

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE APPEALS PANEL HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1,
CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND ON FRIDAY, 3 MAY 2013 AT 10.00AM

Present:-

Councillor C Westwood – Vice – Chairperson (in the Chair)

Councillors

C A Green
D B F White

Officers:

T Godsall - Traffic and Transportation Manager
K Power - Traffic Management Officer
T Taylor - Traffic Management and Road Safety Officer
J Dessent - Assistant Solicitor (Commercial)
M A Galvin - Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees

58 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

59 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

60 OBJECTION TO PROPOSED INTRODUCTION OF TRAFFIC CALMING SCHEME
ASSOCIATED WITH THE NEW COLEG CYMONEDOL Y DDERWEN SCHEME,
HEOL YR YSGOL, YNYSAWDRE, TONDU

The Interim Corporate Director – Communities submitted a report that informed the panel of the current situation in respect of the proposals at Heol Yr Ysgol, Tondu for a traffic calming scheme associated with the new Coleg Cymunedol y Dderwen, and to seek a resolution in respect of an objection that has been received in respect of these proposals.

The Traffic and Transportation Manager advised of the background to the report, which was that public notice, in respect of the closure of Ynysawdre and Ogmore Comprehensive Schools and the establishment of a new school to serve their traditional catchment areas, was published in the Western Mail on 13th May 2009. The notice was displayed on BCBC's website, at the schools affected by the proposal, and at feeder schools and buildings frequented by the community throughout the Ogmore and Garw Valleys and the Valleys Gateway area. This distribution was in line with BCBC's usual handling of public notices and follows the Welsh Government's guidance in dealing with the statutory process.

The Traffic and Transportation Manager confirmed, that as part of the proposals to site the new Coleg Cymunedol y Dderwen at Heol Yr Ysgol, Tondu, planning consent was granted in 2011 which was subject to a number of planning conditions.

He then referred to paragraph 3.5 of the report and Planning Condition 12 of the planning consent notice in respect of the Scheme, which related to the objection that had been made.

The Traffic and Transportation Manager stated that the reason for this condition was to protect the interests of children travelling to school both by bus and car, and especially as pedestrians, as they are considered to be a vulnerable group. Every effort therefore he added, to ensure the safety of children travelling to and from the school so as to protect them from potential harm.

The Traffic and Transportation Manager then elaborated on the current situation and of the options that the Highway Authority considered to comply with the above Planning Condition, ie namely that consent be given to a comprehensive scheme being submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority for traffic calming that restricted the traffic speeds to 20mph on Heol Yr Ysgol, between its junction with Bryn Road to the north, and its junction with Heol Y Fferm to the south, with a number of different options being put forward as illustrated in the report.

In terms of consultation and invitation to object to the above proposals, the Traffic and Transportation Manager advised as follows.

The relevant legislation in respect of the proposed traffic scheme is the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure)(England and Wales) Regulations 1996, the Highways Act 1980 and the Highways (Road Humps) Regulations 1999. In accordance with the requirements of the relevant legislation letters and a plan showing the proposals at Appendix A to the report, were sent to the statutory consultees in July 2012. At the same time, letters and plans were sent to a wide range of additional persons/organisations, including all properties onto Heol Yr Ysgol, and affected properties in side streets within the extent of the proposed traffic scheme. (Appendix B to the report)

The Traffic and Transportation Manager then added, that during the consultation period only two written responses were received. These were from the South Wales Police expressing their support to the proposals (Appendix C to the report) and from Sustrans (Appendix D to the report) who wanted the 20 MPH zone extended further along Heol Yr Ysgol to the river bridge. Sustrans were advised that unfortunately the extension requested was outside the remit of the current scheme.

As a consequence, Delegated Powers to proceed to public notice were obtained on the 20th August 2012 in accordance with the various legislative requirements. Public notice of the proposals was subsequently published in the local press and Notices were erected on site on numerous street lighting columns within the extents of the proposals on 5th December 2012 inviting objections in writing to the proposals by the 30th December 2012. By way of clarification 3 notices were advertised in respect of the scheme, the first in respect of the proposed 20mph speed limit, a second in respect of the introduction of speed cushions, a road hump plateau, a toucan pedestrian crossing and a pelican pedestrian crossing and the third in respect of the proposal to introduce measures to prohibit the waiting loading and unloading of vehicles.

The Traffic and Transportation Manager informed the Panel that within the prescribed time period for objections to the above, an objection was made in writing, and a copy of this was included at Appendix E to the report.

In view of certain information relating to distances stated in the public notices so served being incorrect, the objector was subsequently visited by Officers of the Highways Department to advise the objector that that the process would be revisited, and explain the rationale behind the scheme to the objector.

One suggestion made by the objector during the visit, was for a box junction at the junction of Heol Yr Ysgol and Bryn Road, and this had subsequently been included in the scheme. Unfortunately, the objector indicated that he would be likely to still object to the Scheme due to a dislike of speed cushions. The Traffic and Transportation Manager then confirmed that an amended Public notice was re-issued on the 24th January 2013 inviting objections by the 20th February 2013 (Appendix F of the report referred) and the original objector once more objected to the Scheme. This objection was not as extensive as the original objection, and only related to the traffic calming cushions. A full copy of the second letter of objection by the same objector was attached at Appendix G to the report.

The Traffic and Transportation Manager stated that the points made by the objector he considered, were his own personal views regarding the effect of certain traffic calming measures and given the lack of other objections being received, for example from emergency services, bus companies, disabled groups or others, it would appear that these views are not widely supported in respect of an important location such as this outside a school.

