

18 October 2016

**Petition: Height of speed cushions along Goscote Lane/ Ross Road /
Coalpool Lane**

Ward Blakenhall & Bloxwich East

Portfolios: Councillor Lee Jeavons, Portfolio Holder Economy, Infrastructure and
Development

Executive Summary:

A petition containing in excess of 1000 signatures was submitted by Oliver Jones on 5 September 2016. The petition requesting alterations to the traffic calming on Goscote Lane was worded as follows:

“Many people feel the recently installed traffic calming speed humps on goscote lane have been installed too tall and are damaging people's vehicles when attempting to drive over them. I for one have had my car damaged by them. This petition will be submitted to Walsall council for appropriate action to be taken.”

This report details the response of the Executive Director for Economy & Environment to this petition.

Reason for scrutiny:

The Council's petitions scheme requires that where a petition containing at least 500 but less than 1500 signatures is received by the Council, the relevant senior officer will give evidence at a public meeting of one of the Council's scrutiny and performance panels. The authority has determined that the response to such petitions must be given by either, the Chief Executive, Executive Directors, Assistant Directors or Heads of Service.

Recommendations:

That the Committee hear the petition and the response to it and consider whether to make any recommendations.

Resource and legal considerations:

The implementation of traffic calming features on the public highway is governed by The Highways (Traffic Calming) regulations 1999, as amended Highways (Traffic Calming) (Amendment) Regulations 2000, The Highways (Road Humps) Regulations 1999 and Local Transport Note 1/07 March 2007: Traffic Calming. These documents stipulate the dimensions, types and specific uses of all traffic calming features installed on the highway.

Citizen impact:

It is acknowledged that the introduction of speed cushions can have an adverse impact on some road users; however, the introduction of speed cushions is in strict accordance with the associated legislation and guidance to ensure that any impact is minimised. They are only introduced where there is a proven road safety concern and following a public consultation exercise. It should be noted that speed cushions are considered as one of the most effective forms of traffic calming available.

Environmental impact:

The introduction of traffic calming measures could lead to slight variations in local air quality although any such changes are considered negligible. Furthermore, some noise and vibration caused by vehicles travelling over the speed cushions could be expected, however the spacing and proximity to existing buildings again means that this would be minimal.

Performance management:

The assessment of road traffic collisions and introduction of traffic calming measures as appropriate is fundamental to the effective management and safe operation of the highway network.

Equality Implications:


The management of the public highway is undertaken for the benefit of all sections of the community ensuring the safe and efficient movement of people and goods necessary to support the needs of the local economy.

Consultation:

Consultation with the Council's Traffic Safety & Operation team has been undertaken in the preparation of this report.

Contact Officer:

John Charles – Team Leader

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Report

1. In its capacity as the local highway authority, the Council has a statutory duty under the Road Traffic Act 1988 to undertake studies into accidents arising out of the use of vehicles and in light of those studies, implement measures to prevent such accidents.
2. Goscote Lane is a local distributor that travels through Blakenhall / Goscote and is a well known rat run for traffic travelling from the north of Walsall.
3. As part of Walsall Council's Local Safety Scheme programme for 2015/16 this route was identified as benefitting from the introduction of traffic calming. The Local Safety Scheme programme is based on the personal injury collision history of the roads within the borough's network and is designed to reduce the number of casualties resulting from collisions on the highway.
4. A report was taken to Cabinet on 18 March 2015 outlining the Local Transport Plan capital programme 2015/16, Agenda item 21. Appendix C of the report detailed the proposed Local Safety Scheme programme. The table detailed that in a three year period during October 2011 to October 2014, there had been 19 road traffic collisions along this road. This resulted in being the second highest priority location in the borough requiring traffic calming measures.
5. Following approval of the scheme, proposals were drawn up to address the road safety concerns. The scheme consisted of a range of measures including a roundabout, improved road markings, road signs, builds-outs and speed cushions, and was consistent with the treatment implemented along Harden Road in the previous year.
6. Consultation on the proposals commenced on 19 October 2015, concluding on 9 November 2015. During this period, Ward Councillors, key stakeholders and all directly affected frontages received letters requesting local views on the proposals.
7. The results of the consultation showed that from the 15% response rate, 5% were against the proposals and 10% were in favour; this combined with the 85% of no responses, has resulted in an overall figure of 95% in favour and 5% against the proposals.
8. In accordance with the Highways Act 1980, before speed cushions can be introduced on the highway the authority must advertise a hump notice detailing the size and location of speed cushions. Arrangements were made for the notice to appear in the Walsall Advertiser on 17 December 2015 and to be advertised on street for a period of three weeks.

9. Following the successful conclusion of the consultation process and subsequent approval to proceed, arrangements were made with our highways contractor Tarmac to implement the scheme.
10. The implementation of traffic calming features on the public highway is governed by The Highways (Traffic Calming) regulations 1999, as amended Highways (Traffic Calming) (Amendment) Regulations 2000, The Highways (Road Humps) Regulations 1999 and Local Transport Note 1/07 March 2007: Traffic Calming. These documents stipulate the dimensions, types and specific uses of all traffic calming features installed on the highway.
11. In this instance, I can confirm that all speed cushions have been installed to and conform with this legislation and guidance. The speed cushions supplied are specified at 75mm high, which allowing for manufacturing and construction tolerances of +/- 10%, is still significantly lower than the maximum 100mm height allowable.
12. In respect of the damage caused to vehicles the following is an extract from LTN 1/07 "Vehicles travelling over road humps at appropriate speeds should not suffer damage, provided the humps conform to the Highways (Road Hump) Regulations. However, concerns about accelerated wear to vehicles have been raised by some groups, especially where they are required to traverse road humps repeatedly. The study mentioned above also investigated the effect of repeatedly traversing road humps on vehicles (Kennedy *et al.*, 2004e). No damage to any of the vehicles was seen, despite repeated passes at speeds up to 40 mph. However, suspension geometry checks revealed some minor changes in the suspension systems of the taxi, minibus and ambulance tested. Further testing showed there was no continuing trend for the suspension to move further out of specification; instead, it drifted in and out of the manufacturer's tolerance. This indicates a looseness in the suspension system rather than an indication of accelerated wear. It was seen that the forces generated when traversing road humps were comparable to those likely to be sometimes experienced during normal driving activities, such as driving over a very irregular surface or pothole, or mounting a kerb."
13. Based on these national trials it is clear that traffic travelling over the cushions along Goscote Lane should not experience any damage. Clearly where a vehicle has been modified then there is legislation governing safety standards that should be adhered to. It is possible that modifications that fall outside these standards could experience difficulty.
14. In summary, Walsall Council has ensured with all reasonable care that the traffic calming features installed along Goscote Lane are in accordance with all current legislation and design guidance. As such the size and height of the speed cushions are correct, therefore, there is no requirement for them to be altered in any way.
15. As with all schemes, the authority will continue to assess the effectiveness of the scheme in terms of traffic speed and road traffic collisions.