one of the build outs has left the remaining triangle to act as a pinch point, at which southbound vehicles have priority. It is proposed to install a speed cushion adjacent to the remaining build out to slow traffic from both directions.

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 objections raised by local residents in the vicinity of the proposed speed cushion.
- (ii) The local Ward Councillors and the objectors 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 forward a local safety scheme on Surbiton Road as a contender for Local Transport Plan funding. Construction of the scheme took place between August 2009 and December 2009 (see drawing TM10 /05 B in **Appendix 2**).

3.2 Surbiton Road is an unclassified local distributor road running north-south approximately 1430 metres long with a 30mph speed limit imposed by virtue of street lighting. Pre-scheme speed surveys indicated 85%ile speeds northbound were 38.6mph (32.4mph average) and

85%ile speeds southbound were 35.8mph (30.2mph average). The 85%ile speed is the speed at which 85% of traffic is travelling at or below.

- 3.3 A change to the original scheme, made during the actual construction phase was to remove one of the two (2 metres wide) triangular shaped build outs that created a chicane feature at the northern end of Surbiton Road. The build outs were constructed 20 metres apart and were staggered on alternate sides of the road thereby narrowing the road so that traffic from one direction (northbound) must give way to oncoming, opposing, southbound traffic. However, southbound traffic would also be required to slow down in order to negotiate the feature itself. One of the build outs had been installed in the incorrect position, virtually opposite a driveway and subsequently resulted in residents at Nos. 299 and 301 experiencing difficulties when accessing their driveways. It was not possible to re-install the build out in the correct position due to the recently widened driveway at No. 301 and the remaining build out was left to operate as a pinch point, with southbound traffic having priority (see drawing TM10 /12 in **Appendix 3**).
- 3.4 The Council established a Road Safety Audit procedure in March 2009 in response to potential legal challenges from road users on non trunk roads as part of its response to the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007. A Road Safety Audit is a process to ensure the safety of new road schemes and to reduce the likelihood of accidents occurring. Stage 1 and 2 Audits are conducted during the outline sketch and detailed design stages and a Stage 3 Audit is conducted upon construction. The feasibility and detailed design phases for the Surbiton Road scheme were conducted during 2008 prior to the establishment of the Road Safety Audit procedure. The Stage 3 Audit was carried out on 21 January 2010 in the hours of darkness and in daylight by an Audit Team, none of whom had been involved in the design or construction phases previously.
- 3.5 The pinch point was described within the Road Safety Audit Report as incomplete and a recommendation to complete the speed reducing feature was made and subsequently approved within the designer's response – the Audit exceptions report, in April 2010. Installation of a vertical deflection measure that can be installed adjacent to the build out was the only viable option given the positions of private driveways as previously described in paragraph 3.3.
- 3.6 Post construction speed survey results indicate that 85%ile speeds northbound reduced by 8.2mph to 30.4mph (a 6.7mph reduction in average speed to 25.7mph) and 85%ile speeds southbound reduced by 1mph to 34.8mph (a 1.1mph reduction in average speed to 29.1mph).
- 3.6 In September 2010, approval was given by the Head of Service and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transport to advertise the proposal to install a single, multi piece rubber speed cushion (1.90m x 3.10m) adjacent to the remaining build out (see drawing TM 14/93 D in **Appendix 4**). Following publication of the Statutory Notices on site and in local press, three formal objections were received by the Director of Law and Democracy, an exchange of correspondence has occurred but the objections could not be resolved (copies of correspondence in **Appendix 5**).

4.0 **OBJECTION DETAILS**

4.1 **Mr D A & Mrs C A Parker, 297 Surbiton Road, Fairfield, Stockton-on-Tees, TS19 7SA Details of objection dated 11 November 2010**

Mr Parker has a 12 foot long van which he needs for his work. The installation of a speed cushion would cause inconvenience when reversing the van off the driveway. The position of the existing build out results in Mr Parker reversing off the drive and onto the other side of the road to turn the wheel otherwise Mr Parker's van would hit the build out. If northbound general traffic is queuing at the give way line at the build out, northbound

motorbikes are using the cycle by-pass to travel through the feature and pass / overtake the queue. Drivers do not give way as indicated which results in cars mounting the pavement to pass each other when they meet in the remaining single running lane adjacent to the build out. The noise is already unbearable which will be made worse if a speed cushion is installed, particularly as Surbiton Road is a busy bus route.