The Traffic and Transportation Manager advised that though the points made by the objector in his correspondence had been fully considered, Officers were satisfied that the Scheme of raised traffic calming, including cushions, on Heol Yr Ysgol to meet the planning condition requirements that 85% of traffic should travel at 20mph immediately outside the school, was an appropriate scheme to deal with future anticipated traffic flow in this area.

In relation to the comments made in the objector's letter that despite the proposed measures, vehicles can still exceed the 20 mph limit because of the distance between measures, his alternative suggestion to replace the cushions with road markings and signs are not considered a feasible replacement at this location due to the likely increase in traffic speeds.

With regard to the objector's comments in relation to the visibility at the school access road, the Traffic and Transportation Manager confirmed that swept path analysis of movements in and out of the junction, indicated it was fit for purpose and satisfies Planning Condition 13 of the planning consent. As is the case at any junction, the visibility will be affected by any persons using an adjacent footway.

The Panel was also asked to take into consideration when reaching its conclusion, the fact that the police supported the scheme and that no objections had been received from any other person residing in the vicinity, particularly from other emergency services or the bus companies.

To conclude therefore, the Traffic and Transportation Manager reiterated that Officers were satisfied that the raised traffic calming scheme originally proposed (i.e. Appendix A to the report) was the only practical scheme within budget that would achieve the planning condition imperative of "restricting 85% tile traffic speeds to 20 mph on Heol Yr Ysgol '.

A Panel Member made the point that Traffic Calming humps/cushions have been known to cause damage to vehicles, and to passengers with lumbar problems, due to the impact of these on the vehicle when they are travelled over and that they could also be a trip hazard for pedestrians. The Traffic Management and Road Safety Officer advised that cushions and not humps were going to be used at this location, and these were of a standard type and vehicle friendly for both cars and larger vehicles such as school transport vehicles and that very few complaints were received in relation to the provision of these features.

The Traffic Management and road Safety Officer stated that in terms of road humps, such as the ones serving many industrial estates, including the humps that are situated on the private access road serving the B & Q store situated on Bridgend Industrial Estate, these resulted in a more severe impact upon vehicles which could, if drivers did not reduce their speed when approaching these, be far more likely to cause vehicle damage and have an effect on passengers with back or spine problems. He added that the cushions subject of the Scheme, were of a design considered bus friendly and which were acceptable to bus companies, hence no objections were received from these service providers.

In relation to the point the Member made with regard to the cushions being a trip hazard, the Traffic and Transportation Manager stated that there would be no humps positioned on the road where there were pedestrian crossing points.

The Traffic Management and Road Safety Officer advised that the humps would be placed at a variety of intervals that would encourage drivers of vehicles to reduce their speed to the 20mph limit. He conceded that the humps could be straddled by larger vehicles, but that they would be suitable and serve their purpose for school buses.

In respect of point 3 B. of the objectors letter dated 8 February 2013, (Appendix G), a Member asked if this alternative had been considered as an alternative method of enforcing the speed limit, i.e. by installing flashing amber warning lights and a school warning sign. The Traffic Management and Road Safety Officer advised that these were successfully used in some locations. However, as soon as drivers of vehicles became aware that these were just signs with nothing more added to back these up, they started increasing their speed again. Due to the number of children that would be regularly using this stretch of road, Officers are of the opinion that the installation of physical features such as speed cushions would be more effective in ensuring that the 20mph restriction for vehicles is adhered to.

A Member enquired if the humps would be as effective slowing down larger vehicles as they were with smaller vehicles. The Traffic Management and Road Safety Officer explained that they were, and also larger vehicles would take longer to re-accelerate between humps meaning that they would be travelling at a slower speed.

The Chairperson asked if drivers of vehicles who were caught exceeding the 20mph speed limit on at this location could be successfully prosecuted. The Traffic Management and Road Safety Officer advised that he had never heard of anyone being prosecuted for exceeding this particular speed limit and added that there was an existing road traffic calming scheme at Broadlands restricting vehicular speed between 20 – 25mph and that this was an effective scheme. Additionally, schemes such as this are considered by the police as being self-enforcing in nature.

In terms of the potential for the Scheme before the Panel being successful, a Member felt that this would be assisted by there being other roads situated within the vicinity of the school that by-pass the road subject to the proposed speed restriction, and that drivers of vehicles could use as suitable alternatives to reach their destination. The Traffic Management and Road Safety Officer concurred with this statement, adding that cushions such as these were not placed on 'A' designated roads. He added that alternative routes were available for motorists who did not wish to travel along Heol Yr Ysgol.

The Traffic and Transportation Manager advised that the objector had pointed out that one of the road cushions was to be placed too near to the exit to the school, therefore engineers had subsequently undertaken an analysis of this and confirmed that buses would be able to turn the corner at this point and straddle the humps. Additionally, he added that the point the objector had made regarding the placing of a box junction had since been accommodated as part of the Scheme. The Chair stated that the objector should be thanked for his assistance in respect of this point.

RESOLVED: Members of the Panel having considered the report, and the debate that ensued at the meeting, unanimously agreed to reject the objection received to the proposed raised traffic calming scheme on Heol Yr Ysgol and authorised the implementation of the calming scheme detailed in Appendix A to the report, as advertised in the Western Mail on the 24th January 2013.

The meeting closed at 10.45am.