

**Decision making level
Director**

Officer in Consultation

19th August 2014

Report Title:-

Proposed speed limit changes to B1224 Wetherby Road near Rufforth.

Decision Requested

- To approve implementation of a 40mph “buffer” speed limit on the B1224 approach to the east end of Rufforth village.
- To approve further investigations into the provision an off-road cycle link between the village and the bridleway adjoining the B1224 to the east.

Reason

To improve the safety of the cyclists, pedestrians, and horse riders in this area.

Background

Proposals to introduce a new bridleway between Rufforth and Knapton were first reported to OIC on 11th September 2012. The overall route of the bridleway is indicated in **Annex A**. Due to problems in acquiring land in order to introduce Section A of the route, just east of Rufforth, it was explained that users of the route would be required to travel along the B1224 in the short term. Therefore it was proposed that the existing the 30mph limit covering the village be extended outwards to slow traffic down so that non-motorised road users (NMU) feel less intimidated whilst travelling along and crossing this section of road.

Following more detailed feasibility work, the scheme was again reported to OIC on 19th February 2013 with revised proposals for this section of the route. It was now thought that introduction of a 40mph “buffer” limit over this section of the B1224 would be more appropriate and effective than extending the village 30mph restriction. The introduction of warning signs and road markings to increase driver awareness of the potential NMU in this area was also proposed. The scheme presented at this OIC is shown in **Annex B**. This was approved in principle, and authorisation was given to advertise the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). Since then the warning signs have been installed and the TRO has been advertised.

At this OIC, officers were also asked to continued negotiation with the landowners, with a view to introducing an off-road link in the future. Sustrans have been undertaking negotiations on behalf of the Council and the local steering group. After some initial problems getting a response from the landowners Sustrans have managed to make contact and have put some proposals forward to them. The proposals were for a field-edge path with an access point at the Rufforth village end back onto the roadside verge and at the Harewood Whin end potentially straight onto the new path rather than join the path at the roadside where it emerges back onto Wetherby Road. No formal agreements have been drawn up as yet. Sustrans have completed their work on the other sections of the Rufforth to Knapton scheme therefore further negotiations with the landowner will pass to Council officers to take forward.

Traffic Order Feedback

Only one response was received:

North Yorkshire Police strongly object to the proposal to reduce the speed limit. The Police are not convinced that the reduction of speed limit will provide the required protection to NMU on this section of road, and advised that the only effective means to address the safety concerns is to provide the off-road link as proposed in the September 2012 Report. They consider that a “buffer” speed limit (in this case 40mph) should not be used for the purpose of solving the problem of isolated hazards, and physical measures are more appropriate for this purpose. They add that the imposition of a 40mph limit may lead to a mismatch between what an NMU may expect from traffic and what drivers perceive or expect, particularly if the use of the bridleway is intermittent.

Officer comment – The proposal is to introduce a reduction in the existing 60mph speed limit to 40mph in conjunction with the warning signs already in place. This should provide a safer interim scheme until an alternative off-road path can be delivered. Despite this, and the fact that the use of the bridleway may be infrequent, it is recognised that requiring NMUs to use this road is not ideal and the provision of an off-road path is our ultimate aim. This will be reliant on finalising the agreements with the landowners and funding being secured.

It should be noted that cyclists have been using the full length of Wetherby Road between Rufforth and the A1237 for many years to travel into York from the villages to the West, any reduction in vehicle speeds as a result of the proposed buffer zone will directly benefit these cyclists.

Another additional benefit of the proposed reduction in speed limit on the approach to the village is that it should serve to encourage better compliance with the 30mph limit within the village. Villagers have expressed their concerns for several years about non-compliance with the current speed limits, especially on the blind bend between the edge of the village and the Bradley Lane junction.

Statutory Powers

The City of York Council, as Highways Authority of the area, has powers under the Highways Act 1980 and associated Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 to implement the measures proposed.

Ward Member and Political Party Views

No responses to the TRO advert were received from Members. However, the following views were put forward as part of the previous consultation on the proposals:-

Cllr. I. Gillies

Supports the proposals, but would prefer to see an extension of the existing 30mph speed limit.

Cllr. A. D'Agorne

Supports the proposals.

In addition, at the time of the previous consultation **Rufforth and Knapton Parish Council** expressed support for the proposal.

Options**Option 1:**

- To approve implementation of the Traffic Regulation Order to introduce the proposed 40mph speed limit.

Option 2:

- To not implement the proposed 40mph speed limit.

The Police have raised objection to the proposed introduction of the 40mph limit on the basis that speed limits should not be used to attempt to solve the problem of isolated hazards. They also consider that other engineering measures such as warning signs, road markings, junction improvements, super-elevation of bends and improved street lighting are likely to be more effective at most sites.

As approved at the previous OIC, warning signs and additional road markings have been introduced to highlight to motorists the likelihood of NMU using this section of road. However, if motorists encounter pedestrians, cyclists and horses on a very infrequent basis, the effectiveness of the signs may be reduced over time.

Officers accept the argument put forward by the Police in the event of the speed limit measures being introduced in isolation, but consider that the reduction in speed limit would enhance the measures already in place by reducing vehicle speeds to a more appropriate level.

It is therefore considered that the introduction of the reduced speed limit (as per Option 1), in conjunction with the improvements to the signage already provided, will offer NMU a safer means of travelling on-road between the bridleway and village. It will also bring long term benefits to the village.

However, it is recognised that the preferred ultimate solution would be to provide an off-road link, and further work is needed to secure the relevant agreements with the landowner and identify a funding source to deliver the off-road alternative. Therefore it is proposed that Officers should pursue this regardless of whether the reduced speed limit is introduced.

Level of Risk

1-3 Acceptable		
4-8 Regular Monitoring	✓	
9-15 Constant Monitoring		
16-20 Action Plan		
21-25 Registered as a corporate risk		

Internal Consultation

Legal		The TRO to reduce the speed limit has been advertised.
Financial		There are sufficient funds available to implement the reduced speed limit within the Cycle Minor Schemes allocation of the Capital Programme. Potential funding sources for the off-road link will continue to be investigated.
Human Resources		None
Crime and Disorder		None
Sustainability		The proposals will serve to encourage horse riding, walking and cycling by providing a safer link to a newly-constructed off-road bridleway.
Equalities		None
Property		The ongoing negotiations with the landowners where the off-road link is proposed will determine whether or not the Council will be required to purchase a strip of the field edge.
Other		

Implementation Status

Work will be undertaken by the Council's in house contractor.

Recommendations

Approve the proposal set out in Option 1 (implementation of a 40mph "buffer" speed limit on the B1224), and approve further investigations into the provision an off-road cycle link.

Contact Details

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Report Approved



Date

7 August 2014

All



Wards Affected: Rural West York

For further information please contact the author of the report