
Meeting: Traffic Management Meeting
Date: 6th July 2010
Subject: Options to Change Speed Limits at Husborne Crawley
Report of: Basil Jackson Assistant Director Highways & Transportation
Summary: The purpose of this report is to outline further actions and options undertaken at the request of Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Contact Officer: Nick Chapman
nick.chapman@amey.co.uk

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: Woburn and Harlington

Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

Financial:

None as a direct result of this report

Legal:

None as a result of this report.

Risk Management:

None as a result of this report.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

None as a result of this report.

Equalities/Human Rights:

None as a result of this report.

Community Safety:

Reduced speed would improve safety

Sustainability:

None as a result of this report

RECOMMENDATION(S):**1.**

- (a) The Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities & Healthier Lifestyles is requested to note the contents of the report.

Background and Information.

1. In November 2009 a petition was sent Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) and forwarded for investigation to the Transportation Manager at Bedfordshire Highways. The petition requests that the current 40mph speed limits on roads in and around Husborne Crawley be reduced to 30mph and that a 20mph speed limit be introduced at the lower school.
2. The roads specifically referred to in the petition are A4012 Turnpike Road, School Lane and Bedford Road.
3. The petition comprised 161 signatures from residents and visitors, 43 from children, 27 from parents of schoolchildren and 5 school staff.
4. The petition document contained a report that sets out the concerns of the petitioners and offers some preferred actions. There is a general view expressed that motorists are generally exceeding the existing 40mph limit.
5. A report containing the full details of the petition was presented to the Traffic Management Meeting in April 2010. At that time the Portfolio Holder was requested to note the contents of the report and agree that the conditions on site did not warrant further engineering or regulatory intervention at that current time and that actions contained within it were appropriate to the request made.
6. These actions were:
 - That the situation continue to be monitored by the police. It is the experience of both Beds Highways and the police that changing a speed limit and signing does not automatically change driver behaviour. The 40mph speed limit is deemed to be generally appropriate to the type and nature of the roads concerned. It would be difficult or impossible to enforce a 30mph or 20mph speed limit in the vicinity of the school without physical traffic calming measures to ensure compliance and at current intervention levels this would not be considered.
 - The area be re-assessed for possible additional coloured patches and speed roundels if required to reinforce the existing speed limits.
 - The area be placed on the list for the deployment of the mobile vehicle actuated speed signs owned by Central Bedfordshire and available for temporary use.

- In addition to the continuing police presence however consideration is being given to the introduction of a community based speed monitoring programme that would enable local communities to carry out highly visible speed checks at approved locations to reinforce the police actions. The key to reducing speeds within inhabited areas is continuing and increasing driver education and the community input can be a valuable asset in this. This scheme is not yet in place but is currently being considered for communities across Central Bedfordshire.
7. The location had already been placed upon the Police concern list for additional speed enforcement.
 8. There were speakers at the meeting including Councillors Wells and Chapman supporting a change in speed limits.
 9. The Portfolio Holder was minded to support the recommendation of the report that no action be undertaken to reduce speed limits but that the site be re-appraised for possible additional speed reducing markings and that mobile signs be deployed. It was further agreed that a further meeting be held with residents.
 10. Subsequently to the meeting the decision was called in on the request of Councillor Chapman for review by Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
 11. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee heard a number of speakers. As a result of that meeting officers were instructed to investigate options for addressing the existing situation in Husborne Crawley and to present a report containing these options to the Portfolio Holder at the July Traffic Management meeting.
 12. A site meeting had already been arranged for a date following the Overview and Scrutiny meeting and this took place on 27th May. Those present included the Transportation Manager for Beds Highways, Councillor Wells, representatives of the traffic police and a number of residents. Both Turnpike Road and School Lane were walked, discussions took place and observations made.
 13. It was pointed out that at the time of the visit the safer route to school scheme for School Lane was incomplete and signs and markings had yet to be implemented.
 14. It was agreed that in line with the request of the O&S Committee options would be set out and costed with observations on each option by officers.
 15. It has been pointed out throughout this process that there is no budget available within this years programme to undertake any specific speed limit related works and that the situation on site does not currently require any other intervention from safety related budgets.
 16. Recent Government announcements have cut £665k from the Central Bedfordshire Council integrated schemes budget and removed the £170k Capital expenditure for the Area Based Grant for the Safety Camera Partnership from which speed limit reviews have traditionally been funded.
 17. There has been a project carried out to improve safety in the vicinity of the school.

