

UPDATE TO WOODLANDS PETITION REPORT

At the Tynedale Local Area Council meeting of Tuesday 11th July, concerns were raised about the speed data included in the report, as it was felt that the survey was carried out in the incorrect location at the boundary of the 30mph and 20mph limit.

As a result, two new speed surveys were undertaken between 28th July and 9th August 2023. Detailed summaries are attached but are briefly summarised as follows:-

30mph limit Survey

For westbound traffic, there was an average 3105 vehicles per day, average speed was recorded to be 29mph, with an 85th percentile of 33.1mph.

For eastbound traffic, there was an average 3760 vehicles per day, average speed was recorded to be 29.1mph, with an 85th percentile of 33.1mph.

20mph limit Survey

For westbound traffic, there was an average 1741 vehicles per day, average speed was recorded to be 24.6mph, with an 85th percentile of 29.1mph.

For eastbound traffic, there was an average 2602 vehicles per day, average speed was recorded to be 25.1mph, with an 85th percentile of 29.4mph.

For information, the 85th 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. In order for enforcement of the speed limit to be carried out, the 85th percentile needs to be a minimum of 24mph within a 20mph speed limit and 35mph within a 30mph speed limit).

There were several occurrences where vehicles were recorded exceeding the speed limit, and the limit necessary to meet enforcement requirements. However, while we can't confirm, it is possible that some of these may have been emergency service vehicles given the close proximity of Hexham General Hospital. The Fire Station and Police Station are both also located nearby, with the fire station located on Maiden's Walk and the police station on the B6531 at the west of Hexham.

Based on the data available following these two surveys, the data obtained in the 30mph section does not meet the criteria for enforcement, however, it is clear that the data obtained in the 20mph section does. As such the data has been passed onto colleagues at the Road Safety Unit of Northumbria Police for further investigation.

When the petition was submitted originally, a request for additional traffic calming measures was made, however, physical measures would be inappropriate on this strategic A Class route. Given the average the average speeds (in the 20mph limit) of 24.6mph and 25.1mph it is unlikely that additional measures would see a reduction in

speeds. Our current 20mph guidance states that if average speeds are 24mph are less than physical measures aren't required.

As has been mentioned previously The A695 is a primary route linking Hexham with Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and as such is identified as part of the Resilient Road Network that maintains economic activity and will be prioritised to be kept open in times of severe weather.

This section of the A695 is a long straight section of road which can lend itself to speeding, that does not meet the normal criteria to be a 20mph speed limit but has been implemented as part of the programme of measures around schools. This is borne out by the new speed survey data in the fact that there are no issues in the 30mph section.

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 have been two personal injury collisions in the previous five years on Woodlands.

One "serious" personal injury occurred in January 2023, 27 metres west of the junction with Hillside Road. The occurred when a driver of a car (vehicle 1) heading west towards Hexham Town Centre lost concentration resulting in a collision with a car parked on the nearside (vehicle 2). This collision forced vehicle 2 into the rear of another parked car (vehicle 3).

One "slight" personal injury collision occurred 78 metres east of the junction with Monks Terrace. This occurred when a goods vehicle (over 3.5 tonnes and under 7.5 tonnes) travelling west veered across the road to its offside, colliding with the offside of a car which was travelling eastbound. The goods vehicles left the carriageway to the offside.

Existing Signs and Road Markings

The existing signs and road markings have been reviewed and are considered appropriate for the location and road type, therefore no further action is therefore planned at this time.

The lead petitioner may wish to contact the police to discuss Community Speedwatch, I understand the next window for any applications opens in January 2024, we can provide contact details if required of the lead officer, and the website address for further information with these minutes if desired.

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