

# ANNEX E

## Summary of Residents' Comments, with Officer Responses

### **Comment 1 :**

***The School Safety Zone should be controlled by a 20mph speed limit, preferably without humps? If this is not possible, bring back the speed humps because they were a more effective speed reducing measure than the chicanes.***

### **Officer response:**

When the School Safety Zone was introduced in 2001, a 20mph speed limit and vertical traffic calming measures were introduced. However, following complaints from residents about traffic noise and vibration caused by vehicles riding over the measures, the Council decided to remove the vertical traffic calming measures. As a consequence, the 30mph limit was re-introduced.

Current legislation only allows the introduction of a 20mph speed limit where vertical traffic calming measures are provided to make it self-enforcing, unless there are exceptional circumstances and the proposal is fully supported by the Police. The Police would not support this approach in Rufforth, because the limit would be widely ignored and would rely on a high level of enforcement, which they do not have the resources to provide. The re-introduction of vertical traffic calming measures is now likely to be very strongly opposed locally.

### **Comment 2 :**

***Make the entire village a 20mph Zone***

### **Officer response:**

Whilst Officers are trying to reduce traffic speeds in the village, this is not a practical suggestion, given that 20mph Zones should only be considered for introduction within sensitive areas, such as outside schools and hospitals. In addition, as mentioned above, a 20mph Zone would require vertical traffic calming measures. These have previously been removed in Rufforth due to the problems associated with traffic noise and vibration.

### **Comment 3 :**

***The chicanes are an accident waiting to happen. They have been hit by vehicles on a number of occasions, impatient drivers have been seen overtaking queuing traffic giving way at the chicanes, and some even drive on the footway to get by the chicanes.***

### **Officer response:**

The nature of this type of traffic calming feature, and how a small minority of drivers conduct themselves when negotiating such measures, has to be balanced against the positive benefits of speed reduction outside the school. Driving on the footway is obviously not acceptable, but this could be prevented by providing timber bollards

where necessary. Officers also consider that the temporary form of the chicanes is a factor in this. Although the vast majority of drivers currently comply with the temporary arrangements, permanent chicane features would be far more conspicuous, which should help to avoid collisions and encourage more drivers to respect the priority system.

**Comment 4 :**

***The Chicanes have introduced dangers for motorists and pedestrians, and rely upon responsible, courteous driver behaviour at appropriate speed which is rarely displayed.***

**Officer response:**

Our surveys and observations indicate that most drivers travel at a reasonable speed and negotiate the chicane system correctly. It is unfortunate, but there is a minority of drivers who display poor behaviour. As discussed above, this should be reduced with a permanent scheme in place, but its elimination cannot be guaranteed. However, without any form of traffic calming features the average traffic speed outside the school would probably return to around 34mph, whereas with the chicanes in place, it is only 28mph.

**Comment 5 :**

***Such traffic controls are only required during school opening and closing time on weekdays, and only during term time.***

**Officer response:**

To operate only within these times would require the introduction of temporary or removable traffic calming features, which would be impractical and most likely ineffective. With permanent features, drivers are in no doubt about the nature and layout of the road. The features also highlight the presence of the school under these circumstances, and are intended to convey the message to the motorist that they should be driving in an appropriate manner.

**Comment 6 :**

***Turning in and out of Yew Tree Close is now more dangerous because of the close proximity of the southern-most chicane.***

**Officer response:**

Officers consider that the chicane is not positioned dangerously close to any side roads, and that drivers must always exercise due care and appropriate judgement in giving way to vehicles on the main road before exiting.

**Comment 7 :**

***On car boot and 'auto-jumble' days on a weekend, traffic backs up right through the village and the chicanes greatly aggravate the problems for drivers approaching from either direction (this can also occur when traffic is diverted from the A1 and A59).***

**Officer response:**

Officers accept that traffic very occasionally builds up through the village due to such events, particularly over the summer months. Nevertheless, Officers would expect that drivers' common sense would prevail under these circumstances and where queues do build up, some motorists would allow traffic to pass the chicanes when their own progress is impeded.