18. Additionally a number of other matters were drawn to the attention of residents during the walkabout:
- a) That the limited width of the footways in some locations is further reduced by the residents own hedges overhanging the highway boundary and that these should be trimmed
 - b) That the nature of the Turnpike Road with houses and entrances on one side largely hidden by the dense hedges and the park wall on the other does not give an impression to drivers that they are in a village and thus reduces their perception of a need for caution.
 - c) That Turnpike Road/Mill Road was specifically promoted as an HGV route as part of the Ridgmont Bypass works and thus its use by them is entirely appropriate.
 - d) That in the opinion of officers and the police representatives 40mph is an appropriate speed limit.
 - e) That the rural section of School Lane is and probably always would be driven at speeds greater than the current 40mph limit. This was evidenced a number of times during the site visit.
 - f) That it would be unlikely that a 30 mph limit on some sections of School Lane and on Turnpike Road would succeed without physical speed restraint and that traffic calming on Turnpike Road would not be possible whilst it is a preferred lorry route.
 - g) Reduction in speed below the 'natural' speed of the road would lead to requests for enforcement beyond the ability of the police to attend but that in itself would not automatically preclude such a change.

Conclusion and the Way Forward

19. Options suggested as possible.

Measure	Cost	Plus	Minus
Make all roads 30mph with new gateways and signs (With down graded road and traffic calming)	Circa £35k (Circa £165k)	Would be consistent throughout. Addresses main concern of residents.	Would be unlikely to be adhered to by drivers. Would lead to increased expectations of enforcement. May lead to further requests for traffic calming.
Reduce to 30mph in Bedford Road and at school	Circa 27k	Would provide a 30 where there would be the best chance of it being observed. Would cover the Bedford road junction where visibility is limited Addresses some concerns of residents	Would require two speed limit orders and additional signing. Would offer several changes of limit in a short distance thus be inconsistent. Does not address all concerns of residents
Reduce speed to 30 mph outside school only.	Circa 37k	Would send specific message to drivers approaching school. Would assist crossing the road in conjunction with school WIG WAG lights at school gate times. Addresses some concerns of residents	Would lead to increased expectations of enforcement Would probably be ignored except at school gate times. Does not address all concerns of residents
Implement part time 20 with electronic signs at school times only	Circa £50k	Would send strong safety message to drivers. Likely to be reasonably observed Would only operate when actually needed Addresses some concerns of residents	Costly May not be enforceable by police Does not address all concerns of residents

Leave all as is and improve markings, gateways and enforcement	Circa 27k	Should eventually get message across to drivers if regularly enforced	Does not address concerns of residents
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20. The situation for the residents of Husborne Crawley is that whilst there are many possible options there are none that would currently meet the required levels for further intervention. At the time of the design of the safer route to school scheme a part time 20 mph limit at the school was discussed but there was insufficient budget available to implement it.
21. With the available budget further reduced there seems little likelihood of any further works being carried out there other than those required to re-mark the road following the resurfacing due to take place shortly to reinstate the failed surface dressing.
22. It was explained to the residents that in other communities where intervention has been requested but has not been possible from the integrated programme that local Councils have undertaken to fund some works, be it gateways or traffic calming, from their own budget. There is an increasing list of Parishes that have done this.
23. Ultimately the decision to implement any of the options rests with elected members. Any works so instructed would either need to attract funding from outside the current integrated programme or would require that an existing scheme or schemes be deferred or cancelled to fund implementation.
24. The alternative to this is the option for the Parish to fund part works from its own budgets either in one year or rolling over two financial years to increase the available funding.
25. The Portfolio Holders advice is sought.