

Appeals & Complaints Committee

A meeting of Appeals & Complaints Committee was held on Thursday, 28th February, 2008.

Present: Cllr Robert Gibson, Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Cllr Alan Lewis and Cllr Mrs Mary Womphrey

Officers: J. Butcher, S. Ahmed, M. Henderson (LD); S. Milner (DNS); S. Wells (Arup)

Also in attendance: Mr D. Botterill

Apologies: Cllr Paul Baker, Cllr Andrew Larkin and Cllr Mohammed Javed

ACC 1/07 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

ACC 2/07 **Appeals and Complaints Committee - Procedure for Meetings**

All those present were informed of the procedure for the meetings of the Appeals and Complaints Committee.

RESOLVED that the procedure be noted.

ACC 3/07 **A1044 Low Lane, Leven Bank Road, Stockton on Tees - Proposed Reduction in Speed Limit from 60 mph to 40 mph**

The Committee initially considered a report of the Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services and heard representations from an independent consultant engineer on behalf of the Council. It was noted that, following statutory advertising, objections had been received to a proposed speed limit reduction on A1044, Low Lane and Leven Bank Road between its junctions with Barwick Way roundabout and Glaisdale Road.

It was explained that ARUP's had been commissioned to undertake a study in conjunction with the Council of the aforementioned section of road and the main recommendation, coming from the study, was for a reduction of the speed limit from 60mph to 40 mph, additional street lighting and improvements around the Hilton Lane junction to include a right turn ban from Barwick Lane.

Members were provided with details of speed limits, signing and collisions, including the severity index of accidents. It was explained that the accident rate for the A1044 was considerably higher than the national accident rates for a road of its class. A review had indicated that, in a large proportion of the accidents, excess speed had been the main or a contributory factor.

Officers considered that the speed reduction and other measures would reduce accidents.

The Committee noted that relevant Ward Councillors, Ingleby Barwick Town Council and Hilton Parish Council had expressed support for the proposed scheme, as had a number of members of the public.

An objector, to the proposals, was given the opportunity of presenting his case

to the Committee and made a number of points, including: -

- the study of accidents had not established a causal link between accidents and speed.
- in accordance with Government circulars the speed limit should be set above the average speed on the road (currently 41 – 43 mph). The proposal would put the limit below this average.
- statistics indicated that motorists travelling above the average speed actually had a lower accident rate per vehicle mile and reductions in road fatalities had ceased.
- poor observation by drivers was the reason for accidents rather than speed.
- a change in the speed limit was unlikely to change traffic speeds.
- the analysis of accidents on the road had been weak.
- it had not been demonstrated that a reduction in speed would reduce the severity of accidents
- comparisons between the A1044 and best quality A roads, like the A19, were meaningless.

The objector suggested that lowering the speed limit was unnecessary, unlikely to have any positive impact on accident statistics and may actually increase accidents. He requested the Committee to find that the proposed order should be withdrawn.

All parties were given the opportunity of asking questions relating to the representations made.

In conclusion, an officer from the Council's Technical Services Section and the representative from the independent consulting engineer summed up. It was pointed out that a detailed study had been undertaken to address the problems identified and it had been concluded that speed was a factor in the majority of accidents. Also, the Police had confirmed, to officers, that they considered speed was the primary causation factor of accidents on this road.

At this point the Committee confirmed that it felt it had gathered sufficient information and requested all parties, other than officers from Law and Democracy, to leave the meeting room in order to come to a decision.

The Committee considered the representations made by officers and the objector and accepted the assertion by officers, the consultant engineer and advice provided by the Police that speed was a factor in the frequency and severity of accidents on the road. The Committee therefore considered that the proposed Order was necessary.

RESOLVED that the Head of Technical Services be recommended to implement the Order.

