

Rights of Way Committee

Report Title:	B1508 30 mph & 40 mph Speed Limit and Revocation Order, Bures St Mary and Little Cornard
Meeting Date:	Monday 10 October 2016
Lead Councillor(s):	Councillor James Finch (Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport)
Local Councillor(s):	Councillor James Finch
Director:	Geoff Dobson, Director of Resource Management
Assistant Director or Head of Service:	Alan Thorndyke, Head of Highway Network Management
Author:	David Stiff. Central Area Highways Manager. Tel: 01473 341477. david.stiff@suffolk.gov.uk

Brief summary of report

- To consider an objection to part of the advertised traffic regulation order (TRO) for the introduction of a continuous 40mph speed limit on the B1508, between the parishes of Bures St Mary and Little Cornard.

Action recommended

- That the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport be recommended to approve the making of the Suffolk County Council (Parishes of Bures St Mary and Little Cornard) (B1508 Bures Road, St Edmunds Hill and Sudbury Road) (30mph and 40mph Speed Limit and Revocation) Order 201- as advertised.

Reason for recommendation

- The purpose of the advertised Order is to improve road safety on the B1508 by providing a continuous and consistent 40mph speed limit between the existing 30mph speed limits in the parishes of Little Cornard and Bures St Mary. (The TRO as advertised is included at Appendix A).

Alternative options

- Reduce the length of the proposed 40mph speed limit by omitting a section north of the existing 40mph in Little Cornard.

Who will be affected by this decision?

- Local residents (including farmers), their visitors and road users travelling between Little Cornard and Bures St Mary.

Main body of report

Background

6. The B1508 is a rural, single carriageway road which connects the existing 30mph speed limits in the parishes of Little Cornard and Bures St Mary. Between these speed restrictions lies an existing 40mph speed limit (approximately 1.1km in length), with the road subject to the national speed limit on either side.
7. To improve road safety Suffolk County Council proposes to introduce one continuous 40mph speed limit between the existing 30mph speed limits in the parishes of Little Cornard and Bures St Mary.
8. The proposed measures are intended to encourage motorists to travel at speeds suitable to the road layout and visibility; also to improve road safety by removing the requirement for frequent changes in traffic speed and by encouraging steadier, more consistent driving by motorists.
9. On 21 September 2015 the Speed Limit Cases Panel approved the proposal to introduce a continuous 40mph speed limit on the B1508.
10. A short length of 30mph restriction in Bures St Mary was included in the TRO to correct an anomaly in a previous Order.
11. The drawing detailing the advertised proposals is shown in Appendix B.

Consultation

12. All statutory bodies were consulted between 4 and 28 March 2016, but no concerns were raised in relation to the advertised TRO.
13. Little Cornard Parish Council and Bures St Mary Parish Council both fully support the proposal to introduce a continuous 40mph speed limit.
14. During the statutory consultation period, Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Council (BMSDC) forwarded the proposals on to all of its employees. This resulted in two people objecting to the proposals in principle.
15. The TRO was formally advertised between 9th May and 1 June 2016.
16. The two people mentioned at Item 14 (above) were contacted, informed of advertisement and given the opportunity to make a formal objection. Neither person responded.

Objection

17. One formal representation was received in relation to the advertised TRO, from a resident of the B1508 Sudbury Road (a copy of the correspondence is included at Appendix C).
18. The resident commended the proposal to extend the existing 40mph southwards, to join up with the existing 30mph speed limit at Bures St Mary, explaining that the junction with Hollow Lane was particularly dangerous.
19. The same resident objected to extending the 40mph northwards to meet the existing 30mph speed limit at Little Cornard. The reasons given are summarised as follows:

- a) The resident considers the most dangerous bend to be that first bend after the end of the Great Cornard 30mph area (approximately 80-100 yards from the limit). The resident suggests that it may be more effective to extend the 30mph to the other side of the bend, rather than to introduce a 40mph speed limit.
- b) The resident suggests that the proposed continuous 40mph speed limit may be more likely to lead to a decrease in driver concentration and therefore may not deliver the improvement to road safety that is intended. The resident explains that slow moving agricultural machinery often uses the B1508, particularly during the summer months and is concerned that the proposed 40mph along this stretch could exacerbate driver frustration. The resident suggests that the remainder of the northern section should either be retained as national speed limit, or reduced to 50mph.

