

Mr Atherton
Sent via email
Steve.atherton@zensa1.com

Phone: 0300 123 6780
Fax:
Email: highways@lancashire.gov.uk

Your ref:
Our ref: 54135
Date: 22 May 2020

Dear Mr Atherton

Thank you for your recent e-Petitions regarding speed limits on Smithy Lane, Sandy Lane and Water Street in Brindle. I will address each of these in the order they were raised.

Petition 1. Title: Speed Reduction for Smithy Lane, Brindle, Chorley

The setting of local speed limits is evidence-led and represents the characteristics of the surrounding area. This in turn helps drivers assess what is a safe speed to travel, and encourages self-compliance.

The national speed limit section on Smithy Lane reflects the rural characteristics of the surrounding area with reduced residential and commercial aspects. However, as with all maximum limits, this does not mean it is a safe to travel at such speed. As stated in the Highway Code, drivers are required to adjust their behaviour appropriately taking into consideration the road, traffic and weather conditions at the time. This includes on single track lanes and bends.

To ensure any new road safety measures have the greatest impact, we focus on locations with a proven road safety issue. This is mainly determined by the number of reported injury accidents at a particular location. We also target schemes that help improve the wider highway network.

We have assessed the road safety record and contacted the police regarding the speed limit on this road section. As there are no recorded injury incidents along here within the past 5 years we are unable to justify reducing the current speed limit along Smithy Lane.

Continued

Sarah Waterhouse
Highways Operational Support & Liaison Manager
Cuerden Way • Bamber Bridge • Preston • PR5 6BS

As with the majority of roads throughout the county, there will be an element of incidents present which do not result in injury and, therefore, are not notified to the Police. However, in such instances no information is available to determine the causal factors involved. These could relate to an individual driver error, medical episodes or mechanical failure.

Petition 2. Title: Speed Reduction Improvements on Sandy Lane, Brindle

Where a speed limit is set unrealistically low for a particular road function or surrounding environment, it will likely be ineffective at communicating its purpose of reducing vehicle speed. At the present time, no incidents have been recorded within the vicinity of the village within the last 5 years that indicates the presence of a current speed related road safety concern. On this basis, we are unable to recommend traffic calming measures at this time.

Sandy Lane may feature incidents that did not result in injury and, therefore, not recorded. However, we will be introducing speed awareness signs, which we have used previously at this location. These will be installed again from July 2020 for three months.

Historical villages situated along primary routes characteristically feature buildings in close proximity to the highway. This often reduces the width of available footway space when compared to major towns and cities. Both approaches to the village currently feature defined 'gateways' providing clearly perceptible notification to drivers that they are entering a change in environment. This requires them to reduce speed and be aware of the potential increased presence of vulnerable road users.

Petition 3. Title: WATER STREET (BRINDLE) – Extend 20MPH Zones & Reduce National Speed Limits

The purpose of lower speed limits within town and village locations is to provide clear communication to drivers of a change in the surrounding characteristics. In addition, to highlight the requirement for additional caution due to the potential increased presence of vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians, children and cyclists. Signage at the entrance to these areas stated is a key source of information to drivers indicating the nature and risks posed by a section of road. As mentioned previously, the setting of speed limits are evidence led, self-explaining, and seek to reinforce drivers assessment of what is a safe speed to travel within a location, thus encouraging self-compliance. Where a limit is set unrealistically low for a particular road function and surrounding environment, it will likely be ineffective at communicating its purpose.

The national speed limit section of Water Street outside of the village reflects the rural characteristics of the surrounding area with reduced residential and commercial occupancy. This is common for many similar roads within the immediate area and Lancashire as a whole. This does not indicate that it is a safe speed to proceed irrespective of layout and conditions.

Continued

As previously stated, drivers are required to adjust their behaviour appropriately taking into consideration the road, traffic and weather conditions at the time.

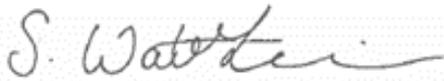
We acknowledge that Water Street will feature an element of minor incidents not resulting in injury and, therefore, not required to be notified to the police. In such instances, there is generally insufficient reliable information available to determine the circumstances involved when considering further safety measures. Whether these relate to a potential recurring road safety concern or are simply associated with individual one off factors or driver error, medical episodes or mechanical failure.

Currently, speed and evidenced collision data for the area do not appear to support the identity of either Brindle village or the immediate surrounding approaches as a high risk zone. With no recorded injury collisions recorded within the last 5 years, Water Street is operating satisfactorily in terms of road safety.

I appreciate your desire to see accidents prevented before they happen, and we share this goal. However, our current priority is to target locations, which will have a demonstrable impact on reducing casualty figures, or to schemes, which contribute towards improving the wider highway network. It would be remiss of us not to try and make a positive impact at these locations our priority.

I understand that you are disappointed with our decision, but I hope our reasoning is clear.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Waterhouse', written over a light grey dotted grid background.

Sarah Waterhouse
Highways Operational Support & Liaison Manager
Highways and Transport
Lancashire County Council