
Meeting: Traffic Management Meeting
Date: 20 December 2017
Subject: Norton Road, Stotfold – Petition for safety measures

Report of: Paul Mason, Assistant Director Highways

Summary: To note the receipt of a petition submitted to Central Bedfordshire Council and discuss a way forward.

Recommendation: That the lead petitioner be informed of the outcome of the meeting.

Contact Officer: Steve Lakin, Principal Highways Officer
steve.lakin@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: Stotfold

Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

Matters raised in the petition correlate with objectives B, C, E, F and I in Central Bedfordshire's Local Transport Plan.

Financial:

Any recommended works would be funded from the Local Transport Plan budget for 2018/19, subject to scheme prioritisation and Executive approval.

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:

None from this report.

Sustainability:

None from this report.

Background and Information

1. A petition has been received, signed by 26 people, raising concerns as to the volume, speed, type and noise of traffic, both day and night on Norton Road (outside numbers 72-159).
2. The lead petitioner requests a range of measure be introduced to address the above concerns, specifically:
 - (i) Introduction of a Traffic Regulation Order restricting use of this section of Norton Road by vehicles above 7.5T, with the exception of access.
 - (ii) An extension of the 30mph speed limit to include the section of Norton Road north of the existing 'gates' indicating the Stotfold town boundary along with improvements to raise the conspicuity of the associated signage.
 - (iii) Deployment of a speed camera to support the enforcement the 30 mph speed limit.
 - (iv) Installation of a speed-activated LED sign that indicates compliance or otherwise of the 30mph speed restriction.
 - (v) Provision of a zebra crossing to assist pedestrians when crossing Norton Road
 - (vi) Provision of bus stops in Norton Road.

Officer comments

3. As Norton Road links the A507 at Stotfold and the Norton area of Letchworth it would be expected to carry a reasonable volume of traffic, particularly at peak times.
4. The section of road within Central Bedfordshire can be characterised as a wide single carriageway. Many of the properties are set back from the edge of the carriageway.
5. The footway on the western side of the carriageway forms part of Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 12 as has the designation of unsegregated shared use for pedestrian and cyclists. The route crosses Norton Road via an uncontrolled point outside no 92. The conspicuity of the crossing is assisted by advanced warning signage, bollards and a coloured anti-skid surface treatment, now heavily worn. Sight lines at the crossing point are good for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.

6. The most recent collection of speed data is September 2015. A total of 57,171 vehicle movements (both direction) across the counter were recorded over a 7-day period. Of these, 32% of vehicles exceeded the Police ACPO enforceable limit of 35mph and above.
7. Central Bedfordshire Council is aware that traffic using this road is likely to have increased as a result of the significant housing growth south of Stotfold. Whilst Stotfold itself has benefited from a range of improvement measures funded from monies secured from developers, no significant measures have been introduced on this side of the A507.
8. Over the period 2012 – 2017 there were three reported injury collisions over the entire length of Norton Road to the Hertfordshire boundary. Two of these collisions occurred in 2013 and resulted in serious injuries. The third collision occurred in 2015 and resulted in a slight injury. None of the collisions related to pedestrians or cyclists.
9. In response to the specific measures being requested, officers' views are as follows: -
 - (i) A review of HGV restrictions on Norton Road would require a survey of HGV movements and consultation with Hertfordshire County Council. However, it appears that restrictions already exist to prevent vehicles over 5T from using Norton Road to enter Letchworth and Baldock. Therefore advance signage of these restrictions at the junction of Norton Road and the A507 would be appropriate and should address this area of concern.
 - (ii) Whilst the signage accords with legislation requirements, consideration could be given to reviewing whether additional signage or marking would be reasonable, subject to compliance with the legal requirements set out in the 2016 Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions.

Extending the existing 30 mph speed limit would require separate statutory consultation on a new traffic regulation order. Any such change would need to be assessed against the Department for Transport Circular 01/2013 'Setting Local Speed Limits'. This guidance stresses that any change to a speed limit should be evidence-led and self-explaining, seeking to reinforce people's assessment of what is a safe speed to travel. Further, that limits should encourage self-compliance and be seen by drivers as the maximum rather than a target speed. The local context of the road is therefore important in this respect, including for example road width and geometry, number and nature of frontages, provision of street lighting, kerbs and footways, level of pedestrian footfall etc.

- (iii) Central Bedfordshire Council does not have any funding currently to install new speed/safety cameras. Speed enforcement is a legal matter and the responsibility of the Police.

- (iv) Central Bedfordshire Council is currently reviewing all of the Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) currently deployed on its road network. A decision will be taken to upgrade, remove or relocate each sign depending upon their effectiveness. The associated works will be programmed over a four-year period and funded from monies allocated within the Local Transport Plan. This section of Norton Road can be included in the review process, albeit as a new site, it will be in competition with other similar requests.
- (v) As there are zero recorded collisions involving an injury to a cyclists or pedestrian on this section of Norton Road then it is unlikely that an investment in a controlled crossing would be justifiable. Such assessments are conducted by an experienced traffic engineer with reference to the Department for Transport's Guidance Note 1-95 'The Assessment of Pedestrian Crossings'.
- (vi) The request for bus stops has been relayed to our public transport team for their consideration.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Petition

Appendix B – Lead petitioners' letter

Appendix C – Location plan

Appendix A

To the Monitoring Officer, Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire.

PETITION

On behalf of the residents of numbers 72 to 159 Norton Road Stotfold SG5 4PG, lead petitioner Mrs. Daphne Willmott.

SUBJECT

A. The unacceptable volume, speed, type and noise of traffic passing through this area both day and night.

We ask that the Council consider the following measures at the next available Traffic Management Committee:-

1. Weight limit on vehicles except for access.
2. Clear signage indicating the 30mph speed limit from both directions on the stretch of road plus it would make sense for the limit when approaching Stotfold from Norton to commence at the "gates" which indicate one is entering Stotfold.
3. Enforcement of the speed limit by speed cameras with fines exacted from offenders.
4. Speed awareness by means of L.E.D. signs showing compliance or otherwise of speed restrictions

B. Pedestrian safety and mobility.

1. A zebra crossing in the interests of resident safety when traversing this hazardous road.
2. Provision of bus stops in Norton Road.

We the undersigned request these issues be investigated and acted upon accordingly.

Appendix B

November 29th 2017

Dear Maria

Please find enclosed petition, with 26 signatures, outlining the concerns of the residents of Norton Road Stotfold relating to traffic and transport within the section of this Road from the roundabout heading towards Letchworth in their residential area.

If you could manage to get it included in the Traffic Management committee meeting on December 20th 2017 it would be fantastic.

Many thanks on behalf of my fellow residents.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Willmott', written in a cursive style.

Daphne Willmott

Appendix C