**Comment 8 :**

***Additional noise pollution is caused by large vehicles having to make standing starts, and from the use of vehicle horns by frustrated drivers.***

**Officer response:**

The overall noise level in areas where traffic calming is installed generally reduces as vehicles are travelling more slowly, but because of this the peaks can become more noticeable. Therefore, even though this route is well used by heavy goods vehicles, Officers consider that any increases in traffic noise at the chicanes should be minimal. Officers' observations on-site have not given rise to concerns in this regard, despite the odd sounding of a vehicle's horn.

**Comment 9 :**

***For residents living close to the chicanes, air quality has been negatively affected by stationary queuing traffic held up by the chicanes at busy times, and with traffic stopping and starting.***

**Officer response:**

Since this area of the city is relatively open, emissions from vehicles are likely to be easily dispersed and thus unlikely to pose any potential health threat to local residents. It is generally acknowledged that emission concentrations generally return to background levels approximately 10-15m away from the carriageway. City of York Council currently undertakes monitoring of air quality at over 300 sites in the city and at present the only areas shown to have the potential to breach the current UK health based air quality objectives are areas on, or close to, the inner ring road in the city centre. Historical monitoring data from Rufforth has shown that levels of nitrogen dioxide in the village were well below the government's health based objective levels (i.e. levels of pollutant likely to have a negative impact upon health).

**Comment 10 :**

***The 'priority over oncoming vehicles' sign at the northern-most chicane is too close to the chicane to provide an effective warning, and should be positioned further in advance.***

**Officer response:**

Having reviewed the signing in advance of the chicanes, Officers propose to make further improvements. At the northern-most chicane, the proximity of the 30mph speed limit boundary was an issue. However, in conjunction with the proposal to relocate this boundary, the improved signing provision should have the desired effect, without the need to relocate the 'priority over oncoming vehicles' sign, which Officers consider to be in the most appropriate location adjacent to the give way lines.

**Comment 11 :**

***The combined length of the necessary 'keep clear' area and the chicane poses an over-long hazard to negotiate on the wrong side of the road.***

**Officer response:**

Visibility on the immediate approach to each chicane is good. Therefore, in spite of the additional few metres that need to be negotiated before going around the chicane, Officers do not consider this to be a problem.

**Comment 12 :**

***There is insufficient warning of the southern-most chicane (when travelling north) as it is positioned immediately after the sharp bend in the road – the 'road narrows' sign on the offside approaching the bends prior to the chicane is poorly sited. If retained, this chicane could be relocated further towards the Laburnum Close junction.***

**Officer response:**

Having reviewed the signing in advance of this particular chicane, Officers propose to make further improvements. The 'S' bend in the road prior to the measures is relatively gentle, and when negotiated at an appropriate speed, drivers should not encounter any difficulties. Nevertheless, the improved signing provision should give adequate warning without the need to relocate the 'priority over oncoming vehicles' sign, which Officers consider to be in the most appropriate location adjacent to the give way lines. In addition, Officers consider that the chicane could present problems for drivers turning into and exiting Laburnum Close if it were to be relocated any further north, towards this side road.

**Comment 13 :**

***The school patrol sign (with amber flashing lights) near the church is in the wrong place and should be nearer to the Zebra crossing.***

**Officer response:**

Officers have considered the siting of these signs very carefully. The signs have been placed just after the 'S' bend in the road in an effort to slow drivers on exit,

which prepares them for negotiating the chicane. In conjunction with the improved advance signing mentioned previously, Officers consider that this is the most appropriate position for the signs.

**Comment 14 :**

***The chicanes, together with the plethora of intrusive 'road furniture' and excessive (recently) introduced street lighting are also unsuitable and unattractive in a rural village location and are completely at odds with the Rufforth Village Design Statement.***

**Officer response:**

Although Officers appreciate the wishes of villagers to reduce street furniture and sign clutter, the B1224 is a strategic route on the highway network, which is used by between 4,500 to 5,000 vehicles during a typical working day. In implementing our initial proposals for monitoring, Street Lighting Officers were required to assess the current lighting provision on Wetherby Road. This assessment determined that the existing provision was not adequate for the purpose, therefore new lighting was included in the scheme.

