

REPORT FROM COUNCILLOR KEN DIXON ABOUT THE DECISION BY WARD COUNCILLORS TO MOVE FORWARD WITH A PROPOSED TRAFFIC CALMING SCHEME IN SOBER HALL AVENUE, INGLEBY BARWICK.

INTRODUCTION

My name is Ken Dixon I am one of three ward councilors representing the West Ward of Ingleby Barwick. I have represented this ward for over 17 years and know the area well.

I have over 50 years of driving experience, I am a class 1 advanced driver, I have driven motorcycles, HGVs and have passed a PSV driving test.

I hold City and Guilds certificates in;- Motor vehicle Technology and Techniques examination, and Motor Vehicle Construction and Use.

I have served in the police service with 10 of those years in the Road Traffic Department, I have dealt with hundreds of accidents from damage only, serious and sadly fatal accidents.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION.

Sober Hall Avenue is a busy two-lane road running from its junction with Bair Avenue to the junction with Barwick Way, it is subject to a 30-mph restriction and is an extremely busy feeder road to the Estates of Sober Hall and Roundhill. The road is over a mile long and has bends at the junctions of both Blair Avenue and Barwick Lane with stretch in the middle that is basically a straight piece of road. There is a PELICAN crossing situated near to Challacombe Avenue which is not raised.

Over the past few years as traffic has increased markedly, we have received large numbers of complaints of excess speeding along the road particularly on the straight stretch, speed ranging from between 40 to well in excess of that. As I have stated it is a very busy thoroughfare for people travelling on and of both estates and through traffic wanting to cut across the estate.

We have reported this problem of speeding to the council engineers and enforcement as well as the police, like everything else we don't believe that there has been the coverage warranted for what we consider a developing serious situation. You will have seen the accidents reported, WE DO NOT WANT ANY FURTHER INCIDENTS OF ANY DESCRIPTION.

OUTCOMES.

The initial officers report recommended that a VAS with the message 'SLOW DOWN or a SID or A VAS/SID in combination with a raised tabletop pedestrian/cycle crossing facility in the western central areas and pedestrian warning signs and 'SLOW' carriageway markings.

We discussed the options and the only options we feel are warranted and needed on this road, are the installation of cushioned traffic calming measures together with a raised tabletop pedestrian/cycle crossing with associated warning signs. We are that committed to

making this road as safe as possible we are willing to put £35,000 from our budget to secure the funding required. We felt that the placing of VAS or SID signs are totally inadequate for the purpose of slowing down vehicles on this stretch of road. You have probably seen it for yourselves, it might deter for the first-time road users when they are confronted by them, but on such busy roads they become blasé and that leads to driving without due care and speeding. They are fine on the minor roads where there are more houses and people around.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES.

There have been a small number of replies from the consultation, with negative replies, it is interesting to note that in their replies they all at some stage call the proposed speed cushions as HUMPS OR BUMPS which are entirely different concepts. Humps or Bumps are raised structures that generally stretch across the whole of the road and do have high points which means vehicles including buses/cars motorcycles and cycles must negotiate them at extremely low speeds in order not to ground the vehicles on the bottom. I can appreciate the concerns about these structures as some Humps/Bumps are like Beechers Brooke to negotiate, these structures are predominantly put in minor estate type roads to slow vehicles down dramatically particularly where children are about.

Speed cushions as you will no doubt be aware are flat topped and are only on either side of the road, they are negotiated at relatively slow speeds and the design gives road users a far better chance of negotiating them without causing damage.

CONCLUSION.

In conclusion I must reiterate that all the responses state that they refer to road Humps/bumps which are totally different construction and are specifically designed to dramatically slow vehicles down or cause fear of damage.

The speed cushions are designed to slow vehicles down to below the limit without the fear of causing damage, you can see from the officer's report that the installation of the cushions would be beneficial to the safety of all road users including pedestrians and cycles. I therefore respectfully request that the speed cushions and raised Pedestrian/Cycle crossing be passed, and as stated we are willing to spend £35,000 to ensure our residents have the safest environment and health.

Don't forget "SPEED KILLS"

Ken Dixon

Councillor Ingleby Barwick West Ward.