

Annex Four – Councillor responses

Councillor D'Agorne

Perhaps I need to explain some of the thinking behind this initiative. A resident put forward the idea as a ward scheme and a small amount of funding for 2008-09 was agreed in the ward wide ballot, for consultation with the residents in that area. We have delivered a letter to every household in the streets affected explaining the proposal, with a tear off reply slip, resulting in 18 in favour and 3 against and one abstention. The streets are narrow terraces, with excessive levels of on street parking, a fact that led to the demise of a previous ward proposal to designate a 'home zone' for the area. Average speeds are more than likely in the range of 15- 20mph meaning that the Manual for Streets guidance from DfT would allow 20mph area designation without the need for the much-despised humps. Funding could come at least in part from ward committee budget and designation would as much as anything be about starting the process of gaining acceptance for lower speeds in an area where they are clearly appropriate to the driving conditions.

My understanding was that transport thinking had moved on from the days when spending could only be justified when someone is killed or injured? There were no recorded accidents on the Sustrans path near the Knavesmire until last month, when a cyclist was killed there. 'Danger reduction' is as much about reducing the risks and the fear of an accident that must affect any parent or child living in these streets. 20mph signs following the adoption of a TRO is the only legal way that we can signal to drivers that a slower speed is appropriate here, as they turn off the busy open Fulford Rd into these narrow two way streets cluttered with parked cars. If you can advise otherwise, I would be only too glad to explore alternatives.

On the question of 'wait and see' for the outcome of the Portsmouth experience, we know for a fact that lower speeds, even by an average of 3-4 mph can make a significant impact on reducing pedestrian and cyclist casualties. What you have in these streets is an ideal opportunity to test out the Portsmouth approach, in an area that is self contained and residents actually want lower speeds. Why not implement it here and evaluate this approach in York. We already know that the approach adopted outside schools over the last 10 years has some effect in reducing casualties but the combination with humps has been generally unpopular with drivers and costly in terms of installation and maintenance. The Labour group have signalled their interest in this policy shift, and we have found considerable support once we explained that we want the limit for areas off the main roads, but without the installation of humps. Given that we are not proposing such costly features, a one year trial could also be an option, with the signs on lampposts being easily removed for use elsewhere at the end of the period. You would have the opportunity then to assess driver and resident reaction to this approach which is gaining increasing popularity as a concept around the country. I'm sure you will be aware of the slower speeds initiative and 20's plenty campaigns.

I would ask that you give serious consideration to all these aspects in your report and in arriving at your recommendation to the EMAP. In my view, leaving aside the question of congestion charging, a 20mph policy is big shift needed in sustainable transport in York (that Damon has said we need to identify in the Traffic Scrutiny) making walking and cycling a much safer more attractive option in the urban area of the city.