

# North Tyneside Council Report to Cabinet Date: 13<sup>th</sup> February 2012

**ITEM 6(a) (i)**  
Title: Traffic Regulation  
Order (Proposed  
residential 20 mph Zone –  
Cullercoats)

**Portfolio(s):** Transport and the Green  
Environment

**Cabinet Member(s):** Cllr E Hodson

**Report from Directorate:** Chief Executive's Office

**Report Author:** Ken Wilson, Head of Regeneration,  
Development and Regulatory Services (Tel: 0191 643 6091)

**Wards affected:** Cullercoats

## **PART 1**

### **1.1 Purpose:**

The purpose of this report is to detail, and request Cabinet to set aside, one objection received to the proposal to introduce a 20 mph zone on residential streets in the Cullercoats area.

### **1.2 Recommendation(s):**

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- i. consider the objection;
- ii. set aside the objection in the interests of road safety; and
- iii. approve the proposals as shown on the plan attached as Appendix 3.

### **1.3 Forward Plan:**

This report appears on the Forward Plan for the period 1 February to 31 May 2012.

### **1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework**

This report relates to the following themes/programmes/projects in the Council Strategic Plan 2011-2015:

Priority 4: Our Environment

Theme 4.4: Working with partners to keep North Tyneside safe

Outcome: 20mph zones will be in place

## **1.5 Information:**

### 1.5.1 Background

- 1.5.1.1 The Council is now in the final year of a five-year programme to introduce 20mph zones in residential areas and outside schools in the borough. 20mph zones are an integral part of the Council's Road Safety Strategy approved by Cabinet on 11 January 2010 along with a range of road safety measures including education, enforcement and infrastructure works. North Tyneside has a long and successful history of addressing road safety issues and since the late 1990s the Council has introduced numerous traffic calming measures, including 20mph zones, in response to concerns about road casualties and speeding problems. As a result the long-term trend in the borough shows a continuing decline in the number of deaths and serious injuries on our roads despite rising levels of car ownership and use in the borough.
- 1.5.1.2 When an area is to be designated as a 20mph zone, traffic speed surveys are first undertaken to determine the existing average speeds. Using the standard national assessment criteria, if the average speed is over 24mph then measures such as road markings or physical traffic calming may be included in order to reduce the average speed below 24mph.

### 1.5.2 Statutory Consultation

- 1.5.2.1 The Highways Act 1980 requires that all schemes involving a change in speed limit must be advertised on site and in the local press. This enables members of the public to object to the proposal. Any objectors are first sent a detailed response and invited to reconsider their objection. Any objections not withdrawn are referred to Cabinet for its consideration.

### 1.5.3 Summary of Objectors

#### 1.5.3.1 Mr A

Mr A objected on the grounds that the Blanket, area-wide speed reductions, implemented only by street signs ("signed-only" speed reduction) have been found to be of extremely limited effectiveness. They are not being introduced in response to local problems or local needs, this scheme is likely to have relatively little impact in reducing either average speeds or accidents. The full text of Mr A's objection is included in Appendix 1.

- 1.5.3.2 Officers responded and explained that as part of North Tyneside Council's adopted Road Safety Strategy, a programme of 20mph zones in residential areas is being implemented in line with national best practice and that the policy to introduce 20mph zones in residential areas is part of a proactive approach to keep the numbers of accidents low. Officers noted that this approach involves minimal costs for the one-off installation of relevant signs and road markings. The full text of the officer response is included in Appendix 1.

Mr A did not wish to withdraw his objection.

## **1.6 Decision options:**

Cabinet may:

### Option 1

Approve the recommendations set out in section 1.2.

### Option 2

Not approve the recommendations set out in section 1.2.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

## **1.7 Reasons for recommended option:**

Option 1 is recommended in the interests of road safety recognising that the proposals are part of the Council's adopted Road Safety Strategy and form part of an approved action in the Council Strategic Plan 2011-2015.

