

Petitions Panel

Dorset County Council



Date of Meeting	4 October 2018
Officer	Michael Potter – Collision Reduction Team Manager
Subject of Report	Procedure for Petitions – Petition entitled ‘Petition to reduce the speed limit of Stapehill Road to 30mph’
Executive Summary	<p>A petition has been received (in accordance with the County Council’s published petitions scheme) in relation to Stapehill Road, Ferndown. The petition states:</p> <p><i>We the undersigned request that Dorset County Council take immediate action to exercise a duty of care and safety for all users of Stapehill Road by reducing the current speed limit along its whole length for 40mph to 30mph or less and to provide the necessary means to enforce the new speed limit.</i></p>
<p>Impact Assessment:</p> <p><i>Please refer to the protocol for writing reports.</i></p>	<p>Equalities Impact Assessment:</p> <p>Not applicable.</p>
	<p>Use of Evidence:</p> <p>Stats 19 Road Traffic Collision Data Traffic survey data collected by Dorset County Council</p>
	<p>Budget:</p> <p>Not applicable?</p> <p>The cost of introducing a speed limit Traffic Regulation Order would likely to be between £7000 and £10,000 – costs are for context only and do not represent actual costs, they include officer time and costs of the signing and lining as well as costs associated with the legal process.</p>
	<p>Risk Assessment:</p> <p>Having considered the risks associated with this decision using the County Council’s approved risk management methodology, the level of risk has been identified as:</p>

Procedure for Petitions – Petition entitled ‘Petition to reduce the speed limit of Stapehill Road to 30mph

	<p>Current Risk: LOW Residual Risk LOW</p>
	<p>Other Implications:</p> <p>Not applicable</p>
Recommendation	The Panel is invited to note the receipt of this petition and decide how to respond to it.
Reason for Recommendation	In order to comply with the County Council’s published scheme for responding to petitions and so as to enable local people to connect with local elected decision makers.
Appendices	<p>Appendix A – Copy of Petition lead by Mr Frankl and Mr Baxter</p> <p>Appendix B – Plan of Stapehill Road – rights of way</p> <p>Appendix C – Plan of Stapehill Road – traffic management measures</p> <p>Appendix D – Speed limit policy document</p> <p>Appendix E – Overview of speed and traffic survey data</p> <p>Appendix F – Road Traffic Collision report</p> <p>Appendix G – Online collision/near miss reports</p>
Background Papers	Dorset County Council Petitions Scheme
Officer Contact	<p>Name: Michael Potter</p> <p>Tel: 01305 221767</p> <p>Email: m.potter@dorsetcc.gov.uk</p>

1. Background to the Petition Scheme

- 1.1 The County Council's Petitions Scheme was adopted on 29 April 2010 and came into effect on 15 June 2010. The Scheme was subsequently updated by the County Council on 21 July 2016 and 15 February 2018.
- 1.2 If a petition is supported by 50 or more signatories then it will be dealt with by a small customer focussed panel. If a petition is supported by 4,250 or more signatories it will be scheduled for a debate at the next meeting of the full County Council.

2. Petition – Petition to reduce the speed limit of Stapehill Road to 30mph

- 2.1 The County Council received a petition organised by Mr Frankl and Mr Baxter on 25 July 2018. The petition contained 976 signatures from Dorset residents; 155 collected were from non-Dorset residents but not included in the overall count as per policy. The petition reads as follows:

Stapehill Road is a narrow lane with no pavements. The lane is a major traffic route between Ham Lane and Wimborne Road West used by an average of 5799 vehicles a day and as a direct result, is dangerously unsafe for pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders, mobility scooters and residents and their visitors entering and leaving their drives.

We the undersigned request that Dorset County Council take immediate action to exercise a duty of care and safety for all users of Stapehill Road by reducing the current speed limit along its whole length from 40mph to 30mph or less and to provide the necessary means to enforce the new speed limit and to provide safe passage for pedestrians.

A copy of the full petition including more details of the reasoning behind the petition is available at Appendix A.

- 2.2 As this petition contains more than 50 signatures, the Panel are invited to note and discuss this.
- 2.3 Ferndown Town Council met on 17 September to discuss the petition and agreed to support the petition.
- 2.4 This discussion should conclude with a decision as to how to respond to the petition. This may include one or more of the following:
 - taking the action requested in the petition
 - considering the petition at a council meeting
 - holding an inquiry into the matter
 - undertaking research into the matter
 - holding a public meeting

- holding a consultation
- referring the petition for consideration by the council's audit and governance committee
- calling a referendum
- writing to the petition organiser setting out our views about the request in the petition.

