



Northumberland

County Council

NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE
DATE: 28TH MARCH 2024

PETITION – ROAD SAFETY AT SWINHOE CROSSROADS

Report of: Director of Environment and Transport, Paul Jones

Cabinet Member: John Riddle, Improving our Roads and Highways

Purpose of report

To respond to the petition which closed for signatures on 4th December 2023 regarding road safety concerns at Swinhoe Crossroads. It has been stated that the proposed changes to the road signage and markings do not address the fundamental cause of recent road traffic accidents.

The petition urges that the Council accepts that the realignment of the roads at the junction to improve the drivers' view of oncoming traffic, is the only solution that will prevent accidents from occurring in future and motorists continuing to be injured or worse.

Recommendations

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

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the following key themes in the Corporate Plan for 2023-26:

'Thriving Places and Culture – Neighbourhoods are safe, clean and well maintained'

Key Issues

- A petition has been raised which expresses concerns about road safety at Swinhoe Crossroads.
- The e-petition has been signed by 607 signatories. A further 412 signatories has signed the paper petition.
- According to accident data from Northumbria Police, five personal injury collisions have occurred since 1st January 2020, with two of these classed as serious.
- A further 13 personal injury collisions have occurred since records began in 1974.

- Personal injury collision data does not include any damage only incidents or near misses which may have occurred.
- The Council is aware of issues at this junction,
- Numerous schemes have been introduced over the years, the most recent being a scheme to improve signage which was completed in December 2023.
- An extension to the 30mph speed limit on the westbound approach to the crossroads is currently being progressed.
- Previous schemes which have been implemented have failed to resolve these issues, and visibility at the junction remains substandard.
- An allocation of £20,000 for Phase 1 Design work at Swinhoe Crossroads is included in the 2024/25 Local Transport Plan (LTP) programme.
- The Design Team will investigate larger scale junction improvements which may involve carriageway realignment / junction configuration.
- Any preferred scheme would then be costed and considered for inclusion in a future LTP programme.
- It should be noted that this may require land acquisition from adjacent landowners.

Background

The Petition

The County Council has received a petition which expresses concerns about road safety at Swinhoe Crossroads. The e-petition has been signed by 607 signatories, A further 412 signatories have signed the paper petition which states:

“We the undersigned do not accept that the proposed changes to the road signs and markings at Swinhoe Crossroads address the fundamental cause of recent road traffic accidents.

We believe that: -

The restricted visibility to motorists arriving at the four-way junction on the B1340 from the south is the major cause of the five known accidents in the past 16 months.

- The recent increase in tourism, larger and faster cars, driven by drivers unfamiliar with the area, on country roads not designed for speed, only serves to heighten the risk of accidents.

As a result, the signatories to this petition urge Northumberland County Council to accept that the realignment of the roads at the junction, to improve the drivers’ view of oncoming traffic, is the only solution that will prevent accidents from occurring in future and motorists continuing to be injured or worse.



Google image of northbound approach to Swinhoe Crossroads



Google image looking east at the Swinhoe Crossroads highlighting visibility issues

Comments

Swinhoe Crossroads lies on the B1340 which is a busy coastal route in the North of the County linking Alnwick with Bamburgh. Over recent years this route has become significantly busier in part due to an increase in popularity of the area as a tourist destination. The C69 and C388 join the B1340 at the crossroads.

The Council is aware of road safety issues at the junction, which are primarily due to poor visibility. Many site meetings have occurred in recent years, resulting in several schemes (consisting primarily of signage and road marking improvements) being implemented.

The most recent scheme was completed in December 2023, while a scheme to extend the 30mph speed limit on the westbound approach to the crossroads is being progressed.

However, previous schemes have failed to resolve these issues, and visibility at the junction remains substandard.

The Council has therefore allocated total of £20,000 to Phase 1 Design work for Swinhoe Crossroads in the 2024/25 Local Transport Plan (LTP) programme. This will enable our Design Team to investigate larger scale junction improvements which may involve carriageway realignment / junction configuration. Any preferred scheme would then be costed and considered for inclusion in a future LTP programme. However, it should be noted that this may require land acquisition from adjacent landowners.

Accident Data

According to accident data from Northumbria Police, since 1st January 2020, there have been a total of five personal injury collisions at Swinhoe Crossroads. Two of these were classed as serious, with the other three being slight. All appear to be because of vehicles turning right into the path of oncoming westbound traffic due to the poor visibility.

It should be noted that this accident data does not include any damage only incidents or any near misses which may have occurred.

A request was made by the lead petitioner for all personal injury collision data at Swinhoe Crossroads to be provided. A further 13 incidents have occurred since records began in 1974.

Proposed Actions

Phase 1 Design work to be progressed from the £20,000 allocation which has been included in the 2024/25 LTP programme.

Once Options are available these will be discussed with the Local Ward Member and Beadnell Parish Council, for consideration and potential inclusion in any future Local Transport Plan annual capital programme.

Implications

Policy	The response to the issues raised in this petition is consistent with LTP Policies.
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Finance and value for money	£20k allocation included in 2024/25 to carry out Phase 1 Design works
Legal	None
Procurement	None
Human Resources	None
Property	None
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No – not required at this point n/a
Risk Assessment	n/a
Crime Disorder &	n/a
Customer Consideration	Petition identifies road safety concerns at Swinhoe Crossroads
Carbon reduction	n/a
Health and Wellbeing	Petition raises issues regarding road safety.
Wards	Bamburgh

Background papers:

None

Report sign off

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

Author and Contact Details

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