## **1.8 Appendices:**

Appendix 1: Letters / emails of objection and associated correspondence

Appendix 2: Legal Notice in local press

Appendix 3: Plan of scheme (drawing CULLER20) A1 version is available on the Council website, will be displayed in each group room and will be available for inspection at Cabinet

## **1.9 Contact officers:**

Derek Smith, Senior Manager, (0191) 643 6106

Kevin Ridpath, Network and Transportation Manager (0191) 643 6089

Paul Fleming, Team Leader, Traffic and Network Management, (0191) 643 6116

Alison Campbell, Financial Business Manager, (0191) 643 7038

## **1.10 Background information:**

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author:

(1) North Tyneside Road Safety Strategy 2010 - 2013

(2) Tyne and Wear Local Transport Plan 2011 onwards (LTP3)

(3) Plan of scheme is available on the Council website, will be displayed in each group room and will be available for inspection at Cabinet.

## **PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING**

### **2.1 Finance and other resources**

Funding is available from the Council's "Urban Safety Schemes" programme within the Local Transport Plan capital allocation for 2011/12, which was approved by Cabinet on 7 March 2011. The estimated scheme cost is £4,000.

### **2.2 Legal**

The introduction of local highway schemes such as a 20mph zone are subject to compliance with the relevant statutory process under the Highways Act 1980.

## **2.3 Consultation/community engagement**

### **2.3.1 Internal Consultation**

The views of Ward Members are sought at the initial stage of the development of a scheme for a 20mph zone and are taken into account.

### **2.3.2 External Consultation/Engagement**

Consultation carried out with residents during the development of the scheme is detailed in paragraph 1.5.2.

## **2.4 Human rights**

The proposals within this report do not have direct implications in respect of the Human Rights Act 1998.

## **2.5 Equalities and diversity**

There are no adverse equalities or diversity issues arising from this report. There are potential positive equal opportunity implications in that physical accessibility, particularly for people with disabilities, may be improved.

## **2.6 Risk management**

There are no adverse risk management implications arising from this proposal.

## **2.7 Crime and disorder**

There are no direct crime and disorder issues arising from this report.

## **2.8 Environment and sustainability**

There are no direct environment and sustainability issues arising from this report.

## **PART 3 - SIGN OFF**

- Strategic Director(s)
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s)
- Chief Finance Officer
- Monitoring Officer
- Strategic Director with Responsibility for Community Engagement

Subject: Cullercoats - Proposed Road Orders - 20 mph speed zone

From: Mr A

I am writing to object to the proposed road orders to create a 20 mph speed zone in Cullercoats.

My objection is based on the following grounds: -

- i) Blanket, area-wide speed reductions, implemented only by street signs ("signed-only" speed reduction) have been found to be of extremely limited effectiveness - this scheme is likely to have relatively little impact in reducing either average speeds or accidents;
- ii) Because signed-only speed-reduction is generally likely to be ineffective, it is likely to require additional measures shortly after. Speed enforcement measures such as speed-cameras and speed bumps are both costly and contentious.
- iii) It is more effective to tackle accident-reduction directly, from the outset, with specific, targeted, local accident-reduction and speed-reduction measures, tailored to local circumstances
- iv) Rather than adopting a blanket approach, the most effective and cost-effective approach is to take advantage of local knowledge, by designing traffic measures in consultation with the local community. Local communities should be asked to identify particular trouble-spots, and suggest their preferred solution.

The 20 mph zones are being introduced as a blanket measure, throughout North Tyneside, area by area, in response to a national government policy. They are not being introduced in response to local problems or local needs.

Signed-only area-wide speed reductions are likely to have very limited effectiveness. In Portsmouth, where a blanket 20 mph speed restriction was introduced, a before and after survey found that the effect was to reduce average speeds by only 1.3 mph. Until recently, DfT guidance had been that "*The weight of evidence points strongly to signed only 20 mph limits having little or no effect on traffic speeds*".

Due to the lack of effectiveness in reducing speeds, there is likely to be pressure to follow 20 mph signed zones with speed enforcement, either in the form of speed bumps, or alternatively, average speed cameras. SPECS3 average speed cameras have been adopted in some London boroughs, linked to the 20 mph programme, and have been favoured by government. The pursuit of blanket speed-reduction will shortly require further measures, at additional cost, and this should be anticipated from the outset.

