



# Northumberland County Council

TYNEDALE LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

DATE: 14<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2023

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## PETITION – REQUEST TO IMPOSE A SPEED LIMIT ON A SECTION OF THE C234 BETWEEN WARDEN BRIDGE AND FOURSTONES

**Report of: Service Director - Local Services, Paul Jones**

**Cabinet Member: John Riddle**

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### **Purpose of report**

To respond to the e petition which closed on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022 regarding a request for a mandatory speed limit of 30mph to be introduced on the half mile section of the C234 between Quality Cottages, and the level crossing adjacent to Fourstones Paper Mill.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Local Area Council note the content of this report and support the actions proposed.

### **Link to Corporate Plan**

How - “We want to be efficient, open and work for everyone”

Enjoying - “We want you to love where you live”

Connecting - “We want you to have access to the things you need”

### **Key Issues**

1. An e petition has been received requesting that a 30mph speed limit is introduced on the C234 between Quality Cottages and the level crossing at Fourstones Paper Mill.
2. A derestricted speed limit is currently in place.
3. The e petition, which was arranged by Warden Parish Council, has been signed by 57 signatories.
4. The petition states that the road is well used by a variety of cars, HGVs, agricultural vehicles, cyclists, horse riders and walkers.
5. The petition states that the residents of Hardhaugh, including young children, navigate the narrow footpath adjacent to their houses and numerous pedestrians must walk

on the road between Fourstones Paper Mill and Hardhaugh due to the lack of a pavement.

6. The request for speed limits has also been requested for inclusion in the 2023-24 LTP programme and is currently being assessed.
7. Speed surveys were carried out as recently as February 2022. Prior to this, a survey was completed in April 2011. According to data obtained from these surveys, there has been an increase in speeds since 2011, but average daily vehicle numbers have significantly reduced.
8. According to accident data from Northumbria Police there has been one “slight” personal injury collision in the previous five years on the stretch of C234 where a 30mph speed limit has been requested. This occurred when a cyclist travelling south was being followed by a bus. The bus driver expected the cyclist to dismount and walk over the level crossing and began to overtake. While on the crossing the cyclist fell from their cycle hitting their head on the near side of the bus causing a small cut above the right eye.
9. Accident data does not include any damage only incidents or near misses which may have occurred.

## **Background**

### **The Petition**

The County Council has received a 57 name petition stating that :-

“It is requested that a mandatory speed limit of 30 mph be introduced on the half mile section of the C234 between Quality Cottages and the Level Crossing adjacent to the Fourstones Paper Mill. This is a busy stretch of road recording over 1600 vehicular movements per day. There are several blind bends, poor sightlines, and numerous concealed junctions.

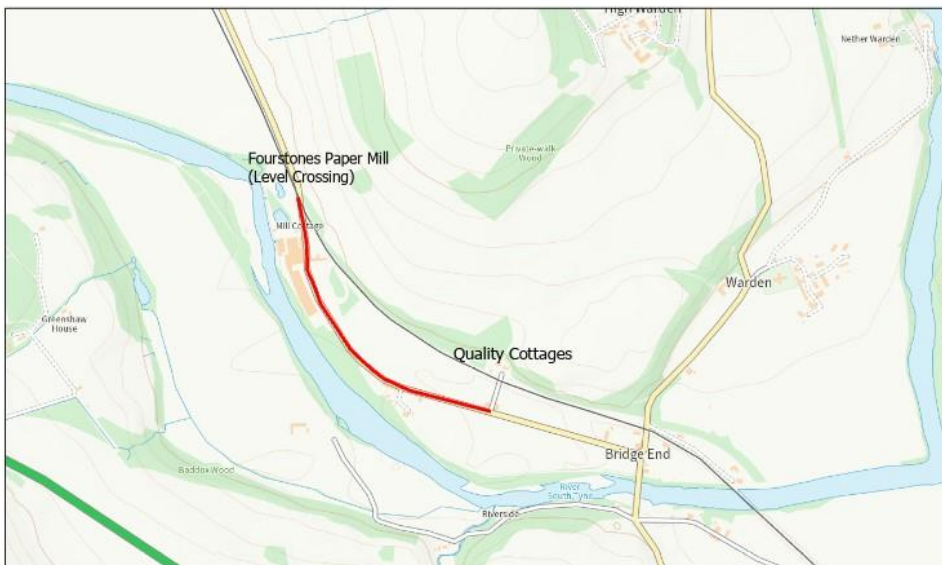
“At the southeast is a junction between two houses on the roadside that leads to four further houses, To the southwest are Hardhaugh Cottages, a group of ten terraced and semi-detached houses. Five concealed junctions serve these houses including two into the adjacent car park. Towards the northwest is Fourstones Paper Mill, there are two entrances to the Mill for HGVs and staff car parks located on either side of the road. The NW end is delineated by a level crossing that crosses the road in a diagonal manner. This is the main Newcastle to Carlisle line carrying significant passenger and freight services.”

