

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO APPEALS & COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE

20 JULY 2012

REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

BUTTERFIELD DRIVE/GREENFIELD DRIVE/BIRCHFIELD DRIVE, EAGLESCLIFFE – PROPOSED ENVIRONMENTAL TRAFFIC CALMING SCHEME

1.0 SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek Member's views regarding outstanding objections received following advertising of vertical deflection traffic calming features on Butterfield Drive, Greenfield Drive and Birchfield Drive in Eaglescliffe, and school time waiting restrictions on lengths of Butterfield Drive, Abbeyfield Drive, Broomfield Avenue and Birchfield Drive.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:-

- (i) Members given consideration to the objections 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 Councillors, Egglecliffe & Eaglescliffe Parish Council and the objectors are informed of the Committee's recommendation.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 Since 1993 the Council's Design Guide and Specification ensured that all new residential roads in the Borough were calmed to ensure an average speed of around 20mph with the use of physical features or simply through the road alignment. In response to an ever increasing number of requests to provide traffic calming on residential roads built prior to 1993, the Council developed the innovative Community Engineer initiative in 2001. The Council's Community Engineer was authorised to work alongside Parish/Town Councils and formally constituted residents groups to develop environmental traffic calming schemes for their particular street /area in reaction to resident's concerns with respect to vehicle speeds and the potential for accidents.
- 3.2 The scheme in the Butterfield Drive area was instigated by Egglecliffe & Eaglescliffe Parish Council following concerns expressed, by word of mouth, by residents in the area with regard to the speed of some drivers using some roads in the Orchard Estate.

- 3.3 The Parish Council worked alongside Stockton Council's former Community Engineer to develop the scheme. Options of the traffic calming measures available were given to the Parish Council, who were encouraged to take ownership of the scheme. The Parish Council opted to develop a scheme featuring road humps.
- 3.4 An initial scheme featuring road humps on Butterfield Drive and Greenfield Drive only, was agreed by the Parish Council at their meeting on 16 October 2008. It should be noted that this scheme also featured the inclusion of school time waiting restrictions in the vicinity of Junction Farm Primary School, which were included at the request of the Officers' Traffic Group, and were not a desire of the Parish Council.
- 3.5 An initial consultation exercise via letter drop dated 30 October 2008 was carried out. The results of the consultation indicated that approximately 63% of residents who responded supported the scheme. A number of respondents indicated that the scheme as originally proposed would result in more traffic on Birchfield Drive. It was therefore considered that the scheme should be amended to include calming features on Birchfield Drive and the residents of Birchfield Drive be re-consulted with respect to this element. This course of action was approved via Scheme of Delegation report TS.T.128.08.
- 3.6 Subsequent to the first consultation exercise a scheme was therefore developed for Birchfield Drive, and this was approved by the Parish Council. A second consultation dated 13 November 2009 was carried out. The results indicated that, when both consultation exercises were considered together, a 68% support for the revised scheme was achieved.
- 3.7 The revised scheme was subsequently progressed through the relevant consultation procedure involving Ward Councillors, the Parish Council and police, and approved as a contender for future funding by the Head of Technical Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Transport (see Scheme of Delegation Report TS/T/154/09 in **Appendix 1**).
- 3.8 Although no funding was identified to implement the scheme in 2010/11 or 2011/12, at their Autumn 2011 meeting, Western Area Transport Strategy (ATS) Stakeholders requested that the statutory consultations associated with the scheme be undertaken, with a view to possibly allocating funding in 2012/13. (The ATS process involves local transport stakeholders, including Ward Councillors, in four areas of the Borough – based on the Renaissance area boundaries – being allocated an annual budget to spend on transport priorities in their area).
- 3.9 As a result, a Notice of Works for the round top road humps and school time waiting restrictions was advertised in the Evening Gazette and on site on 19 January 2012 with the objection period expiring on 9th February. Following the publication of the statutory Notices, the Director of Law and Democracy received 9 letters of objection.
- 4.0 DETAILS OF THE OBJECTIONS.**
- 4.1 Copies of the letters of objection received are attached as **Appendix 2**. Several of the objectors had common concerns as detailed overleaf.

