



Northumberland

County Council

TYNEDALE LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

DATE: 21ST MAY 2024

PETITION – ROAD SAFETY ON A68 BETWEEN B6318/A68
ROUNABOUT TO THE C225 BEUKLEY / BINGFIELD JUNCTION

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 8th January 2024 regarding road safety concerns on the A68 northbound section between the B6318/A68 roundabout at Errington Coffee House to the C225 Beukley / Bingfield junction.

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 on the A68 between the A68/B6318 junction and the C225 junction at Beukley / Bingfield.
- The e-petition has been signed by 81 signatories.
- According to accident data from Northumbria Police, nine personal injury collisions have occurred since 1st January 2018. One of these was fatal, four were serious, with the remaining four classed as slight.
- A further two slight personal injury collisions have occurred on the B6318 on the western side of the A68/B6318 roundabout.
- Personal injury collision data does not include any damage only incidents or near misses which may have occurred.

- No physical speed surveys have been undertaken on the stretch of road referred to, however, our online speed data provider indicates an average speed of 47.3mph, while the 85th percentile is 52.3mph with speed data from 2019 at a nearby location on the A68 indicates an average speed of 52.2mph and an 85th percentile speed of 60.9mph.
- In January 2020, our Traffic Safety Design Team undertook a Road Safety Review of the A68 from Carter Bar in the north to the A69(T) Stagshaw Interchange in the south.
- This 56km length of carriageway was split into 10 x 5km sections, and 1 x 6km section. From the traffic flow and collision data obtained, the various sections of the route were ranked into High, Medium and Low priority based on their collision rates.
- The southern most section between Beukley Farm junction and the A69(T) was ranked 4th in the High Priority list.
- In 2021 this 6km length of A68 was visited and a Route Action scheme covering this section was sent out for implementation in July 2021 with full completion of the works taking place in March 2022.
- Since the scheme was completed, the fatal RTC is the only incident which occurred in this section.
- A “slight” RTC also occurred on the A68 north of the junction with the C225, but this was outside the scope of the scheme, however a similar scheme was fully completed in October 2021 on the 5km section between Wheathill to Beukley.
- Since commencing writing this report, we are aware that a further Fatal Road Traffic Collision has tragically occurred on this stretch of A68. We cannot comment on this incident while police investigations are ongoing.

Background

The Petition

The County Council has received an e-petition which has been signed by 81 signatories, expressing concerns about road safety on the A68 between the A68/B6318 roundabout at Errington Coffee House to the C225 Beukley / Bingfield junction.

The petition states:

“As stated on current road signage, the A68 is a dangerous road with many hidden dips and peaks, which has resulted in many road casualties, the most recent this month resulting in a tragic loss of life and injury.

Anyone living besides the A68 will inform of poor driving behaviour and the fact that A68 seems to attract racetrack thrill seekers which on any other road would be considered unacceptable. It seems on a typical holiday weekend this type of behaviour has become normalised.

The A68 is further safety compromised by heavy haulage lorries and slow-moving farming vehicles.

This petition is focused on speed reduction/calming measures when approaching A68 driveways and junctions. The signatures of this petition have all experience dangerous, aggressive, and totally inconsiderate drivers (motorbikes, cars, and heavy vehicles) with zero tolerance of those pulling in/out of the A68.

It should be noted that the A68 is the main route for the school run with our children at risk.

It is acknowledged that in 2022 signage and road markings improvements were implemented but against the existing driving mentality, speed, and behaviour, has made no safety impact.

The signatures of this petition are convinced the only way forward to mitigate future tragedies, is a controlled and managed reduction of speed over A68 driveways and road junctions.”

Comments

The A68 is a major road in the United Kingdom, running from Darlington in the Northeast of England to the A720 in Edinburgh, the capital city of Scotland. It crosses the Anglo-Scottish border at Carter Bar.

As this is a primary route, it 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, clearly all vehicle types are expected to use this route.