“The road is well used by a variety of cars, HGVs, agricultural vehicles, cyclists, horse riders and walkers. The residents of Hardhaugh, including young children, navigate the narrow footpath adjacent to their houses, and numerous pedestrians must walk on the road between the Paper Mill and Hardhaugh due to the lack of a pavement. There is an advisory 30mph sign on the central bend however the mandatory speed limit for the entire section is 60mph. A recent traffic survey recorded an average speed 42 / 43 mph, 15% of vehicles exceeding 50mph, and maximum speeds of over 80mph. This represents a significant increase in recorded speeds since 2011.

“Collision data for this road section is relatively low, although there have been a number of accidents. Unless a mandatory speed limit of 30mph is introduced it is feared that a combination of road geometry, the composition of road users, and existing traffic speeds will result in more speed related accidents and the possibility of serious injuries or deaths.”

### Initial Comments

The C234 is a typical ‘C’ class unlit de-restricted rural road and is undulating with some tortuous bends between the A69 to the south and Fourstones Village to the north. The length of road at Hardhaugh is covered by warning lines which are in good condition, however no road studs exist.



Plan of C234 at Hardhaugh – area in red highlights petitions area of interest

There are currently yellow backed bend warning signs with “Max Speed 30” supplementary plates in both directions which are in good condition, although visibility of the southbound sign is slightly hampered by overhanging tree branches. These signs are accompanied by SLOW road markings with red strips, 1 for northbound vehicles and 2 for southbound, all are in good condition.



Existing bend warning signage for westbound traffic on C234 at Hardhaugh



Existing road narrows warning signage for eastbound traffic on C234 at Hardhaugh

There is an existing road narrows sign for westbound traffic located south of Mill House which is in good condition, a similar sign for eastbound traffic appears to be missing, however we have contacted the area office to request that a new sign is introduced.



Existing road narrows warning signage for westbound traffic on C234 at Hardhaugh

The requested 30mph speed limit is not currently feasible. This authority has a defined policy for the introduction of local speed limits which follows national guidelines provided by the Department for Transport. This is based on road environment as it transitions from a rural to an urban setting and our assessment considers that the length and density of frontage development on the C234 indicates that the speed limit of 30mph is unsuitable. The minimum requirement for a 30mph speed limit in the guidelines is for continuous frontage development of 600 metres of 20 or more houses.

### Speed Surveys

The latest speed surveys were undertaken in February 2022. These were carried out at the same location as the previous survey from 2011. While vehicle numbers have significantly reduced, there has been an increase in vehicle speeds as follows: -

	2022 data			2011 data			Difference		
	Average daily vehicles	85th %ile (mph)	Average Speed (mph)	Average daily vehicles	85th %ile (mph)	Average Speed (mph)	Average daily vehicles	85th %ile (mph)	Average Speed (mph)
<b>Westbound vehicles</b>	808	51.2	42.4	1613	40.9	34.9	805	10.3	7.5
<b>Eastbound vehicles</b>	811	51.6	43.1	1284	44.8	36.9	473	6.8	6.2

*(Note: - The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile is that speed or less at which 85% of vehicles are travelling. The remaining 15% of vehicles are travelling at that speed or more).*

Average vehicle speeds have increased by 7.5mph for westbound traffic, and 6.2mph for eastbound traffic, meaning current average speeds are now 42.4mph and 43.1mph.

The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile has increased by 10.3mph for westbound traffic and 6.8mph for eastbound traffic, meaning current 85<sup>th</sup> percentiles are now 51.2mph and 51.6mph.

