

Report title: Speed limit Order objections associated with the proposed 50mph speed limit on Sawtry Way, Wyton

To: Cambridgeshire County Council's Traffic Manager and the local members representing the electoral divisions below

Meeting Date: 16th June 2022

From: Executive Director: Place & Economy

Electoral division(s): District of Huntingdonshire, Parishes of Wyton-on-the-Hill & Houghton and Wyton

Key decision: No

Forward Plan ref: N/A

Outcome: To determine the objections received regarding the proposed 50mph speed limit on Sawtry Way, Wyton

Recommendation:

- a) Approve the implementation of the 50mph limit, as advertised
- b) Inform the objectors and police accordingly

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1. Background

- 1.1 Wyton-on-the-Hill (WOTH) is a village and civil parish in the district of Huntingdonshire, located approximately 5km northeast and 3km northwest of Huntingdon and St Ives town centres, respectively (Appendix 1). The concentrated area of residential development is the former R.A.F. housing estate on the north-east side of the B1090. There is also a residential caravan park for the over 50 age group consisting of approximately 48 units called Pine Hill Park located on the south-west side of the B1090.
- 1.2 Wyton-on-the-Hill is accessed by Sawtry Way (B1090), which also serves as a link between the A1123 – the main route for traffic travelling between Huntingdon & St Ives – and the A141 – the main route for traffic travelling between Huntingdon and the north of Cambridgeshire e.g. March & Wisbech. The speed limit in the vicinity of the village is currently 50mph – from a point 295m northwest to a point 365m southeast of its junction with Mere Way – and the rest of Sawtry Way is unrestricted (Appendix 2).
- 1.3 Community Road Watch (CRW) were successful in securing funding from the 2021/22 Local Highway Improvement (LHI) budget to potentially reduce the speed limits along Sawtry Way between the A1123 and the A141. Consideration was given as to i) whether the existing 50 mph speed limit could be extended to include the roundabout at the junction with Pathfinder Way and reduced to 40 mph ii) whether the remaining lengths of the B1090 leading to the A1123 and A141 junctions could be reduced from national speed limit (60 mph) to 50 mph. Requests for proposed speed limit changes are considered in accordance with Cambridgeshire County Council's speed limit policy and national guidance.
- 1.4 At a site meeting between a CRW representative and a county council officer prior to the 2021 LHI application submission the speed limit proposals in para. 1.3 were discussed and officer advice was to submit the proposed changes for consideration and provide appropriate speed survey data. County Council officers have reviewed the proposals and the speed limit data that was provided in line with the County Council's speed limit policy and national guidance on setting local speed limits. The proposals in paragraph 1.3 were rejected in favour of making Sawtry Way 50mph between the A1123 and the A141. The rationale for refusing the 40mph speed limit being:

- History of Collisions

Reviewing the available road traffic collision (RTC) data, there have been 4 recorded personal injury accidents along the length of road between the roundabouts with Churchill Avenue and Pathfinder Way in the past 5 yrs. One of these was very sadly a fatal accident, however, the circumstances and contributing factors to this tragic occurrence indicate that there would not have been a different outcome had the speed limit at the time been 40mph and inappropriate speed certainly was not indicated as a contributory factor. There was a "slight" accident recorded at the Pathfinder Way roundabout this year and the driver recorded a positive breath sample and two further "slight" accidents at the Mere Way junction in 2016 and 2017, both in daylight hours where the vehicle in the side road has pulled out in front of a vehicle travelling on Sawtry Way. It could be argued that a lower speed limit may have prevented these from happening but equally it could be argued that other factors may have been involved. With two possible RTCs in the past 5 yrs that could potentially have speed as a contributory

factor this is not compelling evidence to support a speed limit reduction to 40mph.

- Road geometry and engineering

The road's geometry is straight, and between the Pathfinder Way roundabout and Churchill Avenue roundabouts there are no engineering features along it that could be easily enhanced to encourage a good level of compliance with a 40mph speed limit. Additional engineering measures would need to be introduced to encourage compliance with a 40mph speed limit and that this is out of the scope of the available budget.

- Road function

The function of Sawtry Way best aligns with the table (Appendix 3) from the Department for Transport (DFT) Setting Local Speed Limits Circular 01/2013 as a single carriageway road with predominantly motor-flow traffic function. It forms a well-used link road between the A141 and A1123 as well as providing access to the businesses and residential properties located off of it. The existing mean speeds are in the mid-40s, and therefore below 50mph, this aligns with the provision of a 50mph speed limit and not a 40mph speed limit.

- Composition of road users

A County Council officer undertook two handheld radar speed checks of free-flowing vehicles. The second survey was undertaken on the 9th September 2021, between 1430 and 1610 hrs, pedestrian and cycle activity was noted during this period too. In total, 4 adult cyclists were observed cycling on the carriageway, a further 8 cyclists (mainly secondary school children) were observed cycling on the footway and 22 pedestrians were observed walking along the footway, 10 of which crossed Sawtry Way to either go to Pine Hill or the Wyton-on-the-Hill development. There was no pedestrian activity associated with the movement of children attending the primary school located within the WOTH housing estate. Taking into account that this period included the end of the school day, the pedestrian and cycle flows are relatively low, and it is likely even lower outside of this period. It was noted that the pedestrians crossing Sawtry Way were able to do so freely and without waiting for traffic to pass. Other than the school there do not appear to be any other amenities such as shops or takeaways that generate a regular footfall across the B1090.

- Existing traffic speeds

The case for lowering the existing national speed limit to 50mph is borderline, however, the 85th percentile speeds seem compatible with a 50 limit, so will not interfere with traffic flow, or create an unacceptable enforcement burden on the police.

