



Northumberland

County Council

RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

Paul Jones – Director of Environment and Transport

PROPOSED 40mph SPEED LIMIT, KIRKNEWTON & WESTNEWTON

Cabinet Member: Councillor Mark Mather

Purpose of Report

To consider a proposal to provide a 40mph speed limit on the B6351 and side roads through Kirknewton and Westnewton.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the proposed 40mph speed limit is implemented.

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the following key objectives in the Corporate Plan for 2023-2026:

- 'Tackling Inequalities'
 - Creating places where there is equity in access to an environment that encourages physical activity and active travel.
- 'Driving Economic Growth'
 - Introduce measures which make sustainable travel a more attractive, greener, and easy alternative to getting around including cycling and walking.
 - Continue to make the case for investment in the strategic road network where this will improve safety, ease congestion, and support economic growth and continue to maintain existing networks.

Key Issues

- Concerns have been raised about traffic speeds and accidents on the B6351 through Kirknewton and Westnewton.

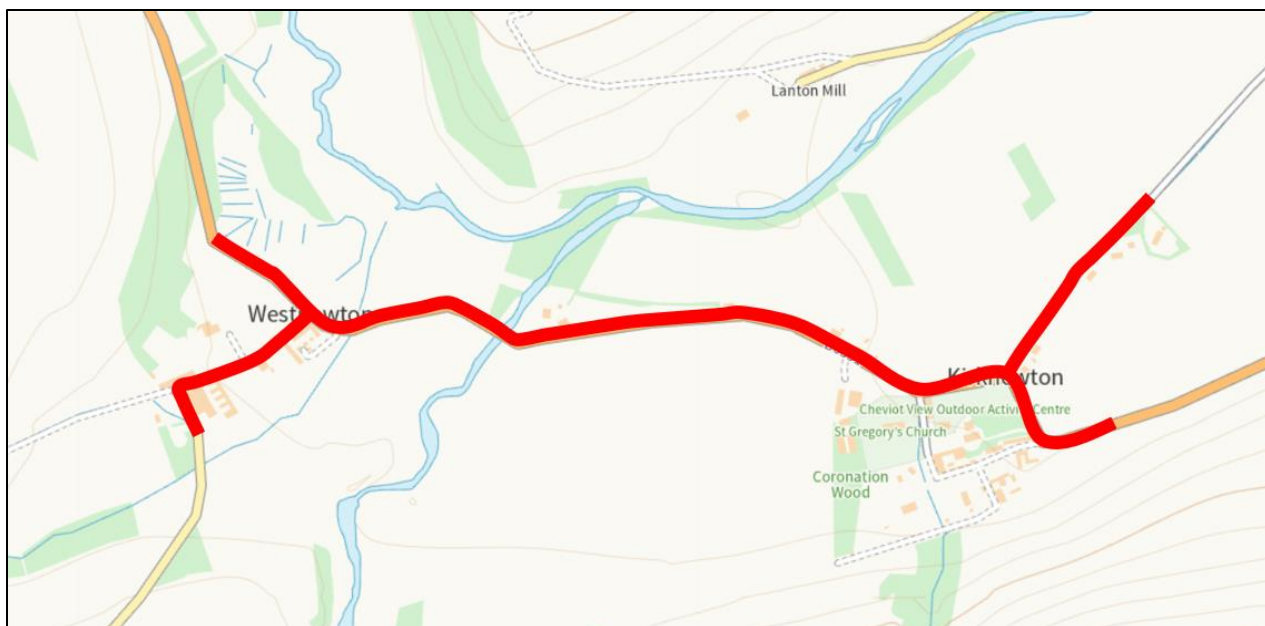
Delegated decisions

- The issue was submitted as a priority for the Local Transport Plan Programme by the local ward member and Kirknewton Parish Council.