**Comment 15 :**

***More incentives are needed to recruit a School Crossing Patrol Warden to operate on the Zebra crossing.***

**Officer response:**

Officers are aware of the current problems in recruiting School Crossing Patrol Wardens at a number of sites across the city. Apart from the intended traffic calming effect of including the Zebra crossing within the newly configured School Safety Zone, another theory behind its inclusion was that this controlled crossing facility would be more likely to attract someone to the post, given that operating from such a facility should be easier than operating from an uncontrolled crossing point (as was the case when the 20mph Zone was still in effect). Officers agree that having someone in this post would greatly improve matters. Unfortunately, despite a recent recruitment campaign for this site, the Council has thus far been unable to fill this particular post.

**Comment 16 :**

***The annoyance of some drivers in having to wait at the chicanes sometimes results in them not stopping for pedestrians at the Zebra crossing further along Wetherby Road outside the school.***

**Officer response:**

In the main, these comments come from those who expect an immediate response from motorists in giving way to pedestrians, which is often impractical and can be potentially dangerous. Officers have used this crossing on numerous occasions both at peak times and in free-flowing traffic conditions to investigate these complaints. Officers consider that the people making this particular comment need to be more realistic about the way in which they use the Zebra crossing. No-one should expect vehicles to stop at the very second they arrive at the dropped

crossing. Pedestrians should wait, whilst clearly conveying their intent to cross the road, until the traffic stops to allow them to cross safely.

**Comment 17 :**

***The Zebra crossing should be replaced with a Pelican crossing, which would be safer for the children, be more effective in making drivers stop when pedestrians want to cross the road, and also slow traffic down.***

**Officer response:**

There are safety concerns about providing such facilities where they are likely to be under used. This is because drivers who travel through the area regularly outside of school times will be used to the lights being at green and are less likely to observe the red. Pedestrians are also likely to be impatient if traffic volumes are low, and cross when there is a red man, which can add to driver frustration in having to stop for an empty crossing. In addition, Pelican crossings are very expensive to install and it is considered that there are not enough pedestrians throughout the day in one specific location to justify a Pelican crossing at this site.

**Comment 18 :**

***I have observed instances where stationary vehicles have been overtaken whilst giving way to pedestrians on the Zebra crossing.***

**Officer response:**

If used properly, the Zebra crossing provides pedestrians with one of the safest means of crossing the road. There is always the risk that drivers may be inconsiderate and drive recklessly, but fortunately, such instances are rare. The situation could of course be made better still, if managed by a School Crossing Patrol, but as explained previously, recruitment is currently difficult.

**Comment 19 :**

***Extend the coverage of Vehicle Activated Signs to cover all of the village Main Street, and not just the small area covered at present' and 'Additional Vehicle Activated Signs are needed, particularly in the vicinity of the school and the Zebra crossing to reduce vehicle speeds' and 'the positioning of Vehicle Activated Signs in the centre of the village gives the impression that it's ok to speed through the rest of the village.***

**Officer response:**

In considering the introduction of Vehicle Activated Signs, Officers need to assess very carefully whether such a measure is appropriate for the location concerned. This speed management tool is also usually combined with a warning sign indicating a hazard ahead, in order to give motorists a valid reasoning behind the reminder to reduce their speed. In this case, the existing Vehicle Activated Signs were being introduced on a trial basis to assess their effectiveness, but only display a 30mph roundel with the message to 'slow down'. Whilst this measure is perceived by residents to be effective in reducing vehicle speeds, saturating the area with these signs would neither be effective or appropriate. At present, Officers consider that the proposed additional sign on the northern approach to the village is no

longer appropriate, given the recommendation to improve the signing in this area, in conjunction with the relocated 30mph speed limit boundary.

**Comment 20 :**

***The chicanes are too far apart and traffic speeds up in between – this can create difficulty for residents’ access to and egress from their properties onto the main road’ and ‘Traffic speeds up between the chicanes after being made to give way.***

**Officer response:**

Our survey data disproves this view, as average speeds outside the school are currently 28mph with the temporary chicanes in place.