2.5 Alternatively, the Panel may determine a combination of the options above, or decide on another course of action as appropriate.

3. Context

- 3.1 The D41350 Stapehill Road currently has a 40mph limit that was made effective on 28 May 2004, prior to this the national speed limit (60mph) applied.
- 3.2 Stapehill Road has had a 7.5t weight restriction (except for access) covering its full length, this was effective from February 1984.
- 3.3 There is a short section of footway at the northern end of Stapehill Road but otherwise there is no footway provision throughout its length.
- 3.4 There are several rights of way that cross Stapehill Road. A map showing the rights of way is at Appendix B
- 3.5 A map can be found at Appendix C showing the extent of Stapehill Road with existing speed/traffic management measures highlighted.
- 3.6 The County Council adopts DfT guidelines for setting speed limits as policy. There are various criteria that need to be satisfied in order for a speed limit to be reduced. In short, speed limits should be set at a level that is "self enforcing" and where there is evidenced need for reduced risk or if a discernible difference in driver behaviour could/would be achieved.
- 3.7 DfT guidance states:

It is important that traffic authorities and police forces work closely together in determining, or considering, any changes to speed limits.

The full range of speed management measures should always be considered before a new speed limit is introduced.

The underlying aim should be to achieve a 'safe' distribution of speeds. The key factors that should be taken into account in any decisions on local speed limits are:

- *History of collisions;*
- *Road geometry and engineering;*
- *Road function;*

- *Composition of road users (including existing and potential levels of vulnerable road users);*
- *Existing traffic speeds; and*
- *Road environment*

While these factors need to be considered for all road types, they may be weighted differently in urban or rural areas. The impact on community and environmental outcomes should also be considered.

- 3.8 Due to the vista of Stapehill Road being rural officer recommendation is that it is appropriate to consider DfT guidance for setting rural speed limits. Table 1 provides a brief overview of the general principles that guide rural speed limit management.

Table 1 – Speed limits for single carriageway roads with a predominant motor traffic flow function

Speed limit (mph)	Where speed limit should be considered:
60	Recommended for most high quality strategic A and B roads with few bends, junctions or accesses.
50	Should be considered for lower quality A and B roads that may have a relatively high number of bends, junctions or accesses. Can also be considered where mean speeds are below 50mph, so lower limit does not interfere with traffic flow.
40	Should be considered where there are bends, junctions or accesses, substantial development, a strong environmental or landscape reason, or where there are considerable numbers of vulnerable road users

- 3.9 Where appropriate 30mph is considered the norm in villages.
- 3.10 The information provided by Mr Frankl and Mr Baxter states that the number of properties on Stapehill Road meets the criteria for a village as prescribed in DfT guidance; 20 residencies within a 600m length of road. However, with the majority of properties being set back from the road and/or concealed by mature vegetation it does not give the impression of a village.
- 3.11 The speed of traffic is an important consideration when reviewing speed limits. Speeds should be close to the requested/proposed lower limit for it to be “self-enforcing”.
- 3.12 DfT guidance states that the mean average speeds should be used as the basis for determining local speed limits. However, the 85th percentile speed should also be taken into consideration if there is a

larger than normal difference between mean and 85th percentile speeds. The aim should be to match the speed limit to the conditions of the road and its environment.

- 3.13 A copy of the County Council’s speed limit policy document can be found at Appendix D for more information about the general principles surrounding speed limit management.
- 3.14 In August 2017 Michael Potter, Collision Reduction Team Manager met with Mr Baxter and Mr Frankl to discuss concerns similar to those highlighted in the petition received in July 2018. In response to this meeting lining work was carried out on Stapehill Road, new centre lines, widening existing centre lines and new SLOW road markings were installed. Signing work was also ordered for Ham Lane and Wimborne Road West to heighten awareness of the existing weight restriction. These works have all been completed.
- 3.15 Two surveys were carried out in September 2017 in response to the meeting between Mr Frankl and Mr Baxter on 4 August 2017 in order to get evidence of traffic speed and flow. Table 2 shows the speed survey figures obtained. Please note – survey site A only gathered data for three complete days (Friday 15 to Sunday 17 September) – complaints were received about the noise disturbance created by the survey equipment. A more detailed review of the speed survey data including a map showing the location of the survey sites can be found at Appendix E.