Background

1. Kirknewton is a small village located 5½ miles west of Wooler. Westnewton is a hamlet located half a mile further west at the entrance to the College Valley. Kirknewton bridge over the College Burn and several residential properties that front onto the B6351 are located between the two settlements. There is currently no speed restriction in place.
2. Concerns have been raised about traffic safety within and between the two settlements. As well as residential properties there is an outdoor activity centre located in Kirknewton which is used regularly by groups such as Scouts and Guides. The area is also popular with walkers using the rights of way network, much of which is accessed from the road. There are no footways in the area which means that pedestrians are regularly present on or close to the roadside.
3. There are two ninety-degree bends at Kirknewton and there is evidence of vehicles misjudging these and leaving the road, causing damage to boundaries and street furniture. The first bend when approaching from the east is also a junction with the private road into the main part of the village and residents have reported instances of vehicles failing to slow for the bend and instead travelling on into the village resulting in risk to pedestrians. There have also been reports of damage to property walls because of this.
4. Kirknewton Bridge is narrow and there are bends either side on the approaches. Although warning signage is in place there is evidence that vehicles often travel too quickly at this point and leave the road. Although none of these accidents have resulted in an injury, there is evidence of regular damage to walls and hedges. A complementary safety scheme is planned to improve the warning signs and road markings at the bridge.
5. Neither Kirknewton or Westnewton satisfy the criteria set out in “Setting Local Speed Limits” (DfT 2013, updated 2024) for a 30mph speed limit due to a lack of development and frontage properties. However, the guidance states that in settlements where criteria for a village are not met and there is a lesser degree of development, but a reduction from the national 60mph speed limit is considered appropriate, traffic authorities should consider alternative lower limits of 40mph or 50mph.
6. The guidance also states that 40mph speed limits should be considered on rural roads “where there are many bends, junctions or accesses, substantial development, a strong environmental or landscape reason, or where there are considerable numbers of vulnerable road users.”
7. Residents and statutory consultees were therefore consulted on a proposal to implement a 40mph speed limit, as shown on the plan, below.

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8. Fifteen responses were received to the consultation, all in favour of the proposal. A summary of the responses is attached to this report. The proposal is also supported by the local Ward Member and Kirknewton Parish Council.
9. The route highlighted is appropriate for a 40mph speed limit which is supported by the local community. It is therefore recommended that the proposal is implemented.

Implications Arising out of the Report

Policy	The proposal is in accordance with relevant guidance.
Finance and value for money	The proposal will be funded via the Local Transport Plan Programme.
Legal	Motorists will be required to comply with the Traffic Regulation Order.
Procurement	None
Human Resources	None
Property	None
Equalities (Impact)	None

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Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	
Risk Assessment	None
Crime & Disorder	None
Customer Consideration	Statutory consultees have been consulted.
Carbon reduction	None
Wards	Wooler

Background papers:

File ref: HE253921

Report sign off.

Authors must ensure that relevant officers and members have agreed the content of the report:

	initials
Finance Officer	n/a
Monitoring Officer/Legal	n/a
Human Resources	n/a
Procurement	n/a
I.T.	n/a
Director	
Portfolio Holder(s)	

Author and Contact Details

Report Author ***Richard McKenzie – Senior Programmes Officer***

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Appendix – Consultation Responses