It is assumed that the petition is referring to the C225 Beukley / Bingfield junction, as this was the location of the fatal road traffic collision. The section of A68 between the A68/B6318 roundabout and this junction has been subject of the following schemes in recent years: -

- In July 2019, a Structural Maintenance Scheme (NCC Ref.No.57673 Little Whittington to Beukley) was undertaken along this stretch of road which resulted in a new 50mm hot rolled asphalt surface being provided in advance, and through the junction. As part of this scheme, all the existing continuous and intermittent edge of carriageway road markings, centre of carriageway warning lines, double white line systems, junction give way and SLOW road markings were replaced.
- In January 2020, our Traffic Safety Design Team undertook a Road Safety Review of the A68 from Carter Bar in the north to the A69(T) Stagshaw Interchange in the south. This 56km length of carriageway was split into 10 x 5km sections, and 1 x 6km section. From the traffic flow and collision data obtained, the various sections of the route were ranked into High, Medium and Low priority based on their collision rates. The southern most section between Beukley Farm junction and the A69(T) was ranked 4th in the High Priority list.
- In 2021 this 6km length of A68 was visited and a Route Action scheme covering this section was sent out for implementation in July 2021 with full completion of the works taking place in March 2022.

- The junction where the Fatal Road Traffic Collision occurred on 1st October 2023 saw several improvements introduced as part of this Route Action Scheme. The existing poor condition junction warning signs and supplementary 'REDUCE SPEED NOW' plates were replaced onto a grey backing board to emphasise the junction further. These accompanied the existing SLOW road markings which were replaced as part of the Structural Maintenance scheme in 2019 for both directions of travel.



Google image showing new signs for northbound traffic on A68 approach to C225 Beukley / Bingfield junction



Google image showing new signs for southbound traffic on A68 approach to C225 Beukley / Bingfield junction

- To provide motorists with an improved awareness of the junction, the existing direction sign located in the radii of the junction was raised on two new post extensions to provide greater advanced forward visibility, especially for southbound motorists.



Google image showing new directional signs at A68/C225 Beukley / Bingfield junction

We do appreciate that visibility to the right (north) whilst exiting the C225 junction is poor, however, given the overall nature of the A68, it is like many junctions on this route and throughout the County, where caution and vigilance is required whilst entering the main carriageway in such situations.

The vast majority of the A68 in Northumberland is currently subject to a 60mph speed limit, except where it passes through built up areas such as Rochester, Otterburn, West Woodburn and Ridsdale.

We currently have no plans to reduce the speed limit at any location on this section of the A68, this would not conform to the guidance set out in the Department for Transport Circular – Setting Local Speeds, updated in March 2024 which states that a derestricted 60mph is the recommended limit for most high-quality strategic A and B roads with few bends, junctions or accesses.

A 50mph speed limit should be considered for lower quality A and B roads that may have a high number of bends, junctions or accesses. This speed limit can also be considered where mean speeds are below 50mph, so lower limit does not interfere with traffic flow.

A 40mph speed limit should be considered where there are many bends, junctions or accesses, substantial development, a strong environmental or landscape reason, or where there are considerable numbers of vulnerable road users.

We will continue to monitor road safety along this stretch of road, however in the meantime any instances of dangerous driver behaviour should be reported to the police, if any dashcam footage is available, this too can be forwarded to the police, and they may be able to investigate further.

Accident Data

According to accident data from Northumbria Police, nine personal injury collisions have occurred since 1st January 2018. One of these was fatal, four were serious, with the remaining four classed as slight.

A further two slight personal injury collisions have occurred on the B6318 on the western side of the A68/B6318 roundabout.

Personal injury collision data does not include any damage only incidents or near misses which may have occurred.

Speed data

While no physical speed surveys have been undertaken within the section of A68 referred to in the petition, data provided from our Speed Compliance Tool, supplied to us by Agilysis indicates average speeds of 47.3mph, while the 85th percentile is 52.3mph.

For information, the 85th percentile is that speed at which 85% of vehicles are travelling. The remaining 15% of vehicles will be travelling above that speed.

A speed survey was however completed in August 2019 further north, at a location south of its junction with the A6079 at Todd Ridge. A location plan, and summary of results is attached as Appendix A.

For northbound vehicles, average speeds were 56.5mph with an 85th percentile of 65mph.

For southbound vehicles, average speeds were 52.2mph with an 85th percentile of 60.9mph.

It should be noted that for any enforcement to be considered within a speed limit of 60mph, the 85th percentile is required to be a minimum of 67mph.

Proposed Actions

Following the implementation of our recent Route Action measures, no action is currently planned; however, we will continue to monitor road safety along this stretch of road and take into consideration any feedback once received from Northumbria Police regarding the recent fatal road traffic accident.

