
Meeting: Traffic Management Meeting
Date: 15 August 2011
Subject: Clarence Road area, Leighton Buzzard – Consider objections to proposed 20mph speed limit

Report of: Basil Jackson

Summary: This report seeks the approval of the Executive Member for Sustainable Communities Services for the introduction of a 20mph speed limit in Clarence Road area, Leighton Buzzard following a public consultation and consideration of responses.

Contact Officer: Estera Twardowska
estera.twardowska@amey.co.uk

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: Leighton Buzzard North

Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The proposal will improve road safety and promote cycling and walking.

Financial:

The cost of introducing a 20mph speed limit will be approximately £6,000. The scheme is externally funded from a Highways Act Section 106 agreement.

Legal:

None from this report

Risk Management:

None from this report

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

None from this report

Equalities/Human Rights:

None from this report

Community Safety:

The proposal will reduce speed and improve safety for cyclists and pedestrians as well as amenity for all residents in the area.

Sustainability:

Implementation of this scheme may encourage people to walk or cycle instead of using less sustainable forms of transport.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

- 1. That the proposal to introduce a 20mph Speed Limit on various roads in the Clarence Road area in Leighton Buzzard be implemented as advertised.**

Background and Information

- This scheme came about as a result of obtaining Highways Act Section 106 funding in relation to a planning application for a new housing development located off Churchill Road (the old Forticrete site) in Leighton Buzzard. The developer made a contribution towards a range of transportation measures, including the provision of traffic calming in residential roads and pedestrian and cycle infrastructure in the vicinity of the site. The proposed speed limit is a part of the Forticrete scheme which includes:

 - Heath Road: provision of zebra crossing outside Heathwood Lower School, improvements to on-road cycle facilities and waiting restrictions.
 - Provision of a 20mph speed limit in the Clarence Road area, between Heath Road and Vandyke Road.
 - Garden Hedge: provision of a raised table outside St George's Lower School, a raised junction at Garden Hedge/East Street.
 - Clarence Road: provision of mini-roundabouts at Clarence Road junction with Garden Hedge, Churchill Road and Nelson Road and provision of a raised zebra crossing outside the shops.
 - Provision of a mini-roundabout at Churchill Road junction with the Forticrete development (Drakes Avenue).
 - Provision of a shared use footway/cycleway between Clarence Road and Montgomery Close.
- Central Bedfordshire Council has a policy of promoting safer routes to school, which seeks to encourage more pupils to walk or travel to school by sustainable modes of transport. The aim of the Leighton Linslade Big Plan is to provide a 20mph speed limit in residential areas to promote walking and cycling.

3. The existing speed limit in the Clarence Road area is 30mph, but a speed and volume survey was undertaken on the main roads through the area to determine actual vehicle speeds. The speed data shows the 85th percentile speeds of traffic on East Street, St Andrews Street and Plumb Tree Lane were below 25mph. On Beaudesert, Nelson Road and Churchill Road those speeds were between 27.6mph and 29.4mph. On two roads within that area the 85th percentile speed of traffic exceeded 30mph and was 30.2mph on Clarence Road and 33.1mph on Garden Hedge.
4. The personal injury collision data for Clarence Road area shows that in the last 5 years (between 01/03/2005 and 28/02/2010) there were 11 personal injury collisions within the area of the proposed 20mph speed limit. The majority of those personal injury collisions occurred on Clarence Road (5 slight and 1 serious) and 2 of those slight personal injury collisions involved pedestrians. Other slight personal injury collisions occurred on: Churchill Road (1), St Andrews Street (3, one of which involved a pedestrian) and Beaudesert (1).
5. Following consultation with Central Bedfordshire Councillors and Leighton Linlade Town Council, proposals were drawn up and shown at a public exhibition and consultation in February 2011. Information letters about the exhibition were distributed to the residents and the information was published in the local press. All plans and questionnaires were also available through the Central Bedfordshire Council website. Based on comments received from local residents the preferred options were taken forward to be implemented subject to statutory consultation.
6. The proposed 20mph speed limit in the Clarence Road area was formally advertised by public notice in June 2011. Consultations were carried out with the emergency services and other statutory bodies, Leighton Linlade Town Council and Elected Members. Local residents were also given the opportunity to make formal representations on the proposal.
7. A total of 4 representations have been received, 3 of which are opposed to the advertised proposals and 1 in support. Copies of all representations are included in Appendix C and the comments are summarised below.
8. The main points raised by those objecting to the proposed 20mph speed limit area were as follows:-
Concerns that the proposal is unnecessary and unaffordable for the Council.
 - a) There is no need for slowing traffic down as there are no safety problems or rat-running.
 - b) The proposal will provide unnecessary signs and posts, especially in cul-de-sacs included in the 20mph speed limit area.
 - c) Concerns for the use of flat topped road humps as that kind of traffic calming may cause damage to motor vehicles and to buildings; they are also painful for disabled drivers.
 - d) The proposal does not include a zebra crossing facility in St Andrews Street where it is more needed than on Clarence Road.

