

MINUTES OF THE **SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL** HELD ON **WEDNESDAY 28th OCTOBER 2020** AT 7.00 P.M. ONLINE VIA ZOOM

PRESENT:

Councillors R Jenks (Mayor) Presiding
M Joyce (Deputy Mayor)

Councillors P Bullivant D Howe
Mrs C Bunday C Jenks
D Corney-Walker Mrs A Jones
C Davies C N Parker
R Hall M Pilkington
R Hayes M E Ryan
M Hocking Mrs L Sheffield

By Invitation: County Councillor Mrs Jackie Hook
County Councillor Gordon Hook
Simon Garner – Project Manager County Transport Review
Christopher Rook – Traffic Management Devon County Council
Chris Parkes – Traffic Management Devon County Council
Chris Boston – Devon Somerset Fire & Rescue Service
Darren Creed – Devon Somerset Fire & Rescue Service

In attendance: Philip Rowe – Town Clerk
Sally Henley – Town Development Manager
Nigel Canham – Communications Advisor
Alexandra Robinson – Principal Administrator

582. WELCOME FROM THE MAYOR

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting including invited guests from Devon County Council (DCC) and the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (DSFRS).

The Mayor made an unreserved apology to the Council, in respect of a comment regarding bullying, made to the local press in a report on the proposed trial 20 mph scheme for Newton Abbot. The apology was recorded and accepted by the Council.

583. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Mrs Karen Crout and Deputy Town Clerk, Ms Sam Scott.

584. INTERESTS

None declared.

585. 20 M.P.H. SPEED RESTRICTION IN NEWTON ABBOT

The Mayor outlined the structure of the meeting to ensure that invited guests had the opportunity to update and provide clarity to the Council on aspects of the proposed scheme. The Mayor reminded Members of the key documents, previously circulated, that would provide reference during the meeting.

A. WM CHRIS BOSTON DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

The Mayor invited Chris Boston, Watch Manager for Bovey Tracy Fire Station and Lead Officer responsible for Road Safety to comment on the proposed scheme and highlight the points made by Group Commander Shaun Davis of DSFRS. WM Chris Boston raised the following key points:

- Letter from Group Commander Davis outlined the ability for on-call staff to respond in a timely manner in a 20 mph zone;
- Newton Abbot Fire Station was staffed by on-call firefighters who held primary positions in other roles (examples included carpenters, builders and mechanics);
- The firefighters had to respond within the law and have no exemptions to the Road Traffic Act;
- Firefighters need to meet the Emergency Response Standard (ERS) within five minutes; and
- Concern that firefighters would not be able to meet the ERS of 5 minutes in a 20 mph zone.

However, WM Chris Boston then added his personal opinion as the Lead Officer for Road Safety for DSFRS and highlighted the following key points:

- Road safety has to be a priority;
- Vulnerable road users in built up areas need protecting;
- Would support a scheme that makes roads safer; overall
- Would wish to achieve safer roads in Newton Abbot.

The Mayor thanked WM Chris Boston for his summary and invited questions and comment from Members, who raised the following key points:

- ❖ The impact on the ERS, especially among those firefighters living or working furthest afield at the time of the call-out;
- ❖ The ability to meet ERS targets for both the first and second appliance (Fire Engine) from Newton Abbot Fire Station;
- ❖ The Fire Station has not always met the ERS of 5 minutes under current circumstances;
- ❖ Would Firefighters be permitted to use a 'flashing light' applied to their personal vehicles to identify themselves to other road users in the event of a call-out?
- ❖ Would firefighters be given exemptions to the Road Traffic Act to respond to call-outs and meet the ERS of 5 minutes?
- ❖ Ability to comply with Royal Society for the Protection of Accidents (RoSPA) and meet their guidelines within proposed scheme;
- ❖ Pinch Points on roads within Newton Abbot;
- ❖ Slowing traffic sufficiently may improve overall flow of traffic through the town;
- ❖ Proportion of accidents/collisions related to speed as opposed to other causation;
- ❖ Education for all generations using technological devices in proximity of roads – reinforce 'Stop Look Listen';
- ❖ Learn to Live, virtual presentation and road safety course reached all year 12 students across the region;

- ❖ Data recorded where police attend collision but not all collisions are reported or attended;
- ❖ Reduction in speed from 30 to 20 mph will have impact on road safety;
- ❖ Retained Firefighters cannot balance between ERS targets and service delivery and concern at how Fire & Rescue Service will meet 5 minute standard; and
- ❖ Accidents or collisions at lower speeds will have less impact.