It is important to remember that the ultimate goal is accident-reduction, and that speed-reduction is only an indirect means to reduce accidents. Measures aimed directly at accident-reduction are likely to be more effective and a better investment.

Instead of blanket, area-wide speed-reduction, it is likely to be better to direct money and attention towards targeted local measures, aimed at areas of high local accident risk, to reduce speeds, or to make crossings safer. Since it is likely that area-wide speed-reduction would lead quickly to measures such as speed bumps, it would make more sense to consider design-measures at the beginning, and aim these specifically at areas of greatest need or greatest accident risk.

Democratic participation and involvement of local communities are worthy objectives in their own right. In this case, they also enable cost-savings, by directing investment more carefully.

Please acknowledge this objection. Please inform me of the next steps in the process and when

the proposed orders will be considered.

Officers will prepare a summary of responses to the consultation - please email me a copy of this summary.

Yours faithfully,  
Mr A

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From:Mr A

Dear Sirs,

Please could you update me: - what stage in the decision-making process has now been reached, regarding the proposed Cullercoats 20 mph zone and road orders.

When will a decision be sent for vote / approval?

Has a report / recommendation been made? Is it possible to see the report / recommendation?

Yours faithfully,  
Mr A

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**From:** John Kermode

Dear Mr A

Thank you for your E-Mail outlining your objection to our proposals to implement a 20mph speed restriction within the Cullercoats area of North Tyneside which was forwarded to myself via our Legal Department

The implementation of the 20mph speed restriction within the Cullercoats estate forms part of Council Policy to reduce accidents and vehicle speeds within residential estate's and create a safer environment for the local community. The implementation of this restriction is a proactive measure by which we are trying to keep accident numbers low and reduce the chance of a serious incident occurring.

The speeds at which vehicles travel is directly linked to the severity of injuries sustained in the event of an accident. For example, a pedestrian, if struck by a vehicle driving at 20mph, is likely to suffer slight injuries. At 30mph they would be severely hurt and at 40mph or above are likely to be killed. Reducing the speed limit to 20mph will have a direct impact on general road safety for all users of the highway whether they be walking, cycling or driving.

Recent surveys carried out within the Cullercoats area indicate that the speeds already conform to the Department for Transport guidelines for 20mph zones meaning that we will be able to implement the restriction without the need to install physical traffic calming measures. For your information North Tyneside Council has no fixed speed camera sites within the borough and at this time there no plans to introduce any such measures.

Targeted accident lead road safety schemes are a part of the road safety programme and we would see the policy on 20mph speed limits as complementing this work. Localised consultation with residents is carried out on major traffic calming schemes however from our experience, extensive consultation creates confusion and leads to many impractical solutions to problems.

I understand that this response will not address all your concerns; however it is important to realise that the 20mph speed limits are seen as a simple and cost effective way of keeping accident numbers low in the borough. The policy has been adopted by most local authorities across the country and is seen as a proactive measure. The local authority is often criticised for waiting for the accident to happen before taking positive steps.

If you still wish to proceed with your objection to our proposals could you please inform us in writing by 18th November 2011, if no response is made we will assume that your objection has been withdrawn and you are happy for the scheme to proceed as advertised. If you wish to uphold your objection to the scheme, it shall be presented to the Council's Planning Committee for consideration in the near future, a decision will be made by the committee and you will be notified of the outcome.

Regards

John Kermodé,  
Project Engineer;  
Traffic & Network Management

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From: Mr A

Dear Mr Kermodé,

1) I wish to proceed with my objection to the proposed Cullercoats 20 mph speed zone - I do NOT wish to withdraw my objection.

2) Please reply confirming that my objection is still in process.  
Please confirm that this email will be sent to the Planning Committee.

3) Please advise me whether it is possible to be represented or make representations to the meeting of the Planning Committee.

4) I believe your reply does not address the points of my objection.

To repeat and re-state the main points of my objection: -

i) Signed-only speed reductions have no significant impact upon traffic speeds.

ii) Reduction of traffic speeds normally requires measures such as changes to road design or alternatively camera enforcement.

iii) Signed-only speed reductions still incur significant cost (the typical cost for each zone has been quoted as £200,000 - see reference 4, appended below).