**Comment 21 :**

***The chicanes would be best removed altogether, but what could be introduced as an effective alternative?***

**Officer response:**

Although there are some obvious disadvantages in operating a priority system using chicanes, the resultant reduction in vehicle speeds outside the school proves that the chicanes have been effective. Alternative methods of speed management involving horizontal movements (rather than vertical measures, such as speed cushions) are limited, but for example, a priority system using traffic signals would not be appropriate under these circumstances, particularly given the rural village environment. Therefore, another alternative suggestion regarding the installation of ‘speed sensitive’ traffic signals (similar to examples in Spain and Portugal) whereby the excessive speed of an approaching vehicle triggers a red signal, although not really practical and not authorised by the DTp to use, would also not be appropriate under these circumstances.

**Comment 22 :**

***A weight limit should be introduced to prohibit HGVs from travelling through the village.***

**Officer response:**

This has been investigated previously, but the Police do not support the introduction of a weight restriction on this B-classified road, which in this location is the only link to an industrial waste site. In any case, the nature of such a Traffic Regulation Order would mean that any contraventions would be difficult to prove, and combined with the lack of Police resources, enforcement action would be minimal.

**Comment 23 :**

***There are difficulties for agricultural vehicles (and cars) accessing Hannam Lane/Green Lane approaching from the south. This lane is used both by farmers and residents on a daily basis.***

**Officer response:**

Offices consider that with approximately 21 metres between the dropped vehicle crossing for the lane and the chicane itself, there is adequate distance for safe manoeuvring in and out of this access.

**Comment 24 :**

***Speed cameras should be used on Wetherby Road through the village to enforce the 30mph speed limit. There are speed camera signs in Acomb, so can a similar camera sign be provided in Rufforth?***

**Officer response:**

North Yorkshire Police do not support the use of fixed speed cameras, so we are unable to introduce them anywhere in the city. The speed camera signs in Acomb were in operation approximately ten years ago, when the Police conducted mobile camera enforcement, but since this operation ceased some years ago, these signs should actually be removed.

**Comment 25 :**

***Wetherby Road needs resurfacing.***

**Officer response:**

Wetherby Road was included within the resurfacing programme for this financial year, following the Council's annual condition survey of the city's highway network. Our intention, assuming that the proposals are approved, is to conduct the resurfacing work in conjunction with construction of the chicanes, which would avoid damaging the new surface.

**Comment 26 :**

***The 'Keep Clear' markings near the chicanes are important to allow residents gain access through regularly queuing traffic, but some motorists ignore them and block nearby driveways.***

**Officer response:**

These markings are required to keep private accesses clear of stationary traffic as vehicles give way at the chicanes. It is unfortunate that these are sometimes blocked, but without them, more problems may occur.

**Comment 27 :**

***An improved gateway layout and an additional Vehicle Activated sign are also needed at the York end of the village.***

**Officer response:**

The introduction of a “five-bar gate” feature at the other village 30mph gateways may be worth considering if it proves successful at the Wetherby end of the village. The provision of more Vehicle Activated Signs in the village should only be considered if speed remains a problem after all other measures have been tried.

**Comment 28 :**

***The Police should enforce the speed limit in the village on a regular basis.***

**Officer response:**

The Police do not consider there to be a serious speeding problem in the village and do not regard it as a high priority site for enforcement work, given their limited resources.

**Comment 29 :**

***Relocate the proposed extension to the 30mph speed limit nearer the pond and allotments. The proposed location is too far away from the start of the village or any apparent danger to be effective.***

**Officer response:**

The Police also have some concern over the proposed speed limit extension being too far away from the village to be effective. Drivers would be more likely to appreciate the requirement to slow down if the speed limit started closer to where there is a change of environment as they enter the village i.e. closer to the first house. Consequently, Officers are now recommending an amendment to the proposals, which relocates the speed limit extension to the north-western property boundary of West Cottage.

**Comment 30 :**

***‘Why can’t the Council promote a by-pass for heavy goods vehicles and commuter traffic to use?’***

**Officer response:**

This option has previously been considered, but it would be extremely expensive and therefore difficult to justify, given the daily vehicle flows involved, the relatively low vehicle speeds through the village, and the low accident rate.