9. Bedfordshire Police has considered the proposal and offered comments for further consideration. A copy of the comments and reasons are included in Appendix C and can be summarised as follows:-

The Police receive complaints of vehicles exceeding the current 30mph speed limit. They consider that more traffic calming measures are needed in order to make the proposed 20mph speed limit self enforcing.

10. The comments received in a supporting letter can be summarised as follows:-
- a) The proposed 20mph speed limit would improve the environment for pedestrians, cyclists and local residents.
 - b) The new speed limit would lower existing noise and vibrations from large vehicles.
 - c) The proposed speed limit would improve road safety for non-motorised road users.

Conclusion and the Way Forward

11. Bedfordshire Highways' response to the specific points listed above are as follows:-
- a) A number of complaints from local residents were received during the public exhibition regarding excessive traffic speed. The survey carried out in July 2010 shows that some roads, especially Garden Hedge and Clarence Road, would benefit from speed reduction measures. It is also believed that a lower speed limit together with proposed traffic calming measures will improve road safety and lower the number of personal injury collisions within the area. Complaints were also received from local residents concerning rut-running in Clarence Road, Garden Hedge and St Andrews Street.
 - b) It is acknowledged that some roads included in the proposed 20mph speed limit area are cul-de-sacs or narrow, heavily parked, residential roads where the existing speed is low. Their inclusion in the 20 mph area is therefore automatic. If the culs-de-sac were not included within the 20mph limit area, additional signs would be required which would increase the cost and add extra street clutter.

- c) Minimal vertical traffic calming features have been proposed in order to target the roads with the highest speeds and road safety problems. National guidance has been followed and flat topped road humps have been considered the most appropriate features at those locations. The flat topped humps have been designed to have shallow ramps to minimise discomfort for vehicle drivers. As there is an existing 7.5tonne weight restriction in place, very few large vehicles pass through this area, therefore the possible vibration and likelihood of resulting damage, would be very low.
- d) The proposed zebra crossing on Clarence Road is located on the pedestrian desire line to the local shops from the new development and the funding for it was allocated in Highways Act Section 106 relating to that development. During the public exhibition a number of residents (especially elderly people) expressed their concerns about safety when crossing in that location and requested a controlled crossing. The personal injury collision data shows the site will benefit from the provision of a zebra crossing. The request for a zebra crossing on St Andrews Street can be considered as a separate matter.

12. Bedfordshire Highways' response to the comments raised by Bedfordshire Police is as follow:-

A decision was made by the local Central Bedfordshire Councillors not to implement schemes involving large numbers of vertical traffic calming features. This is why only isolated raised tables and crossings are proposed. The speed survey shows that the 85th percentile traffic speeds on most of the roads in the proposed 20mph area are below the existing 30mph speed limit and often below 25mph. Traffic calming features (mini-roundabouts, road narrowings, raised zebra, raised junction and tables) have been proposed only on roads with higher speeds. It is also anticipated, based on experience, that the introduction of a 20mph limit together with road markings and regular repeater signs will lower the traffic speed by a few mph. Therefore it is considered that the proposed speed limit should be mostly self enforcing.