The Mayor thanked WM Chris Boston for taking questions from Members and read the letter from Group Manager Shaun Davis DSFRS to the Council; in which he noted that Newton Abbot Fire Station was one of the busiest stations in Devon with two appliances and the team were on an 'on-call' contract. He expressed his concern that if the speed on roads were to be reduced to 20 mph that the time to respond to incidents would be increased and the service could not be provided as it was at present. WM Chris Boston acknowledged the comments made by Group Manager Shaun Davis and reiterated that he had expressed his own personal views as the Lead Officer for Road Safety.

B. SIMON GARNER – CONSULTANT TO DCC TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

The Mayor welcomed Mr Garner once more and invited him to provide clarification on the scope of the proposed scheme, whether it included 'A&B' roads as well as residential roads in the town. He further sought clarification on whether the defined area included Ogwell Cross and Hele Park, Newton Abbot.

Mr Garner reported that he had discussed the concerns raised by DSFRS Group Commander and had invited him to join the Working Group to allow the Fire and Rescue Service to contribute and be involved in the consultation process. Mr Garner highlighted the following points in relation to the proposed scheme for Newton Abbot:

- Experience based on global research and extensive projects within UK;
- 85% of collisions in Newton Abbot occur on A&B roads;
- Inclusion of A&B roads in the scheme provided the greatest benefits where the most dangerous drivers (15% of those exceeding the speed limit) will reduce their speeds significantly;
- Increase in cyclists and walking particularly for short journeys;
- Local communities using local shops rather than car journeys;
- Recommend the trial scheme reach as wide an area as possible to allow sufficient data to be captured and measured against other existing schemes in UK; and
- The specific area does not need to be immediately defined and will be clearer following the detailed consultation and engagement across the town.

The Mayor thanked Mr Garner for his summary and clarification and invited questions from Members who raised the following key points:

- ❖ Sought clarity and confirmation of the scope of the proposed scheme;
- ❖ Suggestion that A&B roads be included without consultation or approval would be wrong for Newton Abbot and must be subject to full investigation;

- ❖ Assurance that following the agreed consultation process it would allow the scope of the proposed scheme to be (re)defined;
- ❖ Ensure the support and involvement of all stakeholders in the consultation process;
- ❖ Lowering the prevailing road speeds, will lower the risk of collision and lower the risk of injury where collisions do occur;
- ❖ Improved traffic flow can increase capacity on the roads;
- ❖ Potential reduction in air pollution due to improved traffic flow;
- ❖ Residents feel safer within communities as speeds are reduced their behaviour alters, allowing children to play near roads, increased pedestrians and cyclists;
- ❖ Police have limited resources to enforce speed restrictions;
- ❖ Previous media coverage may have mis-guided the extent of the proposed scheme, but the planned consultation will allow the area to be defined fully;
- ❖ If largest proportion of collisions occur on A&B roads these should be the focus of speed reduction;
- ❖ Clarification of whether the trial scheme would extend beyond Newton Abbot into neighbouring parishes and confirmed that it would not;
- ❖ Compliance by road users;
- ❖ Enforcement within existing schemes in the UK, comparisons between Bristol and Brighton;
- ❖ Local residents leading by example and amplifying the benefits of the changes;
- ❖ Consultation and community engagement impact on the success of the implemented scheme; and
- ❖ Adherence to RoSPA guidelines and a system that deviates from RoSPA standards for road safety.

The Mayor thanked Mr Simon Garner for his extensive update and for taking questions from Member.

C. CHRISTOPHER ROOK – TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT DCC

The Mayor welcomed Mr Rook, Traffic Management Team Leader for Devon County Council once more and invited him to update Members on Devon County Council's approach to the consultation process and how that would provide a consensus for a scheme within Newton Abbot.

Mr Rook advised Members that the success or failure of a scheme was based upon the involvement and investment by the community. He intended there to be an open approach, based upon hard data detailing collisions; qualitative data about behavioural changes and noted that the consultation would not be launched until the project was able to fully engage with the community. Mr Rook noted the impact of the COVID restrictions on their ability to engage fully with the community; the opportunity to offer open discussions in community centres, schools and local venues would not be possible at this time and careful planning would be needed to make provision for suitable alternatives to ensure all aspects of the community were reached. Mr Rook emphasised that the scheme would not be imposed on Newton Abbot and if it were found to be unsuitable it would be offered to an alternative community elsewhere.

