

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Sutherland County Committee – 9TH February 2016

Agenda Item	8.
Report No	SCC/04/16

Request by Community for speed limit reduction from 40 mph to 30 mph on A836 through Edderton

Report by Community Services Area Manager

SUMMARY

This report invites Members to consider a request for a 30 mph Speed Limit on the A836 through Edderton, with the recommendation from officers to reject the request. In addition, Members are invited to agree to the introduction of a standardisation/upgrade of 40 mph repeater signs within the existing 40 mph limit.

1. Background

- 1.1. A request was made in September 2014 by Edderton Community Council, through the local Member, for the speed limit through Edderton to be reduced from 40 mph to 30 mph.

2. Information

- 2.1. A similar request was also made in 2010, which led to a traffic speed count being undertaken. The results of this speed count showed a mean speed of traffic, going through the village, of 34 mph.
- 2.2. Following this most recent request for a speed limit reduction, a secondary traffic speed count was undertaken in early 2015 and the mean traffic speed was again shown to be in the mid-thirties mph. This would indicate that the present limit of 40mph through Edderton is appropriate.
- 2.3. An assessment covering all elements required under Setting Local Speed Limits: Guidance for Local Authorities: ETLCD Circular 1/2006 has been undertaken and the result is that a reduction of the speed limit from 40 mph to 30 mph does not comply with current guidance.
- 2.4. Under the Council's Scheme of Delegation, the power to make a permanent Road Traffic Order sits with the Sutherland County Committee.

3. Response

- 3.1 Speed limits must be set in accordance with national guidelines to ensure consistency across the UK. The Council's current speed limit policy states that speed limits should be set using the criteria in Scottish Office Circular No 1/1993. This circular has since been superseded by Scottish Executive Circular No 1/2006.

- 3.2 Both of these circulars state that speed limits need to reflect the road layout and characteristics. Drivers will expect and respect lower speed limits where they can see potential hazards - for example on roads outside schools, in residential areas or villages and in shopping streets.
- 3.3 Although there are a number of junctions, houses, a business and a church along the section of road through Edderton, the level of development along this road is not sufficient to meet the criteria in either of the above circulars at which a 30mph speed limit could be considered. This is highlighted and detailed within the appendix attached to this report.
- 3.4 It is therefore considered that a 40mph speed limit is suitable for this section of road and that it would be inappropriate to introduce a 30mph limit. A 30mph limit would not be in accordance with the Council's Speed Limits Policy or national guidelines.
- 3.5 Applying speed limits which lie out with the guidance, will lead to a setting of precedent which could, potentially, be used elsewhere in the Highland Area to promote inappropriate speed limits. Indeed, this can extend to cases out with the Highland Area where requests for inappropriate reductions in speed limits cite Edderton as an example where the national guidelines were not adhered to.
- 3.6 Should the existing 40 mph restriction be retained, then it is proposed to bring the current 40 mph repeater signs up to standard size and correct location.

4. Policy Implications

- 4.1. As per sections 3.3 to 3.5 above, if the Committee were of a mind to approve this request for a 30 mph restriction this would create a precedent and be out with current policy and National Guidelines.

5. Implications

- 5.1 Additional repeater signs will be funded from the Council's Sutherland Area revenue budget.
- 5.2 Any reduction to the current speed restriction may lead to a further request for physical traffic calming measures in the future. Such traffic calming measures are expensive and may well lead to further expense for the Service or Council.
- 5.3 There are no other known Legal, Rural, Equality, Gaelic, Climate Change/Carbon Clever or rural implications.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are invited to:

- i. reject a request for a 30 mph Speed Limit on the A836 through Edderton;
and, as a result
- ii. agree to the introduction of a standardisation of 40 mph repeater signs within
the 40 mph limit.

