

7 August 2000

Report to the Director of Environment & Development Services in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning, Transport & Environment

A1237 Speed limit reduction

Summary

- 1 At the Planning and Transport Committee meeting on 11 November 2000, Members asked officers to look further at the potential to reduce the speed limit along the A1237 from de-restricted (60 mph) to 50 mph. This paper briefly outlines the work undertaken and the objections received from the Police. The paper concludes that in the absence of support for this proposal the reduction in the speed limit not be progressed at this time but that representations be made to the Central Area Commander for a comprehensive review of the Police policy on speed restrictions on the A1237.

Background

- 2 It will be recalled that as part of the A1237 Severance Study, the issue of the speed of traffic along the A1237 was discussed. It was felt by user groups that the speed of traffic acted as a deterrent to cyclist using the A1237. Following discussions with the Highways Agency they confirmed that they were happy to see the speed limit reviewed provided that the Police were in agreement. The Police raised enforcement concerns, and therefore Members agreed, at last November's meeting, with officers recommendation to defer a decision on this matter pending further discussions.
- 3 Officers and the Police met and agreed a way forward, this involved undertaking free flow traffic surveys to ascertain whether or not a 50 mph limit would be self enforcing at differing times of the day and evening. The results of the speed surveys are summarised in Annex A.
- 4 Whilst the A1237 is part trunk road and part local highway authority managed, it is never-the-less is of one character. Council Officers, the Police and the Highways Agency all agree that whatever the speed limit is it should be consistent along its full length, thereby avoiding driver confusion and inconsistency.
- 5 Currently the volume of cyclists travelling along the A1237 is negligible with the peak movement being between Haxby Road and Wigginton Road, comprising 0.2% of the traffic volume, across a 12 hour period (i.e. 77

cyclists). Between 1996 and 1999 there have been 3 accidents involving cyclists other than at junctions. These were:-

- midway between Malton Road and North Lane (slight - 1996)
- between Haxby Road and Wigginton Road (slight - 1996)
- midway between Wigginton Road and Clifton Moor (slight - 1996)

6 Both the Highways Agency and North Yorkshire Police have been given a copy of the survey results, their responses are set out in Annex B.

7 The accidents along the A1237 are summarised in Annex C. Whilst it can be seen that there are a reasonable number of accidents, when these are analysed it is clear that many are not directly speed related, although of course speed can be a factor in the accident severity. A more detailed analysis of the accidents shows that speed is only a primary factor in the 'overtaking' and most of the 'loss of control' accidents. In almost all other cases the reduction in the speed limit from 60 mph to 50 mph would have no significant influence on the accidents.

Discussion

8 The introduction of a 50 mph speed limit on the A1237 would assist cyclists travelling along the A1237, would slightly reduce the speed of traffic approaching junctions and at crossing points other than at roundabouts, and could help improve safety generally.

9 Given the nature and character of the A1237 Officers feel that a 50 mph limit would be the most appropriate. The Police have continued to raise objections, based on enforcement, the character of the road and lack of need due to low accident occurrence and cycle use. The speed survey results confirm that during the evening speeds are generally higher than that deemed as self enforcing (i.e. within 10% of the speed limit + 2 mph). Additionally the open stretch between Askham Lane and Wetherby Road has above average speeds.

10 On the 1 March 2000 the DETR released its much awaited review of speed management policy. For roads of this character (single carriageway roads in rural areas with 60 mph limit) the review concludes that further work is needed to ascertain whether a 50 mph limit (or indeed 40 mph) would be enough to encourage cyclists, pedestrians or horse riders to use such busy roads, it then recognises that there is still the problem of achieving driver compliance. The report concludes that on balance no change is needed to the national speed limit or to nationally introduce lower limits on these roads, but that local authorities are free to develop speed management strategies which take account of national guidelines and local conditions. Attention should however, be focused on speed related accident sites. The review also retains the Association of Chief Police Officers enforcement thresholds, rather than introduce a 'zero tolerance' system.

11 Members may be aware that the proposed islands within the A1237 to assist pedestrians and cyclists crossing the A1237 at Askham Lane and Northfield

Lane/Main Street Knapton have just been installed. This works were carried out since the traffic speed survey was undertaken and could have a modest calming effect on traffic.

- 12 The Police objection relates to their concerns about enforcement, and they (correctly) point out that speed is not the major contributory factor in the accidents along the A1237. The Police also question the benefits which will be accrued and the increased level of cycle and pedestrian use which might be derived.
- 13 By contrast at the recent Woodthorpe Neighbourhood Forum a straw poll was taken of the (approximately) 30 attendees, this suggested that 66% would favour a 50 mph speed limit being introduced along the A1237.