Officer comments

20. During the last 5 years of available collision data (01/03/11-01/03/16) there have been a total of 10 recorded road traffic collisions between Chapel Lane, Little Cornard and the existing 40mph speed limit north of Bures St Mary. The majority of these collisions are clustered approximately 325m before the start of the Little Cornard 30mph speed limit.
21. In January 2016 Suffolk County Council undertook safety improvements at this location, including new signing to provide effective warning to motorists of the hazards associated with this section of road.
22. It should be noted that all of the recorded collisions mentioned in Item 20 (above) occurred when the road surface was either wet or damp, with many attributed to loss of control on a bend. For this reason it is considered that a continuous 40mph speed limit is preferable to extending the Little Cornard 30mph limit and imposing a higher speed limit to the remainder of this section of the B1508. The length of road adjacent to the existing Little Cornard 30mph does not give the appearance of a road subject to a 30mph speed limit, with little roadside development. The proposed speed limit of 40mph throughout this section of the B1508 should reduce the potential for accidents of this nature, particularly on a rural road with many bends.
23. Between the Little Cornard 30mph and the existing 40mph there are a number of field and residential accesses, as well the junctions with Wyatt's Lane and Spout lane. The proposal to introduce a new 40mph speed limit in this area would assist motorists (especially drivers of agricultural vehicles) when leaving these premises.
24. There is little physical difference in the road layout or its nature between the existing 40mph limit and the proposed 40mph limit. A continuous 40mph speed limit between Little Cornard and Bures St Mary will create more consistency in this part of the highway network.
25. To conclude, it is recommended that the Order be approved as advertised in order to provide the optimum road safety benefit.

Human Rights Act 1998

24. The objections need to be considered in the light of the Human Rights Act 1998, s. 6 of which prohibits public authorities from acting in a way which is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. Two specific convention rights may be relevant:
 - a) Entitlement to a fair Entitlement to a fair and public hearing in the determination of a person's civil and political rights (Convention Article 6) which includes property rights and can include opportunities to be heard in the consultation process; and
 - b) Peaceful enjoyment of possessions (including property), subject to the State's right to enforce such laws as it deems necessary to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest (First Protocol Article 1).
25. Other rights may also be affected including individuals' rights to respect for private and family life and home.
26. Regard must be had to the fair balance that has to be struck between the competing interests of the individual and of the community as a whole. Both public and private interests are to be taken into account in the exercise of the Council's powers and duties as a traffic authority. Any interference with a Convention right must be necessary and proportionate.
27. The Council is required to consider carefully the balance to be struck between individual rights and the wider public interest. In this case, officers consider that the interference with Convention rights, if there is any, will be justified in order to secure the significant benefits in improving access and road safety.

Sources of further information

- a) Appendix A – Advertised Traffic Regulation Order
- b) Appendix B – Drawing of advertised proposals
- c) Appendix C – Formal representation

APPENDIX A

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL (PARISHES OF BURES ST MARY AND LITTLE CORNARD) (B1508 BURES ROAD, ST EDMUNDS HILL AND SUDBURY ROAD) (30 MPH AND 40 MPH SPEED LIMIT AND REVOCATION) ORDER 201-

Suffolk County Council in exercise of its powers under Section 84(1) (a) and (2) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, as amended, (hereinafter referred to as "the Act of 1984") and of all other enabling powers, and with the permission of the Secretary of State for Transport, and after consultation with the Chief Officer of Police in accordance with Part III of Schedule 9 to the Act of 1984, hereby makes the following Order:

1. No person shall drive any vehicle at a speed exceeding 30 mph in any direction on the length of road specified in Schedule 1 of this Order.
2. No person shall drive any vehicle at a speed exceeding 40 mph in any direction on the length of road specified in Schedule 2 of this Order.
3. No speed limit imposed by this Order applies to vehicles falling within Regulation 3(4) of the Road Traffic Exemptions (Special Forces) (Variation and Amendment) Regulations 2011 when used in accordance with Regulation 3 (5) of those Regulations.
4. The provisions of the Suffolk County Council (Parish of Bures St Mary) (B1508 Sudbury Road) (40 mph Speed Limit) Order 2012 are hereby revoked.
5. This Order may be cited as the Suffolk County Council (Parishes of Bures St Mary and Little Cornard) (B1508 Bures Road, St Edmunds Road and Sudbury Road) (30 mph and 40 mph Speed Limit and Revocation) Order 201- and shall come into operation on

Date:

The COMMON SEAL OF SUFFOLK)
COUNTY COUNCIL was affixed)
in the presence of:)

(An authorised Officer of the Council)

SCHEDULE 1

Parish of Bures St Mary

30 mph Speed Limit

ROAD	DESCRIPTION
Sudbury Road (B1508)	From a point 459 metres north of the centre of its junction with St Edmunds Lane (U8616) in a northerly direction for a distance of 82 metres.