4.2 Network Safety response dated 25 November 2010

The installation of a speed cushion follows the recommendation made in the independent Road Safety Audit and is the only practicable option to complete the feature.

Vehicle tracking analysis (see **Appendix 6**) indicates that the installation of a speed cushion would not obstruct access to, or from, the driveway of No. 297 even in the 12 foot van. The analysis also suggests that the brick wall across the frontage of No. 297 already inhibits vehicle reversing paths. The existing situation is not further impeded, or indeed created, by the triangular build out and it would actually be possible to reverse off the driveway without the van physically crossing the speed cushion.

It is anticipated that the installation of a speed cushion would physically deter northbound drivers trying to negotiate the feature before an approaching southbound vehicle because they would need to slow significantly as a result of the speed cushion. This should also reduce instances of vehicles mounting the footway but if this persists the need for additional bollards on the east side of Surbiton Road could be considered.

It is not practicable to restrict the advisory cycle by-pass to pedal cycles and prohibit motor cycles. The by-pass is necessary to prevent cyclists proceeding through the centre of the feature and coming into conflict with vehicles.

Noise level differences which residents attribute to speed cushions tend to be well within limits put forward in British Standards and in research by organisations such as the Transport Research Laboratory. Complaints relating to noise have been found to be generated by a change in the character of noise rather than the noise levels actually becoming substantially increased.

4.3 Mr J Bennett, 286 Surbiton Road, Fairfield, Stockton-on-Tees, TS19 7SA Details of objection received 18 November 2010

The scheme has not assisted road safety on Surbiton Road, there has been an increase in accidents since its construction. An additional speed cushion must be needed because the existing measures have not worked. The scheme makes driving along Surbiton Road more difficult and dangerous.

It is difficult to reverse off the driveway because of the existing feature when traffic is queuing, which would be made worse by a speed cushion.

4.4 Network Safety response dated 26 November 2010

Since the majority of the scheme has been implemented, vehicle speed surveys along Surbiton Road indicate that average vehicle speeds northbound have reduced by 6.7mph and by 1.1mph southbound. Every 1mph reduction in average vehicle speed as a result of traffic calming has been found to reduce injury accidents by around 5%. The reduction in vehicle speeds co-incidentally reduces the potential for injury accidents, or the severity of any accidents that may occur.

At the time of writing this report the scheme has been completed for 11 months which is too short a time period for accident trends to have developed. The injury accident records are

up to end of September 2010. In the first 9 months of the scheme completion, there were no reported injury accidents along the full length of Surbiton Road.

Traffic survey information indicated that Surbiton Road is acceptable for chicanes and pinch points. Generally, priority working is acceptable for traffic flows of 850 vehicles per hour in both directions. Traffic flows during the busiest hours on Surbiton Road were surveyed at less than 300. Therefore, traffic flows should be sufficient to ensure opposing vehicles will meet and slow down, as is the intended purpose of the features, but flows should not be high enough for significant traffic queues to occur. The scheme on Surbiton Road aims to achieve lower vehicle speeds and reduce the number and severity of recorded injury accidents. There are many examples across the Borough where residents must leave their driveway and join the carriageway where there is queuing traffic such as at junctions, particularly signalised junctions.

The installation of a single speed cushion would complete the speed reducing feature and would not obstruct access to residents driveways.

4.5 Ms M Brown, 290 Surbiton Road, Fairfield, Stockton-on-Tees, TS19 7SA Details of objection dated 12 November 2010

The traffic survey was conducted to the south of Culross Grove which is nowhere near the proposed speed cushion location. The survey was only done for a portion of time and therefore does not provide a full picture of what happens throughout each day. From the quoted accidents, how many occurred at the proposed speed cushion location? The traffic calming request list in Appendix 14 of the latest Road Casualty Review (2009) shows no accidents on Surbiton Road in 2007-2009, why was the scheme constructed in 2010?

There is going to be a major accident at this feature, more obstacles for drivers to negotiate will exacerbate the potential for accidents. Residents were consulted on the proposed remedial measures, their views were not considered and a decision to proceed has already been made. Cars do not give way as directed which will be made worse by a speed cushion because drivers on one side will have to slow down giving chance for the other side to put their foot down. Motorists drive around the build out and use the pavement to pass cars instead of giving way. Remove the build out and install speed cushions at intervals up to the table top junction (Culross Grove).