In the meantime, any instances of dangerous driver behaviour should be reported directly to the police. Should any dashcam footage be available, this too can be forwarded to the police, and they may be able to investigate further.

Implications

Policy	The response to the issues raised in this petition is consistent with LTP Policies.
Finance and value for money	n/a
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 on the A68 between B6318/A68 roundabout and C225 junction at Beukley
Carbon reduction	n/a
Health and Wellbeing	Petition raises issues regarding road safety.

Wards	Humsaugh
--------------	----------

Appendix Index

Summary of Speed Survey Results TS-19-35 (south of junction with A6079 at Todds Barn)

Background papers:

Route Safety Study - A68 Carter Bar to A69(T) Stagshaw Interchange

Department for Transport Guidance on Setting Local Speeds (updated March 2024)

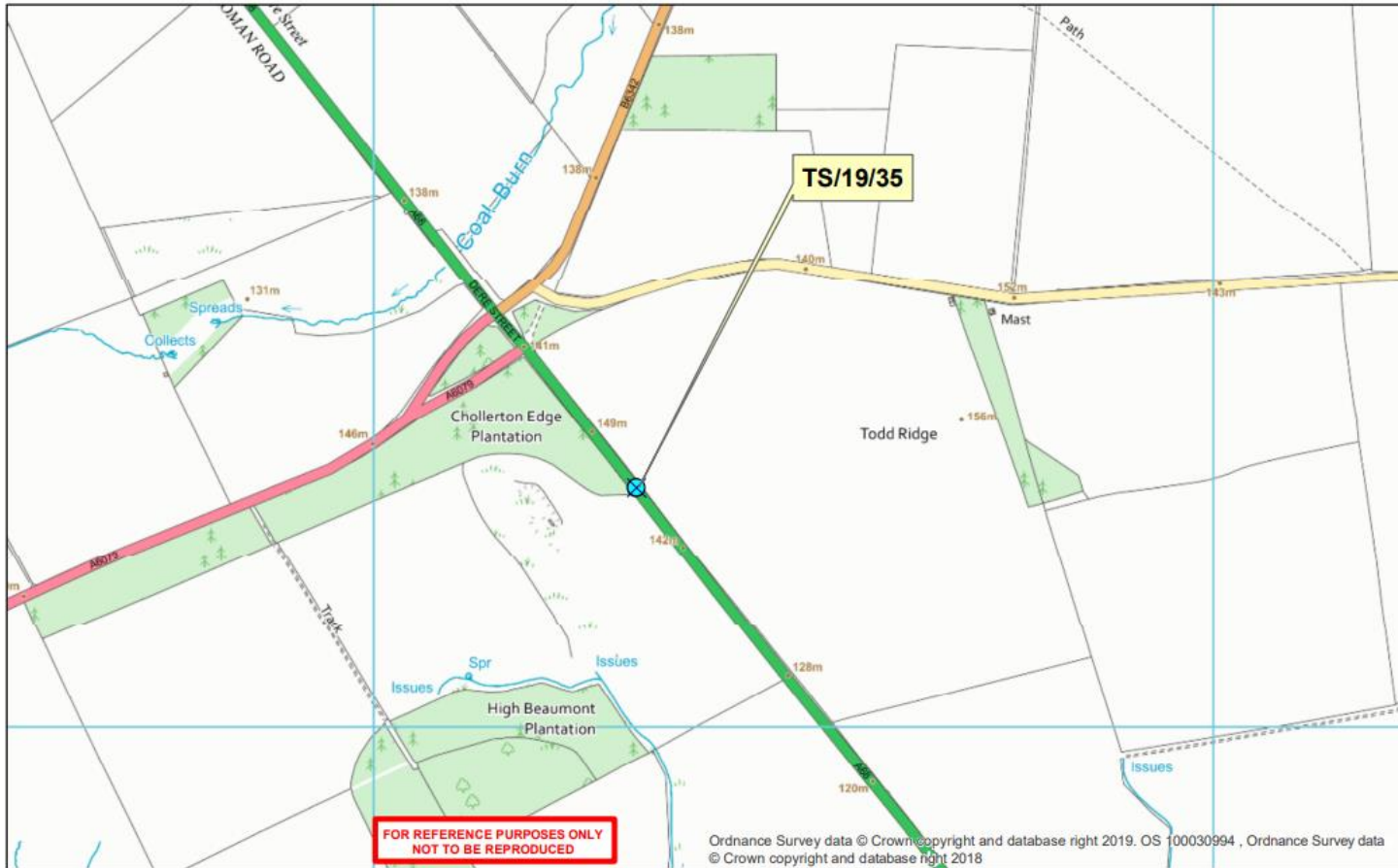
[Setting local speed limits - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Report sign off

