

Agenda Item No. 4(a)

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER – HIGHWAY, TRANSPORT AND
INFRASTRUCTURE**

21 November 2019

Report of the Executive Director – Economy, Transport and Environment

**PETITION: ECKINGTON - REQUEST FOR TRAFFIC CALMING AND
SAFETY MEASURES ON MAIN ROAD BETWEEN MARSH LANE AND
ECKINGTON SCHOOL**

- (1) **Purpose of Report** To consider a petition requesting traffic calming and safety measures on Main Road between Marsh Lane and Eckington School, Eckington, Sheffield.
- (2) **Information and Analysis**

Background

The petition was reported to the Cabinet Member on 19 June 2019. It contained 264 E-petition signatures and a paper petition signed by 137 persons and reads as follows:

“The route on Main Road between Marsh Lane and Eckington has for many years been one of significant concern in terms of safety for pedestrians. Children from Marsh Lane daily use this route to get to and from the secondary school in Eckington. Many parents, however, will not allow children to walk to and from school due to safety concerns related to crossing the road. Many adults also use this route to walk to and from both villages.

A recent collision when a student was crossing the road, involving a car and the student has led a renewed call for the council to implement traffic calming measures, support regarding reducing the speed limit and the request to reconsider extending the footway.

These proposals would allow safe pedestrian travel for local children and adults.”

B6056 Main Road, Marsh Lane is a ‘B’ classified Road and is used by an average of 8,500 vehicles every day. It connects Dronfield with Eckington and Marsh Lane village is located along the route. Marsh Lane Primary School is located off School Lane with a vehicle and pedestrian entrance on Main Road.

Located outside the primary school is a pedestrian crossing and outside Eckington School there is a zebra crossing. Unfortunately, the footway between these two continuous facilities is not and pedestrians have to cross the road without a controlled facility.

Marsh Lane Primary School has the 'School Safety Zone' signing on both approaches as does Eckington School which includes flashing amber warning lights stating that the advisory speed limit is 20mph when the lights flash. Unfortunately, the downhill sign to Marsh Lane Primary School cannot have the flashing lights as there is conflict with the flashing lights of the pedestrian crossing and the advice of the Department for Transport is that such a practice could potentially lead to driver confusion. Bearing this in mind, the 'School Safety Zone' signing within a yellow backing board has no flashing amber warning lights.

The speed limit varies along the B6056 with 30mph through Marsh Lane village, which then increases to a 40mph section through the rural area prior to Eckington School, where the 30mph speed limit is then resumed. Marsh Lane also has a fixed speed camera, similarly there is a fixed speed camera outside Eckington School and an additional fixed speed camera just south of Ford Lane, and associated camera signing along the whole route. Speed readings taken around the point where pedestrians cross show that the 85th percentile speed (the speed at which 85% of motorists are travelling) is 38mph.

In conjunction with the speed limit terminal signs, there are the 30mph speed limit gateway features on both approaches into Marsh Lane and Eckington. There are road signs, 30mph painted roundels and 'dragon teeth' approach markings.

The collision history for Main Road is very good with one slight injury collision near Eckington School in the last three years (to date 31st May 2019, the standard test period). This involved a vehicle turning out of the school and a motorbike.

The collision the head petitioner refers to was as a result of a child pedestrian stepping out into the road without looking. The Police at the scene did offer road safety advice. Fortunately, the collision was not serious.

The various road safety and traffic calming measures along Main Road, Marsh Lane are shown on the attached drawing.

Officer Comment

The B6056 Main Road has a very good accident history and good compliance with the speed limit. This is likely as a result of the three fixed speed cameras

along the route, gateway treatments, school signing and the controlled crossings outside each school.

The County Council receives daily requests for traffic calming in the form of vertical and horizontal deflection or vehicle activated signs, and to ensure these are treated on a consistent basis, a speed management protocol has been developed which, amongst other factors, highlights the required injury collisions to justify the expenditure of the Council's very limited resources. Due to the very good collision history for Main Road, the Council will not be providing any additional traffic features to the ones already provided.

Officers do recognise that crossing the road to complete the route from Marsh Lane to Eckington is not desirable and having a dedicated crossing point is not easy to achieve, as it is better to cross the road in two different places depending upon which direction you are walking, due to visibility. An additional controlled crossing would not meet the Council's criteria on pedestrian demand. Officers suggest that additional warning signing, either side of the crossing area to highlight that pedestrians will be present, could be provided.

Officers have investigated completing the footway continually down one side and an estimate of the cost is £150,000. Currently, the Council is only receiving funding for a limited number of highway schemes and, therefore, the construction of a footway at this location remains a consideration for the future.

Officers have, over the years, been approached by members of the public concerned over parking in and around the school and they have therefore agreed to investigate the possibility of providing short sections of double yellow lines around the junctions of Main Road with School Lane and Lightwood Road. This proposal will be added to a list of similar schemes which will be pursued at a later date. Officers have discussed this with the Head Teacher who welcomed the proposals as she is experiencing poor parking practices, by parents which include dropping off children on the pedestrian crossing itself.

