

# Petitions Panel

**Dorset County Council**



Date of Meeting	5 February 2019
Officer	Michael Potter
Subject of Report	<b>Procedure for Petitions – Petition entitled “Extend the 30mph zone on the Coombe, Puddletown”</b>
Executive Summary	<p>A petition has been received (in accordance with the County Council’s published petitions scheme) in relation to the Coombe, Puddletown. The petition states:</p> <p><i>We request the County Council extend the 30mph zone on the Coombe in Puddletown 100m southwards to the top of the hill in order to improve the visibility of the signage and to improve road safety for all users (pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders) particularly in the vicinity of Puddletown Middle School</i></p>
Impact Assessment:  <i>Please refer to the <a href="#">protocol</a> for writing reports.</i>	Equalities Impact Assessment:  Not applicable
	Use of Evidence:  Stats 19 Road Traffic Collision database
	Budget:  (Note: Have any VAT implications been identified?)
	Risk Assessment:  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:  Current Risk: LOW Residual Risk: LOW

**Procedure for Petitions – Petition entitled ‘Extend the 30mph zone on the Coombe, Puddletown’**

	Other Implications:  None identified
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	Appendix A - Map of The Coombe
Background Papers	Dorset County Council Petitions Scheme Department for Transport 01/2013 Circular <i>Setting Local Speed Limits</i> Department for Transport Traffic Advisory Leaflet 01/2004 <i>Village Speed Limits</i>
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## **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 – Extend the 30mph zone on the Coombe, Puddletown**

- 2.1 The County Council received a petition organised by Colin Hampton, Clerk to Puddletown Parish Council on 13 December 2018. This reads as follows:

*We request the County Council extend the 30mph zone on the Coombe in Puddletown 100m southwards to the top of the hill in order to improve visibility of the signage and to improve road safety for all users (pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders) particularly in the vicinity of Puddletown Middle School*

- 2.2 As this petition contains more than 50 signatures, the Panel are invited to note and discuss this.
- 2.3 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.

- 2.4 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 C81, White Hill, known locally as 'The Coombe', is part of the rural road that leads into the southern end of the village of Puddletown. Approximately 50m past the existing 30mph terminal on The Coombe is the main entrance to St Marys C of E Middle School. A map showing the location of The Coombe including the location of the existing 30mph terminal and other warning signs can be found at Appendix A.

- 3.2 Before the petition was formally submitted by Puddletown Parish Council on 13 December 2018 a site meeting at The Coombe was arranged between officers from Dorset Highways (Mike Potter, Road Safety Manager and Stephen Mepham, Community Highways Team Leader), representatives of Puddletown Parish Council and County Councillor Nick Ireland. This meeting took place on Friday 7 December 2018.
- 3.3 During this meeting the concerns raised in the petition were considered.
- 3.4 During the site visit on 7 December officer's stated that extending the 30mph limit to the top of The Coombe was not supported by Department for Transport (DfT) guidance for setting local speed limits due to there being no buildings with frontage access to The Coombe. However, it was suggested that warning signing and lining could be installed/changed to increase drivers' awareness of potential hazards, for example pedestrians in road and repositioning an existing school warning sign.
- 3.5 It was also agreed, that a traffic survey could be carried out on The Coombe to get evidence of traffic flow and speed. Whilst the speed limit on The Coombe is national speed limit, the layout and nature of the road would mean traffic speeds are likely to be relatively low in comparison to the national speed limit.
- 3.6 The works order for warning signing and request for traffic survey have been put on hold pending the outcome of the petition panel meeting.
- 3.7 To extend a 30mph limit as request in the petition on The Coombe would go against DfT guidance on setting local speed limits; the county council adopts DfT guidance as policy.
- 3.8 DfT guidance states that 30mph limit should be the norm through villages and Puddletown is covered by a 30mph limit throughout the extent of the village.
- 3.9 Traffic advisory leaflet 01/04 (DfT, 2004) which compliments DfT guidance on setting local speed limits states that the beginning of village speed limits should not extend beyond the built up areas of the villages.

*As a visual message to drivers that they are in a village, a measure of density is needed to give some minimum standard as to the frequency of the houses over the extent of the speed limit. On the basis of the minimum number of houses and length of speed limit, an average density of at least 3 houses per 100 metres over the extent of the 30mph speed limit is recommended. This minimum density should generally also apply for each 100m section, but particularly for the first 100 metres of the speed limit at each end of the village, to reinforce the visual message for drivers. This recommended measure of density, over which the speed limit should apply, should be reserved to cover the main body of the village only. The limit should therefore not extend beyond these minimum requirements except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. where the main focal point of the village*

*such as a community hall or church is situated outside the main density area of the village).*

- 3.10 The Coombe does not meet with the description outlined by the DfT to be considered as part of a 30mph village speed limit. There are no buildings with frontage access on to the section of The Coombe in question.
- 3.11 Where speed limits do not meet with criteria, speed management measures can be considered. These include hazard warning signing and lining such as SLOW road markings.
- 3.12 It can often be the case that the perception of traffic speed is higher than actual speeds, particularly so on rural roads. Traffic surveys provide evidence of existing speeds which can be used to inform local communities of actual traffic speeds.

#### **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.

**Matthew Piles**  
**Service Director Environment, Infrastructure & Economy**  
**February 2019**