Given that budgets for road safety measures are necessarily limited, this money should be spent implementing measures that do actually reduce traffic speeds effectively, and targeted at areas of high potential risk.

In the area of Cullercoats, the best example would be the road outside Cullercoats school, which combines the highest traffic volumes, highest traffic speeds and the greatest concentration of risk pedestrians. Other high risk areas have also been identified during discussions at local public meetings.

iv) Public consultation and involvement are considered important in the success of road safety schemes, hence public consultation should be a priority in the targeting and design of measures.

The community in Cullercoats has been very vocal about road design and road safety issues and would like to be consulted properly about road safety measures, in a manner permits consideration of alternative proposals.

v) Average speed camera enforcement of 20 mph limits has been under discussion within the Northumbria Safer Roads Initiative area and at this stage has not been ruled out. Nationally, implementation of new average speed camera systems in 20 mph zones is on-hold, awaiting a policy review upon the evaluation of pilot schemes in four London boroughs. New camera schemes are widely anticipated.

In the notes (see references 2 and 3 below), the Northumbria Safer Roads Initiative indicate that adoption of a 20 mph signed zone is a necessary first step before implementation of average speed camera enforcement.

Failure to achieve speed reductions at this stage would lead to pressure to adopt measures such as average speed cameras at a later date. We should try to adopt effective and appropriate measures at an early stage, not leave a situation where additional measures may be required later. The money proposed to be spent on signed-only speed reduction schemes would be more effective if spent on specific targeted measures, such as changes to road design.

We should try to avoid measures such as camera enforcement, which cause ill-feeling, and instead aim to pursue measures which make roads inherently safer.

5) Your email says

The implementation of the 20mph speed restriction within the Cullercoats estate forms part of Council Policy to reduce accidents and vehicle speeds within residential estate's and create a safer environment for the local community.

and

Recent surveys carried out within the Cullercoats area indicate that the speeds already conform to the Department for Transport guidelines for 20mph zones meaning that we will be able to implement the restriction without the need to install physical traffic calming measures. For your information North Tyneside Council has no fixed speed camera sites within the borough and at this time there no plans to introduce any such measures.

i) The speed threshold you refer to is 24 mph.

You have not provided the speeds measured in the traffic surveys you have mentioned, but you appear to imply these are less than 24 mph.

This suggests that traffic speeds are already relatively low and close to 20 mph.

**Please could you provide figures for the traffic speeds measured in the surveys.**

It is impossible to assess the current situation without access to the figures

ii) It is widely accepted that signed-only speed restrictions will not produce a significant reduction in traffic speeds (see references 1 and 4 appended).

The implementation study at Portsmouth found that the 20 mph scheme there reduced mean traffic speeds by only 1.3 mph - however, it is worth noting that this mean figure also included



roads where speeds were reduced by up to 9 mph by measures beyond signed-only reduction, e.g. by bumps and cameras (see reference 4 below). This suggests that on roads without these measures, the reduction in speeds due to signed-only restrictions was much less than 1 mph.

>From the above, it is unlikely that the signed-only scheme will have a significant impact on traffic speeds and safety in Cullercoats.

Real reductions in traffic speeds would require road design measures.

iii) At this point, no-one in England has any firm plans to introduce average speed cameras in 20 mph limits, because decisions are on-hold, awaiting the outcome of pilot schemes in four London boroughs. However, this does not mean that camera enforcement has been ruled out. Average speed cameras for 20 mph limits have been under consideration within Tyne and Wear, by the Northumbria Safer Roads Initiative.

In the notes (see references 2 and 3, below), the Northumbria Safer Roads Initiative indicate that adoption of a 20 mph signed zone is a necessary first step before implementation of average speed camera enforcement.

6) You have not addressed the substantive points of my objection.

I wish to complain about your proposal to unilaterally deem my objection to be withdrawn unless I reply to your email - this appears to be abuse of process. If I had been on holiday or if I had not received your email for some reason, this arbitrary move would have removed my democratic right to object.