The case for reducing the 50 limit to a 40 based on the speed information in Appendix 4 is much weaker. The automated traffic counter (ATC) data collected at location C is skewed by the number of vehicles slowing down to turn into the accesses or pulling out of them. This is demonstrated by the comparative data, that was obtained from handheld radar checks, of free-flowing vehicles not impeded by a vehicle slowing down to turn. The average speeds of the handheld radar checks were 47 mph and the 85th percentile

speeds were 51 & 52 mph. This demonstrates that there is generally a good level of compliance with the existing 50mph limit.

- Road environment

The road within the existing 50mph limit is tree and hedge lined with little, if any clear visual evidence of residential development and no direct residential frontage development.

The current road layout and environment is not conducive to encouraging drivers to respect and observe a 40mph speed limit. It is highly unlikely that a good level of compliance would be achieved by simply changing the speed limit signs alone. An average of a 1 to 3 mph reduction can be expected by just changing the speed limit signs. The speed data obtained from the hand-held radar surveys suggests that this alone would not be enough to achieve a high level of compliance with a lower speed limit.

Implementing a speed limit that has a poor level of compliance can put road users at risk as they have an expectation that the posted speed limit will be observed by drivers. Low compliance with a speed limit is likely to lead to requests for enforcement. Given that the police would be a likely objector to the speed limit being reduced from 50 mph to 40 mph, based on the comments received from the Traffic Management Officer, it is unlikely that they would readily undertake frequent enforcement action.

2. Main Issues

- 2.1 The speed limit Order (SLO) procedure is a statutory consultation process that requires the Highway Authority to advertise, in the local press, a public notice stating the proposal and the reasons for it. The advert invites the public to formally support or object to the proposals in writing within a twenty-one-day notice period.
- 2.2 The SLO was advertised in the Hunts Post on the 10th November 2021 and the statutory consultation period ran from the 10th November 2021 to the 1st December 2021.
- 2.3 The statutory consultation resulted in ten written objections. The written objections are included in Appendix 5, however, in the interest of data protection they have been redacted to omit identifiable information. The officer responses to the points raised, avoiding duplicate responses where possible, are also given in the table.
- 2.4 CRW undertook some local engagement with residents and businesses located along the length of the B1090 between the A1123 and the A141 in the summer of 2021 and whilst they had insufficient time to canvas every household they did obtain signatures of support for a 40 mph speed limit from 35 WOTH residents, 33 Pine Hill Park and Blenheim Court residents, 5 residents located in properties along the B1090 and 6 businesses. The WOTH Parish Council also support in principle the speed limit reduction.

3. Alignment with corporate priorities

- 3.1 Communities at the heart of everything we do
There are no significant implications for this priority.

- 3.2 A good quality of life for everyone
There are no significant implications for this priority.
- 3.3 Helping our children learn, develop and live life to the full
There are no significant implications for this priority.
- 3.4 Cambridgeshire: a well-connected, safe, clean, green environment
There are no significant implications for this priority.
- 3.5 Protecting and caring for those who need us
There are no significant implications for this priority.

4. Significant Implications

- 4.1 Resource Implications
The necessary staff resources and funding have been secured through the LHI scheme
- 4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications
There are no significant implications for this priority.
- 4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications
There are no significant implications for this priority.
- 4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications
There are no significant implications for this priority.
- 4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications
The statutory consultees have been engaged, including the County and District Councillors, the Police and the emergency Services. The Police offered no objections and no comments were received from the other emergency services. Wyton-on-the-Hill and Houghton & Wyton parish councils were also engaged but no representations were received.

Note, following the meeting referenced in para. 1.4 the police were consulted on the 40mph proposal (idea being to potentially extend the existing 50mph restriction to include the roundabout at the junction with Pathfinder Way and see the restriction reduced to 40mph). In response they echoed the concerns of the County Council officers, agreeing that the speed data does not support the reduction of the existing 50mph limit to 40mph, that the character of the existing 50mph limit would need to change significantly to achieve compliance with a 40mph limit and that this would necessitate the implementation of physical features to ensure vehicles are forced to reduce their speed.

Notices were placed in the local press and the proposals were made available for viewing online at <http://bit.ly/cambridgeshiretro>

- 4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement
County Councillors: Cllr Ryan Fuller and Cllr Douglas Dew, and District Councillor: Cllr David Norman Keane were consulted, whereby Cllr Douglas Dew and Cllr Keane were supportive of the proposal.

4.7 Public Health Implications

There are no significant implications for this priority.

4.8 Environment and Climate Change Implications on Priority Areas:

4.8.1 Implication 1: Energy efficient, low carbon buildings – N/A

4.8.2 Implication 2: Low carbon transport – N/A

4.8.3 Implication 3: Green spaces, peatland, afforestation, habitats and land management – N/A

4.8.4 Implication 4: Waste Management and Tackling Plastic Pollution – N/A

4.8.5 Implication 5: Water use, availability and management – N/A

4.8.6 Implication 6: Air Pollution.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: Positive

Explanation: The consistent speed limit will lessen pollution caused by vehicles accelerating between the 50mph and national speed limits. The lower vehicle speeds may also result in a reduction in air pollution.

4.8.7 Implication 7: Resilience of our services and infrastructure, and supporting vulnerable people to cope with climate change – N/A

5. Source documents guidance

5.1 Source documents

Copies of the written representations (redacted) received during the consultation period

Copy of the draft speed limit Order

Copies of the consultation documents (public notice, statement of reasons, consultation letter – sent to statutory consultees)

DFT setting local speed limits circular 01/2013 – linked [here](#)

5.2 Location

Available upon request from the Policy & Regulation team

(policyandregulation@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)