The Mayor thanked Mr Rook for his assurances and invited questions and comments from Members, who raised the following key points:

- ❖ Clarity of vision for the scheme;
- ❖ Benefit of having alternative options for implementation as part of the consultation;
- ❖ A Heat Map identifying key areas in need of speed reduction based upon data gathered during the feasibility study;
- ❖ Achievement may not be reduction in compliance but the overall reduction in severity of collisions when they do occur;
- ❖ Cost of implementation should not be a factor in selecting a scheme appropriate for Newton Abbot;
- ❖ The scheme must be fit for purpose and by agreement for the residents and businesses of Newton Abbot;
- ❖ Concern at potential need to install multiple traffic speed cameras to assist with police enforcement but this was recorded as unlikely;
- ❖ Design of scheme would need to be sustainable without reliance on police enforcement;
- ❖ Importance to maintain traffic flow and connection to the major arterial roads from Newton Abbot as a hub between Plymouth, Poole and Southampton;
- ❖ Benefit of background concerns raised by consultees in relation to schemes elsewhere; and
- ❖ The percentage of residents within the UK living within a 20 mph zone, the information for which was not available at the meeting.

The Mayor thanked Mr Rook for taking questions from Members and for his assurances about the preparation for consultation within Newton Abbot.

D. COUNTY COUNCILLOR MRS JACKIE HOOK – CHAIRMAN TRAFFIC SPEED TASK GROUP

The Mayor again welcomed County and District Councillor Mrs Jackie Hook to the meeting and reminded Members of her role as Chairman of the Traffic Speed Task Group. He referred to the report dated June 2019, previously circulated, which summarised the key findings from its research on road safety. There being no initial questions from Members; the Mayor invited Councillor Mrs Jackie Hook to comment on the proposed scheme for Newton Abbot.

Councillor Mrs Jackie Hook noted that the proposed scheme was in its very early stages and that the Task Group had met monthly since January in accordance with the restrictions placed upon everyone due to the COVID Pandemic. Councillor Mrs Hook was pleased that the Devon County Council Cabinet; Teignbridge District Council Executive and the Town Council had all expressed their support in principle for the proposed scheme. The next stage would be to look at implementation, but this would be subject to a full consultation process and community engagement across Newton Abbot. Councillor Mrs Hook noted that the inclusion of main roads was subject to debate and that she did not wish to refer to the scheme as a trial as it was likely to remain in some form whilst it may change over time, in keeping with examples such as Bath.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Mrs Hook for her brief update subject to limited time and invited Members to comment, who raised the following key points:

- ❖ Concern expressed at responsibility to residents and businesses should the scheme be unwelcome within the town;

- ❖ Assurance that Devon County Council as the Highway Authority would manage issues without burden on the Town Council;
- ❖ Management plan and timeline for the proposed scheme;
- ❖ It would be necessary to compete the consultation, engagement and legislative changes to the Traffic Regulations Order, therefore implementation is likely to be in 2022;
- ❖ Invitation for a representative of Town Council to sit on the DCC Implementation Group to ensure communication and a collaborative approach;
- ❖ DCC web page dedicated to the proposed scheme to provide regular updates throughout the process;
- ❖ Cost of implementation would be met from existing DCC budget without impact on the taxpayers of Newton Abbot;
- ❖ Education and advise to encourage responsible cycle use;
- ❖ Cost of scheme balanced with cost of traffic collisions; and
- ❖ The implementation of Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) would be unlikely.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Mrs Jackie Hook for taking questions and for her input along with all the other guests who had given advise and clarity on the proposed scheme for Newton Abbot.

586. **TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE – DCC IMPLEMENTATION GROUP**

Councillor Chris Jenks referred to DCC invitation for a representative of the Town Council to sit on the Implementation Group. Councillor Jenks welcomed the opportunity to ensure communication among fellow Councillors in the same way as had been achieved for the Newton's Place Project.

Councillor Mike Joyce was nominated for the role of Town Council representative based upon his experience and there being no other nominees, accordingly it was:

RESOLVED that Councillor Mike Joyce be nominated as the Town Council representative on the Devon Council Implementation Group for the proposed 20 mph scheme in Newton Abbot.

587. **REVIEW OF PROPOSED 20 MPH SCHEME FOR NEWTON ABBOT**

The Mayor acknowledged the valuable additional information provided by the invited guests earlier in the meeting and invited Members to comment further on the proposed 20 mph scheme for Newton Abbot.

In light of the additional information and clarity provided by the guest speakers, Members raised the following points:

- ❖ The consultation process as proposed would provide a better outcome for the town;
- ❖ Members were unanimously in support for the scheme in principle and were open to the outcome of the consultation and engagement with the community; and
- ❖ Members felt the consultation needed to be as broad as possible to ensure a consensus of opinion.

Following a lengthy discussion, accordingly it was;

RESOLVED that the Town Council supports the concept of reviewing local speed restrictions within Newton Abbot and proposes a wide-ranging consultation to identify appropriate measures for Newton Abbot.

Mayor