7) Please note that the local community in Cullercoats has been extremely vocal about consultation recently, particularly regarding road improvements within the Cullercoats regeneration proposals. On the basis of views expressed at recent public meetings, it would appear that the local community in Cullercoats is extremely unhappy with the current level of consultation on road design issues.

The local community has indicated in the strongest terms its desire to participate in decision-making about road safety and road design.

The consultation should include consideration of alternative proposals for road safety.

8) I wish to complain that consultation about road design is minimal and that lack of consultation is causing inefficiency and problems. This lack of consultation is likely to lead to additional cost, wasting money.

For example, the road outside Cullercoats School (Marden Avenue, Beverley Terrace) was recently resurfaced, without any consultation on new road design measures that might have been appropriate. This is particularly relevant in the context of road safety measures in Cullercoats as the greatest potential risk area. As alluded to above, the local community had made representations asking for specific safety measures on this stretch of road, such as pedestrian refuges (islands). If these items had been incorporated at the time of resurfacing, the cost would have been reduced greatly.

In another example, parking restrictions in Cullercoats were revised recently, but it appears that statutory bodies were not notified and consulted. For example, the Fire and Rescue Service had indicated specific concerns about access and parking, and these were not incorporated in the new parking scheme adopted.

In the long run, effective consultation tends to reduce costs, produces better outcomes and greater public satisfaction.

9) Please provide details of the recent surveys of traffic speeds, which you referred in your email, with figures for the speeds measured.

Please provide budget costs for the proposed Cullercoats 20 mph zone.

Please provide these figures in a timely manner, to enable a response before any planning decision.

10) I will be circulating this correspondence and will submit this to the Cullercoats Community Centre noticeboard.

Yours faithfully,

Mr A

I attach references to the following four documents in support of my points above.

1) <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200102/cmselect/cmtlgr/557/55709.htm>  
**Select Committee on Transport, Local Government and the Regions Ninth Report**

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76. Changing speed limits will achieve little by itself. The TRL informed us that speed limits were not effective unless the road is designed for lower speeds: a reduction in the limit without supporting measures by itself typically only leads to a very small reduction in average speed.<sup>[130]</sup> The supporting measures include:

- a design which indicates the speed limit; the IHT noted that "roads need to look as though motorists should drive along them at the appropriate speed";<sup>[131]</sup>

- engineering which enforces the speed limit; and

- improved signs.

(Reference to this report)

130 RTS 27.

131 The AA stated that "speed limits should be reconciled to the character of the road (and vice versa)". The "... key lies in finding the right speed limit for each stretch of road." The organisation added that "all speed limits should be reviewed in a formal programme with a timetable and a budget. Getting the right speed on the right road is the single most pressing road safety issue - the benefits of a review are more than proportionate to the costs". Drivers need to be able to easily realise what the speed limit is (RTS 48). As Professor Stradling pointed out, this means first and foremost that the design and type of road must reflect the speed limit (RTS 45). The RAC supported this idea which is often described as the "the self-explaining" road (RTS 6).

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2) <http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=9739&p=0>  
**Introduction of 20mph Zones in Sunderland Policy Review 2009/10**

7.1.7 The Department for Transport ... state the following;

"Research into signed-only 20 mph speed limits shows that they generally lead to only small reductions in traffic speeds. Signed-only 20 mph speed limits are therefore most appropriate for areas where vehicle speeds are already low. This may for example be on roads that are very narrow, through engineering or on-road car parking. If average speeds are already around 24

mph on a road, introducing a 20 mph speed limit through signing alone, is likely to lead to general compliance with the new speed limit. Early research from the area-wide 20 mph limit in Portsmouth suggests that greater reductions can be achieved through signed only limits where previous average speeds were significantly above 20 mph.

The implementation of 20 mph limits over a larger number of roads should be considered where the conditions are right. Highway authorities are already free to use additional measures in 20 mph limits to achieve compliance, such as some traffic calming measures and vehicle activated signs or speed cameras”.