Table 2 – Speed survey results, Stapehill Road – September 2017

	Speed survey results - Stapehill Road Ferndown - September 2017					
	Northbound		Southbound		Combined	
	85th %ile	Mean avg.	85th %ile	Mean avg.	85th %ile	Mean avg.
Site A 15 to 17 September	43.6mph	37.4mph	41.2mph	35.5mph	42.4mph	36.3mph
Site B 15 to 24 September	42.9mph	35.1mph	39.8mph	33.5mph	41mph	34.2mph

- 3.16 Table 3 shows traffic flow information gathered during the two surveys. The surveys showed a marked difference between traffic flows on weekdays and weekend. Please note – survey site A only gathered data for three complete days (Friday 15 to Sunday 17 September) – complaints were received about the noise disturbance created by the survey equipment. A more detailed review of the speed survey data including a map showing the location of the survey sites can be found at Appendix E.

Table 3 – Traffic flow survey results, Stapehill Road – September 2017

	Traffic flow survey results - Stapehill Road, Ferndown - September 2017					
	Northbound		Southbound		Combined	
	Weekday*	Weekend	Weekday*	Weekend	Weekday*	Weekend
Site A 15 to 17 September	2363	875	3436	1143	5799	2018
Site B 15 to 24 September	2155	886	2953	1055	5108	1942

*Site A only had one weekday included within survey – Friday 15 September

- 3.17 The collision history is an important consideration when setting speed limits. Validated collision data is provided to the county council by Dorset Police. Data is currently available up to May 2018. At the time of writing details of the collision mentioned within the petition that occurred on 30th June are not available, a verbal update will be provided at the petition panel meeting if available.
- 3.18 It is standard practise to consider the latest available five years of collision data; at time of writing this is June 2013 to May 2018. Table 4 provides an overview of the collisions and their severity that have occurred on Stapehill Road that would be considered within a speed limit assessment. Please note, collisions occurring at the junctions at either end of Stapehill Road have not been included as per standard procedure. This is due to the speed limit on Stapehill Road not being a potential factor in these collisions. A report providing more detail of the circumstances and the location of collisions can be found at Appendix F.
- 3.19 The petition submitted by Mr Frankl and Mr Baxter mentions a collision occurring in June 2018, if details of this collision are received before the panel meeting on 4 October a verbal update will be provided by officers.

Table 4 – Collisions, Stapehill Road June 2013 to May 2018.

Collisions - Stapehill Road Ferndown			
Date	Time	Severity	Description
24-Dec-14	07:20	Slight	Pedestrian hit by vehicle wing mirror
06-Dec-15	00:29	Slight	Driver failed to negotiate bend
12-Oct-16	16:47	Slight	Motorcyclist overtaking van into path of oncoming car

- 3.20 As well as the validated road traffic collision data provided by Dorset Police, there is a facility on dorsetforyou.gov.uk that enables people to report collisions or incidents that may otherwise go unreported to the county council. Table 5 below provides a summary of the incidents reported. Full details of each report can be found at Appendix G.

Table 5 – Online collision/near miss reports via dorsetforyou.gov.uk – Stapehill Road

Online collision/near miss reports - Stapehill Road, Ferndown	
Date reported	Description
10-Aug-17	Pedestrian walking in road facing traffic - wing mirror hit hand of pedestrian
17-Jul-18	No description recorded
29-Jun-18	Two vans travelling in opposite directions hit offside wing mirrors
29-Jun-18	Heavy goods vehicle hit tree branch, car following hit debris causing damage. Later a HSS truck swerved to avoid low hanging tree branch into oncoming traffic and 30mins later delivery truck hit branches
29-Jun-18	Pedestrian walking south in road facing traffic - northbound car swerves to avoid pedestrian crossing centre line, saw oncoming traffic and swerved back narrowly missing pedestrian

- 3.21 Whilst one collision is one too many, the collision history on Stapehill Road is not significant when compared to other priorities, nor do the detail of the collisions suggest that a 30mph limit would reduce the likelihood of collisions.
- 3.22 The first point of contact for speed limit reduction requests is the community highways team. At the meeting with Mr Frankl and Mr Baxter in August 2017 it was agreed that the community highways team would be contacted to comment on the request to reduce the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph.
- 3.23 The community highways team were not supportive of the request to reduce the speed limit on Stapehill Road from 40mph to 30mph. The main reason given was due to the density of residential frontages and their conspicuity.
- 3.24 An additional reason was linked to the results of the speed surveys which revealed a disparity between the mean average speeds and 85th percentile speed. This disparity means that adherence would require regular enforcement.