Table 4.1

CONCERN	OBJECTOR(S)	COMMENTS
1. Scheme is not justified in terms of prevailing speeds or accidents and/or how many residents asked for traffic calming.	D H & M Griffiths Mr W M Shore	The Parish Council have indicated that they do not have any written requests for traffic calming, such requests have been by word of mouth only. Butterfield Drive, Greenfield Drive and Burnmoor Drive were already on the Council's Traffic Calming Request list in 2008 following previous written requests from residents.
2. Other measures should be used to slow traffic speeds.	Mr David Gill G.W. Lewis D H & M Griffiths Mr. Terry Mattinson Mr. Paul Kay	Options of the traffic calming measures available were given to the Parish Council by the Community Engineer. The Parish Council opted to develop a scheme featuring road humps. Such schemes are proven to result with the largest reduction in speeds. Prevailing vehicle speeds are unlikely to permit 20mph via signs only to be progressed, average speeds would need to be less than 24mph as the Police require such zones to be self-enforcing. Signage only schemes have a much lower speed reduction impact. Vehicle Activated Signs tend to be used on roads higher in the hierarchy than those on the Orchard estate. Western ATS stakeholders, where the VAS signs tend to receive funding have not indicated a desire to provide one here. Instead, they are seeking to reduce actual average speeds to around 20mph which could not be achieved by provision of VAS.

CONCERN	OBJECTOR(S)	COMMENTS
<p>3. Insufficient consultation/level of support not sufficient/how many car owners where consulted.</p>	<p>Mr David Gill D H & M Griffiths</p>	<p>Two public consultation exercises have ensured that all frontages on the affected roads have been consulted directly via a 'letterdrop' including plan, questionnaire and pre-paid reply envelope. Statutory consultations involving advertising in the local free press, which all properties receive, and via street notices has also been undertaken.</p> <p>284 responses from 600 invitations to respond provides a 47.3% response rate. The Council's Policy, Performance and Partnerships Section have indicated that to achieve a response rate in the region of just 30% is not usually considered too low to be indicative of what those invited to respond to a consultation are likely to think. It is perhaps most relevant to understand that it is likely that not all people who responded to the consultation were either car owners or car users; most were likely to have a view on the scheme's implementation in a variety of different ways; and, it is every individual potential consultee's decision to respond to a consultation or not. Taking this into account, because it is usually those who feel most strongly about (either for, or against) a proposal/situation who respond to consultations about it, the Council considers the response rate to, and the overall results from, the consultation in question adequately reflects the views of stakeholders that will be impacted by it.</p>

CONCERN	OBJECTOR(S)	COMMENTS
4. Traffic calming causes pollution and/or environmental intrusion.	Mr David Gill G W Lewis Ian Caley D H & M Griffiths	The emissions from vehicles is lower at lower speeds, the provision of speed humps to current guidelines should encourage motorists to drive at lower speeds through traffic calmed areas rather than accelerate between features and then slow down for the next one, thus reducing vehicle emissions. Generally speaking, the Council receives few complaints with regard to noise problems for calming schemes featuring round top road humps, and most new estate roads built since 1993 have such features.
5. Potential damage to cars/difficulties for cyclists.	Mr T F Shevels GW Lewis Ian Caley D H & M Griffiths	The emissions from vehicles is lower at lower speeds, the provision of speed humps to current guidelines should encourage motorists to drive at lower speeds through traffic calmed areas rather than accelerate between features and then slow down for the next one, this reducing vehicle emissions. Generally speaking, the Council receives few complaints with regard to noise problems for calming schemes featuring round top road humps. Research by the Transport Research Laboratory has shown that if road humps are negotiated at an appropriate speed there is no evidence of any vehicle damage or significant and permanent changes to the vehicles suspension systems.

CONCERN	OBJECTOR(S)	COMMENTS
5. (continued)		Full width road humps can cause issues for cyclists, however, tapered road humps are proposed which leave a gap of around 400mm adjacent to the kerb.
6. Cost of scheme cannot be justified/waste of money.	Mr David Gill G W Lewis Ian Caley D H & M Griffiths	The scheme is considered a priority by Western ATS stakeholders who have allocated funding in 2012/13. Reducing high speeds in residential areas and around schools is one of their top priorities.