Northumbria Safer Roads Initiative (formerly Northumbria Safety Camera Partnership) states their position to be as follows;

7.4.6 20mph Zones are expected to be self-enforcing through use of traffic-calming measures. Enforcement action is unlikely as the signing of zones is less than that stipulated in the Highway Code i.e. in the absence of repeater signs road with street lighting are 30mph, leading to unlikely success from any prosecutions. 20mph speed limits are enforceable through the Safer Roads

Initiative using appropriate type-approved cameras subject to the following criteria:

- a) All necessary signing – entry/exit signs and repeater signs – is in place;
- b) There is a proven history of road traffic accidents within the speed limit area; and
- c) 85th percentile speeds are at or above the defined national threshold for enforcement (see below).

Visit to North Tyneside – Example of Good Practice

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With regard to the actual introduction of the 20mph zones, suitable areas were first identified and traffic speed surveys undertaken. If the average speed was 24mph or less then this was considered suitable for a 20mph zone (signs and roundels only). If average speed was above 24mph then traffic calming or other measures such as flashing lights needed to be considered. It was necessary that the schemes were self-enforceable as they will not be enforced by the Police. ...

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3) <http://www.safespeedforlife.co.uk/freedomPDF/NSRI/NSRI%20WG%20Minutes%20180908.pdf>  
Northumbria Safer Roads Initiative  
Minutes of Working Group Meeting 18 September 2008

...

RK (Ray King, Project Manager Northumbria Safer Roads Initiative) mentioned that both Newcastle and Gateshead has expressed interest in using average speed detection in 20 mph limits in future.

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4) <http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/speed-limits-portsmouth/speed-limits-portsmouth.pdf>  
Interim Evaluation of the Implementation of 20 mph Speed Limits in Portsmouth  
Department for Transport  
September 2010

Overall there was an increase in the number of sites that demonstrated speeds of 20 mph or less after the implementation of the scheme. Many sites already had low average speeds of 20 mph or less before the scheme was implemented. At the sites monitored with higher average speeds before the scheme was introduced, there were significant reductions in average speeds. For example for the group of sites monitored with average speeds of 24 mph or more before the scheme was introduced, the average speed reduction was 6.3 mph. The average reduction in mean speeds on all roads was 1.3 mph.

DfT Circular 1/06 also discusses other published studies on 20 mph speed limits, stating that: 'Research into 20 mph speed limits carried out by TRL (Mackie, 1998) showed that, where speed limits alone were introduced, reductions of only about 1 mph in 'before' speeds were achieved. 20 mph speed limits are, therefore, only suitable in areas where vehicle speeds are already low (the Department of Transport would suggest where mean vehicle speeds are 24 mph or below), or where additional traffic calming measures are planned as part of the strategy.'

The Council agreed to implement two 20 mph Zones per year over a five year period at a cost of approximately £200,000 per Zone.

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**From: Mr A**

I have just added an important additional point under (4 (v)) and (5(iii)): -  
In the notes, the Northumbria Safer Roads Initiative indicate that adoption of a 20 mph signed zone is a necessary first step before implementation of average speed camera enforcement.

Mr A

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**To: Mr A**

Mr A

Thank you for the reply, we will be taking the report to a forthcoming planning committee and your objection will form part of the report for committee consideration. I understand the legal team have contacted you direct on the issue of the attending the committee and speaking rights.

May I inform you in case you are not aware that the introduction of the 20mph speed limits forms part of the Council Policy and is part of our Road Safety Strategy, bearing this in mind the response from Mr Kermode was based on recent changes in government support for signed only 20mph zones and the benefits of changing driver behaviour in the long term.

There are a few issues I think need to be clarified, the cost quoted in your response for the introduction of a 20mph zone was highlighted as £200,000 – please be assured that “signed only” schemes will cost in the region of £2500 to £10,000 depending on the size of the zone. Where possible existing lighting columns will be used to minimise costs and street clutter this is a small zone therefore it is estimated to be approx £2500 (no detailed cost analysis has been done until we have confirmation that the scheme will go ahead).

North Tyneside have no fixed speed camera sites within the borough only mobile units. There are no fixed speed camera sites planned for the North Tyneside area.

