



Northumberland County Council

**RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN BY
DIRECTOR OF LOCAL SERVICES AND HOUSING DELIVERY**

Paul Jones

24th September 2017

Proposed 20 MPH Speed Limits Hexham Town Centre

Purpose of report:

To consider the implications of objections received to the proposal to introduce 20mph speed limits in Hexham Town Centre.

Recommendation

To continue with implementation of the proposed traffic regulation order.

Links to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the *Places and Environment Aim* in the Corporate Plan:

"Our aim is to maintain and further improve the quality of our towns, villages and countryside and make it easier for residents to access services and high quality, affordable homes and to travel using different modes of transport. To achieve this, we will keep Northumberland clean, green and safe from detrimental impacts of climate change, build more houses to benefit those most in need and provide a convenient, integrated public transport network."

Key Issues

A Delegated Decision Report was not prepared prior to the implementation of this scheme, as this proposal was part of the Local Transport Programme (LTP) Programme 2017/2018.

During the period that the proposal was being advertised, four objections/comments were received to our legal section from members of the public. Details are attached in Appendix A.

At the design stage of this proposal, DfT circular 01/2013 Setting Local Speed Limits, advisory document was consulted, together with any available speed survey data and anecdotal evidence provided. There were also extensive deliberations between representatives from Hexham Town Council, NCC Traffic Safety and Local and County Councillors.

Although, all sources of data are open to interpretation, Officers firmly believe that these proposals, in addition to existing highway features i.e. Pedestrian crossings, will ultimately lead to a reduction of speed in the Hexham Town Centre area. It is envisaged that the cumulative effect of these measures will result in, improved road safety, driver awareness and driving below 20 mph becoming the 'norm' in a town and village environment.

All elements of the objections/comments received were carefully considered by Officers when making their final decision to make the proposed Order. County and Town Councillors were in agreement and all parties recommended continuing with the implementation.

Report Author

Terry Luck - Programmes Officer (Traffic Safety)
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File References

S:\Highways\PROJECT\15\HE15 Minor Improvements\Various School 20mph Speed Limits\HE152332 Hexham

Traffic Regulation Order – TRO_087

Appendix Index

Appendix A – Objections received during the period of advertising.

DECISION TAKEN

Title of Cabinet Member or Officer(s):

Director of Local Services and Housing Delivery

Subject:

Proposed introduction of 20 MPH Speed Limit restriction In Hexham Town Centre area.

Consultation

Not required – proposal part of LTP 2017/18 and supported by Hexham Town Council and Local County Councillors

Decision Taken:

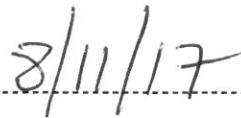
To introduce the 20 MPH Speed Limit restriction in Hexham Town Centre.

All objections have been considered by Officers and the decision is to proceed with the original proposal.

Signature of Director



Date



Maureen Wilcock,
Northumberland County Council,
County Hall,
Morpeth,
Northumberland.
NE61 2EF

24th August 2017

Dear Ms. Wilcock,

Proposed 20mph Hexham.

I wish to object to the proposed 20mph. speed restrictions for what could be classed as the Hexham ring road i.e. from Monks Terrace to Broadway, Elansgate past Hexham railway station, Dene Street back to Monks Terrace. I can see the attraction for this proposal but I contend that rather than make this route safer it will make it more dangerous. From Hexham Hospital to the police station there are 8 sets of traffic lights and at school times there is a lollypop lady in Hencotes. This all slows the traffic down so there is no need to go to the expense of 20mph signs. To maintain this speed motorist will need to keep checking their speed if not doing this they will think they have time to look around and take their eyes off the road.

I can see no objection to the centre of Hexham being 20mph.

Yours Sincerely,

31st August 2017

For the attention of Maureen Wilcock

Legal Services Department
Northumberland County Council
County Hall
Morpeth
Northumberland
NE61 2EF

Dear Sirs

I welcome the County Council's intention to introduce a 20 mile per hour speed limit in Hexham, however, I believe it should be extended to cover more roads.