While we have taken note of the increase, they are still acceptable when considering the existing derestricted speed limit, and do not meet the necessary criteria for enforcement.

We are not able to explain at present the large decrease in traffic since 2011 and this issue cannot solely be attributed to the fact that many residents may now be working from home since the COVID-19 outbreak.

### **Accident data**

According to accident data from Northumbria Police (which does not include any damage only incidents or near misses which may have occurred) there has been one “slight” personal injury collision in the previous five years on the stretch of C234 where a 30mph speed limit has been requested. This occurred when a cyclist travelling south was being followed by a bus. The bus driver expected the cyclist to dismount and walk over the level crossing and began to overtake. While on the crossing the cyclist fell from their cycle hitting their head on the near side of the bus causing a small cut above the right eye.

### **Proposed Actions**

Considering the concerns raised through the petition and taking account of the recent request for speed limits for inclusion in the 2023-24 LTP programme it is proposed that we issue a design brief within the 2023-24 LTP programme to investigate potential road safety improvements. Examples of improvements could include improved gateway features, addition warning signs, road markings or potential implementation of 40mph speed limit if considered appropriate. However, we should highlight that this study may also conclude that the road is acceptable in its present situation.

### **Implications**

<b>Policy</b>	The response to the issues raised in this petition is consistent with LTP Policies.
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	Any appropriate scheme to be funded through the 2023/24 Local Transport Plan.
<b>Legal</b>	None
<b>Procurement</b>	None
<b>Human Resources</b>	None
<b>Property</b>	None

<b>Equalities</b> (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	None
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	n/a
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	n/a
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	Petition identifies various road safety issues along this route. Motorists would be required to adhere to any reduced speed limit should one be introduced.
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	n/a
<b>Wards</b>	Humsaugh

### **Appendix Index**

Appendix A – Summary of speed survey data from 2011 and 2022

### **Background papers**

None

### **Report sign off**

	Full Name of Officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	
Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	
Relevant Executive Director	R Murfin
Chief Executive	
Portfolio Holder(s)	

### **Author and Contact Details**

Neil Snowdon – Principal Programme Officer (Highways Improvement Team)







C234 Hardhaugh 05/02/2022 - 15/02/2022

Eastbound																				
Time	Total	Vpp	Mean	SD	Vbin	Vbin	Vbin	Vbin	Vbin	Vbin	Vbin	Vbin	Vbin	Vbin	Vbin	Vbin	Vbin	Vbin	Vbin	Vbin
[-		85			6	11	16	21	26	31	36	41	46	51	56	61	66	71	76	81
0	1		37	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
100	1		41.7	10.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
200	1		47.9	7.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
300	1		40.9		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
400	2		44.9	10.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
500	8		45.4	8.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	0
600	22	58.8	45.9	10.9	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	4	4	4	2	1	0	0	0
700	59	52.8	44.8	7.9	0	0	0	0	1	1	6	11	16	12	8	4	1	0	0	0
800	90	51.7	43.7	8.7	0	0	0	0	2	3	8	18	21	21	10	4	2	0	0	0
900	70	51.1	42.9	8.8	0	0	0	0	2	3	8	14	18	14	6	4	1	0	0	0
1000	72	50.9	42.8	8.1	0	0	0	1	1	3	9	17	17	14	8	2	1	0	0	0
1100	85	50.2	42.1	8.6	0	0	0	0	2	4	8	16	15	11	5	2	1	0	0	0
1200	95	51.1	41.5	9.3	0	0	0	1	1	4	9	12	13	10	6	2	1	0	0	0
1300	83	51.1	42.8	7.8	0	0	0	0	1	2	9	14	18	10	8	2	1	0	0	0
1400	57	50.4	42.2	8.1	0	0	0	0	1	3	9	12	14	10	6	1	1	0	0	0
1500	61	50.7	42.5	8.1	0	0	0	1	1	3	7	15	14	12	6	2	1	0	0	0
1600	52	51.7	43.3	8.1	0	0	0	0	1	2	6	13	11	10	6	2	1	0	0	0
1700	47	49.4	41.5	7.5	0	0	0	0	1	2	7	12	12	8	3	1	0	0	0	0
1800	35	51.4	43.9	8.2	0	0	0	0	1	3	7	10	7	4	1	1	0	0	0	0
1900	24	52.2	44	8.2	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	4	8	4	3	1	0	0	0	0
2000	10		47.1	8.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	3	1	1	0	0	0	0
2100	8		47	10.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0
2200	5		47	10.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
2300	2		42.7	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
07-19	728	51.2	42.8	8.4	1	1	1	3	11	31	89	162	176	139	72	29	9	2	1	1
06-22	752	51.8	43.1	8.5	1	1	1	4	12	33	94	171	192	152	81	35	11	2	1	1
06-00	799	51.8	43.1	8.5	1	1	1	4	12	33	94	172	194	153	82	35	12	3	1	1
06-06	811	51.8	43.1	8.5	1	1	2	4	13	34	95	174	196	157	84	36	12	3	1	1

