

POSITION STATEMENT – 40MPH SPEED LIMIT ON A660 LEEDS ROAD, BRAMHOPE



- Leeds City Council has been subject to requests on a number of occasions to reduce the speed limit on the Bramhope section of the A660, from its current 40mph speed limit, to 30mph. Officers following the latest Department for Transport guidance note for setting local speed limits believe that the current 40mph is appropriate and are unable to support the request to reduce this speed limit, the reasons which are explained below.
- Leeds Road is an A-classified (A660) route, forming part of the strategic network for the whole metropolitan district. It is the major distributor route for the north of Leeds. As such, the level of traffic that uses the route on a day by basis is in line with this, with traffic surveys indicating over 16000 vehicle movements per day through the Bramhope section.
- The road geometry through Bramhope is very much in line with that expected of a strategic route. The road is wide and mostly straight with a deviation close to Glenmore Court and the bends by Church Hill providing a discernible change in alignment. Warning signage is provided to inform motorists of these hazards where appropriate. A central hatch marking runs along the full length from the Kings Road roundabout to the Church Hill bends, intending to narrow the effective carriageway to vehicles, which is a method of reducing speed. There are traffic islands within this hatching to act as a deterrent to potential overtaking manoeuvres, as well as providing a point for pedestrians to cross the road. The prevalent width of the carriageway is directly linked to the speed at which drivers will take on a road as the feeling of space allows a more comfortable driving experience, thus increasing speed and also therefore aligning the road to a higher speed limit.
- The private accesses that exit out onto Leeds Road are almost all protected by a grass verge area that results in vehicles not having to directly exit their property into the carriageway. This allows good visibility for the driver. The level of adjacent development is not prominent. The adjacent properties are generally set well back from the carriageway and are typically behind high walls and/or foliage. There are a number of adjoining side roads.
- The number of pedestrian movements in the area is very low, due to the low level of commercial premises along the Leeds Road that would attract such movements. Furthermore, for the same reason, there is a general lack of on-street parking.
- The existing traffic speeds as per a speed survey undertaken in 2016 give a 24 hour mean speed of 35.6mph with the vast majority travelling between 30mph and 40mph. When determining an appropriate speed limit, the existing vehicular speeds play an important part in that process. Drivers will drive to the conditions of the road and their speed is a direct indication of this. Whilst the mean speed is lower than the posted speed limit, it is nearly 20% higher than the lower 30mph speed limit.

DAILY VEHICULAR VOLUME	MEAN SPEED	TRAFFIC BETWEEN 30MPH – 40MPH	TRAFFIC BELOW 30MPH	TRAFFIC ABOVE 40MPH
17553	35.6mph	13993 (79.7%)	1485 (8.5%)	1920(10.9%)

- Traffic composition along the route is typically motorised vehicles of varying categories. Previous pedestrian counts show very low pedestrian movements. The A660 is noted as a popular route for cyclists, allowing them to access the more rural areas outside the north and north-western boundaries of the Leeds metropolitan district.
- On the A660, in the five year period from 2012 to date there had been nine slight accidents and one serious accident on the section between the Britannia Hotel entrance and Kings Road. The serious accident occurred in 2016 near to the Breary Lane junction, where a cyclist passing a stationary car was struck as the car door was opened into them. The nine 'slight' accidents were recorded by the Police as having the following reasons:
 1. Defective/ illegal tyres causing blow-out (1);
 2. Failed to look (4);
 3. Following too close (2);
 4. Learner or inexperienced driver (1);
 5. Swerved (1).

The failed to look accidents are all at junctions, where drivers have not given proper consideration to oncoming traffic before moving out into the carriageway, consequently colliding with oncoming or passing vehicles.

From March 2017 to June 2017, there have been a number of damage-only incidents at the bend by Church Hill, with one slight injury accident occurring also.

- All speed limits are set in accordance with guidance provided by the Department for Transport, specifically 'Setting Local Speed Limits'. The underlying aim of the Department for Transport's current speed management policy is to achieve a 'safe' distribution of speeds that reflect the function of the road. This implies a mean speed appropriate to the prevailing conditions. A key factor when setting a speed limit is what the road looks like to the road users, such as its geometry and adjacent land use. Drivers are likely to expect and respect lower limits, and be influenced when deciding on what is an appropriate speed, where they can see there are potential hazards, for example outside schools, in villages and in shopping streets.
- A principal aim in determining appropriate speed limits is, therefore, to provide a consistent message between the road geometry and environment, and for changes in speed limit to be reflective of changes in the road layout and characteristics. The following are important factors when considering what is an appropriate speed limit:
 - Road function (strategic, through traffic, local access etc.);
 - Road geometry (width, sightlines, bends, junctions and accesses etc.);
 - Road environment (rural, residential, shop frontages, schools etc.);
 - Existing traffic speeds;
 - Level of adjacent development; and
 - Traffic composition (including existing and potential levels of pedestrian and cycle usage).
- A further method of determining whether a speed limit is appropriate is whether the five-year accident period along the route has a particular pattern of speed-related accidents that would be resolved through a lowering of the speed limit. Even considering all of the above, road safety and the reduction of accidents within the metropolitan district is the primary consideration of the Council as the highway authority.

The accident data which the Council refers to is obtained directly from the Police as a result of their investigations following an incident. This allows the Council access to unbiased information, collated by professional Officers and refers only to where an injury has occurred. Damage-only accidents and bumps/shunts are not considered. The accidents are categorised

as 'slight', 'serious' or 'fatal', with these descriptions being fairly self-explanatory.

The accident history for the A660 between the Britannia Hotel entrance and Kings Road is explained earlier in this document. It is clear from these records that speed is not a direct or indirect causation factor in any of the incidents, which therefore removes the possibility of accidents being a point of justification for the reduction in the speed limit.

- Considering all of the above points, Leeds City Council believes that the speed limit along Leeds Road, Bramhope is appropriate and subsequently are unable to support calls for the reduction in the speed limit at this time.
- The Council is aware of queries as to why the speed limit was reduced in Adel, but not in Bramhope. The Council believes that the highway environment through the 30mph section in Adel to be significantly different to that in Bramhope. The level of on-street parking associated with both commercial premises and private dwellings is much higher, particularly between New Adel Lane and The Crescent. Pedestrian movements are also significantly higher, with the effective centre of Adel being in this area. This is defined as such due to the presence of the Post Office, butchers, deli, the Public House and others. In Bramhope these are generally found at The Cross, away from the A660. Furthermore the speed surveys in this area show a mean speed of 24.9mph, thus very comfortably below the posted speed limit and suited to a 30mph speed limit.
- The Council is aware of the number of incidents that have taken place on the bend by Church Hill in the March to June 2017 period. Work to identify the causation of these incidents is ongoing with remedial measures being proposed in the summer period.

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