



West Lothian Council

COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

OBJECTION TO TRAFFIC CALMING SCHEME – PROPOSED ROAD HUMPS, B7015 SHEEPHOUSEHILL, FAULDHOUSE

REPORT BY TRANSPORTATION MANAGER

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to advise the council executive of two objections received to the statutory advertisement procedures for the traffic calming measures proposed on B7015 Sheepphousehill, Fauldhouse and to recommend a council response.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council Executive dismisses the outstanding objections and gives approval to proceed with the construction of the traffic calming scheme proposed in Fauldhouse.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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| I Council Values | Focusing on our customers' needs and working in partnership. |
| II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment) | Policy: Promotion of road safety in line with the council's Road Safety Plan 2006-2010, the community safety strategy and the Single Outcome Agreement. |
| III Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property) | Financial: The estimated cost to construct the scheme is £60,000. This will be met through the 2009/10 General Services Capital Budget. Costs relating to maintenance of the measures will require to be accommodated in future revenue budgets.

Staffing: None.

Property: None. |

IV Consultation

An on street face to face survey was carried out in Main Street Fauldhouse, on 29 April and 2 May 2009, to assess public perception of the issues on Sheephousehill.

Consultation letters were sent out to residents, other parties who were consulted on the original traffic calming proposal, Disability West Lothian, the emergency services and statutory bodies. The details of this consultation were provided to the ward members.

A "drop-in" evening took place on 13 October 2009 at the local library for members of the community to discuss the proposals.

The local area committee considered a report on the consultation process at its recent meeting on 10 November and noted the generally positive outcome.

Statutory procedures for the introduction of road humps on Sheephousehill commenced on 5 November 2009.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

Background

On 20 May 2008, the Council Executive considered an objection to the original traffic calming measures proposed for Sheephousehill, Lanrigg Road and Eastfield Road, Fauldhouse. The executive recommended that the report be continued to a future meeting to allow further consideration of the scheme by the Local Area Committee, Environment PDSP and consultation with disabled and access groups.

After due consideration by the Local Areas Committee, Environment PDSP and consultation with disabled and access groups a further report was presented to the Council Executive on 11 November 2008. At this time, the executive approved the recommendation to progress an option to introduce speed tables at recommended spacing on Sheephousehill only and initiate statutory procedures for this option.

Proposed Measures

Eleven speed tables have been proposed to provide the most effective scheme to reduce vehicle speeds and therefore reduce accidents and provide a safer environment on Sheephousehill. The speed tables are spaced at the maximum distance recommended to achieve both a reduction in vehicle speed but also allow a constant vehicle speed along Sheephousehill.

Local Community Perception

To engage with the community of Fauldhouse and assess public perception of the issues on Sheephousehill an on street face to face survey was undertaken. This survey was carried out in Main Street outside the co-operative store. An example of the survey form used is shown in Appendix 1.

The survey took account of the demographics of the people surveyed to ensure they were representative of the town. The survey was initially carried out during the week, however, it was identified that there was an insufficient sample size for people within the 16-25 and 26-59 age groups. A further survey was then carried out at the weekend to address this.

The survey indicated that people do have concerns regarding Sheephousehill with the main issue being the speed of traffic, 68% of people raised this as their main issue. The next highest concern was about parking with 18% of people identifying this as their main concern.

It should also be noted that the preferred type of traffic calming feature was speed cushions, however, speed tables are proposed as they are preferred by Disability West Lothian. As speed tables are an effective alternative it is appropriate that they are being considered.

Further Community Consultation

As a result of the changes to the original proposals, letters were sent out to residents and other parties who were consulted on the previous proposal. This included residents in Sheephousehill, Lanrigg Road, Eastfield Road and the housing area enclosed by these streets, Disability West Lothian, the emergency services and statutory bodies, among others. An information leaflet and questionnaire were also sent out along with the consultation letters. Examples of these are attached to the report.

Notices were placed in the street, library and CIS office inviting members of the community to a “drop-in” evening on 13 October at the local library. This evening allowed members of the community to discuss, raise concerns and/or give their views on the proposals. The information leaflets and questionnaires were also handed out on this evening.

Detailed plans were exhibited at the “drop-in” evening for members of the community to see the proposals in greater detail. Drawings number HP/B295/CON2 and /CON3 appended show the detail of information provided. Information was also made available on the council’s website.

A total of 84 responses were received from 397 questionnaires distributed (a 21% return). This is a reasonable return for this type of survey. From these responses 84% supported the introduction of traffic calming measures on Sheephousehill (refer to Q1 on the community consultation questionnaire) and 76% agreed with the type of traffic calming feature being proposed (speed tables) (refer to Q2 on the community consultation questionnaire).

Statutory Procedures

The statutory advertisement for the introduction of road humps on Sheephousehill commenced on 5 November. Members of the public had 28 days from this date to submit an objection to the proposals.

Two objections have been received from residents within Fauldhouse. Copies of their letters are attached to the report.

Objector 1, Park View, Fauldhouse has been advised of the objectives of the scheme and the support of the community, however he is not prepared to withdraw his objection.

The main issues raised by Objector 1 are summarised below with an officer comment in each case

1. I think this money should be used to upgrade the roads in Fauldhouse.

The budget for this scheme has been allocated as part of the provision of safer streets through the council's capital budget. There is a separate budget for funding road maintenance work and this allows the council to have some of the best kept roads in the country.

