

Recommendation from Regulatory Committee on 4 January 2018

Proposed Introduction of a 20mph Zone in Iwerne Minster

6 The Committee was being asked to decide whether to recommend to Cabinet that they agree to the introduction of a 20 mph zone in Iwerne Minster. Concern had been raised by the local community that the speed of traffic throughout the village was a risk to road safety and, given the characteristics of the village, speeds should be kept below 20 mph to minimise that risk. A petition submitted by Iwerne Minster Parish Council asking for a reduction in the speed limit to 20mph in the village had been discussed by Committee on 12 March 2015 with agreement reached that further investigation should be undertaken between officers and the Parish Council on what progress might be able to be made.

Those investigations - including site visits, traffic flow and speed surveys - showed that the basic criteria for a 20mph zone were met, save for a section of Tower Hill, but that County Council funding of such a scheme would not be justifiable against other priority schemes. Given this, the Parish Council agreed to raise funds to cover the cost of enabling a 20mph zone to be introduced and it was agreed to proceed with the proposal on that basis. The necessary consultation on the proposed Traffic Regulation Order raised no objections at the primary consultation stage, with the local County Council member, North Dorset District Council, Dorset Police and the Parish Council all supporting what the zone was designed to achieve. However, given that four objections had been received when the proposal was formally advertised, there was now an obligation for the Committee to decide whether the proposals should be recommended to be progressed, as advertised.

With the aid of a visual presentation, officers explained what the zone was designed to do - in regulating or reducing the speed of vehicles to a level at which drivers could readily meet the general hazards which might be expected on the village's roads. Plans and photographs were shown to the Committee which provided an understanding of the characteristics of the roads throughout the village and their setting and relationship with development and facilities in the village, including where the Clayesmore School art block was situated. More the case, the village lacked any significant footways, with properties fronting the road directly. In being a zone, there would only be a need to sign the three entry points and the zone would not impact on traffic using the main A350 north/south route.

Officers explained that the 20 mph Speed Limit Policy allowed parishes to fund such limits, subject to meeting the criteria laid out in the Policy. Officers confirmed that this had been the case in this instance and should proceed as a community funded scheme. The local speed watch team had contributed significantly to gathering the necessary evidence used by officers in their assessment of the scheme.

Whilst there had been no personal accident statistics recorded on roads in the village over the latest available 5 year period, given the number of accesses directly onto the road, the narrowness and configuration of the roads, the absence of footways and the location of school sites, it was reasonable to believe that there was enough evidence to indicate that if a 20mph zone was introduced, it would be of considerable benefit to the village on road safety grounds by reducing risk.

Councillor Peter Finney - who had an ongoing interest in this project since his time as County Council elected member and Deputy Leader - encouraged the Committee to support a scheme instigated by a community doing what it thought was in the best interests of its residents. Its commitment to this was borne out

by it being willing to fund the scheme. He considered this to be a prime example of what local communities could achieve for their own benefit and at their own expense.

John Hooper, Chairman of the Parish Council, confirmed that the scheme was for the benefit of the whole community and that this was demonstrated by the overwhelming support it had from the residents of the village. He pointed to the number of elderly people in the village as well as approximately 400 pupils of the school. Given that the proposals met all the necessary criteria and was to be wholly funded by the Parish Council, he considered that given the marked increase in speed and volume of traffic through the village, a zone was the only viable option for dealing with this and was justified on that basis.

Cllr Deborah Croney confirmed, as the local member, that she was wholly supportive of this proposed zone and what it was trying to achieve. She had been campaigning for a speed reduction since before she became a County councillor. The lower the speed limit, the reduction in risk was her thinking especially given the number of pupils at the school. She also pointed to the support for the scheme from the Parish Council, the petition and the Police and Crime Commissioner. She commended all those involved in the success of the campaign and asked the Committee to accept this. She considered this showed what could be achieved when a community worked together for a positive outcome and hoped that the Committee would agree that this should be implemented as soon as practicable.

The Committee considered that the principles of the campaign and what it was designed to achieved to be of considerable merit and should be supported. They considered this to be a prime demonstration of how a local issue could be progressed with the will and cooperation of the local community for their own benefit. It was a model that should be embraced by other communities as a means of achieving their own aims and outcomes. Members considered that if a 20mph zone was introduced it would be of considerable benefit to the village on road safety grounds and in how residents were able to go about their daily life. However, it was recognised that to ensure that it was successful, then it was necessary for it to be properly enforced, as far as practicable.

On being put to the vote, the Committee decided unanimously that the Cabinet be recommended to endorse the proposal for a 20 mph zone throughout the village.

Recommended

That having considered the objections received, Cabinet be recommended to approve the proposed community funded 20mph zone for Iwerne Minster.

Reason for Recommendation

The proposals will regulate or reduce the speed of vehicles to a level which drivers can readily meet the general hazards which maybe expected on these roads.

Also, to fulfil our obligation to review speed limits in light of changes in DFT (Department for Transport) guidance "Setting local speed limits". The Dorset 20mph Speed Limit Policy was approved by the Environment Overview Committee in January 2014. This allowed Parish Councils to fund 20mph speed limits and 20mph zones subject to meeting the criteria laid out in the County Council's speed limit policy.