Summary

- 14 Since the support of the Police can not be secured for a 50 mph speed limit, the Highways Agency will not support a speed limit reduction either. Reluctantly therefore, it may be sensible to keep the matter under review. The Council will undertake further surveys to see what effect the recent and proposed junction alterations and the newly installed refuge islands are having on traffic speeds. Additionally consideration will be given to further traffic calming measures along the higher speed sections of the A1237, which will be designed to reduce traffic speeds to self-enforcing levels. In the mean time the Council may wish to make direct representations to the Police at Central Area Commander level.

Funding

- 15 The Highways Agency have agreed to fund the signing on the Trunk Road section of the A1237, however this would come via a joint bid through the Local Transport Plan.
- 16 The introduction of a 50 mph speed limit Order will cost this Council £100,000 (including the Trunk Road section). The signing and lining budget could not fund these works. Therefore even if the Council did decide to proceed with an Order, notwithstanding the Police objection, this money would need to be secured through a LTP bid. Any further calming measures would require additional funding. This forms part of the 'more than basic' LTP bid.

Legal Authority

- 17 The Council as Highway Authority are empowered to carry out alterations to the roads under its control. Whilst the trunk road falls under the control of the Highways Agency, under de-trunking proposals, this agency would take the lead in the advancement of a scheme in partnership with the Council (as prospective Highway Authority) although any bid for funding would need to be made through this Council's Local Transport Plan.

Recommendation

- 18 It is recommended that work be suspended on the reduction of the speed limit on the A1237 to 50 mph, pending further representations by the Council to the police Central Area Commander. In the mean time officers will keep this matter under review, in the light of changes which may otherwise reduce vehicle speeds.

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Background Papers

Consultant's report into the severance problems created by the A1237
A1237 Severance Study - Consultation Feedback

- P+T Committee 11 November 1999

Study into Problems for Pedestrians and Cyclists Crossing A1237

- P+T Committee 19 August 1999

Safe Routes to School report

- P+T Committee - 29 August 1996

Safe Routes to School report

- P+T (North East) Sub-Committee - 2 Dec 1997

Strensall Road/A1237 Petition

- P+T (North East) Sub-Committee - 3 Nov 1998.

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A1237 Speed Survey Results

ANNEX A

The following tables set out the results of speed surveys undertaken along the A1237, this work has been undertaken as part of the evaluation into the feasibility of introducing a 50 mph speed limit along the whole length of the A1237.

All surveys were undertaken by City of York Council in February 2000, they recorded free flow conditions only with three surveys at each site, namely during mid-morning, mid-afternoon and early evening

Site 1 - A1237 - south of Moor Lane

	clockwise			anti-clockwise		
	mean	85%ile	peak	mean	85%ile	peak
morning	52 mph	58 mph	66 mph	53 mph	58 mph	69 mph
afternoon	54 mph	59 mph	75 mph	52 mph	57 mph	78 mph
evening	55 mph	61 mph	103mph	53 mph	58 mph	72 mph

Site 2 - A1237 - Halfway between Askham Lane and B1224

	clockwise			anti-clockwise		
	mean	85%ile	peak	mean	85%ile	peak
morning	53 mph	58 mph	75 mph	53 mph	57 mph	75 mph
afternoon	57 mph	67 mph	81 mph	56 mph	66 mph	101mph
evening	57 mph	63 mph	74 mph	58 mph	64 mph	80 mph

Site 3 - A1237 - Halfway between B1224 and A59

	clockwise			anti-clockwise		
	mean	85%ile	peak	mean	85%ile	peak
morning	47 mph	53 mph	64 mph	48 mph	54 mph	66 mph
afternoon	52 mph	57 mph	74 mph	48 mph	55 mph	65 mph
evening	49 mph	53 mph	62 mph	49 mph	57 mph	74 mph

Site 4 - A1237 - Halfway between Strensall Road and Monks Cross

	clockwise			anti-clockwise		
	mean	85%ile	peak	mean	85%ile	peak
morning	50 mph	55 mph	63 mph	48 mph	53 mph	62 mph
afternoon	50 mph	54 mph	72 mph	48 mph	54 mph	66 mph
evening	55 mph	60 mph	94 mph	55 mph	62 mph	73 mph

Note - Mouchels carried out a recent survey closer to Strensall Road roundabout, this showed the 85%ile speed as 47 mph clockwise and 53 mph anticlockwise

Site 5 - A1237 - Halfway between Monks Cross and A1036

	clockwise			anti-clockwise		
	mean	85%ile	peak	mean	85%ile	peak
morning	47 mph	54 mph	71 mph	46 mph	53 mph	87 mph
afternoon	50 mph	56 mph	65 mph	46 mph	53 mph	68 mph
evening	49 mph	56 mph	75 mph	55 mph	61 mph	75 mph

Letter of objection from NORTH YORKSHIRE Police
ANNEX B
and letter from the Highways Agency

Accident assessment

ANNEX C