

A379 ENGAGEMENT REPORT

Summary of responses – April 2018

This report provides a summary of the responses received throughout a three-week engagement to help the Council's Transport Team take stock of the recent changes to the A379 between Pomphlett Roundabout and Elburton Roundabout.

THE ENGAGEMENT

- The engagement opened on Monday 20 November and closed on Sunday 10 December 2017.
- A feedback form was available online and three events were held at Plymstock Library (approx. attendance – 200)
- 340 responses were received in total - this includes the online responses (312), written letters (7 entered online) and email responses (21).
- Two formal responses were received from Plymouth CityBus and Plymouth Cycling Campaign, along with representations from Plymstock Resident Association's.
- The engagement activity received a positive response from the community who indicated that they were pleased to have the opportunity to give their views.

WHO RESPONDED?

Not everyone responded to the questions which asked for a postcode, frequency of travel along the A379 and main mode of transport, however of those respondents that did;

- The majority were from the Plymstock (PL9) area (270).
- The majority indicated that they used the A379 most days (256).
- The majority indicated that they were car drivers (247).

THE RESULTS

There have been a number of recent changes to the road network and pedestrian/cycle facilities along the A379. The feedback form firstly asked whether these changes had improved the experience of the users.

Section I

The results found that 290 respondents answered this question and in total 92 individuals indicated that they had experienced an improvement whilst travelling along the A379 by selecting one or more of the options. 198 individuals selected no improvement experienced.

Table I

Improvement experienced	Number	Improvement experienced	Number
Congestion	49	Using cycle facilities	17
Unreliable journeys	8	Bus services/routes	4
Road safety	34	Noise reduction	23
Crossing the road	40	Other improvements	6
No improvement experienced	198		

When including the views set out in the email responses three respondents indicated they had experienced an improvement (95 in total) and 13 indicated that they had not experienced an improvement (211 in total).

The analysis of the comments found that for those who indicated that congestion had improved it was as a result of the installation of a new signalised junction at Stanborough Cross. This, alongside the introduction of the average speed camera between Billacombe Roundabout and Elburton Roundabout coupled with the 30mph speed limit was felt to have improved traffic flow generally along this section of road.

These measures were also a contributing factor for those who considered that road safety and noise pollution had improved particularly in respect of speeding vehicles. The comments also found that ability to cross the road has been made easier and safer due to the new Stanborough Cross Junction, the new Toucan crossing at Broxton Drive and the lower speed limit.

There were also a few respondents who indicated that the cycling facilities had improved and they would welcome an extension of these facilities in the future.

The following responses have been included to represent the summary above;

“I am 80 so the discipline of the lights at Elburton is especially useful. The time of the wait sometimes seems too long but the fact that 20 or more vehicles go through on the change means you are less inclined to jump the lights. Also I know someone who lives near the lights who say that the noise reduction from screeching tyres allow them to keep their windows open longer. The speed limit of 30mph has taken some getting use too but there again the discipline makes driving safer.”

“Less congestion - More even flow of traffic since 30mph introduced! Road safety - When approaching roundabouts, road junctions and pedestrian crossings slower speeds! Crossing the road - As a car driver, safer when crossing oncoming traffic at exit/turning junctions! Noise reduction - As a resident living above A379 alongside all my neighbours have noticed a considerable reduction in traffic noise particularly motorcycles racing and revving as well as car horns sounding etc!”

“The extension of the cycle path from the Ride to Saltram Meadow has made it safer for a cyclist. The route along Billacombe Road from Laira Bridge to Pomphlett Roundabout was becoming dangerous. The new crossing at Broxton Drive has made access to the new path safer. The improved junction at Stanborough Cross seems to work very well with clear cycle pathways marked out.”

“I feel compelled to let you know my view as a resident of Elburton Rd as I am concerned that those protesting for a raise in the limit back to 40mph do not necessarily reside in the roads affected. The only good thing to come out of the Stanborough Cross development is the reduction in the speed limit to 30mph and the fixed traffic enforcement measures installed”.

Section 2

The feedback form then went on to ask those, who indicated that they had not experienced any improvement from the recent changes, to provide comment about the issues they were currently experiencing. 271 comments were received in this section. A further 13 email responses have been analysed and included (284 comments in total).

NB: This number is higher than the 211 who indicated that they had not experienced an improvement, as many commented in all sections of the feedback form regardless of their experience.

From the analysis of the comments two main issues were very prominent:

1. Stanborough Cross – Analysis of all 284 comments found that 101 comments related to issues regarding the new four arm junction (36%).

2. Speed limit – Analysis of all 284 comments found that 147 comments related to issues regarding the speed limit for this section of road, many of which particularly wanted to register their opposition to the reduction from what was previously 40mph to 30mph (52%).

The other main issues coming through from the 284 comments included:

- Parking in cycle lanes along the A379 (40 in total)
- Congestion at Pomphlett Roundabout (21 in total)
- Calls for the road to be restored to a two-lane dual carriageway (12 in total).
- General congestion and rat-running as a result of Stanborough Cross junction and the new speed limit.