I would like to see the 20 mile per hour limit extended to Eastgate, Gallows Bank and Dipton Mill Road as many drivers do not adhere to the 30 mile per hour limit. This makes it dangerous for pedestrians and children accessing Hexham Middle School from this entrance since the school crossing patrol was removed.

A speed limit of 20 miles per hour would also make it safer for residents crossing from Hackwood Glade and Hackwood Park especially with the increasing use of electric cars as vehicles travelling down the hill towards Hexham cannot be seen and are often exceeding the 30 mile per hour speed limit.

I am sure that a 20 mile per hour speed limit would also improve safety on other roads such as those used by school children at QEHS and St Joseph's Middle School.

Yours faithfully

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31st August 2017

Ms Maureen Willcock
Legal Services
Northumberland County Council
County Hall
Morpeth NE61 2EF

Dear Ms Willcock

Hexham Town Centre 20 mph speed restriction – Order 2017 TROM_087

We wish to object strongly to the above proposals to introduce a 20 mph speed restriction throughout Hexham Town Centre. We feel this is totally unnecessary and will, in our opinion, be a total waste of Northumberland's Council Tax payers' money.

Although not residents of Hexham, we visit the town several times every week, at all times day and night and rely on it for our shopping, hospital, work and leisure. We are members of organisations that meet regularly in the town and are keen supporters of the Queens Hall Theatre and Forum Cinema. We have pursued these activities for 50 years and have never encountered speeding traffic in the town centre for the majority of that period and for a long time now none whatsoever.

In fact, today it is virtually impossible to drive anywhere in Hexham at much above 20 mph. For instance the main road, Priestpopple, Battle Hill, Hencotes, etc., formerly the A69 through the town centre, has seven sets of pedestrian crossing lights, plus one set of traffic control lights at the Allendale Road junction, plus two roundabouts, all within approximately 1½ mile to 1¾ miles between the Hospital to just beyond the Police Station. These are all operated frequently and thus traffic is stop start all the way through the town centre.

In other parts of the town, for example Market Street, Beaumont Street, etc width restriction caused by on-street parking bays ensures that traffic speed is naturally curtailed. Station Road, with its Belisha Beacon crossing and two roundabouts, and Haugh Lane with two pedestrian light controlled crossings and the notoriously busy Tesco roundabout are also host to very slow moving traffic.

The biggest hazard to road safety on Corbridge Road has been, for probably two years, the fact that the a lot of the street lighting does not work, particularly those lights in front of the hospital and on the refuges further east on the A695.

In the current economic climate, we believe that the proposed 20 mph speed restrictions will deter people from visiting Hexham and will thus have a detrimental effect on the prosperity of the traders and the town in general.

We therefore urge that these proposals be rejected.

Yours sincerely

1 September 2017

Dear Ms Willock

**Objection: Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (Hexham Town Centre 20mph Speed Restriction) Order 2017
TROM 087**

I refer to previous correspondence with your Terry Luck, and an email sent at the latter's suggestion to Jane Kevan at Hexham Town Council and wish to object to this scheme

Grounds for Objection

The grounds for my objection are that

- the "reasons" as stated in the above order (in a single line) is democratically inadequate
- the case as stated in the above order (in a single line) is not made,
- that it is without any indication of how the benefit will be achieved, (or the limit enforced)
- that council tax payers' money could be better spent,
- that there are probably better ways to "improve road safety in the area",
- that it will further clutter the town centre with more sign-age.

Requests for further details have proved fruitless.

Further Response

I know of little evidence that vehicles travel at "high speed" in the indicated area or that travelling at 20 to 30 mph is a significant problem. I suspect that excepting Dene Avenue, average speeds are already well below 20mph.

If people using "rat-runs" are a problem (possibly Dean Street?) specific steps can be taken to designate that area as no through traffic "access only".

If "furious through traffic" is a problem and cannot be persuaded to use the A68 and A69, pedestrianise (or "Bus only") The Cattle Market and possibly the majority of Priestpopple. There are already possible proposals for closing Hallstile Bank and possibly Market Street (which would have the effect of reducing traffic on Beaumont Street). Eliminating traffic on those roads would improve road safety - if there is a safety problem to start with.

This proposed order looks like a sledge-hammer to crack a nut - with the sledgehammer likely to miss and the nut not being a problem.

yours sincerely