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

Author and Contact Details Neil Snowdon – Principal Programme Officer (Highways Improvement Team)

APPENDIX A - Summary of Speed Survey Results TS-19-35 (south of junction with A6079 at Todds Barn)



Additional Comments:

Grids
395315
574287

<p>Northumberland County Council</p> <p><small>Northumberland County Council County Hall Blanchard Northumberland NE18 7 2EP Tel: 01667 832000</small></p>	<p>Network Management Information System</p> <p><small>This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Licence no. 100049508 (2019)</small></p>	<p>Title: A68 Stagshaw to five lane ends (Sth of Colwell)</p>	
		<p>Drn: CE</p>	<p>Date: July 19</p>

Site No: 00004424
 A68 South of A6079 Jct Todd Ridge
 Speed Summary (Mon to Fri)-Limit 60 Mph

Site Reference: 395482574079
 From 30/08/2019 To 06/09/2019

Channel: Northbound

Time Begin	Total Vol.	85th %ile	Mean Ave.	Std. Dev.	Bin 1 <31Mph	Bin 2 31-<36	Bin 3 36-<41	Bin 4 41-<46	Bin 5 46-<51	Bin 6 51-<56	Bin 7 56-<61	Bin 8 61-<66	Bin 9 66-<71	Bin 10 71-<76	Bin 11 76-<81	Bin 12 81-<86	
00:00		8 -		61	7.6	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	0	0	0
01:00		5 -		61.7	9.7	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
02:00		5 -		60.3	6.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
03:00		2 -		60 -		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
04:00		6 -		62.9	7.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
05:00		9 -		59.1	6.7	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	2	0	0	0
06:00	57		67.9	58	10.1	0	0	0	3	8	8	12	12	7	5	1	0
07:00	113		68.5	58.7	10.1	1	0	0	5	17	23	20	25	11	8	2	0
08:00	123		68.9	59.4	8.9	0	0	2	3	14	26	28	23	15	9	2	1
09:00	116		65.3	56.8	8.8	1	1	0	5	18	26	28	20	11	4	1	0
10:00	129		64.5	56.3	8.4	1	0	1	7	21	33	32	18	8	4	0	0
11:00	140		64.7	55.5	8.8	1	0	3	8	27	38	25	19	10	5	1	0
12:00	135		64.6	56	8.9	0	1	2	8	21	34	32	19	9	5	1	0
13:00	127		63.1	54.7	8.6	1	0	2	10	26	34	25	16	6	1	1	0
14:00	148		62.2	54.7	7.6	1	0	1	9	33	48	29	15	8	2	0	0
15:00	140		62.4	54.7	7.9	1	1	1	10	28	41	31	15	7	3	0	0
16:00	153		64.4	56	8.8	1	0	1	9	26	41	33	24	11	3	0	1
17:00	124		64.5	56.5	7.9	0	0	1	7	22	31	29	21	7	5	0	0
18:00	85		64.8	57.5	6.9	0	0	0	2	11	23	24	16	6	0	0	0
19:00	53		67.8	58.7	8.9	0	0	1	1	5	11	14	8	4	3	2	0
20:00	29		63.7	55.9	7.8	0	0	0	2	4	7	6	3	2	0	0	0
21:00	21		63.9	54.6	10.3	0	0	0	1	5	5	3	4	2	0	0	0
22:00	13		64.3	56.7	7.8	0	0	0	0	3	4	3	2	1	0	0	0
23:00		9 -		57.6	5.1	0	0	0	0	1	4	2	0	0	0	0	0
12H,7-19	1533		64.7	56.3	8.1	8	3	14	83	264	398	336	231	109	49	8	2
16H,6-22	1693		64.9	56.5	8.2	8	3	15	90	286	429	371	258	124	57	11	2
18H,6-24	1715		64.9	56.5	8.2	8	3	15	90	290	437	376	260	125	57	11	2
24H,0-24	1750	65		56.5	8.2	8	3	15	90	291	439	380	264	130	57	11	2
Am	11:00 -			02:45 -		09:00	09:15	11:00	10:45	10:45	11:00	10:00	07:15	07:45	07:45	07:15	07:30
Peak	141 -			65 -		2	1	4	10	29	38	33	27	15	10	3	1
Pm	14:30 -			18:45	21:15	13:30	12:00	12:30	15:15	14:15	14:30	15:15	15:45	16:00	16:30	19:15	16:00
Peak	154 -			59.1	11.1	2	2	3	12	35	52	33	24	11	5	2	2