13. In conclusion, it is considered that the proposed 20mph speed limit together with proposed traffic calming features will reduce speeds and will bring road safety benefits. Lower speeds will improve the local environment and promote walking and cycling. Therefore, it is recommended that the scheme be approved for implementation as advertised.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Plan

Appendix B – Public Notice

Appendix C – Representations

PUBLIC NOTICE

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL PROPOSES TO INTRODUCE A 20MPH SPEED LIMIT ON VARIOUS ROADS IN CLARENCE ROAD AREA, LEIGHTON BUZZARD

Reason for proposal: The proposed Order is considered necessary on the grounds of promoting road safety. The proposed 20mph Speed Limit is intended to reduce the speed of vehicles in this residential area and improve pedestrians' safety. If implemented, this will improve road safety and quality of environment, and will help promote walking and cycling. Therefore, Central Bedfordshire Council proposes to make a Road Traffic Regulation as follows:

Effect of the Order:

To introduce a 20mph Speed Limit on the following lengths of road in Leighton Buzzard:

- The entire length of St Andrew's Street
- The entire length of St Andrew's Close
- The entire length of Beaudesert
- The entire length of Bedford Road
- The entire length of Lammas Walk
- The entire length of Garden Hedge
- The entire length of Pear Tree Lane
- The entire length of Ash Grove
- The entire length of East Street
- The entire length of Plum Tree Lane
- The entire length of Summer Street
- The entire length of St George's Close
- The entire length of Clarence Road
- The entire length of Pennivale Close
- The entire length of Mountbatten Gardens
- The entire length of Roosevelt Avenue
- The entire length of Miletree Court
- The entire length of Churchill Road
- The entire length of Winston Close
- The entire length of Oakley Green
- The entire length of Montgomery Close
- The entire length of Nelson Road
- The entire length of Tyndall Avenue
- Any road that is subsequently constructed and adopted that adjoins any of the aforementioned roads

Orders to be revoked: If implemented any previous Speed Limit Order made on the above lengths of road will be revoked.

Further Details of the proposed Order, a plan and a statement of reasons for proposing to make the Order may be examined during normal office hours at Leighton-Linslade Town Council, The White House, Hockliffe Street, Leighton Buzzard and normal opening hours at Leighton Buzzard Library, Lake Street, Leighton Buzzard. These details will be placed on deposit until 6 weeks after the Order is made or until it is decided not to continue with the proposal. Telephone Estera Twardowska on 0845 365 6086 for further advice on this proposal.

Objections should be sent in writing to the Transportation Manager, Bedfordshire Highways, Woodlands Annex, Manton Lane, Bedford MK41 7NU or by e-mail to centralbedsconsultation@amey.co.uk stating the grounds on which they are made by 24th June 2011.

Order Title: If made will be "Central Bedfordshire Council (20mph Speed Limit) (Various Roads in Clarence Road Area, Leighton Buzzard) Order 2011"

Technology House
239 Ampthill Road
Bedford MK42 9QQ

Basil Jackson
Assistant Director for Highways

2nd June 2011

Appendix C



PROPOSED 20 mph speed limit on various roads in Clarence Road area, Leighton Buzzard together with traffic calming measures.

Your Reference: ET/47788/3.12

<p>This Authority has considered the proposed Traffic Regulation Order as outlined in your letter dated the 2nd June 2011 and offer the following comments for further consideration.</p> <p>Comments</p> <p>At this time Clarence Road, Churchill Road, Nelson Road together with other roads in this area are subject to a 30 mph speed limit. Police officers from the area safer neighbourhood team receive complaints of excessive speeds and are requested to provide a high visibility uniformed presence with periodic speed enforcement checks to cause compliance of the present 30 mph speed restriction.</p> <p>A successful 20 mph speed limit should be generally self enforcing with conditions that cause drivers to naturally travel at around 20 mph. The proposed traffic calming measures are not sufficient to cause the required reduction in vehicle speeds on the roads subject of this proposal, consequently without additional engineering measures this proposed 20 mph speed limit is unlikely to be complied with.</p>	X
<p>This Authority has considered the proposed Traffic Regulation Orders as outlined in your letter dated the 2nd June 2011, together with the reason(s) given. The proposals are accepted by this authority, therefore no objections will be offered.</p>	

Name: - ... Steve Welham

Address ... Traffic Management Unit,
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Road Policing Unit.
Police Headquarters,
Woburn Road,
Kempston,
Beds. MK43 9AX.

