
Decision Session
Executive Member for City Strategy

2nd November 2010

Report of the Director of City Strategy

20mph zone petition for Almsford Drive

Summary

1. To advise the Executive Member of the proposed response to the receipt of the petition requesting a 20mph zone for Almsford Drive. The petition requests an extension of the existing 20mph zone covering the Danebury Drive area to reduce through traffic attempting to avoid the traffic calming around Carr Infant School.

Recommendations

2. The Executive Member for City Strategy is recommended to:
 - a) Agree that no further action should be taken at the current time in relation to Almsford Drive but that it should be taken forward for consideration against other priorities in 2011/12.
 - b) Await further guidance from the Department for Transport before determining whether it should be progressed as a wider 20mph speed limit or as an extension to the 20mph zone.

Reason: To progress requests and petitions against agreed criteria to ensure that limited funding is allocated consistently

Background

3. A 20mph zone was implemented in the Danebury Drive area during 1993/94. The area currently covered by a 20mph zone is shown in Annex A. The area to be included was determined on the basis of the existence of recorded accidents/casualties. The roads to the north of the area (including Almsford Drive) were not included at the time as the roads were not considered to carry much traffic and there were no recorded casualties.
4. A petition was presented at Council on 8th April 2010 requesting that the 20mph zone be extended to include Almsford Drive. Residents requested it on the basis that traffic uses Almsford Drive as a short cut to Wheatlands Drive to avoid the 20mph zone and traffic calming around Carr Infant School. Further, they consider that they are near to the school and on the route to it for

many children. Of the 70 households on Almsford Drive 20 have signed the petition supporting the introduction of traffic calming.

- It is possible that although Almsford Drive was not considered to carry much traffic when the scheme was introduced that the introduction of traffic signals associated with the relocation of Manor School has increased the amount of through traffic.

Petition Data

- The petition requested the extension of the 20mph zone. The speed survey carried out (located to the east of Wheatland Grove) returned the following data:

	Average speed (mph)	85 th percentile (mph)	Highest speed (mph)
From Wheatlands	18	25	36
To Wheatlands	21	28	43

- The speed data returned means that under the criteria agreed at the December 2009 Decision Session meeting Almsford Drive would be eligible for implementation as a 20mph speed limit (without traffic calming), if this was deemed more appropriate.
- Some vehicle flow data was obtained from the week-long speed survey to try and determine whether there is through traffic using the route. This is shown below:

	Wheatlands Grove (average number of vehicles per hour)	Almsford Drive (average number of vehicles per hour)
Avg. Flow Weekday 7-8am	58	68
Avg. Flow Weekday 8-9am	37	4
Avg. Flow Weekday 9-10am	79	23
Avg. Flow Weekday 3-4pm	38	20
Avg. Flow Weekday 4-5pm	36	22
Avg. Flow Weekday 5-6pm	58	15
Avg. Flow Weekend 9-10am	No data	4
Avg. Flow Weekend 4-5pm	No data	6

- There are approximately 70 households on Almsford Drive and a further 60 on Wheatlands Grove. In the absence of detailed through traffic and local traffic flow data it is difficult to draw any absolute conclusions. It can be seen though that traffic levels on Wheatlands Grove exceed the number of households on the street between 9-10am and is equivalent to the number of households

during 7-8am and 5-6pm and on Almsford Drive between 7-8am probably suggesting some evidence of through traffic during these periods. The remainder of the traffic flow data does not suggest any significant level of through traffic is occurring.

10. It is possible that the western end of Almsford Drive is experiencing more through traffic using Wheatlands Grove as a short cut to Boroughbridge Road to avoid the signals on Beckfield Lane/Boroughbridge Road. Through traffic on roads immediately to the north of Almsford Drive were considered in a report at the April 2010 Decision Session meeting and did not indicate any significant levels of additional traffic on Newlands Drive or Ouseburn Avenue, although there was evidence of through traffic on Lidgett Grove. These roads are more convenient and direct short cuts to avoid the signals although it is possible that the western end of Almsford Drive and Wheatlands Grove experiences higher levels of traffic than otherwise might be expected during 9-10am for this reason.
11. No casualties have been recorded on Almsford Drive during the previous three years (1st September 2007 – 31st August 2010).
12. Almsford Drive could be progressed independently of the 20mph speed limit requests (see paragraphs 13-14) as an extension to the 20mph zone but would need to be prioritised against other requests and schemes. There is no available funding during 2010/11 to deliver the scheme without stopping schemes currently progressing. Almsford Drive is not considered to take priority over currently progressing schemes as there are no recorded casualties to address. It will need to be considered against other priorities and requests as part of the allocation of any funding available in 2011/12.
13. During 2009 several requests for 20mph speed limits were made for the roads immediately surrounding and to the north of Almsford Drive (Ouseburn Ave, Wheatlands Grove, Cranbrook Road, Lidgett Grove and Newlands Drive) It would seem appropriate to consider all of these roads together as part of a wider 20mph speed limit or limited engineering zone. This area would have a boundary with the current 20mph zone surrounding Carr Infant and Junior Schools. The recent proposed revision of Dft's speed limit circular (which is subject to final confirmation of alterations) suggests that 20mph speed limits sharing a boundary with 20mph zones should be avoided as it may cause confusion. The circular suggests that it may be more appropriate to have the whole area as a 'zone' that included minor traffic calming engineering works. This would make a scheme in the area more expensive to deliver and would require more extensive consultation. It is proposed to wait until revisions to the speed circular have been confirmed and there is more certainty regarding signing current 20mph zones within or adjacent to 20mph limits before progressing further with a scheme.
14. As an area, certain roads within it would be prioritised for delivery from any 20mph budget that is available in 2011/12. It is proposed that this would be reviewed next year with a view to determining whether it is appropriate to combine all the streets into one larger 20mph speed limit. Unless additional funding can be found for this wider area scheme it cannot be funded in 2010/11. If however the Ward Committee wished to fund the scheme as a local priority it could be progressed sooner.