Vehicles = 8112  
 Posted speed limit = 80 mph, Exceeding = 210 (2.599%), Mean Exceeding = 83.57 mph  
 Maximum = 76.5 mph, Minimum = 2.8 mph, Mean = 43.1 mph  
 85% Speed = 51.56 mph, 95% Speed = 57.38 mph, Median = 43.00 mph  
 10 mph Pace = 38 - 48, Number in Pace = 5704 (69.77%)  
 Variance = 73.08, Standard Deviation = 8.55 mph

Westbound

Time	Total	Vpp	Mean	SD	Vbin	Vbin	Vbin	Vbin	Vbin	Vbin	Vbin	Vbin	Vbin	Vbin	Vbin	Vbin	Vbin	Vbin	Vbin	Vbin					
[-		85			0	6	11	16	21	26	31	36	41	46	51	56	61	66	71	76	81	86	91	96	100
0	2		41.4	7.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
100	1		41.7		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
200	0		49.3		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
300	1		45		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
400	1		44.7		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
500	8		41.2	9.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
600	5		43.5	9.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
700	23	50.7	41.7	9	0	0	0	0	1	1	4	5	5	4	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
800	43	50.6	40.8	9.7	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	7	8	9	8	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
800	43	46.2	40.8	9.3	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	6	10	11	7	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
900	59	46.9	40.4	9	0	0	1	1	1	4	12	11	12	9	5	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1100	59	50.3	40.9	9	0	0	0	1	1	5	11	13	11	10	5	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1200	55	50.7	40.7	9.4	0	0	0	1	2	5	11	15	13	9	8	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1300	67	51.1	41.7	9.3	0	0	0	1	1	5	10	14	14	12	7	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1400	69	46.1	41.1	8.3	0	0	0	1	1	4	10	16	17	13	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1500	77	52.6	43.5	8.7	0	0	1	0	1	4	10	15	15	16	10	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1600	70	51.7	44.3	7.7	0	0	0	0	1	2	6	15	18	18	8	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1700	73	51.1	42.3	7.9	0	0	0	0	1	3	9	15	19	18	7	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1800	49	52.7	44.7	8.4	0	0	0	0	1	1	5	8	11	11	6	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1900	37	52.6	44.2	8.5	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	7	11	7	4	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2000	22	52.7	44.8	8.5	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	4	6	5	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2100	19	53.9	46	8.9	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	4	5	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2200	11	56.4	44.8	11.3	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2300	5		43.8	10.5	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
07-19	695	50.9	42.1	8.9	1	2	4	6	11	40	99	145	153	132	68	26	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
06-22	779	51.1	42.4	8.9	1	2	4	6	12	42	106	159	177	150	79	31	8	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
06-00	796	51.2	42.4	8.9	1	2	4	6	12	44	107	161	179	154	81	32	9	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
06-00	808	51.2	42.4	8.9	1	2	4	6	13	45	109	164	182	156	83	33	9	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

Vehicles = 6384  
 Posted speed limit = 60 mph, Exceeding = 164 (2.029%), Mean Exceeding = 63.32 mph  
 Maximum = 82.4 mph, Minimum = 3.2 mph, Mean = 42.4 mph  
 85% Speed = 51.23 mph, 95% Speed = 55.37 mph, Median = 42.73 mph  
 10 mph Pace = 38 - 48, Number in Pace = 3528 (43.84%)  
 Variance = 70.56, Standard Deviation = 8.42 mph

