

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO APPEALS & COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE

3rd MARCH 2011

REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

A174 PARKWAY EXTENSION, STOCKTON / MIDDLESBROUGH – PROPOSED REDUCTION IN SPEED LIMIT FROM 60MPH TO 50MPH

1.0 SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek Members' views on an unresolved objection received following statutory advertising of the proposed speed limit reduction on A174 Parkway Extension.

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 and the comments of the Head of Technical Services.
- (ii) A recommendation on the merits of the objection is made to the Head of Technical Services.
- (iii) The local Ward Councillors, Thornaby Town Council / Middlesbrough Borough Council and the objector are informed of the Committee's recommendation.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 In August 2006 the Department for Transport (DfT) published the National Guidance 'Setting Local Speed Limits' Circular 01/2006 and asked all traffic authorities to use the guidance to assess speed limits on all A and B roads within their authority.
- 3.2 The Stockton-on-Tees review assessed all A and B roads and some C roads where the speed limit are greater than 30mph. Using the methodology recommended in the National Guidance, the study utilised speed and accident data to assess whether the current speed limit on each section of route included in the review is appropriate purely from a technical perspective.
- 3.3 The review has resulted in a number of recommendations for changes to the road network or for further study work. In accordance with the DfT timescale, this work needs to be undertaken so that any necessary changes to speed limits on A and B roads can be completed by 2011. All Ward Councillors were made aware that the Speed Limit Review document was put on the Council's Intranet in September 2009 and is still on the site.

- 3.4 A174 Parkway Extension, the full length between A1044 Thornaby Road and A174 / A19 Parkway Interchange, has been identified as a priority action. The findings were that the average speeds (39.2mph and 48.1mph) are much lower than the existing National 60mph speed limit. The accident rate per 100 million vehicle kilometres was calculated based on the total number of accidents over the 3 years (2005-07). The accident rate is (16), this is lower than the National average (24), however, the route is unlit and pedestrians cross the road between Teesside Industrial Estate and the housing areas to the north. The recorded mean speeds also suggest that it would be appropriate to reduce the speed limit to 50mph.
- 3.5 It is worth noting that planning permission to construct a roundabout on A174 Parkway Extension to serve Teesside Industrial Estate has been given – this may further reduce traffic speeds on the road and make the current National speed limit even more inappropriate.
- 3.6 It should also be noted that approximately 100 metres of the road at the Eastern end approaching A19 is outside the boundary of Stockton-on-Tees. This section is within the Borough of Middlesbrough. Middlesbrough Council have indicated that, subject to Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council paying all costs and leading on the preparation of the Traffic Regulation Order required, they have no objections to the proposals.
- 3.7 The proposals are shown on drawing no. TM2/100 in **Appendix 1**, and were approved via Scheme of Delegation Report TS.T.118.09.
- 3.8 The scheme has been through the relevant consultation procedure, including local Ward Councillors, Thornaby Town Council and the police.
- 3.9 As a result, a traffic regulation Order for the reduction in speed limit was advertised on site and in the local press on 11th November 2011. Following publication of the statutory notices, the Director of Law and Democracy received one letter of objection from Mr T Bounds. Despite further correspondence with the objector (copies of correspondence in **Appendix 2**) the objection remains unresolved.

4.0 OBJECTION DETAILS

- 4.1 The main grounds for objection are the lack of hazards on the road – the road is straight in character, has no junctions or parking lay-bys, no properties adjacent to it, is not used by pedestrians or cyclists, and that vehicle speeds are already low. Mr Grounds considers that the proposed speed limit reduction will not contribute to road safety on the affected length of road.

4.2 Response to objection

Circular 01/2006 'Setting Local Speed Limits' provides guidance on the methodology that a speed limit review should follow. It recommends that accident data should be assessed together with a survey of traffic speeds to indicate whether an existing speed limit is appropriate for the type of road and mix of use.

- 4.3 A number of other National Guidance documents were also reviewed to provide context to the Speed Limit Review Study. The DfT recently published 'A Safer Way', a document proposing a new approach to road safety and setting accident reduction targets for achievement by 2010. This particular document highlights a particular concern with rural roads. It notes that whilst just over 40% of all distance travelled is on rural roads, they account for 62% of all deaths. The report illustrates the connection between speed and accident severity and concludes that if speeds were reduced on rural roads then the rate of death and injury on these roads would also decrease. Whilst the document stops short of reducing the National Speed Limit from 60mph to 50mph on all single carriageway rural roads, it does emphasise the greatly enhanced risk of fatalities should accidents occur at 60mph compared to 50mph.

- 4.4 In May 2005, the research paper 'Managing Speed on our Roads' was published by the DfT. The paper discusses the consequences of speed highlighting key statistics, including the 'for each 1mph reduction on average speed, accident frequency is reduced by 5%'.
- 4.5 Road Casualties Great Britain: 2007 Annual Report, DfT published in 2008 reports National accident rates which can be compared with local accident rates as part of a speed limit review. Local accident rates are detailed in the annual Road Casualty Review.

