

**Name of meeting:** Cabinet Committee - Local Issues

**Date:** 22 November 2023

**Title of report:** Objection to the proposed extension of the 30mph speed limit on A644 Huddersfield Road, Mirfield.

**Purpose of report:** To consider two objections received to: 30mph extension on Huddersfield Road, Mirfield

<b>Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £500k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Key Decision - Is it in the <a href="#">Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)</a></b>	<b>No</b>
<b>The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> &amp; name</b>	<b>David Shepard – 30.10.2023</b>
<b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director Finance?</b>	<b>Isabel Brittain – 26.10.2023</b>
<b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?</b>	<b>Julie Muscroft – 27.10.2023</b>
<b>Cabinet member <a href="#">portfolio</a></b>	<b>Councillor Moses Crook</b>

**Electoral wards affected:** Mirfield

**Ward councillors consulted:** Yes

**Public or private:** Public

**Has GDPR been considered:** Yes

## 1. Summary

Outline planning permission has been granted for the demolition of existing buildings and erection of Class E retail unit, access, car parking, servicing, landscaping, and associated works at the site of Kenmore Caravans Ltd, 119, Huddersfield Road Mirfield, WF14 9DA.

These documents can also be viewed online at the Planning Services website under planning reference 2019/92221.

- 1.2 Planning condition No. 6. of that permission stated that 'Notwithstanding the submitted information, a detailed scheme for the provision of a right turn lane from Huddersfield Road into the site and new pedestrian refuges on Huddersfield Road that is based on drawing number 15151-101 Revision D shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before development commences. The scheme shall include construction specifications, white lining, signing, surface finishes and transport regulation orders together with an independent Safety Audit covering all aspects of the work. All of the agreed works shall be implemented before any part of the development is first brought into use.
- 1.3 The works proposed (Appendix 1) include:
  - The widening of the Huddersfield Road to provide a right turn lane into the development.
  - The provision of 2 no. pedestrian refuges
  - The provision of 2 no TRO - one to restrict vehicle parking in the vicinity of the new access and one to reduce the speed limit at the new access from 40mph to 30mph, by relocating the current 30 mph speed limit further along the Huddersfield Road so that it encompasses the proposed new access and pedestrian refuges.

## 2 Information required to take a decision.

- 2.1 The current speed limit on Huddersfield Road is 40mph from its junction with A62 Leeds Road at Cooper Bridge to a point 91 metres west of Doctor Lane just prior to Mirfield Town Centre.
- 2.2 The speed limit change proposed would extend the 30mph from its current location for a distance of 210 metres in a westerly direction (away from Mirfield Town Centre) to encompass the proposed new right turn lane, development access and pedestrian refuges.
- 2.3 The developer has committed, through the planning process and via a Section 278 agreement to progress the traffic regulation orders in advance of the highway alterations so that they can utilise the safety benefits of the reduced speed limit during construction.
- 2.4 The speed limit change proposals, as shown on Appendix 1 were formally advertised between 31 August 2023 and 30 September 2023. During this period two objections were received from local ward councillors. They are not objecting to the speed limit change itself, rather objecting because they do not believe the speed limit change goes far enough.

**Objection 1:** “As you will be aware I travel extensively on our road network, and with this in mind I have considered this section of the A644. After passing the maltings we have two major industrial sites with limited visibility, the junction exiting Stocks Bank Road onto the A644 the visibility is so limited due to the angular shape of the junction is terrible, it’s so blind that you have to stop and twist your neck around at an almost impossible angle to see the traffic travelling towards Mirfield, and even with this in mind there is a rather large blind spot to the visibility from your right. I have often thought that this junction is so blind that it ought to be a Stop junction rather than a give way.

There are frequent right turns into Wood Lane and the entrance to this road is very narrow, very often when the Pear Tree public house is busy people park their cars along this section of road right up the junction of Wood Lane reducing visibility,

When there are either practice sessions or football matches at Battyeford playing fields, parents park along this section of road for several hundred yards. This makes the road very narrow at 40mph speeds.

John Cottons is always a busy site with many HGV’s entering and leaving the site. I understand that Cottons have applied for planning permission to extend the site into the old waterworks. John Cotton’s is a major employer for Mirfield, and I would like to see the business to thrive. But the application will bring more HGVs onto the A644.

