

AGENDA ITEM

**REPORT TO APPEALS &
COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE**

28 SEPTEMBER 2012

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

**BUTSFIELD WAY AND WALLINGTON ROAD, BILLINGHAM – PROPOSED
ENVIRONMENTAL TRAFFIC CALMING SCHEME**

1.0 SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek Members views regarding outstanding objections received following advertising of vertical deflection traffic calming features on Butsfield Way and Wallington Road in Billingham.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:-

- (i) Members give 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, Billingham Town 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 Butsfield Way/Wallington Road was instigated via the North Billingham Residents Group following concerns expressed by residents in the area to local Ward Councillors, with regard to the speed of some drivers using the roads.
- 3.3 The Residents Group worked alongside Stockton Council's former Community Engineer to develop the scheme. Options of the traffic calming measures available were given to the Residents Group, who were

encouraged to take ownership of the scheme. The Resident Group opted to develop a scheme featuring road humps.

- 3.4 A public consultation exercise with respect to the proposals was carried out via letter drop dated 19th August 2010 including drawing, questionnaire and pre-paid reply envelope. The results of the consultation indicated that 75% of respondents supported installation of the scheme.
- 3.5 The scheme was subsequently progressed through the relevant consultation procedure involving Ward Councillors, the Town Council and the Police, and was approved as a contender for future funding by the Head of Technical Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transport (see Scheme of Delegation Report TS/T/25/11 in **Annex 1**).
- 3.6 No funding was identified to implement the scheme in 2011/12. At their Spring 2012 meeting, Northern Area Transport Strategy (ATS) stakeholders resolved to allocate funding to the scheme from their 2012/13 budget, with a contribution also confirmed from the local Ward Councillors Community Participation Budget. (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).
- 3.7 As a result, a Notice of Works for the round top road humps was advertised in the Herald & Post and on site on 4th July 2012 with the objection period expiring on 25th July 2012. Following the publication of the statutory notices, the Director of Law and Democracy received 2 letters of objection.

4.0 DETAILS OF THE OBJECTIONS

- 4.1 Copies of the letters of objection received and subsequent correspondence are attached as **Annex 2**. The objectors concerns are summarised individually in the table below, alongside of a response from the Head of Technical Services.

Objector	Concerns	Comments
<p>Mr David Mason 100 Wallington Road Billingham TS23 3XQ</p>	<p>1. No desire for traffic calming received from local residents. Traffic calming scheme is not justified in terms of the accident record or prevailing vehicle speeds.</p>	<p>1. Wallington Road was added to the traffic calming request in 2008 following a request from a local resident. The Community Engineer was requested to work alongside North Billingham Residents Group to develop a calming scheme by the local Ward Councillors as they were receiving on-going concerns from local residents. This was prompted by a meeting with Council Officers, local Ward Councillors, Billingham Town Council and local residents held on 19th January 2010 following concerns expressed to the Council's Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services and Head of Technical Services to discuss and agree a way forward. The results of the public consultation exercise associated with the calming scheme indicated that 75% of respondents were in favour of the proposals. Environmental traffic calming schemes are not necessarily justified by the accident record or prevailing vehicle speeds, but by residents perceived fears relating to vehicle speeds or accidents. For the record there has been one injury accident recorded on the affected length of road since January 2007 (as far back as the Council records go), involving serious injuries to a pedal cyclist in 2009.</p>
	<p>2. Road humps generate speeding between features involving heavy braking and accelerating.</p>	<p>2. The road humps are designed and spaced to current guidelines which should encourage motorists to drive at lower speeds along the treated length of road, rather than accelerate between features and slow down for the next one.</p>

	3. The condition of the road humps deteriorates rapidly and require constant maintenance.	3. Any road humps installed will be in compliance with Department for Transport recommendations, which require a more robust construction in order to reduce maintenance requirements.
	4. Speed humps are not required and an unnecessary expense on Council Tax. A 20mph speed limit would be preferable.	4. Support for the scheme has been demonstrated by the public consultation exercise. The scheme is a priority for Northern Area Transport Strategy stakeholders and the local Ward Councillors, who have allocated funding to implement the measures. Signage only schemes have a lower speed reduction impact; the desire is to reduce actual average speeds to around 20mph, as has been achieved on most new estate roads built since 1993 which generally feature road humps.
Mr A Greaves 93 Wallington Road Billingham TS23 3XQ (Initial letter dated 25 th July)	1. Road humps in the vicinity of this property will cause noise nuisance.	1. The Council receive very 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.
	2. Wallington Road does not have a high accident rate.	2. As detailed above, the proposed measures are an environmental traffic calming treatment in reaction to residents concerns with regards to traffic speeds and the potential for accidents. There was one serious accident recorded on Wallington Road in 2009.
	3. Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) should be used to reduce speeds.	3. VAS tend to be used on roads higher in the hierarchy than Wallington Road. Northern ATS stakeholders, where 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.

	4. Reposition the road hump proposed near 93 Wallington Road to opposite Halton Court, away for residential properties.	4. The emissions from vehicle is lower at lowers 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. The road humps have been positioned to avoid private driveways and to maintain the desired hump spacing. To move it to the location suggested would leave too large a spacing between the relocated feature and the hump proposed further west near Pelton Close; to move it at this stage would also require commencing the statutory process again.
(second letter with attachment dated 31 st July, in response to SBC letter dated 26 th July 2012)	5. Proposed location of the road hump near 93 Wallington Road is on an area of carriageway where ice takes longer to thaw, thereby increasing the potential for accidents.	5. The Council's Senior Engineer responsible for road safety audits has indicated that this issue would not be flagged up as a safety concern; drivers should be exercising caution during wintery conditions. Site observations indicate that the location is well drained,with a gully present either side of the proposed hump.
	6. Although 75% of respondents to the public consultation exercise, 25% did not, which is a significant proportion.	6. 32 (24 for, 8 against) responses from 73 invitations to respond provides a 43.8% 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 every individual potential consultee's decision to respond to a consultation or not. Taking this into account, because it is usually

		<p>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. The 75% in favour is also in excess of the 70% 'rule of thumb' favoured by the Head of Technical Services/Cabinet Member in support of any particular scheme.</p>
	<p>3. What do the Council do in response to complaints received regarding environmental traffic calming schemes featuring the use of round top road humps? Have humps been removed, compensation paid, rates reduced or sound proofing been provided.</p>	<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 Greaves could submit a claim under the Land Compensation Act, though the Council are unaware of any discretionary compensation being made under these circumstances. The Council are unaware of any scheme where alterations have been made to traffic calming schemes featuring round top road humps that were in specification located on the adopted highway.</p>

5.0 FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The estimated cost of the scheme is £11,400, funding has been allocated via the Northern 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 North Billingham Residents Group, working alongside Stockton Council's former Community Engineer. A public consultation exercise has been carried out with local residents, resulting in an approval rating of 75%. The Police and emergency services have no objections. The Ward Councillors 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 two objections being received.

Northern Area Transport Strategy stakeholders have allocated funding to implement the scheme, as have Ward Councillors via their Community Participation Budget allocation. 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

Contact Officer : **Mark Gillson**
Tel No : **01642 526725**
E-mail Address : **mark.gillson@stockton.gov.uk**

Environmental Implications

The scheme should make the roads 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 local residents with particular reference to speeding vehicles whilst improving public safety.

Background Papers

Scheme of Delegation Report TS.T.25.11

Education Related Item?

No.

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors

Billingham North: Councillors Lynne Apedaile, Colin Leckonby and Ray McCall.