There was a range of comments about the new Stanborough Cross junction – some more vociferous than others, however the issues cited within responses were very consistent and included:

- Confusion at the staggered alignment of the junction – there are reports of drivers repeatedly crossing from Haye Road and entering Stanborough Road on the wrong side.
- Drivers are u-turning at the junction (with potential conflict with the pedestrian phases on the lights) and also complaints about the detour people who used to u-turn at the roundabout now have to make.
- Complaints about the sequencing of the lights and amount time the traffic waiting to move through the junction.
- Complaints about the allocation of lanes for different turning movements.

Although some respondents were in favour of the reduced speed limit (specifically those who resided close to or adjacent to the A379), the majority of respondents felt that it was unnecessary and the 40mph limit should be re-instated. Commonly cited problems of the reduced speed limit include:

- Drivers rat-running through adjacent roads and through Plymstock in order to avoid the 30mph – this has led to reports of increased traffic and speeding on adjoining roads.
- Drivers more concerned with their speedometer than looking at the road and also drivers going less than 30mph due to the average speed camera that is in place causing tailgating and bunching.
- Difficulties getting out of adjoining roads due to the slow and consistent flow of traffic.

The following responses have been included to represent the summary above;

“Personally I have found the experience almost entirely negative. Traffic congestion is worse, during off peak hours when traffic used to flow very smoothly and freely it now sits waiting for a significant time for lights to change. Using the A379 now requires most drivers to watch their speedometer as much as the road due to an unnecessarily slow speed, not at all applicable to the type of road. I often avoid now and drive through Plymstock instead.”

“The issues are: 1. For a long time the lane arrangements, i.e. some sections being single lane, some dual and some being a mixture of both, has appeared to be random without any apparent logic on what is basically a good quality dual carriageway but not used fully as such for a long time. 2. The lights at Stanborough junction have caused problems - these include some delays compared with a roundabout, lack of responsiveness of the lights to traffic flow and the overall design of the junction whereby Stanborough Road and Haye Road entrances to the junction are curiously offset resulting in some cases of drivers being confused and crossing on the wrong side of the road. 3. The introduction of the 30mph limit and average speed cameras on part of the road has caused drivers much frustration as the speed limit is considered unnecessarily low, drivers going towards town having to brake to achieve the limit, others suddenly remembering the limit and slowing to 20mph to achieve

the average speed. 4. The provision of cycle lanes which cannot be enforced - in practice cars are parking on these lanes in various places thus rendering them of very little practical use to cyclists and possibly making matters more dangerous as cyclists are forced out into the road to get around such cars.”

“Congestion is still a real problem. The cycle lane is little used. The road layout at the junction with Stanborough Road/Haye Road is confusing and in my view dangerous. The signal delay is too lengthy. Making the road a single lane carriageway has reduced capacity. I fail to see how this will accommodate the extra traffic when Sherford is fully developed.”

There were a number of other more specific Highways issues raised throughout the engagement, some of which have been forwarded to relevant service areas to be addressed. These included requests for better lining and signing on various roads, road repairs for Sherford Road which is experiencing higher levels of traffic, improvements to Stentaway Road to improve pedestrian safety and request for a solution to stop residents of Alexandra Close (off Elburton Road) reversing against the flow of traffic to access the u-turn to head west along the A379 toward the city centre (in order to avoid lengthy detour).

Section 3

The final question asked respondents to suggest further changes they would like to see in order to improve the experience of using the A379;

- 292 comments were received and 14 email responses were included in the analysis (those where a suggestion was evident) – 306 in total.

The dominant issue coming through from the previous question is the concern and opposition to the increase in the speed limit from 30mph to 40mph. Returning the speed limit for this stretch of road back to 40mph was suggested by 145 respondents (online and email) (47%). 67 respondents suggested that the road should be returned to a two-lane dual carriageway. 48 respondents suggested both, i.e. that it should be a 40mph two-lane dual carriageway.

44 respondents made suggestions about the cycle facilities along the A379 – predominantly to stop parking across the existing cycle lanes and more enforcement.

Suggestions to improve the new Stanborough Cross junction also featured heavily, however the suggestions reflected the analysis set out in Section 2.

Other suggestions that featured, but not to the same extent included;

- Public transport improvements: park & ride facilities, continuous bus lanes and more bus services servicing the A397 corridor.
- More pedestrian crossing points and pavements to link Sherford with Saltram Park.
- Pomphlett Roundabout improvements: filter lanes, better lining and signing and improved visibility.

NEXT STEPS

The results of this engagement have been shared with relevant Council Officers and Ward Members for their consideration. A number of remedial works have taken place on the highway to improve the lives of the residents who were experiencing daily issues. The issues raised in respect of the Stanborough Cross Junction have been passed to the transport consultants working on behalf of the Sherford development. A further response will be issued in respect of the comments raised about the speed limit along this stretch of the A379 once all factors have been given full consideration.