

REGULATORY COMMITTEE

4th FEBRUARY 2004

WESTBURY: THE HAM - TRAFFIC CALMING

Purpose of Report

1. To consider responses to consultation and to recommend the installation of certain measures.

Background

2. During the consideration of the proposal to construct the Hawkeridge Link Road, concerns were raised by a number of people relating to the extra traffic likely to be attracted to the B3097 route via The Ham (**Appendix 1**).
3. At the meeting of the Environment and Transport Committee on 15th September 1999, at which objections to the planning application for the Hawkeridge Link Road were debated, and planning permission given, it was indicated that measures were being considered to introduce traffic calming on The Ham in order to alleviate the concerns and physically control speeds within the existing 30 mph limit. The type of scheme originally envisaged was a combination of priority narrowings, cushions and a gateway treatment.
4. These draft proposals were developed into a scheme and details advertised in November 2000. The objections to this proposal were considered by the Environmental Services Sub-Committee in January 2001. The objectors were generally concerned that the priority narrowings and cushions would create noise and encourage traffic to speed up at quieter times. A number suggested "flashing signs like those at South Newton." Consequently it was resolved not to install the physical narrowings and cushions but to install interactive signs. The gateway proposal would have been retained.
5. However, other residents subsequently raised concerns regarding this decision and a public meeting was called by Mr. Newbury, as the Local Member, to discuss the matter. This meeting was held in April 2001 and the residents made it clear that priority narrowings to slow traffic were still desirable but that vertical measures which would create noise were definitely not appropriate. They also considered a weight restriction should be introduced to divert through heavy vehicles via the Industrial Estate roads and Storridge Road. They supported the gateway and a Zebra crossing.
6. A revised scheme was developed which provided two pairs of priority narrowings and a refuge in the road widening that had subsequently been constructed in conjunction with adjacent development. The gateway and Zebra crossing were also retained. The residents of The Ham were consulted on this scheme in October 2002. There was general support for the principle of the scheme but a number of residents objected to the specific siting of the build-outs as the location would have impinged on their ability to enter and leave their drives.

7. The number of private drives on The Ham, particularly at the Westbury end, means that it is not possible to reposition the build-outs without impinging on someone's drive. It was accepted that one of the build-outs at the Trowbridge end could be relocated away from the property without greatly compromising its effect.
8. In the meantime, interactive signs were permitted by the revised Traffic Signs Regulations. A further revised scheme was prepared in which the narrowings at the Westbury end were deleted, an interactive sign was included, and the narrowings at the Trowbridge end retained but slightly relocated. The gateway and Zebra crossing were also retained. This revised proposal was circulated to residents in August 2003. These proposals are indicated in **Appendix 2**.
9. Comments from six residents, including two 30-signature petitions, Westbury Town Council and Heywood Parish Council were received. These are summarised in **Appendix 3**. The main thrust of the petitions was that some form of physical traffic calming was still required. Full copies of the letters are available in the **Members' Room** and from the Environmental Services Department prior to the meeting.
10. In the meantime, Zebra crossings have been introduced across The Ham and Station Road adjacent to the mini-roundabout junction. These were funded by the developer of the site off The Ham as part of the requirement to contribute to improved pedestrian facilities in the area. The developer is also required to complete the footway on the south side between the development and the new crossing by the Post Office. This work is in hand but disagreement with some frontagers over the claimed ownership of sections of the verge has delayed the implementation.
11. An initial investigation was carried out into the request for a weight restriction. However, in the light of the ongoing development at North Acre Park, the connection into Brook Road, and the continuing discussions with Network Rail regarding the structural capacity of the bridge on Station Road, it is appropriate to look at lorry movements in the area holistically. This will be investigated in more detail when further data is available.

Main Considerations for the Council

12. A decision has to be made as to whether the current proposals should be installed or whether further alternatives should be developed which, experience has shown, could well give rise to further objections from some sections of the community.

Environmental Impact of the Recommendation

13. Additional signing will, however, have a limited environmental impact. This has to be balanced against the improved "quality of life" the residents should enjoy as a result of the traffic being slowed on this section of road.

Risk Assessment

14. As indicated in paragraph 3, there is an outstanding commitment to introduce some measures on The Ham and it is considered that the current proposals accord with that commitment and there is no financial risk to the County Council.

Financial Implications

15. Finance is available to introduce the measures currently proposed.

Options Considered

16. The options available are:-
- do nothing
 - implement the current proposals
 - defer implementation of any measures whilst further options are considered

Reasons for Recommendation

17. The current proposals have overcome the previous objections to the specific siting of the original measures. The current responses do not constitute objections to what is currently proposed but seek additional measures such as ramps/cushions. The original public meeting indicated that such vertical measures would not be acceptable. It is therefore considered that the current proposals should be implemented to fulfil the commitment that some traffic calming measures should be introduced.

Recommendation

18. That the proposals shown on the plan at **Appendix 2** be implemented and the correspondents be advised accordingly.

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The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report:

Letters from residents and local Councils