F O R T	A G A I N S T	N E I T H E R	Other Relevant Comments
1			<p>I Strongly support the introduction of a 40mph speed limit through the village of Kirknewton. I have witnessed unacceptable use of speed on the bend on many occasions and it is an ongoing problem and is a personal risk to myself, family and other pedestrians who walk regularly in the village. In 2024 several vehicles overshot the corner due to excessive speed and continued straight into the drive. On one such occasion the wall was demolished by such a vehicle, after it skidded into the stone wall. Had anyone been playing on the drive at that time they would without doubt have been killed. 30mph would be a much more appropriate speed limit, at least on the two main bends in Kirknewton, but since we have been told that the qualifying criteria do not exist, then 40mph is better than the current 60mph. 40mph would of course also benefit the whole stretch of road through the village and past the village hall, where public events regularly take place and where there are regular walkers (and no pavements)</p>
1			<p>As both a resident and parish councillor I am responding to the above consultation very much in favour of the proposal. I would only add that beefing up the signage for the dangerous bends at the east side of the village and at the west entrance to the bridge over the College Burn are also critical to reducing the number of accidents, which have been increasing in frequency over the years with written off vehicles and property damage and only due to good fortune that no serious injuries have been sustained</p>
1			<p>The area for the proposed limit indicated on the circulated map tends to adequately cover the danger around Kirknewton and Westnewton. The most important area is between Westnewton bridge and Kirknewton village hall, the reason being that there are regular numbers of walkers parking their vehicles at the village hall and walking the road to Westnewton bridge to join the pathways to Heth Pool. This road has a long sweeping bend and lends itself to a rapid increase of speed of 60mph (or above) by vehicles leaving the bridge and travelling towards Kirknewton. The road on the bend is masked to those vehicles by the stone walls bordering the fields and properties making it dangerous for vehicles to quickly reduce their speed on gaining a view of pedestrians, particularly if there are vehicles travelling in the opposite direction from Kirknewton as they are also masked by these same walls. A 40mph would hugely reduce this danger.</p>
1			<p>I would like to support this proposal whole heartedly and think it is a very excellent idea.</p>

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1		I fully support the proposal for a 40mph speed limit through Kirknewton and Westnewton because : (a) the road through the village includes section with narrow carriageway, tight corners, restricted visibility, and neither verge nor any other refuge for pedestrians: (b) there is recent history of vehicles failing to negotiate Westnewton Bridge: (c) neither drivers nor pedestrians have a clear view of oncoming traffic when approaching the bridge: (d) visibility is very poor for a vehicle turning right onto the B6351 from Hethpool road. With no available refuge, fast moving traffic poses a risk to any pedestrian who walks on the right hand side (facing oncoming traffic) when approaching the bridge from Westnewton direction, or when approaching the War Memorial corner from Yeavinger direction. The Wester end of the proposed 40mph limit appears to coincide with a bend in the road that is shaded by trees and often covered by ice for long periods. I would therefore invite the County Council to consider extending the restrictions a short distance further towards Kilham.
1		We are very pleased to hear about this. The road between Akeld and Kilham is frequently problematic because of speeding cars, logging lorries cutting sharp corners at silly speeds, and our bus service cutting corners and slamming it to the many potholes. Some local people have said they have frequently been forced into the side to avoid this. At Westnewton I take my life into my hands when exiting onto the main road.
1		I support this proposal. Cars travel too fast along this stretch of road where there are homes with pets and children. Should it really be 30mph as it would be in other villages?
1		no comments
1		I Strongly support the introduction of a 40mph speed limit through Kirknewton and Westnewton. There have been a number of crashes around both ends of the village in the last few years. In fact a Range Rover crashed into the Westnewton Bridge causing extensive damage to the "listed" bridge in January 224. Hopefully a 40mph limit will help to avoid such instances in the future and make it a safer environment for car users and pedestrians alike.
1		Reducing the speed limit through Kirknewton would be much welcomed. We have witnessed numerous traffic accidents and near misses involving vehicles of all sizes. As pedestrians 30mph would be even more appreciated.
		Further to a letter received via the Chairman of the Kirknewton Parish Council I wish to give my support to the plan to implement a speed limit between the two villages of Kirkweston and Westnewton. I understand that this will be 40mph which I think is still too fast but it is better than none at all.