All 20mph speed limits are introduced in residential areas where the speeds are already low and classed as self enforcing, as the research on the effect of 20mph speed limits are ongoing, results will fluctuate over time. The type and nature of the street is also a major factor in the final result of any analysis, overtime as drivers attitudes change we would expect speeds to lower.

Attached are the traffic surveys undertaken in the area for your information and the plan of the zone you have objected to.

Regards

Paul Fleming  
Team Leader, Traffic and Road Safety

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**From: Mr A**

Please forward this reply as a submission to the Planning Committee, as part of the planning process.

This is a response to a council rebuttal of my objection.

Dear Mr Fleming, and Planning Committee Members,

### **1) Attending the committee and speaking rights**

At this point, I do not believe I have been approached by the legal team or advised regarding the Planning meeting or arrangements to attend.

Please could you clarify and arrange to re-send any communication, in case this has gone astray.

### **2) Traffic Speeds and Road Safety**

You do not appear to have disputed that the evidence from official studies shows that signed-only speed reductions do not significantly reduce road speeds.

### **3) Council Policy - Road Safety Strategy**

Thank you for clarifying and re-affirming that the scheme is being implemented in a top-down manner, as a result of policies adopted several years ago, not in response to public pressure or public consultation.

You appear to suggest that road planning in North Tyneside should be conducted in top-down manner, and should not be swayed by public representations.

Within DfT guidance and all official studies, there is a consistent theme that public participation and consultation are recommended good practice and a necessary part of successful road safety strategies. A top-down approach stands in opposition to this.

Public opinion, as expressed at recent public meetings in Cullercoats, is strongly in favour of greater consultation, and that there has been great dissatisfaction with road-planning proposals recently offered, as part of the Cullercoats Regeneration Masterplan.

You have also indicated that the signed-only scheme is being implemented because the government has offered you money to do this (which will keep your department in work) not because there is any evidence this will reduce traffic speeds, accidents or injuries. It appears to be uncontested that all the official evidence is that signed-only speed reduction has little effect on actual traffic speeds.

**My main request to the Planning Committee is that any decision should be postponed to allow time for proper public consultation, via public meetings, to allow discussion of alternative safety measures. This should be accompanied by a report on the range of alternative measures potentially eligible for DfT funding.**

#### 4) Cost

You write that the cost would be "in the region of £2500 to £10,000". This is a minimal figure and presumably represents only the cost of putting up signs. This would be misleading and would not represent the total cost of this project.

The figures for Portsmouth, which I quoted, come from the Department for Transport, and represent overall costs, including: -

- Traffic surveys,
- Officer time for planning,
- Cost of applying for and making road orders,
- etc.

**Please could you give the total budget for all activities associated with the Cullercoats scheme.** Experience with local government auditing suggests that detailed itemised cost totals will be available for all headings for this project - please could you provide these.

The point at issue is this: - a large proportion of the costs associated with this safety scheme, such as cost of surveys, planning, road orders, would be similar or the same if alternative speed reduction measures were proposed. The cost of the intervention - whether putting up 20 mph signs or installing a few road humps, is in many cases a minor part of the overall project cost.

If the decision at this stage is to implement measures that are known to be ineffective, this is likely to require the whole subject will have to be re-visited, at some future point, requiring all of these costs to be repeated. It would make more sense to get it right now - it makes no sense at all to do something that is known to be ineffective. Signed-only speed reductions are known to be ineffective - all the official evidence shows that they do not lead to any significant reduction in traffic speeds.

#### 5) Alternative measures

Please note that there is a range of alternative measures which have been shown to be effective, in official studies and pilot schemes. It is possible to reduce traffic speeds in residential "home safety zones" from 20 mph to below 10 mph, with appropriate measures.

From the traffic surveys, there may be a case for additional speed reduction measures on Beverley Gardens, which has the highest traffic speeds of the roads listed. With traffic speeds above 24 mph, this is at the borderline for acceptability for signed-only speed reduction. It would make sense to include measures at this time rather than later, at much greater cost.

The main conclusion from the traffic speed surveys would probably be that the greatest risk may not be on residential streets but at crossings on the main roads, due to the combination of high speeds, high vehicle and pedestrian volumes - this is the apparent consensus within the local community, as voiced at public meetings. The local community has called for improved crossings at risk sites on Beverley Terrace, Marden Avenue and the seafront. There needs to be proper consultation about this.