I’m not one for reducing speed limits unnecessarily but having reviewed my many journeys along this section of road I would support extending the 30mph all the way along to the traffic lights at Cooper Bridge. I do not believe that this will impact on journey times due to the lengthy queues at both the traffic lights, and at Cooper Bridge roundabout. In fact, a lower speed limit may even contribute to lesser queuing time at Cooper Bridge.”

**Objection 2:** “I wish to object to the TRO, which I feel fails to offer the standard of speed reduction and road safety to the wider area which one may expect.

I feel that by Kirklees assessing against speed surveys (which have not been fully shared with members and the public) which do not take into account the changes proposed it is a false picture and runs the risk of repeating the failure seen at the Fountain junction where there was no holistic view of traffic changes.

Despite the strap line of councillors at the heart I do not feel members views when representing the wishes of our community reflect this statement”

In response to both objections, that are similar in content and concern:

The highway environment along the A644, between A644 junction with A62 at Cooper Bridge, and Oddfellows Hall, is 40mph. Where the environment changes, with more side roads, roadside activity and pedestrian movements, the speed limit reduces to 30mph. These speed limits were assessed as part of the Kirklees Speed Limit review and deemed to be appropriate for their environment.

Adding in a new access point and pedestrian islands into the 40-mph section would not be appropriate, or safe, and as a result the developer was charged with amending the speed limit to the more appropriate 30mph, where the environment is being changed to facilitate their development. There will not however be any physical

environmental changes to the rest of the A644, so amending the speed limit, as requested by both objectors, is inappropriate and not in keeping with the ethos of “Setting Local speed limits” guidance.

Add to that, the Personal Injury Collision [‘PIC’] record along the 40mph section is very good, with only 5 PICs occurring during the past five-years. The PIC Rate [per billion-vehicle-miles] over the past 5 years is less than ¼ of the National Average Rate for this type of road (*Reported Road Casualties Great Britain*; RAS10002 – Urban ‘A’ Roads), strongly supporting the view that it is operating safely.

Whilst the observation that congestion holds back speeds for much of the time is accepted, there is no safety case for incurring delays with a lower limit when congestion is not being experienced. All 5 of the historical PICs occurred during working weekdays, most in AM/PM peak periods. There is no evidence of PIC issues arising from drivers speeding when traffic flows reduce.

### **3. Implications for the Council**

3.1 **Working with people** - The proposed works are considered necessary to reduce traffic speeds in vicinity of the proposed new development.

3.2 **Working with Partners** – Not applicable

3.3 **Place based Working** – Not applicable

3.4 **Climate Change and Air Quality** – These proposals will not have a detrimental impact on Air Quality or Climate Change.

3.5 **Improving outcomes for children**- These proposals are aimed at reducing traffic speeds in order to make the road safer for all users, including children, in the vicinity of the new development.

#### **3.6 Other implications (HR/Legal/Financial etc)**

There is a cost to the Council of £6,262.71 to process the necessary legal Traffic Regulation Order and this has been funded by the developer. The developer will also pay for the signing changes if the traffic regulation order progresses, as well as all physical highway works and re-location of the speed camera here

### **4. Consultees and their opinions**

Statutory consultees were consulted on these proposals on 19 July 2023 with no comments received other than the issues raised above by local ward councillors.

### **5. Next steps and timelines**

Cabinet Committee Local Issues to consider the objections raised during the formal advertising period for the extension to the 30mph and the consequent changes to the start point of the 40mph.

If Cabinet Committee Local Issues chooses to overrule the objections received the scheme will be implemented as advertised.

If Cabinet Committee choose to uphold the objection, then the speed limit cannot be repositioned in relation to the new development access, the design criteria for the development access, right turn lane and pedestrian islands will need to be re-visited, the proposed benefit in the reduction in the speed limit will not be realised.

## **6. Officer recommendations and reasons**

Officer recommendation is that the objection to the amendments to the existing speed limit on A644 Mirfield be overruled, and the proposals implemented as advertised.

### **Reason**

That the proposed change to the 30mph is to allow the location and design of the new development access and its proposed pedestrian refuges to fall within an appropriate speed limit with a suitable distance, including a buffer zone, beyond the start of the 30mph.

The existing length of Huddersfield Road has been independently assessed as being suitable for this type of road and there are no proposed environmental changes that would alter that assessment, and as a result it is appropriate that it remains as 40mph.

## **7. Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendations**

The Portfolio Holder supports officer recommendations to implement the scheme as designed.

## **8. Contact officer**

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## **9. Service Director responsible**

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