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1		<p>We are residents living in the Kirknewton area and have become increasingly concerned with the driving on the local B road including the one through Kirknewton. We are at a loss to understand why any driver should think it suitable to travel at anything approaching 40mph when negotiating the bends a K/N and the stretch with residential houses, livestock buildings and bridge. The signs of the bends and village sign should be sufficient. However, because there are such drivers about we support the 40 limit a necessity. We would also wish to make it known that we are experiencing appalling driving behaviours on these roads as a daily occurrence. On a journey to Wooler of 8 miles we usually meet two vehicles coming around corners on the wrong side of the road, sometimes on those bends in K/N. Most recently a bus was over the line on the bed on Kilham Bank - with room to space on his other side. It is our vigilance which prevents these drivers having accidents. Basically we defensively drive at all times to avoid the behaviour of others. We do not know the answer to this problem - maybe better training for learners, but recognise that is not in the scope of this Programme. Loss of wildlife, particularly hedgehogs and hares where ignorance of their behaviours in flight mode is apparent, is another sad aspect of poor behaviours of drivers. We appreciate this opportunity to give our opinions on this issue.</p>
		<p>In response to the letter dated 13th January 2025 I write to record that both I and my wife (both drivers and pedestrians- therefore two votes!) strongly support the proposal to provide a 40mph speed limit on the B6351 covering Kirknewton and Westnewton. Indeed it is long overdue, as the history of accidents in the last few months has demonstrated. But it would be a welcome step in the right direction. We would also support any proposals in due course to provide other measures designed to make the road safer for pedestrians and cyclists in addition to motorists: The narrow bridge over the river requires much improved Ed signage to provide advance warning to motorists/HGVs of its narrowness, of pedestrians in the road and of the bends before and after the bridge, reinforced by strong signage, on and beside the road, indication "slow" perhaps aimed particularly at HGV's. Much more frequent action to keep the verges clear to improve visibility on the other blind corners, especially the two 90 degree bends at the eastern entry to Kirknewton, and to ensure that the road signs are visible rather than hidden by vegetation. Much more frequent action to clear back the mud and debris that accumulate at the sides of the road, covering anything up to a foot of tarmac, which effectively narrows the available road surface and drivers vehicles towards the centre of the carriageway on what is already a narrow road. We look forward to welcoming a positive outcome to this consultation.</p>
1		<p>Any reduction in speed would be appreciated. The walk to the village has or post box at times can be quite hazardous especially when it's vehicles coming in opposite directions. There isn't a footpath. The blind bends both sides of the bridge surprise many motorists resulting in several collisions with the walls of the bridge making one wish we could have a speed limit of 20 miles per hours. I hope our plight is looked upon favourably.</p>
1		<p>Proposed 40mph speed limit Kirknewton/Westnewton Re HE25. We have been advised by our Parish Council of a proposal to put 40mph speed restriction in place for Kirknewton and Westnewton and were asked to submit comments/opinions. As we drive the road daily we both feel that 40mph is not going to realistically achieve anything. To drive through both villages and along the stretch of road between them it is difficult to maintain 40mph anyway. We feel that a 30mph restriction should be in place through Kirknewton and also a 30mph restriction from before the bridge over the Collage Burn through to the other side of Westnewton past the bad bend would be far more beneficial. The stretch of road between could possibly be limited to 40mph. We have witnessed plenty of near misses and in fact two accidents due to cars speeding. I hope our feedback helps.</p>
1		<p>Proposal for a continuous 40mph speed limit covering Kirknewton and Westnewton on B6351. Speeding has always been a major issue in these areas. We are delighted that Highways intend to address this problem.</p>

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1			Thank you for the consultation on the above scheme. Built Heritage and Design have no in principle objection to the proposal but noting Kirknewton is a conservation area and both Kirtnewton and Westnewton contain listed buildings we recommend that any signage or lines respects the character or appearance of the settlements with appropriate makings. BHD is ready to comment further in this regard if required.
1	5	0	0

Delegated decisions

DECISION TAKEN

**Title of Officer(s) and
Portfolio Holder (where
appropriate):**

**Paul Jones - Director of Environment and
Transport**

Subject:

**PROPOSED 40mph SPEED LIMIT, KIRKNEWTON
& WESTNEWTON**

Consultation

15 responses received in favour.

Decision Taken:

The proposed 40mph speed limit should be
implemented.

Signature of Director



Date

12th June 2025
