

APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE

A meeting of Appeals and Complaints Committee was held on Thursday 29 June 2023.

Present: Cllr Pauline Beall (Chair), Cllr Nigel Cooke (Vice-Chair), Cllr Dan Fagan, Cllr Elsi Hampton, Cllr Ross Patterson, Cllr Alan Watson and Cllr Barry Woodhouse.

Officers: Jonathan Kibble (DoCS,E&C), Ann McLone (DoCS,E&C), Julie Butcher (DoCS) and Sarah Whaley (DoCS).

Also in attendance:

Apologies: .

ACC/1/23 Evacuation Procedure

The Evacuation Procedure was noted.

ACC/2/23 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations on interest.

ACC/3/23 Minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2023

Consideration was given to the Appeals and Complaints Committee Minutes from the meeting which was held on 1st March 2023 for approval and signature.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved and signed as a correct record by the Chair.

ACC/4/23 Committee Procedure

The Committee considered and agreed a proposed procedure for the meeting, which the Chair explained ahead of the following item.

RESOLVED that the procedure be agreed.

ACC/5/23 Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, Traffic Calming Scheme, The Glebe, Norton, Traffic Calming Scheme

The committee were presented with a report to seek members' views on unresolved objections received following the statutory advertising of a proposal to implement a traffic calming scheme on The Glebe, Norton, consisting of 7 sets of speed cushions. The scheme was to be implemented in phases, the four northern sets of speed cushions would be introduced in Phase 1 and the remaining speed cushions introduced in a second phase should funding become available.

The proposed traffic calming measures on The Glebe were a result of an investigation into alleged speed related issues on The Glebe, Norton which was identified as a

priority by the Norton West Ward Councillors to address concerns relating to speeding issues raised by local residents. The scheme was to be funded through the Norton West Ward allocation of the Ward Transport Budget; this budget was provided to spend on transport priorities within the ward that would not be eligible for funding from the core road safety budget. The Norton West Ward Councillors had therefore been active members in the scheme's development.

The Principal Transport Officer presented the main report to members. The officers report also contained the representations received from members of the public in response to the statutory consultation process in full which were summarised to the committee, alongside officers' responses, full details of which were contained within the main report.

The committee were also informed that since the original report a number of objectors had withdrawn their objections taking the total number of objections to 19. There had also been an additional objection received which had been submitted from a resident who had already made representation during the original consultation.

The additional objection related to the costs involved for the proposed speed cushions with questions raised as to why preformed bumps were not being used which the objector believed to be a fraction of the costs stated in the report as well as being far more durable, easier, and cost effective to install. The objector stated that this would enable those restrictors to be placed elsewhere on the estate, i.e., Ashton Road and Weaverham Road, without incurring additional costs.

The Principal Transport Officer informed the Committee that precast cushions set in a foundation were being proposed as they were longer lasting than rubber cushions which degraded very quickly and were not as cost effective.

It was noted that as well as The Glebe residents, Director of Community Services, Environment and Culture and the Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport, local ward councillors, an Officer's Traffic Group were consulted in terms of the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) which was made up of emergency services, taxi and bus operators.

It was highlighted that 63% of residents provided a response, of those, 69% were in support of the proposals and 26% were against the proposals.

Cleveland Police had indicated their support for the proposals.

The bus operator Stagecoach had originally expressed reservations with regard to the impact of the scheme on bus timetables given the number of sets of cushions proposed, though it was highlighted there wasn't an issue with parking on The Glebe so buses should be able to comfortably straddle the features. A brief assessment of the vicinity of features to bus stops was undertaken, no issues anticipated, but a request to add bus stops to the plan was made.

Stagecoach requested a 1:20 ramp gradient but it was confirmed that pre-cast concrete cushions would be used as had been elsewhere recently, with a gradient of 1:15. Local Ward Councillors – the Norton West Ward Councillors were supportive and had been active members in the scheme's development.

The statutory consultations for the proposed Traffic Regulation Notice involved

advertising on site, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's website and in the local press.

Objectors attended the committee meeting and were given the opportunity to make representation. Their comments could be summarised as follows:

- It was felt that the public consultation was inadequate and had not reached all affected residents, including those in the wider area that would be impacted by the proposed scheme. It was also felt that objections had been triggered due to a local resident informing other residents of the proposed scheme, not by the Council's consultation.
- There had been a leaflet drop in the area which was likened to a driveway advertising campaign which some residents would have disregarded and disposed of.
- The notices that the local authority had posted on lampposts were done so during the recent Kings Jubilee and various bank holidays, which may have gone unnoticed.
- The 3pm start of the Appeals and Complaints Committee meeting was not suitable for members of the public who had work commitments, hence the poor turnout.
- Concerns were raised relating to the impact that speed cushions would have on people who suffer with bad backs.
- Speed cushions could cause car damage to the suspension if travelling at 20mph. Ideal speed would need to be 10mph which would then impact on traffic flow.
- It was not felt that The Glebe was a dangerous road and that there were other more dangerous roads at either end of The Glebe, Junction Road and the A1027 which would benefit more from a traffic calming scheme due to fatal and near fatal accidents which had occurred, particularly on Junction Road.
- Residents of The Glebe would feel the pain of the scheme, not emergency vehicles, and buses as they had larger wheelbases and could straddle the cushions.
- Questions were raised relating to the validity of the traffic survey and the accuracy of the speed monitoring device, which was undertaken in 2019.
- The reduced speed of vehicles driving over the speed cushions would increase air pollution. Local Authorities should be looking to do everything they could to reduce air pollution.
- The local bus company had requested the speed cushions were a 1 in 20 gradient, however the proposal stated 1 in 15 which would also have an impact on air pollution, therefore why was a gradient of 1 in 20 not proposed?
- Reference was made to putting speed cushions around the entrance of Saltney Road on The Glebe. Saltney Road was the main access road for the school which was used by parents picking up and dropping off children twice a day and putting the cushions on that vicinity would only create problems, therefore it was requested that this be re looked at as part of phase 2.
- It was asked if there were alternative traffic calming schemes that could be

considered rather than speed cushions?

Ward Councillors, Cllr Tony Riordan and Cllr Hilary Vickers attended the meeting and were given the opportunity to make representation. Cllr Tony Riordan made representation on behalf of himself and Ward Councillor Hilary Vickers which could be summarised as follows:

- The Committee were given an overview of the background to the issues which had resulted in the proposed traffic calming Scheme.
- There were two main roads in Norton West which was Junction Road and The Glebe, both of which were problematic. The traffic surveys which had been undertaken on both roads had shown The Glebe to have more speeding traffic than Junction Road.
- Members were informed that speeding traffic on The Glebe had been ongoing for approximately 20 years, and Ward Councillors had repeatedly received complaints from local residents about the problem which took up most of their case work.
- Community speed watch had been carried out with the Police regularly. Residents were encouraged to come and see how this was done and were surprised at how much speeding there was.
- The fatalities which had been spoken about happened post traffic survey.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions/make comments. These could be summarised as follows: -

- Officers were asked if they had an example of a cross section of the speed cushions
- Members asked what the cost of a speed camera in comparison to the speed cushions would be?
- Offices were asked if they could consider making the whole estate around The Glebe 20mph?
- Clarity was sought as to which residents had been contacted directly from the Council during the consultation.
- Members noted that the scheme was initially requested by residents.
- Members were satisfied that the statutory consultation had been followed correctly.
- A letter was circulated to Members provided by an objector that attended the meeting and which had been distributed to local residents informing them of the scheme. The letter was anonymised.

Officers were given the opportunity to respond to comments/issues raised. Their responses could be summarised as follows: -

- The Principal Transport Officer clarified that a leaflet drop informing residents of the proposed scheme had not been undertaken by the Council.

- Officers explained that the statutory consultation process had been followed.
- Members were shown a picture of a section of the speed cushion.
- It was confirmed that the cost of speed cameras was unknown as the council did not operate any speed cameras within the Borough.
- For the Council to implement a 20mph speed limit across the whole of The Glebe estate without physical features, speed would have to be below 24mph, however the traffic survey had shown the speed to be just below 36mph, hence the proposal for speed cushions.
- In terms of concerns raised relating to Junction Road and the A1027, Officers explained that separate to the Ward Transport Budget, there was also a road safety strategy that looked at strategies across the Borough, looking at cluster sites where incidents were high. This usually involved collating 3 years of data and then identifying works from the Councils controlled budgets. It was possible that Junction Road was being looked at from the Councils point of view. Where there had been serious incidents such as a fatality, Officers would attend the incident site and investigate what had happened.
- Officers confirmed that 135 residents on The Glebe had received consultation letters from the Council notifying them of the proposed scheme prior to the scheme being considered which required 2/3rds to be in support, which the proposed scheme was, therefore the scheme was put forward.

Highways officers, Councillors Tony Riordan, Hilary Vickers, and the objectors left the room, discussion then took place amongst the Appeals and Complaints Committee prior to a decision being made.

A vote took place and the officer's recommendation was agreed.

Highways Officers, Councillors Tony Riordan, Hilary Vickers, and the objectors then returned to the meeting to receive the recommendation.

The Chair commended all those that attended for their input into the discussion which was valued.

The Chair also highlighted the proposal was initiated by residents which was taken up by the Ward Councillors and whilst it was acknowledged it would not meet everyone's desired outcome, all statutory procedures had been carried out and alternative options had been considered and the one proposed was a viable option. Therefore, the Committee's decision was to agree the recommendation.

RESOLVED that the

(i) Director of Community Services, Environment and Culture consider the committee's recommendation to implement the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees, The Glebe, Norton Traffic Calming Scheme as detailed within the main report.

(ii) local Ward Councillors and the objectors be informed of the Committee's recommendation.

