

VES FAQs

1. Do we need to respond to the consultation?

Yes please, as it will help to provide a more accurate reflection of residents' support.

2. Why are the proposals limited only to a small area?

We know more needs to be done but for maximum impact, we are concentrating on the shopping area in this phase of traffic calming.

3. Why doesn't the proposed 20mph extend further?

The initial plans took in much more than what is now proposed and were estimated to cost about £180,000. Sadly the constraints of traffic regulations, funding and NSC requirements make only these current proposals practicable for now.

The area proposed is very clearly the village centre so drivers can easily understand the objective need for slowing down because of pedestrians and therefore taking more care.

NSC had to run a speed survey in 2 locations along the proposed 20mph limit area to be assured of the median speed, before they would agree to the 20mph limit. North Somerset Council will only allow 20mph limits without additional traffic calming eg speed cushions, where there is reasonable data to support a realistic possibility that 20mph averages will be achieved. So this would not apply to other stretches of Long Ashton/Weston Road.

We were advised that a more extensive 20 mph would be less effective because drivers will only obey the limit if it is for a relatively short distance.

Traffic calming measures can be very effective if they are incremental. So if we can reduce the average speed in this part of the village by say 2mph, then step by step, more traffic calming can be considered in the future.

4. What about cyclists?

Although speed limits are not enforceable against cyclists, it is intended that here the 20mph limit will highlight to responsible cyclists that they should slow down in the centre of our village. Cyclists should give way to pedestrians crossing or waiting to cross zebra crossings (Highway Code). The plans include raising the crossing outside the Co-op which should slow down cyclists.

5. Is this the best solution for the Brocks Lane Junction?

The Brocks/Yeo Lane junction was the most difficult part of the scheme. Because of the distance from Birdwell School, it can't be designated a school crossing; so funding for school crossings can't be accessed eg for warning lights.

It can't be a zebra crossing because of the residents' cars using Brocks Lane and Yeo Lane. The proposed buff coloured strip is not a pedestrian crossing; "look both ways" will be painted on the pavement on either side and tactile paving will be installed. The purpose of a different coloured surface is to alert motorists. A single yellow line during school crossing times will restrict some parking to help visibility. Is it better to do nothing at this junction or at least try to warn drivers to slow down? But we are aware that children should not regard this as a zebra crossing and hope families can get this message home: any suggestions on this are welcome.

6. Should parking be restricted more?

We want our local shops to thrive so it is a tricky balance between pedestrian safety and enabling customers to park conveniently. The area to the front of Piccolo's causes confusion and drivers have received parking tickets behind the double yellow lines. The plans include a layby in that area similar to the one outside the PO. Outside the Bird in Hand garden, a single yellow line will restrict parking only at school crossing times ie 8-9am and 3-4pm Mondays – Fridays.

More double yellow lines to remove parking would increase the speed of traffic whereas the aim of the VES is to slow traffic down. In some locations and at some times, parking can usefully slow down traffic speed; but we want to avoid congestion for emergency vehicles and buses.

7. Could more be done to make the crossing near Theynes Croft safer for children going to Northleaze School?

We are very aware that more needs to be done and indeed the original VES proposals included improvements to the crossing at the top of Theynes Croft. However, because of the limited funds available we had to make the decision, for now, to cut back the measures only to the shopping area as that is the area most in need of safety improvements.

Birdwell School had been asking NSC for improvements to the Brocks Lane crossing for many years; unfortunately these things take too long to work their way into delivery.

8. How is the cost of £30,000 arrived at?

NSC have a standard costing scale with their contractor broken down for each sort of work required. NSC is the highways authority but have no funds for these road safety improvements in Long Ashton.

9. Could the bus-stops be moved further away from the shops?

We want the centre of the village to be thriving for the businesses and safe for pedestrians so the bus-stops are conveniently positioned for this purpose.

10. Why has the Parish Council made the VES a priority for expenditure?

Traffic calming was considered one of the highest priorities in the Parish Plan in 2007 and the Neighbourhood Development Plan in 2015, both of which involved high levels of information to and consultation with residents. A strong feeling was evident that the village needed to be safer for pedestrians, whether young or old.

There is more information about the NDP on the PC website and in particular there is a link to the Hamilton Baillie report in full:

<http://www.longashtonparishcouncil.gov.uk/LongAshton-PC/UserFiles/Files/VESasonNS.pdf>

whose choice expressions include: “a serious disappointment”, “fragmented”, “featureless”, “somewhat bleak streetscape”, “aggressive nature of drivers”, “the unloved corner” and so on.

Can we rise to the challenge of enhancing the village?