4.6 Network Safety response dated 26 November 2010

The pre-scheme and post-scheme automatic speed surveys were conducted at a point considered to be appropriate to record the higher vehicle speeds since it is the only straight length (between Nos. 216 and 182) with wide grass verges and good forward visibility. An automatic vehicle survey logs vehicle speeds and volumes in both directions over a continuous 24 hour/7 day period. The post construction speed survey was conducted at the same location as the pre-construction survey, in order to enable a 'like for like' comparison from quantitative data sets. The results show speeds have reduced in both directions but northbound speeds have reduced more significantly.

The feasibility study for the scheme was conducted in 2008. The accident data analysed was for the 5 years preceding the study (2002-2007). The scheme was approved in September 2008 by the Head of Technical Services and appropriate Cabinet Member. Funding was allocated to the scheme in the financial year 2009/10 and construction began in August 2009. The Road Casualty Review refers to accident statistics for the latest 3 full calendar year period, therefore 2007 to 2009.

1 serious and 2 slight accidents occurred at the first bend at the northern end of Surbiton Road, in the vicinity of Kirkwall Close in the years 2002-2007. A slight accident would constitute a sprain, bruises, slight cuts or slight shock. An example of injuries sustained as

a result of a serious accident would be a fracture, internal injuries, concussion and detention in hospital for treatment. It was considered necessary to install a speed reducing feature at this bend to reduce the risk of further accidents occurring or the severity of any that do occur.

It is anticipated that installing a speed cushion would further reduce vehicle speeds, particularly southbound. This would ensure potential for accidents would also reduce or that the severity of any that do occur would lessen. In addition, the installation of a speed cushion would physically deter northbound drivers trying to negotiate the feature before an approaching southbound vehicle because they would need to slow significantly as a result of the speed cushion. This should also reduce instances of vehicles mounting the footway but if this persists the need for additional bollards on the east side of Surbiton Road could be considered.

The latest consultation exercise with 13 residents was unfortunately mis-represented when residents should have been informed/advised of the proposal, rather than consulted, as though the proposal to proceed to Statutory advertising stage was optional. The internal procedure has subsequently been modified to prioritise the Road Safety Audit process which, in future, will be presented to residents for information rather than form a consultative exercise. This is the first local safety scheme in the Borough to have been through the Stage 3 Road Safety Audit process.

To remove the build out, re-construct the carriageway and install a set of two speed cushions at intervals between Bishopton Road West and Culross Grove would incur additional, unnecessary costs (approximate estimate is in the region of £14,000), since the existing feature could be completed by the installation of a single speed cushion. A proposal to install speed cushions along the entire length of Surbiton Road was investigated at the feasibility study stage and was rejected by the emergency services and bus operators and was subsequently withdrawn. The approach to speed cushions should be clear of parked vehicles in order to enable large vehicles to straddle the cushion because parked vehicles would affect their approach angle and 24 hour waiting restrictions on both sides of the road would thereby be required. Waiting restrictions of any type are also likely to receive strong objection from local residents.

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. However, a clear approach to the speed cushion is required for these large vehicles to line up straight to pass over the actual cushion.
- 5.2 The features installed on Surbiton Road have been successful when implemented elsewhere in the Borough in areas comparable with Surbiton Road. For example, speed cushions in Hilton village, chicanes proposed in Wynyard and priority working pinch points in Cowpen Bewley village and Low Grange Avenue in Billingham.
- 5.3 In response to local residents and other road users' requests for investigation into provision of speed cushions along the straight stretch of Surbiton Road, it was also proposed to install one new set of two speed cushions in the vicinity of No. 200 Surbiton Road. 9 directly affected residents were consulted on this proposal, 8 replies were returned of which 1 was in support and 7 were opposed. This element was subsequently removed from the remedial measures scheme. This aspect was not a recommendation from the Road Safety Audit. It was investigated due to comments from local residents that the distance between the raised table top at Culross Grove and the first set of speed cushions enabled vehicles

to build up speed. The original scheme used minimal number of physical features located at the injury accident locations, which were specifically at the bends.