2. If the Police do their job right, the council would not be proposing to construct speed humps.

As the Police do not have sufficient resources to provide a 24-hour presence, speed tables are considered the most effective solution for reducing the speed of all vehicles.

3. Speed humps can damage cars and small van's; who would pay for the damage caused by the speed humps?

The Transport Research Laboratory has carried out extensive testing regarding possible damage to vehicles repeatedly traversing road humps. Their investigation found that vehicles travelling over road humps at appropriate speeds should not suffer damage. The council's proposal for Sheephousehill utilises speed tables, which span the full width of the road. These minimise discomfort to drivers and passengers as well as making driving over the humps smoother.

4. If the council lowered the speed to 20mph and the Police do the job they are paid to do, speed humps would not need to be installed.

The introduction of a permanent 20mph speed limit on Sheephousehill would have to be self enforcing at the request of the Police. The introduction of speed tables at the intervals specified on the plan would be the most effective method to ensure the speed limit is adhered to and is self enforcing. A 20mph speed limit would not be supported by the Police nor be legal without the installation of traffic calming features.

5. What happens in the winter? Will the road be untreated as snow will not be cleared from the road because of speed humps being damaged?

The traffic calming proposals are passed to our maintenance section for their comments. No adverse comments have been raised regarding damage to traffic calming features from council vehicles. Sheephousehill will still be gritted and cleared of snow during the winter.

6. Would rumble lines not be a better idea than speed humps as they do not cost as much and you have not got roadworks on the only safe road in and out of Fauldhouse

Rumble strips have been used previously as a traffic calming feature but these have not been effective in reducing vehicle speeds. High maintenance costs and complaints from some the communities regarding noise have resulted in rumble strips not being considered for new traffic calming schemes.

A speed survey was carried out that showed vehicles are being driven at speeds in excess of the 30mph speed limit. The mean speed recorded over a seven day period was 33.5mph. Investigations into accidents on the length of road shows that the accident rate is 35% higher than that anticipated on a road of this class.

Objector 2, Main Street, Fauldhouse has also been advised of the objectives of the scheme and the support of the community, however he is not prepared to withdraw his objection.

The main issues raised by Objector 2 are summarised below with an officer comment in each case.

1. I do not think a mean speed of 33.5mph justifies this level of expense.

The results from the speed survey carried out between 19 and 25 September 2008 shows that 70.4% of vehicles were being driven in excess of the speed limit. As previously highlighted to you, the accident rate on Sheephousehill was found to be 35% higher than that anticipated on this class of road. Taking into account both these issues, it was concluded that traffic calming measures were justified/

2. The money would be better utilised on signs that flash up your speed or slow down signs.

Flashing signs only target an isolated location and therefore would not be effective in treating the length of road concerned.

3. These bumps are not good for the environment as everyone has to change down gears 11 times.

The traffic calming has been designed at spacing's recommended by the Department for Transport. The features are spaced at around 100m apart which should allow drivers to negotiate all the features at a constant speed without the need for slowing down / speeding up.

4. People with medical conditions find these very uncomfortable and sore (back, neck conditions especially)

Disability West Lothian have been included in the consultation and their preference is for speed tables as they minimise discomfort to vehicle occupants. The speed tables proposed for Sheephousehill will be 70mm high which is lower than the maximum allowable height of 100mm. This should provide an effective speed reduction while minimising any discomfort vehicle occupants may experience.

5. Your survey questions were misleading. "Q1: Everyone should support traffic calming"

The survey questions were seeking the communities' views on the proposal to introduce traffic calming. Question 1 was set to gauge the level of support for the traffic calming. The yes / no choice ensured a definitive response could be presented on the level of support for traffic calming.

6. Out of 85%, how many disagreed with eleven speed bumps? As being part of 85% myself I disagreed with eleven speed bumps but agree from the 30 mile sign to Croftfoot Drive bumps.

The survey results indicated 2 additional people were supportive of the type of traffic calming but were concerned with the number of features proposed (3 out of the 72 people who were supportive of traffic calming measures). The aim of the scheme is to reduce vehicle speeds over the full length of Sheephousehill. If the traffic calming measures stopped at Croftfoot Drive, vehicle speeds would not be controlled over the remaining length of Sheephousehill.

E. CONCLUSION

The proposals have been developed through extensive consultation with the Fauldhouse community. The public survey undertaken indicated strong support for the introduction of traffic calming features on Sheephousehill and, in particular, support for the use of speed tables.

The introduction of these measures will create a safer environment for all road users and it is recommended that the objections should be dismissed and the proposals introduced as designed.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None

Appendices: Seven

- On Street Questionnaire Form
- Information Leaflet
- Community Consultation Questionnaire
- Drawing No. HP/B356/CON2
- Drawing No. HP/B356/CON3
- Letter from Objector 1

- Letter from Objector 2

Contact Person: Ronald Fisher, Projects Manager, Transportation, 01506 775304, e-mail: ronnie.fisher@westlothian.gov.uk

Graeme Malcolm, Transportation Manager, County Buildings, Linlithgow, West Lothian, EH49 7EZ.
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