4.2 Some objectors had individual concerns as detailed below:-

Table 4.2

OBJECTOR	OBJECTION	COMMENTS
Mr David Gill	<p>Too many road humps / scheme should be restricted to Butterfield Drive and Birchfield Drive areas.</p> <p>Statutory consultations for the scheme should not have been carried out until funding was confirmed. It may be 2 – 3 years before the scheme is implemented.</p>	<p>The road humps are spaced in accordance with advice given in the Department for Transport's Road Hump Regulations. The Parish Council expressed a desire to include Greenfield Drive within the scheme.</p> <p>Western Area Transport Strategy (ATS) stakeholders requested that the statutory consultations associated with the scheme be carried out in 2011/12, with a view to allocating funding in 2012/13. ATS stakeholders have now allocated full funding for the scheme in 2012/13 at their meeting on 16 May 2012, subject to favourable completion of the statutory processes.</p>
Mr T.F Shevels	Road hump outside of this property is too close to Greenfield Drive and should be moved.	The road hump has been positioned to avoid private driveways and to maintain the desired hump spacing. To move it at this stage would require commencing the statutory consultation process again.
G W Lewis	Also objects to provision of school time waiting restrictions.	There is no right to park on a public highway, it is normally tolerated unless it is causing a road safety hazard or obstructing traffic flow. In this case, the restrictions are proposed to improve road safety for pedestrians and prevent inconsiderate parking around junctions. The increased perception of safety may encourage more parents to 'park and stride' from nearby parking areas.

OBJECTOR	OBJECTION	COMMENTS
Ilan Caley	<p>Nuisance drivers have grown up or moved away.</p> <p>Proposed road hump is sited near his property which will cause environmental intrusion.</p> <p>Provision of road humps will exacerbate school time parking issues.</p> <p>How will the proposed school time waiting restrictions be enforced?</p>	<p>Comment noted, but the Parish Council have initiated the scheme prompted by concerned residents and other nuisance drivers could replace them.</p> <p>The road hump has been positioned to avoid private driveways and to maintain the desired hump spacing. To move it at this stage would require commencing the statutory consultation process again.</p> <p>Drivers are permitted to park on round top road humps, unless there are waiting restrictions present indicating otherwise.</p> <p>The Council's Civil Enforcement Officers have powers to enforce the restrictions. Enforcement of school gate parking issues is a priority and the restrictions will be enforced on a regular basis.</p>
Mrs M R Farr	Where will the road hump in the vicinity of her property be located.	<p>The Community Engineer proposed a road hump to slow speeds as close as is practicable to the pedestrian desire line parallel to Durham Lane and associated with the Kingsmead development to the north. However, the proposed location conflicts directly with driveway accesses and is not in line with best practice. It is therefore proposed that the Council re-engage with affected residents in the vicinity to hopefully agree an alternative location, possibly a flat top road hump directly on the pedestrian desire line. Note that this will require this particular road hump to be removed from phase 1 works, any replacement feature proposed would be subject to statutory consultation and implemented separately. Subject to favourable public and statutory consultation it is anticipated that this work could be completed as a second phase in 2012/13.</p>

OBJECTOR	OBJECTION	COMMENTS
Mrs M R Farr (continued)	Re-design of the road layout to slow the left turn manoeuvre from Durham Lane into Greenfield Drive should be investigated.	<p>If agreement for a revised scheme cannot be reached the remainder of the scheme could 'stand alone'.</p> <p>Outside of the remit of the scheme, however this location is being investigated with an aim to improve access to the low floor platform at the bus stop for public services vehicles, so the suggestion can be considered as part of that study.</p>
DH & M Griffiths	<p>Could we have statistics of the number of road accidents or incidents on Greenfield Drive that would justify the scheme going ahead?</p> <p>What date was the scheme presented and agreed with the Parish Council prior to any consultation with the residents?</p>	<p>There have been 2 recorded injury accidents on Greenfield Drive in the latest 6 year period (2006-11).</p> <p>The Parish Council have provided minutes which show the scheme was presented at their meeting on 16 October 2008. However, they have also indicated that they feel the scheme which was consulted on was over stringent and not a true reflection of the requirements presented to the Parish Council. It would appear that this was largely due to the inclusion of school time waiting restrictions, which were not a desire of the Parish Council.</p> <p>The Parish Council confirmed their support for the scheme at their meeting on 19 April 2012.</p>