Signed:- ... S. P. Welham.

Grasmere Way, Linslade, Leighton Buzzard, Beds. LU7 2QL

9th June 2011

The Transportation Manager,
Bedfordshire Highways,
Woodlands Annex
Manton Lane,
Bedford.
MK41 7NU

DOCUMENT REF	T1995
CONTRACT	AMEY
ACTION	BY
DATE	23/06/11
COPIES	17 JUN 2011
INITIAL	S.12

Dear Sir,

Proposed 20mph zone Clarence Avenue etc. Leighton Buzzard

I wish to object to the above proposals as shown in the Leighton Buzzard Observer of 7.6.11.

1. It is an unnecessary and unaffordable expense which will achieve very little.
2. As the Council is said to be very short of money for matters to which they are already committed it seems ludicrous to propose new work which, on the face of it neither they nor the Government can afford.
3. The work done in Leighton Road and West Street, a couple of years ago, of a similar nature was said to be for the purpose *of speeding up the traffic flow* by removing obstructions such as traffic lights. The proposed work is to slow down the traffic flow – to what purpose – is there really a safety problem?
4. The imposition of a 20mph speed limit is, of itself, something to which I would not strongly object, except to say that it seems to me to be unnecessary (in a cul-de-sac 150 yards long) and will 'waste' a lot of money with yet more poles and signs. I understand that 20mph speed limits are not monitored by the Police.
5. The 'flat topped road humps' are, to my mind a catastrophe due to the potential and actual damage caused to motor vehicles. There is much in the motoring press on this subject where it is claimed that no proper investigation has even been carried out – by local or National Government - of the damage which is caused to vehicles and even to buildings. The constant vibration especially from larger vehicles, could, I suggest, cause structural damage.
6. As a disabled driver my progress over these humps is painful – *but no one seems to care* about the number of disabled drivers who will suffer. Because I *have* to slow down more than most I am subject to hooting and pressure from vehicles coming up close behind me when I encounter these humps. The result is, often, that they will swing out aggressively to wildly overtake me – hardly a case of 'improving the safety' as is your proposal.
7. You claim that the work is necessary as the area is '*often used for rat-running shortcuts*'. How stupid do you think we are? Of the 21 roads listed **eleven are cul-de-sacs** and six are loops which end up much where they started (i.e. Llamas Walk/Bedford Street) Can you say how many motorists actually use these 17 roads as shortcuts.

Yours faithfully,

From:

Sent: 24 June 2011 12:04

To: Central Beds Consultation

Cc:

Subject: 20 mph zone proposal , Clarence Rd, Garden Hedge, Beaudesert, East Street and other roads including St Andrews Street in Leighton Buzzard. OBJECTION

I object to the 20 mph zone proposal for Clarence Road, Garden Hedge, Beaudesert, and other roads including St Andrews Street in Leighton Buzzard. Although I sent a letter dated 15.6.11 explaining my concerns , I realise on reflection, I am unsure that it came across as an objection. Therefore, I am sending this email to ensure my objection is noted . Please use this email as my objection. I object to the 20 mph zone proposal because the plans do not include a zebra crossing facility in St Andrews Street, near North Street. At this entrance to St Andrews Street, there are two sets of dropped kerbs but the blind corner means pedestrians have to step onto the road in order to look for traffic, and, pedestrians also find themselves stranded in the middle of the road by the central white markings at this frequently very busy junction. I feel St Andrews Street is extremely more difficult to cross as a pedestrian than Clarence Road. I do not understand why a zebra crossing provision is being proposed for Clarence Road and not for the far trickier, very much used by pedestrians and cars, road of St Andrews Street. I FEEL A ZEBRA CROSSING IN ST ANDREWS STREET IS FAR MORE NEEDED THAN ONE IN CLARENCE ROAD.
Pennivale Close. Leighton Buzzard. LU7 3ES

The Transportation Manager
Bedfordshire Highways
Woodlands Annex
Manton Lane
Bedford
MK41 7NU

Pennivale Close
Leighton Buzzard
Beds
LU7 3ES

15.6.11

Dear Mr Chapman

Re 20 mph zones, Clarence Road, Garden Hedge, Beaudesert, East Street and other roads including St Andrew's Street.