SCHEDULE 2

Parishes of Bures St Mary and Little Cornard

40 mph Speed Limit

ROAD	DESCRIPTION
Sudbury Road/ St Edmunds Hill/ Bures Road (B1508)	From a point on Sudbury Road 541 metres north of the centre of its junction with St Edmunds Lane (U8616) in a northerly, then north-westerly direction, through the remainder of Sudbury Road and St Edmunds Hill, to a point on Bures Road 230 metres south east of the centre of its junction with Chapel Lane (U8622), a total distance of approximately 4 kilometres.

From: Loudon Greenlees
Sent: 26 May 2016 10:02
To: Heather Miller
Subject: 40 MPH Speed limit on B1508 Bures to Great Cornard

Dear Ms Miller

I would like to start by advising that the copy of the notice placed on the speed limit sign at the Bures end of the current 40 mph limit was particularly unhelpful as it did not include any dates. I have however obtained a copy of the full document from the library in Sudbury.

I live on Sudbury Road very near to the Bures end of the current 40mph speed limit, about 80 yards up from the bottom of Hollow Lane. I would like to suggest the following:

- a. I believe that it would be very productive to extend the current 40 mph limit area from its current ending just north of Hollow Lane to the current end of the Bures St Mary 30mph limit. To my knowledge, since we moved to our current house in 1992 (24 years) there have been a number of accidents with cars being driven too fast around the bend at the bottom of Hollow Lane and spinning off the road either into the ditch at the side of the road or in one or two cases into our fields either through or (in one case) over the hedge. I believe that the Hollow Lane bend is probably the most dangerous on the whole stretch between Bures and Great Cornard and in most cases the accidents involved were relatively young and inexperienced drivers.

The introduction of the 40mph limit 4 or 5 years ago did very little to assist with this problem because it stops about 50 yards on the Great Cornard side of the Hollow Lane bend and, because the speed limit ends, motorists are given the impression that it is safe to drive at a faster speed which is definitely not the case. I feel that the continuation of the 40mph all the way to meet the Bures 30 mph limit might at least discourage drivers from speeding up before the Hollow Lane bend

Although there has been one other accident, which involved a fatality, about 15 years ago; this occurred much closer to the Bures St Mary 30 mph speed limit. An extension of the current 40mph limit as suggested above may help to prevent a repetition.

- b. I think that the second most dangerous bend is the first bend after the end of the Cornard 30 mph area (about 80-100 yards from the limit). Rather than

start a new 40mph at the end of the 30mph, I would suggest that it may be more effective to extend the 30mph to the other side of the bend.

- c. I am mystified as to why you think that you will achieve an “improvement in road safety by removing the requirement for frequent changes in traffic speed”. I believe that drivers are inclined to lose concentration when required to drive at the same relatively slow speed for extended periods. I also do not believe that two changes of speed limit over a distance of 2.5 miles (which you have shown as 4km) is “frequent” but I do believe that driving at 40mph for that distance is likely to risk a lack of driver concentration. Furthermore I believe that, as there is quite a lot of slow moving agricultural machinery traffic on the B1508, particularly in the summer months, drivers are more likely to get frustrated by being held up by this traffic as there are very few places where a car can overtake on this road, especially at 40mph. I therefore suggest that this section of the road could either be left at the National Speed Limit or be limited to 50 mph, at which speed it will be easier to overtake agricultural machinery, rather than to 40mph.

In conclusion, I recommend that

- i. the current 40mph limit be extended to the beginning of the Bures 30mph limit;
- ii. the current 30mph limit at Great Cornard be extended for about 100 yards to include the right hand bend just after the end of the current limit; and
- iii. The stretch in between the extended Cornard 30mph and the 40mph section be left at 60 mph (NSL) or be limited to 50mph.

Sadly I do not believe that whatever you decide to do, short of traffic calming devices which are almost certainly not appropriate on this road, will have any effect on the motorbikes that often drive up and down the road at weekends at speeds which seem to be substantially greater than 60mph.

Yours sincerely

Loudon Greenlees