**Comment 31 :**

***Forward visibility approaching the chicane from the Wetherby end of the village is poor, as it is positioned on the apex of a gentle curve in the road, and drivers turning left out of Maythorpe risk meeting vehicles travelling into the village from the north head on. It should be relocated on the straight section of road between Maythorpe and Middlewood Close.***

**Officer response:**

Although the location for this chicane is not perfect, it appears to be the best position, in that it has the least adverse effect upon access to and egress from nearby side roads and private driveways. In addition, Officers consider that sight lines on the northern approach along Wetherby Road are relatively good, and that the gentle curve in the road serves to introduce a degree of caution from approaching drivers before they make the decision to go around the chicane. Nevertheless, Officers have reviewed its position, with the only possibility being the straight section of road between Maythorpe and Middlewood Close. However, the proximity of a privately maintained side road means that this could be potentially dangerous, given that the sight lines for the side road motorists looking in both directions (but particularly when looking left) is obscured by the adjacent hedgerow and is very poor.

**Comment 32 :**

***The chicanes are unsafe for cyclists because the bypass lane is too narrow and will not get cleaned, forcing cyclists into the centre of the road.***

**Officer response:**

Cycle infrastructure guidelines indicate that although not desirable, narrow cycle lanes over short distances are generally acceptable, and bypassing the chicane will certainly have obvious advantages for cyclists. Similar cycle bypass lanes have been used at other chicane arrangements (e.g. Huntington Road) without any operational problems.

**Comment 33 :**

***The speed reduction measures should be extended at the other end of the village (on the B1224).***

**Officer response:**

Our speed survey data shows that the average speed of vehicles entering the village from the south along the B1224 was 31mph and 28mph in August and September 2006 respectively. These speeds do not give rise to concerns from Officers or the Police, and therefore, no further action is currently recommended at this location.

**Comment 34 :**

***The Police should be stopping drivers who abuse the priority working for the chicanes.***

**Officer response:**

Officers agree, but also recognise that the Police are under resourced, and that they have higher priority work to undertake. As the majority of drivers respect the priority working at the chicanes, this constitutes minimal risk.

**Comment 35 :**

***Don't forget about the traffic exceeding the speed limit on Bradley Lane. Will enhanced gateways be installed there too?***

**Officer response:**

Our speed survey data shows that the average speed of vehicles entering the village along Bradley Lane was 40mph and 38mph in August and September 2006 respectively. This raises some concerns and suggests that more could be done to reduce approach speeds further. Therefore, Officers recommend that the "five-bar gate" arrangement should also be implemented at this location if it proves to be an effective addition at the Wetherby end of the village.

**Comment 36 :**

***The temporary chicanes are too wide.***

**Officer response:**

Should the proposals to make the chicanes a permanent feature be approved, the cumbersome nature of the chicanes in their temporary form would be replaced with kerbed build-outs, incorporating cycle bypass lanes. The width between the existing kerb line of the opposite footway and the chicane kerb edge would be no less than 4.5 metres. This is in order to allow large farm vehicles to pass safely, but also to deter both lanes of traffic from passing the chicane at the same time.

**Comment 37 :**

***Parking should be prohibited at the junction of Yew Tree Close and Wetherby Road, as it is dangerous entering and exiting the side road at school arrival and departure times, and for social events at the school.***

**Officer response:**

This was not covered by the proposals, and Officers do not consider that the problems described warrant any action being taken.

**Comment 38 :**

***The proposals should include countdown signs prior to the 30mph speed limits, e.g. 150yds; 100yds; 50yds.***

**Officer response:**

This was investigated at the early stages of feasibility in 2004. Officers put their case forward to the Department for Transport to consider the use of this type of countdown marker sign, but authorisation was refused.

**Comment 39 :**

***A resident has raised concern about an incident where a funeral hearse was unable to pull up directly opposite a property because of a chicane island.***

**Officer response:**

Any inconvenience caused in such circumstances is clearly very regrettable. However, there are many situations on the highway where it would not be practical or safe for a hearse, or other vehicles, to park. This might arise due to permanent factors, such as the proximity of a junction or a highway feature such as a pedestrian refuge. However, it could also happen due to temporary factors, such as the position of other parked vehicles or road works taking place. Therefore, it would not be realistic to design traffic management schemes with the avoidance of all such possibilities in mind, especially when they are only likely to occur on a very infrequent basis. The Rufforth chicanes do, inevitably, have some local impact on parking, but this must be balanced against the traffic speed reduction and road safety benefits they are helping to achieve.