A174 Parkway Extension

- 4.6 This length of road is approximately 1km in length, and is currently subject to the National Speed limit of 60mph.
- 4.7 As set out in Circular 01/2006, speed limits are now based on mean speeds rather than 85th percentile speeds.
- The average speeds of 39.2mph and 48.1mph, and even the 85th percentile speeds (44.7mph and 55.3mph), are much lower than the 60mph speed limit. This indicates the drivers are assuming a speed at which they feel it is safe to drive which is much lower than the plated limit.
- 4.8 The accident rate (16) is lower than the Nation average (24) and presents no cause for Significant concerns at the present time. However, the road is unlit and pedestrians do cross the road to and from Teesside Industrial Estate – desire lines are evident along the road. Cyclists also use the road though flows are light.
- 4.9 In summary, the recorded mean speeds suggest that it would be appropriate to reduce the speed limit to 50mph. There are proposals to construct a roundabout on the link, which may further reduce traffic speeds on the road.
- 4.10 Mr Bound's concerns with regard to the road safety on Thornaby Road and the access / egress to Hollybush Petrol Filling Station are considered in the correspondence in **Appendix 2**.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The estimate cost of initial statutory consultation associated with the proposals is £1000 to be funded from the 2010/11 Speed Limit Review budget. The cost of the signing / lining works and remaining statutory consultation is currently being estimated and will also be funded from the 2011/12 budgets.

6.0 POLICY CONTENT

The proposals are consistent with the Sustainable Community Strategy to ensure a safer Borough and the Local Transport Plan.

7.0 CONSULTATION

Councillor Mrs Craggs and Middlesbrough Council support the proposals. No response was received from Councillor Mrs Walmsley and Thornaby Town Council, Statutory consultations have been undertaken. Cleveland Police are in support of the proposals.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

The measures proposed are the most appropriate solution and should reduce traffic speeds which should in turn reduce the potential for accidents, or the severity of any accidents which do occur.

Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services

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Environmental Implications

None.

Community Safety Implications

Addressed Road Safety concerns.

Background Papers

Scheme of Delegation Report TS/T/118/09
Speed Limit Review
Letters of Objection and Responses

Education Related Item?

No

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

Stainsby Hill : Councillors Mrs E Craggs and Mrs S Walmsley



Key

Proposed speed limit reduction from 60mph to 50mph.

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Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council 100023297

Rev	Description	Drn	Chk	Date

Drawing Status: PRELIMINARY APPROVAL INFORMATION TENDER CONTRACT

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Project
A174 PARKWAY EXTENSION
Content
ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING SPEED LIMIT

Scales
1:5000
Date
FEB '10

Drawn GCF
Checked KM
Job No. TM2/100



Stockton-on-Tees
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Dear Sir

A174 Parkway Extension Speed Limit

would like to object to the proposal to reduce the speed limit on the A174 Parkway Extension that was recently published. I consider this proposal completely inappropriate for this road.

The road has unusually few hazards – it is almost completely straight with no gradient, it has no intermediate junctions with any other roads, there are no parking facilities along it, no properties face onto it, is not used by pedestrians or cyclists (with no pavement), nor does any footpath cross it. The road was built as a major trunk road and is effectively one half of a dual carriageway. If this road is not suitable for the National Speed Limit, one wonders which road might be!

I assume this proposal relates to safety. I have travelled along this stretch of road at least twice a day during the working week for the last 12 years. In that time I can recall seeing only 1 possible incident along the main stretch of road. I have seen accidents at the traffic lights at Thornaby Road; I have seen incidents at the A19 roundabout. However, these are obviously not speed related. The place with the most accidents in the vicinity is the Petrol Station on Thornaby Road, where people turn right out of the petrol station across 2 lanes of traffic with very limited visibility. Despite the frequency of incidents, no action on this issue has been taken!

For a proposal to reduce the speed limit for safety reasons, I would expect proper data on accidents along the stretch of road in question to be presented. I would also expect a thorough analysis of the accident data to be made, including locations of accidents and causes. This would enable proper consideration of the sorts of accidents that had occurred and what measures to reduce accidents would be appropriate – and whether excessive speed was a major factor or not. Without such analysis, merely reducing the speed limit might be futile as it may not address the causes of accidents.

In short, I expect a proper case to be made to reduce this speed limit, demonstrating that this action would be appropriate and necessary.

Yours faithfully



T A Bounds

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Dear Sir

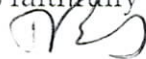
A174 Parkway Extension - Speed Limit Amendment

Thank you for your letter of the 30th November in response to my objection to the reduction in the speed limit on the A174 Parkway Extension. I still wish my objection to stand.

Concerning the Parkway itself, you say that the accident rate is lower than the National average - I therefore fail to understand the reasons for which you are proposing this action. As you say, cyclists are very few, and some pedestrians do cross the road from the industrial estates, but have there been any pedestrian casualties?? Traffic may travel on the Parkway Extension somewhat slower than the speed limit, in my opinion unnecessarily slow given the nature of the road, but I fail to see why this should imply a reduction in the speed limit. If anything, this will only encourage traffic to slow even further.

Regarding the Hollybush Petrol Station access, I am slightly gratified that is recognised as a trouble spot. However, you seem to have mistaken the nature of the accidents! The problems I have observed are NOT with vehicles entering the Petrol station, but with vehicles turning right across three lanes of traffic when **leaving** it! Traffic turning right has two lanes of northbound traffic to negotiate, both doing different things, as well as a lane of Southbound traffic. The problem comes as visibility is very restricted, with large numbers of vehicles blocking the view, especially of traffic in the right hand Northbound lane, and of Southbound traffic. The measures you have taken seem very misdirected - the yellow box markings are at the wrong access point, and probably wouldn't help the issue anyway, and the 40mph speed limit is mostly irrelevant as the petrol station is only a 100m or so from the traffic lights. It seems somewhat odd that the garage's perceived loss of business is apparently of more impact than the clear risk of serious injury to road users. It also seems indicative of the attitude that reduction of speed limits seems regarded as a 'cure-all' for any road safety situation, whether speed is a factor or not.

Yours faithfully



T A Bounds