I have read the proposals for the above including other traffic calming methods of a zebra crossing in Clarence Road and another raised area in Garden Hedge.

I am particularly interested in the fact that St Andrew's Street is one of the roads being considered for the 20 mph zone. I have already requested a zebra crossing in St Andrews Street (off North Street). Please see my letter dated 1.4.11. This is currently being investigated under report number 146822.

In my letter, I explained how, as a pedestrian, in order to reach the town centre from Pennivale Close and surrounding area, you HAVE to cross either Church Street or St Andrew's Street. Church Street is a very busy main road and St Andrew's Street has a hazardous blind bend and is particularly difficult to cross during rush hour/school run time.

St Andrew's Street is crossed by many adults and children accessing the town centre and schools. IT IS A MAJOR DESIRE ROUTE AND VERY DIFFICULT TO CROSS SAFELY PARTICULARLY DURING RUSH HOUR/SCHOOL RUN TIME. When going towards the town, pedestrians have to step onto the road in order to see round the bend. At busy times, pedestrians often can only make it halfway across and are stranded in the middle of the road by the central white markings, waiting for traffic to pass, in order to complete their crossing of the road.

I and many other people are finding crossing St Andrew's Street a problem and feel it is one of the most difficult roads to cross safely in Leighton Buzzard, and there is no alternative safe road to cross to reach the town centre and schools.

Please, when working on the Clarence Road/ Garden Hedge/ Beaudesert/ East Street project, can you consider, in addition to the already considered 20 mph speed limit, a zebra crossing for St Andrew's Street. A ZEBRA CROSSING IN ST ANDREW'S STREET WOULD BENEFIT MANY PEOPLE.

Yours sincerely

NB Please find attached two maps

From:
Sent: 07 June 2011 16:11
To: Central Beds Consultation;
Subject: 20mph zone Leighton Buzzard

Dear sirs,

I would like to object to the 20mph zone which you are trying to force on the Clarence road Vandyke Road part of the town.

- 1) Slow traffic means more fumes from cars and noise.
- 2) No one has been hurt or injured in this area so why do it?
- 3) This plan has been put forward by over paid people who have nothing else to do and are worried as the Beds safety partnership is now out of money and is trying to get Beds police as tax collectors!
- 4) Please explain why this is being put through so fast and by the back door! It was only found out by accident by the local paper!

-----Original Message-----

From:
Sent: 29 June 2011 13:40
To: Central Beds Consultation
Subject: Leighton Buzzard speed restriction in St Andrews St etc

To whom it may concern:

I live at St Andrews St, LU7 1DS.

I am writing to voice my very strong support for the proposed 20 mph speed restriction in St Andrews Street and neighbouring roads.

I agree that this would improve the environment for pedestrians and cyclists; and also I think it will do the same for those who live in the area.

On numerous occasions I have felt my house shake when a large vehicle goes by at high speed. The house was built in the 1930s (I think) and is not designed for such vibrations. Also, the noise sometimes wakes me up at night or very early in the morning in spite of me having had new double glazing windows installed. It seems to me that motorists often exceed the current speed limit of 30 mph and many vehicles seem to use St Andrews St as a short cut to Hockliffe Street from Heath Rd.

I do not own a car and depend on cycling, walking and public transport - so any improvements in safety and ease of use for these modes of transport would be greatly appreciated.

By the way, the pavement on my side of the road in St Andrew's Street needs to be re-levelled. It has a noticeable slope on it due to being driven on over the years and causes discomfort to walkers and inconvenience to wheelchairs and buggies - any chance that this can be addressed at the same time?

I hope you receive very few objections to this scheme and I wish you well in implementing it. If I can do anything to help, please let me know.

Kind regards