- 5.4 The objectors have raised the issue of difficulties accessing their driveways due to the existing built out. AutoCAD vehicle tracking analysis indicates that access to/from their driveways is not impeded by the build out. The difficulty is described as when indicating to make the manoeuvre to access their drive, motorists behind are not sure of their intentions and are frustrated waiting behind them. This is simply an example of poor driver behaviour, there are other examples in the Borough of roads that carry significantly more through traffic than Surbiton Road where frontage residents must make the same manoeuvre; such as Bishopton Road West, B1274 Junction Road, A177 Durham Road and Darlington Lane. However, those drivers on Surbiton Road will be travelling at lower speeds as a result of the scheme, the situation is also similar to residents accessing their driveways on Low Grange Avenue in Billingham which has a similar 'priority working' scheme.
- 5.5 The chicane was the most northerly speed reducing feature encountered by motorists travelling southbound on Surbiton Road from Bishopton Road West. The removal of the build out from the southbound carriageway has resulted in no physical speed reducing feature for southbound motorists, which the installation of a speed cushion would also address. Vehicle speed surveys along Surbiton Road indicate that vehicle speeds northbound have reduced significantly more than southbound vehicle speeds (average results are a 6.7mph reduction compared with a 1.1mph reduction and 85%ile results are a 8.2mph reduction compared with a 1.0mph reduction).

It is considered necessary for a physical feature to be installed rather than simply reversing the priority at the feature (from southbound to northbound) because reports of poor driver behaviour at the existing feature suggest motorists using Surbiton Road do not give way, as indicated by appropriate road signs and markings, in the absence of a feature to physically deter motorists from trying to get through before opposing traffic. Given that the existing build out feature is in the northbound carriageway, it would be unusual to have priority for northbound traffic because the physical feature is normally constructed in the side of the carriageway that should give way to oncoming traffic.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The costs of implementing the remedial measures is estimated at £6,575 to be funded from the Road Safety Audit revisions budget in the 2010/11 Capital Programme.

The cost of collisions to society is as follows:

Fatal	£1,876,830
Serious	£215,170
Slight	£22,230

(Costs based on Transport Analysis Guidance April 2009).

On that basis, if the severity of one accident is reduced from serious to slight, it would provide a saving to society of £192,940.

7.0 POLICY CONTENT

The proposals are consistent with the Local Transport Plan and Community Plan in ensuring a safer Borough, improving road safety and security of assets and reducing road casualties. The Stage 3 Road Safety Audit was conducted in accordance with HD19/03 and the Road Safety Audit procedure ref TS.T.160.80

8.0 CONSULTATION

The original consultation exercise in 2008 had a 45% response rate with 338 households returning their reply slip. Of those, 251 (75%) were in support, 85 (25%) were not in support and 2 were undecided.

The Officers' Traffic Group, Head of Technical Services and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transport indicated their support for the original scheme and the proposed remedial measures.

13 households were 'consulted' on the proposed remedial scheme; 6 replies were returned of which 5 were opposed and 1 was in support. The results were presented to local Ward Councillors who represented local residents' views and opposed the decision to proceed. All 13 households were sent a copy of the Statutory Notice.

3 objections were received during the statutory advertising and remain unresolved.

9.0 CONCLUSIONS

Physical measures were considered necessary in order to reduce vehicle speeds. The scheme has been successful in reducing speeds along Surbiton Road, particularly northbound and since construction of the scheme there have been no reported injury accidents.

The need to complete the feature was recommended in the independent Stage 3 Road Safety Audit, the installation of a single speed cushion is the most feasible, practical and cost effective way of complying with the recommendation. The proposal to proceed to Statutory advertising, against the preference of local residents and Ward Councillors, can be justified by the speed survey results which indicated northbound speeds have reduced more significantly than southbound speeds (average results are a 6.7mph reduction compared with a 1.1mph reduction and 85%ile results are a 8.2mph reduction compared with a 1.0mph reduction). Priority through the pinch point feature is for southbound traffic. The installation of a speed cushion may also address the instances of failure to give way as described by the objectors. Of the 7 reported injury accidents in the preceding 5 years of the original 2008 study; 2 slights and 1 serious accident had occurred at this location.

It is recommended that the speed cushion is installed to complete the feature in accordance with the Road Safety Audit recommendation and that the objections are over ruled.

Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services

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Environmental Implications

The proposed remedial measures aim to further reduce vehicle speeds and potential for road traffic accidents on Surbiton Road thus ensuring the area continues to be a safe, healthy and attractive place to live.

Community Safety Implications

Addresses issues arising in the post construction Road Safety Audit.

Background Papers

Officers' Traffic Group (09/09/10)
Stage 3 Road Safety Audit (Arup ref 12S435-38)
Surbiton Road Exceptions Report (March 2010)
Report TS.T.48.10
Report TS.T.63.08
Cabinet Member Briefing minutes 05/07/10

Education Related Item?

No

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

Fairfield : Councillors M Perry and W Woodhead