- 3.25 The disparity between the mean average and 85th percentile speeds also provided reason for concern that a 30mph limit would increase the likelihood of tailgating and overtaking which in turn would increase the likelihood of collision rather than reduce it.
- 3.26 Department for Transport (DfT) guidance on setting speed limits state that speed limits should not be set where a reliance upon regular and frequent enforcement be required to achieve good adherence to a speed limit.
- 3.27 It is not possible for the county council to commit resource for speed limit enforcement, this is a matter for Dorset Police.
- 3.28 It is understood that the level of police resource required for regular enforcement on Stapehill Road is not available, nor does Stapehill Road rank as a high priority for enforcement when considering the collision history.
- 3.29 Dorset Police were asked for their views on the request for a reduced speed limit. In short, Dorset Police were not supportive of a reduction in the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph.
- 3.30 A statement has been provided by PC Heidi Moxam – Road Casualty Reduction Officer – Dorset Police:

With regards to the requested reduction in speed limit, at the time of writing I can confirm that Dorset Police would not support a reduction due to the lack of statistical data that is normally used to support applications. I can confirm that on two visits to the area by the road camera safety team over a period of 30 minutes and 90 minutes per session there were only 2 offences which would suggest that traffic is travelling at or below the current speed restriction. It is possible that if the limit was reduced, motorists may look for overtake opportunities and potentially come into conflict with other manoeuvring vehicles.

Dorset Police support local authorities in their work with identification of speed restrictions and endeavours to ensure that the motorists are always fully aware of the limit in which they are travelling, this can be achieved by keeping similar limits in similar surroundings and Stapehill is within adjoining 40mph limits and its topography is not indifferent along the majority of its length.

Police can determine support for speed proposals based on the information available to them as regards collision statistics at the location and, since very recently, CSW information. Discussions take place betwixt local authorities and police as regards data capture.

I'd be keen to see any further support that can be managed to ensure road user safety, for example, footways or lighting. Speed limits should not be used to attempt to solve the problem of isolated hazards, I concur that there are a couple of bends in Stapehill Road and a care

home and businesses, but the buildings are all set back from the road and pedestrians will not be stepping out of houses into the road as in some more rural locations I have witnessed. Police cannot guarantee regular enforcement of speed restrictions due to the workload and staffing capabilities and as experience has shown, a speed restriction will not evoke full reaction and adherence by all motorists.

I admire the campaign by residents and concur with some of their thoughts, however, their cause is not dissimilar to many other requests and I have to apply the same criteria to all based on the evidence to hand. Stapehill Road could be described as on the outskirts of an urban area and the movement of motor vehicles is the primary function therefore it follows that my opinion has to be based on the statistical nature of vehicle movement. I do note, however, that the road does not cater for the needs of non-motorised road users nor have adequate footways.

- 3.31 The petition also raises concerns with road edge deterioration. Stapehill Road is regularly inspected by the community highway team. Edge deterioration is considered during highway inspections and repair works have been made to the worst sections of edge deterioration during 2018 and will continue to be inspected during regular inspections.
- 3.32 Road edge deterioration is often the direct result of running water along the road edge rather than vehicle movements.
- 3.33 An additional concern raised is regarding visibility to/from private accesses along the route. Primarily the onus for improving visibility to/from a private access onto public highway is the responsibility of the landowner. If landowners are able to improve visibility by changing fence lines or cutting back vegetation, then this should be carried out before the highway authority considers action to alleviate concerns with visibility.
- 3.34 With regards to the petition's request for facilities for non-motorised road users on Stapehill Road, this has been taken to mean footways and/or shared use paths adjacent to the carriageway on Stapehill Road. A feasibility study has not been carried out on whether a facility for non-motorised users would be viable.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 The Panel is invited to note the receipt of this petition and decide how to respond to it, possible options are available in paragraph 2.3.

Andrew Martin

Service Director for Highways and Emergency Planning
September 2018