

Open Report on behalf of Andy Gutherson, Executive Director - Place

Report to:	Planning and Regulation Committee
Date:	12 February 2024
Subject:	A631 Market Rasen to Louth: Proposed Speed Limit Alterations

Summary:

This report considers objections to the lengths of new 50mph and 40mph speed limits proposed along sections of the A631 as shown at Appendices B and C.

Recommendation(s):

That the Committee overrules the objections to the proposed speed limits, so that they may be made operative.

Background

In November 2016, the Secretary of State for Transport announced a new Safer Roads Fund of £175m. The Fund was specifically targeted at delivering highway improvements to reduce the number and severity of fatal and serious injury collisions on the 50 highest risk A class roads in the country, based on the Road Safety Foundation's analysis published in 2016.

Lincolnshire County Council submitted a bid to fund targeted route based improvements to the A631 between Market Rasen and Louth, where high numbers of reported injury collisions have occurred over a number of years. The bid was successful and the funding has been used for general road safety measures such as resurfacing works, speed camera installation, additional signage and road markings, lower speed limits and junction improvement.

The route is subject to the national speed limit except where it passes through a number of villages including North Willingham and South Elkington where a 40mph limit is currently in force and in Ludford where there is an existing 30mph speed limit.

Proposals

Analysis of the accident rate along this stretch of the A631 and mean speed of traffic indicates that the criteria in the speed limit policy are met for new 50mph limits to be introduced on sections between Market Rasen and North Willingham, North Willingham and Ludford, and on both approaches to South Elkington. A 40mph limit is proposed through the developed area further south to include the junction with the A157. These proposals are illustrated at Appendices B and C.

We have also taken the opportunity to extend the existing 30mph speed limit in line with policy on Willingham Road in Market Rasen (Appendix D) at the request of Market Rasen Town Council and the local Member.

Statutory consultation for these proposals took place last November and they were publicly advertised from 4th December until 29th January.

Objections

Nine objections have been received to these proposals. Many objectors are concerned that the application of a 50mph limit over long sections of the A631 is unnecessary and inappropriate for the prevailing conditions, and that the reduction in general traffic speed may encourage an increase in overtaking manoeuvres resulting in more accidents. Journey times will be unreasonably extended, and congestion will result, increasing the impact on the environment. It is suggested that speed limit reduction should be targeted to specific points along the route and that the current proposal penalises all drivers rather than the few who speed regardless of any restriction. It is also mooted that the funding would be better spent on improvements to individual junctions along the route.

Comments

The comments raised by objectors question the need for speed reduction along this rural route. Analysis of reported injury accidents demonstrates that since 2010 there have been 260 casualties, eight of which have resulted in a fatality. On this basis, use of the funding received to deliver a scheme which, as part of a package of measures, reduces traffic speed can be justified. Junctions along the route were assessed for potential improvements as part of the scheme and sufficient funding was available for works to be carried out at the intersection with the A157. Substantial lengths of speed limit reduction have been proposed as this is preferable in terms of encouraging consistent traffic speed reduction rather than introducing shorter sections where the limit changes frequently. This consistency will be enhanced by the installation of speed cameras at various points along the route between Market Rasen and Ludford.

Conclusion

The aim of these proposals is to apply government funding to effectively enhance and support other measures designed to reduce risk to highway users along the A631. The route meets the criteria to justify this funding and it is anticipated that reducing the speed limits as proposed will contribute to a reduction in personal injury accidents, and as such, will contribute to the overall success of this accident reduction scheme.

Consultation

The following have been consulted on these proposals: West Lindsey District Council; East Lindsey District Council; LRSP; Lincs Fire & Rescue; East Midlands Ambulance; Traffic Commissioners Office; Confederation of Passenger Transport; RHA; FTA; Stagecoach Buses; PC Coaches; Grayscroft Coaches; The Jockey Club (Market Rasen); Market Rasen Town Council; Louth Town Council; North Willingham Parish Council; Elkington Parish Council; Tealby Parish Council; Ludford Parish Council; Cllr S Bunney; Cllr H Marfleet

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

None carried out

Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Overview of A631 route
Appendix B	Proposed 50mph speed limit (Market Rasen - Ludford)
Appendix C	Proposed 50mph speed limit (South Elkington)
Appendix D	Proposed 30mph speed limit extension (Market Rasen)

Background Papers

The following background papers as defined in the Local Government Act 1972 were relied upon in the writing of this report.

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
Consultation documents; Correspondence; survey information	Available on request.

This report was written by Jeanne Gibson, who can be contacted on 01522 782070 or via TRO@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

This page is intentionally left blank