Any decision should be postponed to allow time to explore the range of alternative measures that would potentially be eligible for DfT funding.

Yours faithfully,  
Mr A

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From: P Fleming

Mr A

Apologies for the delay in responding.

Previously when objections had been received and not withdrawn, the decision on whether to proceed with the Order as advertised or amend it in some way was taken by Planning Committee. This process has changed recently in that the decision now rests with the Council's Cabinet. The process of coming to a decision is unchanged. Therefore a report, including your objections, will be submitted to a meeting of Cabinet for a decision. Cabinet is a public meeting so you would be able to attend the meeting, however Cabinet, like Planning Committee, does not have a speaking rights scheme for Traffic Regulation Orders so you would not be permitted to address the meeting.

As stated in my previous response all 20mph speed limits are introduced in residential areas where the speeds are already low and classed as self enforcing, as the research on the effect of 20mph speed limits is ongoing, results will fluctuate over time and prove successful in some areas and not in others. As explained the type and nature of the street has a major factor in the final result of any analysis and overtime we expect driving habits to change to reflect the lower speed limits in residential areas.

As all local authorities have road safety targets to lower the number of slight, serious and fatal accidents on their roads – the government encourages local authorities to implement schemes that have a positive impact on reducing the numbers of accidents and devise ways of keeping the numbers low. The Road Safety Strategy and Council policies are created to provide guidance on how this is to be achieved.

The Road Safety Strategy is a public document and is open to consultation prior to be created – this document shows North Tyneside's way forward for Road Safety in the borough. 20mph speed limits are clearly stated in this document and seen as a way of keeping accident numbers low. A major factor in the severity of an accident is the speed of the vehicles involved.

The cost of the scheme you are referring to can be broken down as follows:

- Traffic Surveys ; 4 No = £400
- Proposed purchase and installation of signs and posts ; Total cost = £3000
- Legal Notice; Advert in the press £ 300  
Posting notices / checking notices on site = £100  
Estimated at 3 hours at
- Officer time in preparing work approx £ 40 / hour = £120
- Senior officers time in dealing with objections/writing reports – (unknown), this is unknown at this time because the process is ongoing - dealing with objections involves senior officer time/Heads of service approval / Legal officers input and the time of Councillors attending the Cabinet meeting.

As explained in my previous email the full detailed design has not be undertaken until we are in a position to proceed with the scheme, above is our estimation of the costs – when the detailed

design is undertaken we will look to use existing street furniture and remove unnecessary signs and poles – this could reduce the cost of the scheme or slightly increase the cost depending on what is found.

Your request for full consultation on all traffic management proposals and the production of reports is a sensible idea but not practical as large consultation exercises result in varying opinions with mixed results. Our experiences have shown that the more options that are drawn up the more confusion this creates, the accident data and speed data would dictate the extent of the problem and then officers would use the tried and tested road safety methods at hand to offer the best and most cost effective solution to the problem. There are generally not that many methods available and therefore its quite restrictive. As the area has a good road safety record we would not recommend physical measures but signed only restrictions to help reinforce the road safety message and help lower the speeds over time. We would not expect an instant reaction but gradual, as the speeds are already low for the area we would expect these to lower further overtime.

I agree that serious road safety problems are on main roads and we will continually monitor accidents and speeds on these roads to determine if there is a need to resolve a road safety problem or assist with pedestrians crossing. The 20mph programme is a proactive approach which is relatively simple to implement, compared to the installation of other traffic management measures that are not necessarily needed and could be deemed unpopular. We are building upon the good work we have already achieved over the last 10 years and are **not** waiting for the accident to happen which is often the criticism. Residents across the borough want lower speed limits on residential roads and request lower speed limits in their neighbourhood to make them feel safer, we know this because we have received very few objections to the proposals and at regular area forums the request is for lower speed limits and road safety measures.

As you have stated you do not wish to withdraw your objection then your objection will be taken to Cabinet in February following the new process.

Regards

Paul Fleming

Team Leader, Traffic and Road Safety

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