Designation: Community Services Area Manager – Caithness & Sutherland

Date: 21 January 2016

Report Author: Campbell Stewart

Background Papers: The Highland Council Speed Limits Policy
SOID Circular No 1/93: Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (Sections 81-85) – Speed Limits – Guidance for Road Authorities
ETLLD Circular No 1/2006: Setting Local Speed Limits

Appendices: Results of Assessment tagged at end of report.

Edderton Proposed Speed Limits

A836 Speed Limit Review

Framework Based on 'Setting Local Speed Limits: Guidance for Local Authorities: ETLCD Circular 1/2006' published by The Scottish Executive

Issue	Comment	Determination on Specific Issues
Road Function	Strategic with local access	Isn't suitable for reduced speed limit
Road Geometry Road Width = 6.0m nominal width Design Speed = 100B (60 mph/96 kph) Bends = Straight Junctions = 2 no Accesses = 7 no between 40mph limit	Sightlines taken from ACAD & OS Landline mapping. Design speed is based on localised distance 1Km <i>centred</i> on crossroads.	Road has a Design Speed of 60 mph, therefore the current restriction of 40 mph is already a reduction.
Road Environment Rural	See comments relating to 'village' classification below. Edderton is located on the A836. There are count down markers for the 40mph speed limit, speed restriction repeater signs, gateway feature signs and a SID sign within the 40 mph restriction.	Under national guidance reduction of speed limit from 40 mph to 30 mph not justified.
Development Although Edderton has greater than 20 houses, the majority do not front onto the A836.	With reference to TAL 1/04 Edderton does not fall into the 'village' category and a therefore 30mph speed limit is not appropriate.	Reduction of speed limit on the A836 to 30 mph through Edderton is not justified

<p>Traffic Composition Traffic Survey Oct 2010 Traffic Survey Feb 2015</p>	<p>The mean speeds in both directions are 34 mph which is below the current 40mph limit. Very similar results to 2010 Survey.</p>	<p>40 mph speed limit is appropriate in this location.</p>
<p>Accident & Casualty Savings</p>	<p>Accidents There are no recorded accidents on A836 in the vicinity of Edderton for the 5 years to May 2015.</p>	<p>Accidents statistics do not justify reduction of speed limit.</p>
<p>Traffic Flows & Emissions</p>	<p>No effect on traffic flows will occur should a speed limit of either 40 or 30mph be imposed.</p>	<p>Speed limit reduction would see no change to traffic flows.</p>
<p>Journey Times for Motor Vehicles</p>	<p>A reduction to 30mph over 598m (length of current restriction) will result in insignificant addition to the journey time Note: Current guidelines state minimum length of a restriction be not less than 600m.</p>	<p>Speed limit reduction would not significantly affect journey times</p>
<p>Journey Time Reliability</p>	<p>No change in journey time reliability expected.</p>	<p>No impact</p>
<p>Environmental Impact</p>	<p>A reduction in speed would see a decrease in CO2 emissions, although this is considered to be minimal. Signage would be reduced as repeater signs would no longer be permitted.</p>	<p>Speed limit would result in a slight environmental cost.</p>
<p>Public Anxiety</p>		
<p>Severance by Fast Moving Traffic</p>	<p>Edderton is severed by traffic on A836, but the traffic is not fast moving</p>	<p>Speed limit reduction would not significantly affect ability to cross A836.</p>
<p>Conditions/Facilities for Vulnerable Road Users</p>	<p>A Safer Routes to School scheme was carried out</p>	

	in 2005. A SID (Smilie face) has also been installed on the A836.	
Cost of Engineering Works	Maintain 40mph – minor (£1,000) Introduce 30 mph – significant ((£25,000 min.)	40 mph – renew repeater signage 30 mph – major engineering/road re-alignment
Visual Impact of Works	Minimal	Signage would be reduced if 30 mph limit was introduced.
Enforcement	Current speeds would adhere to 40mph restriction. Reduction to 30 mph would more than likely require enforcement.	To reduce the limit to 30 mph will require enforcement by Police Scotland.