The speed limits along the B6056 have been reviewed recently and they are considered appropriate. The 40mph section is more rural in nature than other more urbanised sections of the route and in line with criteria set down in Government documents which ensure that there is a consistent approach to speed limits throughout the County. The speed limit will not therefore be reduced.

Local Member Comments

Councillors Charles and Ridgeway have been contacted and made the following comments:

"I have read the report which I feel is thorough and fair in the circumstances. Certainly on the stretch of road you refer to I am aware that visibility is limited, due to the various twists and turns in the road. Ideally of course, I would like to see a pavement, but I do take the point about resources, when there is no significant record of accidents, and the cost so high in the current times of having such limited resources.

I would have suggested the possibility of a strategically placed zebra crossing to join the two paths, but I do understand the difficulty about placement due to the visibility issues, which would require two crossing places, and I am not convinced that this would improve safety in any case.

Which leaves us with the speed to consider. I wonder if this could be looked at again? Since this stretch is used as a pedestrian route quite extensively and regularly, particularly by young people, who we now are easily distracted, could we not consider the introduction of a 20mph zone?

My experience elsewhere when there is a variable speed limit moving between 30 to 40 and back again is that most people drive at the upper limit, and although this is very far from being a straight road, experience of travelling on this road suggests that traffic often moves at above the speed limit. A 20 mph zone would potentially slow most (law abiding) road users down for the whole stretch and make it safer for pedestrians at all times. As we know, research tells us that the seriousness of accidents to pedestrians is much less when the vehicle is travelling at a slower speed.

I have seen 20mph zones on short stretches elsewhere which are effective, often where there is limited pedestrian space, and the vulnerability of the pedestrians is being taken into account.

I would be very pleased if this could be given further consideration."

Comment: Officers have noted the request from the Local Members, Diane Charles and Brian Ridgeway for a 20mph speed limit along the section of highway where the school children have to cross the road. The change in speed limit to 20mph, however, is simply not a feasible option as a reduction in the speed limit with signs only and without the introduction of physical traffic calming would not make the speed limit adhered to and would not be supported by the Police. At this location, it is open countryside with very little development and the characteristics of the environment are not that of a 20mph speed limit. The introduction of traffic calming is something that the Council would not support due to the good accident history and the site would not meet the criteria as laid down in the adopted speed management protocol document.

(3) **Financial Considerations** The cost associated with the advertisement of the TROs is approximately £4,000 and the cost of supply and erection of two 'pedestrian warning' signs is approximately £400 which will be funded through the Highways Maintenance Revenue Budget.

(4) **Legal Considerations** Section 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 states that it shall be the duty of every Local Authority exercising the functions in that Act (so far as practicable having regard to the matters listed below) to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians) and the provision of suitable and adequate parking facilities on and off the highway.

The matters referred to above are-

- 1) the desirability of securing and maintaining reasonable access to premises;
- 2) the effect on the amenities of any locality affected and (without prejudice to the generality of this paragraph) the importance of regulating and restricting the use of roads by heavy commercial vehicles, so as to preserve or improve the amenities of the areas through which the roads run; 2ii) the national air quality strategy prepared under Section 80 of the Environment Act 1995;
- 3) the importance of facilitating the passage of public service vehicles and of securing the safety and convenience of persons using or desiring to use such vehicles; and
- 4) any other matters appearing to the Local Authority to be relevant.

Section 2 of the 1984 Act states what a TRO may provide for and this includes regulating the use of a road by vehicular traffic. Notice of proposals must be given in accordance with Regulation 7 Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure)(England and Wales) Regulations 1996 and at least a minimum of 21 clear days for the receipt of written objections must be allowed. Objections can then be considered by the Local Authority.

Having determined all objections, the Council may determine to introduce the new restrictions. The Order will need to be formally made, advertised and the requisite signs erected. An Order cannot be made until after the last date of publication of the notice of proposal. No part of a TRO can come into force before that date when it is intended to publish a notice of making it.

Other Considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, human resources, environmental, health, property, social value and transport considerations.

(5) **Key Decision** No.

(6) **Call-In** Is it required that call in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

(7) **Background Papers** Held on file within the Economy, Transport and Environment Department.

(8) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS** That:

- 8.1 The Cabinet Member refuses the request for traffic calming and reduction in the speed limit on Main Road between Marsh Lane and Eckington School but notes the request for the footway to be added to a desire list for funding in the future.
- 8.2 The Cabinet Member approves the erection of two 'pedestrians crossing' warning signs' and add the Traffic Regulation Order proposal to the current waiting list.
- 8.3 The Local Member, objectors and Head Teacher of Marsh Lane Primary School be notified accordingly.

Mike Ashworth
Executive Director – Economy, Transport and Environment