Prioritising petitions and requests

15. The introduction of 20mph zones has been prioritised around schools as part of the safe routes to school programme. Other requests or proposed extension of the safe route to school are considered in the first instance against recorded casualties so as not to dilute the impact of the scheme outside the school. The introduction of a traffic calming scheme requires at least 50% of respondents to the consultation to support the proposal. Where the proposal to introduce is a Council led scheme, officers would undertake the consultation as part of the scheme progression. Where it is a resident proposal or request, evidence that 50% of households support the proposal it carries greater weight when being considered for prioritisation.
16. Not all the requests and petitions received so far for 20mph speed limits have been assessed. The December 2009 report to EMDS agreed that petitions would be included in the list of schemes to be prioritised against the agreed criteria rather than dealt with separately.
17. A petition for a 20mph speed limit containing the signatures of 50 per cent or more households gains priority in an evaluation and response to, an initial approach if everything else is equal i.e. accidents, proximity to schools etc. When the Council formally consults on the petition or request the support of 50 per cent of respondents to the survey is required before a new speed limit would be introduced.

Consultation

18. Members commented as follows:
 - Councillor Potter advised that she would support a 20mph speed limit across the wider area referred to in paragraph 13 and considers that traffic calming would be unnecessary.
 - Councillor D'Agorne advised that he considered a more holistic approach to be sensible rather than shifting any problems to another street.
 - Councillor Simpson-Laing advised that residents requested a 20mph speed limit not additional traffic calming.
 - Councillor Horton advised that he would not be in support of additional traffic calming.

19. North Yorkshire Police made the following comments:

This petition appears to be based on reducing traffic flow and not road safety or casualty reduction, which is not part of the DfT criteria for the setting of 20mph speed limits. The speed data produced for Almsford Road, despite reasonable average speeds being recorded for the site, the 85th% speeds are a little high and may indicate that an unsupported limit may be difficult to successfully implement. However, should the 20 mph speed limit be imposed on Almsford Road, it is not objected to on the following understanding:-

- That the City of York Council is responsible for the management of that highway. The imposition of any 20 mph speed limit is made with due regard to the authorities responsibility under the relevant legislation and will comply with DfT guidance.

- The assumption of North Yorkshire Police is that if correctly placed, the speed limit will be self enforcing and the authority are fully responsible for ensuring that it meets those aims.
- With due regard to the obligations of the City of York Council, North Yorkshire Police will not undertake any routine speed enforcement on any highway that has a 20 mph limit imposed.
- It will be the duty of the City of York Council to put into place corrective speed reduction measures if that limit fails.

With regard to the implementation of a 20mph zone, the lack of any recorded casualties on Almsford Drive means that this location is not a priority for treatment, however, as long as any traffic calming ensured that the 20mph speed limit was self enforcing, it would not be objected to.

Options

20. Option one – Agree that an extension to the 20mph zone should not take place during 2010/11 and consider the scheme against other priorities coming forward for delivery during 2011/12. The scheme could be considered through two processes, either as a 20mph zone or as part of a wider 20mph speed limit already requested by residents on adjacent streets.
21. Option two – Do not agree to delay any consideration of the scheme and agree to proceed with implementation (subject to wider consultation) during 2010/11 and direct officers to halt an existing scheme in order for it to progress.

Analysis

22. Option one – The introduction of the agreed criteria and process for responding to petitions and requests has provided a consistent approach to delivery of 20mph zones and speed limits. This approach is data led. It is primarily based on casualty data and the establishment of a policy that a school safety zone would be provided outside all schools. Carr Infant School already has a 20mph zone and no casualties have been recorded on Almsford Drive which would suggest that an extension of the zone is not a priority at the current time even though children use the road as a route to school. Two options are available to consider speed reduction measures at this location during 2011/12 (a zone extension on Almsford Drive only or a lower speed limit across a wider area) but the location will have to be considered against other priorities for delivery during next year as available funding is fully committed for 2010/11.
23. Option two – Regardless of the lack of casualties an extension of the 20mph zone could be considered due to its close proximity to the school. It would require further consultation with residents as implementation of a traffic calming scheme requires at least 50% household support which the petition does not provide. Officers would need to determine which road safety scheme currently progressing should be halted in order to reallocate funding. To progress a 20mph zone on Almsford Drive would cost in the region of £20,000. The cost of a wider area 20mph speed limit would be approximately £8,000.

Corporate Objectives

24. A data led approach of assessing road safety issues and prioritising scheme meets the Council's corporate priorities to create a Safer City. It also supports the aims and objectives of the Road Safety Strategy as part of the Second Local Transport Plan and contributes to A Safer City.

Implications

Financial

25. There are no financial implications from option one. If option two were pursued in year costs may rise depending on the scheme deferred. No further funding is available through the Local Transport Plan allocation without cutting other schemes.

Legal

26. A Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) will need to be in place in order to enable the speed limit on any road to be altered. The Council has powers under the Highways Act and Road Traffic Regulation Act to undertake and implement TROs

HR

27. There are no impacts

Other

28. There are no impacts

Crime and Disorder

29. Speeding is a criminal offence and the Council has a responsibility to deliver an effective Speed Management Strategy.

Risk Management

30. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy, no significant risks have been identified arising from the recommendations.

Contact Details

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Report Approved



Date 14.10.10

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Wards Affected: Acomb

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Annex A – plan of existing 20mph zone