

**Post Covid-19 recovery traffic impacts on Silverton
Silverton Parish Council
July 2020**

Overview

At the May 2020 meeting the Silverton Parish Council discussed the reduced traffic levels in Silverton, resulting from Covid-19. Minute 113178 of the meeting minutes¹ requested consideration of next steps in reducing traffic speeds in the village and this paper;

- Provides background information
- Considers how to approach the issue
- Suggests an action plan

Background

Over recent months Silverton, like most places in the UK has seen significant reductions in traffic during lockdown. There has been a noticeable increase in people making use of road space in the village and surrounding lanes – with residents of all ages and abilities walking, cycling, using e-bikes, scooters, skateboards and personal mobility devices – all taking advantage of reduced traffic.

Whilst this is visible to residents it is not easy to obtain data on how people have responded to the opportunity. However, the most recent set of traffic surveys, undertaken as part of the planning application at Silverdale² (ref 18/02019/MOUT, recently approved at appeal by the Inspector) does have traffic count data as part of the 'Addendum to the Transport Statement' dated 2019. This report details traffic surveys undertaken on Thursday 24th January 2019 at 5 junctions across the village. At 'The Square' roundabout the survey showed 292 vehicles in the am peak (8:00am to 9:00am – which is a normal survey period) of which 9 vehicles were classed as 'heavy'.

To determine impacts of Covid-19 on traffic levels a repeat survey was undertaken on Thursday 11th June, again in the am peak (8:00am to 9:00am), with a wider classification of vehicles undertaken, the summary results of which are below;

Car	Van	Light Goods	Heavy Goods	Bus	Minibus	Tractor	M/cycle	Cycle
141	30	4	0	4	2	1	3	5

The total number of vehicles observed was 190, just over 65% of the January 2019 total – a significant reduction.

The Devon County Council online Collision Map³ provides details of traffic incidents (where reported to the Police). It shows a cluster of incidents (classed as 3 slight, 1 serious) on Fore

¹ <https://www.middevonparish.co.uk/media/195199/may-2020.pdf>

² <https://planning.middevon.gov.uk/online-applications/>

³ <https://www.devoncctraffweb.co.uk/public/collisionmap.html>

Street, School Lane and Park Road in 2014, no other incidents are shown in the data (which at the time of writing was correct until 25th February 2020). However, as has been seen recently there have been several traffic related incidents, vehicle to vehicle on the Square, a light goods vehicle strike, and the recent death of a pet, both on Fore Street. Representations to the Parish Council have also been made recently with increased traffic volumes and speeds during the recent Bickleigh road closure.

The neighbourhood plan process has considered traffic impacts in the village, the Silverton NP Evidence Report (draft) of 2014⁴ noting that according to the 2011 census (the most recent data available) that 70% of residents use a car/van for travelling to work with 839 vehicles available in the village. The Roads and Access comments to the consultation⁵ include numerous concerns and suggestions with regards to traffic speeds and impacts.

The Silverton Parish Neighbourhood Plan 3rd Full consultation version of January 2020⁶ sets out a vision for the village ***“Silverton is a rural Parish in the Exe Valley, yet within easy reach of Exeter and other local towns. We seek to protect the special character of both its country setting and ancient heritage, while encouraging the change and development needed to make our Parish a more thriving, more sustainable and safer place for the present community and for those who will live here in the future”*** and specifically in relation to the topic of Traffic and Travel states ***“reducing the impact of motor vehicles”***. Four specific objectives are defined Traffic and Travel to support the vision, namely;

Make it easier and safer for people to walk and cycle within the Parish	23. Explore proposals to provide new facilities for cyclists should they come forward 24. Explore possibility of foot and cycle link between the Village and A396
Manage traffic in the interests of safety	25. Explore appropriate traffic management measures to reduce the speed of traffic lowering pedestrian risks from traffic
Address parking issues	26. Encourage the creation of off-road parking space 27. Ensure all new housing has adequate off-road parking for their residents and visitors

It should be noted that whilst the draft neighbourhood plan (once adopted) sets these objectives, it is not in the gift of the Parish Council or Mid Devon Council to bring about changes. Highways responsibilities lie with Devon County Council.

The Devon County Council Traffic Speed Task Group reported in June 2019⁷ describes a series of ambitions and recommendations including “1. Taking a different approach to our policy of setting traffic speeds and embedding the safe systems approach” and “2. Supporting local

⁴ <https://www.middevonparish.co.uk/media/123258/local-evidence-report-draft-291114.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.middevonparish.co.uk/media/123307/access-roads.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.middevonparish.co.uk/media/194888/draft-np-amended-jan-20-1.pdf>

⁷ <https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=26245>

areas to determine their own environment". A default trial of 20mph is being developed for Newton Abbot and closer to Silverton, Broadclyst already has a 20mph zone.

It should be noted that 20mph speed limits are a variation to the local Traffic Regulation Orders to reduce the speed limit (as per Bickleigh village) whilst 20mph zones are similar but have associated physical infrastructure measures to help ensure reduced speeds (as per Broadclyst, which has speed cushions and speed tables).

Given the reduced traffic levels of late, and the increased levels of walking and cycling in the village, what do we want for Silverton in the future?

Approaching the issues

Traffic is a very emotive subject. Given the vision set out in the draft neighbourhood plan and its supporting objectives, we have the framework within which to consider change. However, this must be undertaken within the community, taking account the needs of residents and business, people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds and focus achieving clear and demonstrable benefits (such as reduced traffic speeds, reduced incidents, improved environment etc.).

At this stage the potential physical solutions should not form the focus of any discussion, as these will be defined, consulted upon and agreed downstream via Devon County Council, but focus should be on how the community achieves speed reduction in a potential variety of forms.

We need to enable wide and active engagement, to develop a case for change, underpinned where possible by evidence, whilst harnessing local opinion and considering recently expressed views and opinions.

An action plan

Therefore, it is proposed to engage in an **integrated action plan** with the following broad stages to develop the case for changes to traffic speeds in Silverton;

- The Parish Council to facilitate an action group including parish, district councillors, local residents and businesses
- To establish communications portals through a Facebook page and website for those that don't use Facebook
- Establish links with the '20s Plenty for Us' campaign⁸ which provides resources, advice and assistance to communities looking to tackle traffic speeds
- Leaflet all households in the village to ensure the widest possible engagement
- Set up a specific online survey (plus written representations) to garner views
- Once government restrictions have been lifted, hold a series of public events / discussions

⁸ <http://www.20splenty.org>

- Gather evidence; traffic counts, speed surveys (if possible), public transport provision / use and, anecdotal reports to develop an evidence base
- Seek support from Mid Devon via our local councillor
- Seek support from Devon County Council via our local councillor
- Engage with and seek advice from similar village groups around the UK
- Report progress monthly to the Parish Council

Recommendations

That this paper be noted and the integrated action plan be put in train with an associated standing item on future Parish Council agendas.

Giles Perkins (Parish Councillor, Silverton)
Cllr Josh Wright, Silverton (Village Ward)

July 2020