

Director of Development and Environment
North Somerset Council
Somerset House
Oxford Street
Weston-super-Mare
BS23 1TG
Ref: P/6/347

1st October 2010

Dear Sir,

Review of Speed Limits on the A368 in Upper Langford

I am writing on behalf of Burrington Parish Council to convey the Parish Council's views on North Somerset Council's proposed changes to speed limits on the A368 and, in particular on the specific proposal, within the Parish of Burrington, to move the 40 to 30 mph transition point from adjacent to the turning to Burrington village westwards beyond the B3134 Burrington Combe turning for some 900 metres to a point immediately adjacent to Mendip View.

The Parish Council's view is that the proposed changes within the Parish and elsewhere on the A368 are not a good use of ratepayers' money that would be better spent enhancing the present scheme to make it more effective. Also, the coalition Government's current views on 'localism' do not fit easily with the impression given in this consultation that the Department for Transport is applying pressure for speed limit reviews in the District on roads such as the A368.

Members of the Parish Council do not understand why DfT Circular 01/2006 is cited as the main reason for proposing changes, when this Circular was issued some years ago, or why Traffic Advisory leaflet 01/04 appears to have been used without regard to other relevant factors for proposing where transition points between speed limits should be. Our recollection is that the Council was also advised by consultants who considered a number of factors including road safety, collision statistics and actual traffic speed along this section of the A368.

The Parish Council's view is that problems of compliance with existing speed limits on this length of the A368 through the Parish (and in adjoining parishes) are likely to be due largely to inadequate signing, the positioning and size of some repeater signs, insufficient maintenance, which has resulted in signs disappearing, being turned to the side or becoming obscured by hedgerows, and an apparent lack of enforcement. A more cost-effective approach would be to restore and enhance the existing signs, form "gateways", lay speed limit reminder road markings, introduce vehicle activated signs that were promised in the original scheme, and seek to enforce the speed limits.

It would also help drivers, and probably improve compliance, if there were a more consistent strategy for signing speed limits on the A368 in North Somerset and Bath & North East

Somerset Council. In the neighbouring district, there is more use of 'gateway' signing at the entrance to villages with 30 mph roundels on square yellow signs associated with village name signs and appropriate road markings. This approach reinforces the message that speed limits are imposed because the road is passing through a village.

Specific objections to the proposed relocation of the 30 mph limit east of Upper Langford are:

- Raising the speed limit across the B3134 Burrington Combe turn does not appear to be consistent with the bad accident record at that junction nor the regular destruction of signage there.
- The proposed re-location of the 40 to 30 mph speed limit transition point will be on a blind bend immediately before a number of houses and because of limited visibility will not give sufficient advance warning to motorists to modify their speed when travelling westwards, especially as there are houses on this stretch of road (and especially Mendip View) that have very limited sightlines to the east.

If the speed limit were to be moved closer into the village of Upper Langford, there are other locations that would be more appropriate than that proposed: for example in association with the village name sign at Langford Green. However, this would still entail raising the speed limit at the Burrington Combe turning, which seems undesirable in view of the accident record at that point.

Members of the Parish Council have considered North Somerset Council's Speed Strategy and DfT guidance in Circular 01/2006 and Traffic Advisory Leaflets 13/93 and 01/04. They note that this guidance makes recommendations rather than imposing rigid standards and believe that the right approach to speed limits in Upper Langford, which is a small and dispersed settlement, is to reflect local circumstances, as described above, with the interests of road safety in the village as the main consideration.

The Parish Council would also like to see better signage and road markings throughout Rickford, where there are some very difficult junctions between the A368 and side roads with poor sight lines because of bends in the A368 and the steep alignment or acute angle of some side roads. There is also a very important road crossing at Rickford Rise/Burrington Lane that is used by children and their parents on their way to Burrington School.

Yours faithfully,

Louisa Purcell

Clerk to Burrington Parish Council