OBJECTOR	OBJECTION	COMMENTS
<p>DH & M Griffiths (continued)</p>	<p>The speed bump which is proposed to be sited outside 71 Greenfield Drive, would cause problems and I would like to know the specifications of positioning of speed bumps in relation to properties, car access and egress?</p> <p>Position of proposed road hump will affect visitor parking and access to the driveway.</p>	<p>Road humps are generally sited to avoid causing issues to residents accessing and leaving driveways, in that they are not placed directly in front of driveways. There is no set distance contained within our standard details, though it is accepted that vehicles may have to negotiate the features when accessing or egressing driveways. As these manoeuvres are invariably carried out at low speed, there are no significant concerns with respect to siting of road humps in these circumstances. Site observations indicate that the available space between driveways in the vicinity of no.71 Greenfield Drive would not preclude the installation of a road hump here.</p> <p>Drivers are permitted to park on round top road humps, unless there are waiting restrictions present indicating otherwise. The road hump will not be directly in front of any driveway, it is proposed between the driveways of nos. 71 and 72 Greenfield Drive. Road humps are located in the vicinity of private driveways throughout the Borough; drives may have to cross the road hump when accessing or egressing their property.</p>

OBJECTOR	OBJECTION	COMMENTS
Mr W M Shore	Council tax should be reduced should the scheme proceed as house prices will be affected.	<p>Stockton Borough Council do not have figures relating to house prices and traffic calming, comparisons before and after treatment would also be subject to local valuations and trends in the housing market nationally. Since 1993 all new housing developments must physically traffic calm the estate roads within the site. Developers have indicated that traffic calming is a positive selling point for prospective buyers, particularly those with young children.</p> <p>Mr. Shore could submit a claim under the Land Compensation Act, though the Council are unaware of any discretionary compensation being made under these circumstances.</p>
Mr Terry Mattinson	Road hump proposed near 37/39 Birchfield Drive should be relocated in a northerly direction away from frontage properties to reduce environmental intrusion.	<p>This hump was sited a reasonable distance from the Greenfield Drive junction in order that just 2 road humps, rather than 3, be provided on the length of Birchfield Drive that runs north to south. Generally speaking, the Council do not tend to receive complaints with respect to noise and vibration issues regarding schemes featuring round top road humps.</p> <p>To relocate the road hump at this stage would require commencing the statutory consultation process again.</p>

OBJECTOR	OBJECTION	COMMENTS
Mr. Paul Kay	<p>Road hump proposed near 37/39 Birchfield Drive should be relocated in a northerly direction away from frontage properties to reduce environmental intrusion.</p> <p>The location of the road hump may affect possible widening of the strengthened footway crossing at the property.</p>	<p>This hump was sited a reasonable distance from the Greenfield Drive junction in order that just 2 road humps, rather than 3, be provided on the length of Birchfield Drive that runs north to south. Generally speaking, the Council do not tend to receive complaints with respect to noise and vibration issues regarding schemes featuring round top road humps.</p> <p>To relocate the road hump at this stage would require commencing the statutory consultation process again.</p> <p>Site observations indicate that the driveway could still be extended without the proposed road hump being directly in front. Vehicles would have to negotiate the hump when accessing or egressing an extended driveway, however, this is the case at locations throughout the Borough.</p>

5.0 FINANCIAL & LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The estimated cost of the scheme is £25,200, funding has been allocated via the Western Area Transport Strategy budget and via the Community Participation Budget.

6.0 POLICY CONTENT

The proposals are consistent with the Council's Local Transport Plan and Sustainable Community Strategy.

7.0 CONSULTATION

The scheme was developed by Egglecliffe & Egglecliffe Parish Council, working alongside Stockton Council's former Community Engineer. Two public consultation exercises have been carried out with local residents, resulting in an overall approval rating of approximately 68%. The Police and emergency services have no objections. The elected Ward Councillors at the time of the public consultation have previously indicated their support. Scheme approval has been given by the Head of Technical Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transport. Statutory consultations involving advertising on site and in the local press were undertaken. This resulted in 9 objections being received. The Parish Council have confirmed their support for the scheme following the statutory consultation.

Western Area Transport Strategy stakeholders have allocated funding to implement the scheme, as have the Ward Councillors via their Community Participation Budget allocation. It is recommended that the feature proposed near nos 97/114 Greenfield Drive be omitted from phase 1 works, and investigation into an alternative road hump location be undertaken. The objectors will be invited to the Appeals Committee meeting.

8.0 CONCLUSION

The measures proposed 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

The scheme should make the estate a safer place for all road users in particular children, thus ensuring that the Borough continues to be a safe, healthy and attractive place in which to live and work.

Community Safety Implications

The provision of the traffic calming measures addresses the concerns of residents within the estate with particular reference to speeding vehicles whilst improving public safety.

Background Papers

Scheme of Delegation Reports TS.T.128.08 and TS.T.154.09

Education Related Item?

No

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors

Eaglescliffe – Cllrs. A. Lewis, Mrs M. Rigg and P Dennis