Collated from 15 minute interval data

Created at 08:02:34 on 11 Sep 2019

Site No: 00004424

Site Reference: 395482574079

A68 South of A6079 jct Todd Ridge

Speed Summary (Mon to Fri)-Limit 60 Mph

From 30/08/2019 To 06/09/2019

Channel: Southbound

Time Begin	Total Vol.	85th %ile	Mean Ave.	Std. Dev.	Bin 1 <31Mph	Bin 2 31-<36	Bin 3 36-<41	Bin 4 41-<46	Bin 5 46-<51	Bin 6 51-<56	Bin 7 56-<61	Bin 8 61-<66	Bin 9 66-<71	Bin 10 71-<76	Bin 11 76-<81	Bin 12 81-<86
00:00		3 -		55.5	5.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
01:00		4 -		55.6	7.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
02:00		2 -		58.5 -		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
03:00		1 -		62.8 -		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
04:00		10 -		59.8	10.8	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	1	0	0
05:00		22	61.8	52.2	11	0	1	1	3	4	5	4	3	0	0	1
06:00		50	62.7	51.2	11.4	2	2	5	7	10	10	5	5	4	1	0
07:00		94	63.2	54.3	8.8	1	0	4	8	17	24	20	11	6	2	0
08:00		119	60.8	51.7	10.2	3	3	9	13	24	27	23	13	4	3	0
09:00		115	60.1	51.3	9.7	3	3	5	17	28	27	16	9	3	1	0
10:00		128	58.4	50.1	9.8	5	2	9	20	35	32	15	6	3	1	0
11:00		132	58.7	50.5	8.5	3	3	7	22	37	31	19	7	2	1	0
12:00		120	59.1	50.3	8.6	1	2	9	26	31	22	15	9	2	1	0
13:00		108	59.5	51	8.9	2	4	6	15	29	26	14	8	4	1	0
14:00		116	60.4	51.9	8.4	1	2	8	15	28	28	17	11	3	1	0
15:00		124	59.5	51.4	8.1	2	0	8	19	30	34	18	11	2	0	1
16:00		129	61.5	52.3	10.3	6	1	5	12	32	30	23	13	5	1	0
17:00		148	61.9	55.3	6.9	0	0	2	10	23	49	39	18	4	1	0
18:00		113	63.7	55.4	8.3	0	0	2	11	19	33	24	16	7	3	0
19:00		63	64.9	55.3	11.1	3	0	1	4	8	14	13	11	4	2	0
20:00		45	62.3	54.2	10.1	0	0	2	3	6	12	10	4	2	1	0
21:00		33	61.5	51.2	11.3	2	1	2	2	8	4	6	4	1	1	0
22:00		18	62.5	54	8.7	0	0	1	0	3	5	4	2	0	0	0
23:00		12	63.8	56.1	6.9	0	0	0	0	1	3	3	2	0	0	0
12H,7-19		1446	60.5	51.9	8.8	27	20	74	188	333	363	243	132	45	16	1
16H,6-22		1637	60.8	52.1	9	34	23	84	204	365	403	277	156	56	21	1
18H,6-24		1667	60.8	52.1	9	34	23	85	204	369	411	284	160	56	21	1
24H,0-24		1709	60.9	52.2	9	34	24	86	207	373	417	291	163	57	21	2
Am		11:00 -		03:00 -		09:15	10:45	08:15	11:00	11:00	10:45	07:45	07:45	06:45	08:45	08:15
Peak		132 -		62.8 -		6	4	9	22	36	34	26	13	7	2	1
Pm		16:45	19:00	18:45	21:00	16:00	13:15	12:00	12:00	13:45	17:00	17:00	17:00	16:45	18:30	17:30
Peak		149	64.9	56.1	11.3	6	4	9	26	34	49	38	18	7	4	1

Collated from 15 minute interval data

Created at 08:02:34 on 11 Sep 2019