



North

Yorkshire County Council

Business and Environmental Services



Your ref:

Our ref: M51JC008.PR.DB

David Bowe
Corporate Director
County Hall, Northallerton
North Yorkshire DL7 8AH
Tel: 01609 532556
Fax: 01609 760794
E-mail: david.bowe@northyorks.gov.uk
www.northyorks.gov.uk

22 December 2011

Dear Mr Atkinson

REQUEST FOR VEHICLE ACTIVATED SIGNS - MINSKIP ROAD, STAVELEY

Thank you for your letter dated 6 December 2011 in connection with the above and your previous correspondence with officers at the Area 6 highways office.

As you will be aware, the County Council implemented a 20mph speed limit along the western section of Minskip Road and an extended 30mph speed limit on the eastern section of the road in September 2009 as part of the Harrogate Rural Safety Scheme programme. This scheme was developed and introduced with the specific aim of reducing vehicle speeds entering the village and adjacent to the Primary School.

Firstly, I have taken this opportunity to assess accident statistics for Minskip Road, Staveley and am pleased to confirm that there have been no personal injury accidents along the length of road since the introduction of the reduced speed limits.

The last speed/ traffic survey undertaken on the road following the completion of the 20mph/ 30mph limits, in July 2010, indicated that:-

1. Mean vehicle speeds within the 20mph limit [outside Highthorn - east of the school grounds] were recorded at 24.4mph eastbound [692 vehicles per day] and 27.4mph westbound [627 vehicles per day];
2. Mean vehicle speeds within the 30mph limit [near Wayside Nurseries] were recorded at 35.7mph eastbound and 34mph westbound.

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Mr B Atkinson
Clerk to Staveley and Copgrove Parish Council
Danesmead
Main Street
Staveley
Knaresborough
HG5 9JY

Copy: Andrew Jones MP
Richard Flinton, Chief Executive



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Atkinson - M51JC007.PR.DB/1

Whilst there has been a reduction in vehicle speeds along the length of the 20mph limit [the previous survey in 2006 showed mean speeds of 30.2mph eastbound/ 28.4mph westbound], the 2010 results are a little disappointing in the levels of compliance with the posted limits. I note your concerns that the Police are not actively enforcing the 20mph limits, although I should stress that 20mph speed limits are generally designed to be self enforcing, requiring minimal or no enforcement by the Police.

The County Council and its 95 Active road safety partners is also currently finalising a Speed Management Protocol to deliver a consistent approach to concerns regarding traffic speed, across the County as a whole. This protocol will ensure that the appropriate 'measures' – regardless of whether these are awareness raising, education, enforcement or engineering, are deployed in the correct locations in a prioritised manner so that the locations with an actual and regular speeding problem are tackled appropriately. It is hoped that this new protocol will be put in place early in 2012. Further discussions will be taking place with the 95 Active Partners regarding what other action can be deployed in this area to tackle the inappropriate speed concerns.

I understand your concerns that regarding the likelihood of enforcement, however, the above protocol has been formulated to address speed related concerns across the County of North Yorkshire in a consistent manner, to enable the relevant authorities to target their resources to the areas where problems are being experienced.

I will however raise your concerns with the North Yorkshire Police Traffic Management Officer to assess whether any future enforcement activities can be targeted in the area.

As you are aware, funding for traffic calming and highway improvement schemes is extremely limited following the recent budget cut announcements and any scheme proposed would have to achieve a very high priority on the county-wide Integrated Transport (IT) budget to attract any funding. As the IT budget has been severely reduced across the board, it is likely that the only schemes being funded for the foreseeable future are those that are likely to achieve significant casualty-reduction results.

Any scheme proposal [which would include traffic calming measures as you request in your email] would have to be assessed using the formula which calculates its cost/benefit 'score' which then allows comparison with other similar schemes across the whole of North Yorkshire. The prioritised list that is then established as a result of this process ensures that the limited funding available can be allocated to the schemes that will deliver the most benefits. I do not therefore believe that the application of the assessment formula to any scheme would result in a score which warranted the provision of funding on Minskip Road, Staveley given the absence of an established accident record in the area.

In summary, therefore, the absence of any historical personal injury accident data means that this location is not considered a priority for the limited funds available - the worst situations must be dealt with first.

I note that the Parish Council has offered to contribute towards the cost of installing a Vehicle Activated Sign [VAS] on Minskip Road, however, I regret to inform you that the site does not merit the installation of a VAS under the current protocol. The current North Yorkshire County Council protocol advises that VAS should only be considered where there is an injury accident problem associated with inappropriate or excessive speed that cannot reasonably be or has not been satisfactorily resolved through the introduction of conventional accident remedial or traffic calming measures.

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Even with the offer of external funding, North Yorkshire County Council must ensure that the approach to the use of VAS as a road safety measure is consistently applied across the County and in accordance with our protocol and therefore cannot authorise the installation of a VAS at this site.

The protocol is however presently under review, with consideration being given to the use of VAS for limited periods of time through self funded schemes including groups of Parish Councils. When the new protocol is established early next year we will be circulating it to all Parish Councils.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'David Bowe', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Bowe
Corporate Director
