



meeting ENVIRONMENT STANDING SELECT COMMITTEE

date 6 September 2004 agenda item number

Report of the Chair of the Environment Standing Select Committee

Traffic Calming - a project scope for examining the effectiveness of traffic calming measures in use in Nottinghamshire

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To inform Members of a potential project scope for the Committee to investigate the effectiveness of traffic calming measures. At its meeting of 29th June 2004 the Select Committee requested the preparation of a scoping paper supplemented by a presentation to the Study Group.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 A range of interrelated measures are currently in use within Nottinghamshire that have the intended effect of reducing the speed of traffic in order to make highways safer for road users and pedestrians. Such measures include:

- road humps
- road narrowing
- changes to road-marking and signing
- altering existing speed limits
- chicanes
- safety cameras

In addition, school safety zones and school travel plans, while not necessarily serving to slow traffic may have an impact on its flow.

- 2.2 The County Council's policy on traffic calming states that traffic calming measures are introduced in appropriate circumstances as a response to an actual problem on the highway involving high numbers of accident related

injuries or concern among communities arising from inappropriate speed or through traffic in their area.

2.3 Implementation of a scheme is based on various factors including:

- The number of injury related accidents or for environment related schemes the following criteria are used:
- The category of road (i.e. traffic calming will not be installed on major roads unless in response to accidents).
- More than 250 vehicles travel through the site during a typical peak hour and the majority of these vehicles exceed the stated speed limit by 20% or more (e.g. faster than 36mph in a 30mph zone).
- Houses front more than half the affected road.
- Substantial public support is received for the introduction of traffic calming measures.

Suitable sites for traffic calming are identified through consultations with residents, emergency services, public transport operators and the police.

2.4 The County Council gives consideration to what effect the traffic calming schemes will have on buses, emergency vehicles and the surrounding roads. For some areas traffic regulation orders, one-way streets and road closures may also be considered.

Simply signing the street as 'access only' does not usually work, therefore these signs are rarely used.

Inappropriate speed is a common factor in accidents and it increases the seriousness of injuries.

When pedestrians are hit by a vehicle travelling at:

- 40 mph ... 90 out of a hundred are killed
- 30 mph ... 40 out of a hundred are killed
- 20 mph ... 5 out of a hundred are killed

A high proportion of all pedestrian casualties occur in built up areas.

3 Scope of Project

3.1 Following discussion, the Select Committee may decide to study one or more of the following areas in relation to traffic calming measures. In each case the Select Committee will need to consider where working groups are already considering these issues, and how these could be complemented.

- 3.2** Issues relating to the roles and responsibilities of the County Council and other partners, including members of the road safety partnerships, such as, the police and emergency services (e.g. the criteria for the location of safety cameras).
- 3.3** Contrast and compare Nottinghamshire County Council's policies on traffic calming, in the context of national guidelines in terms of their effectiveness and impact, with other local authority areas.
- 3.4** An assessment of traffic calming measures currently in place in Nottinghamshire in terms of their impact and rate of return in relation to reduction in accidents, including an examination of the available evidence relating to reduction in accidents and speed due to the installation of safety cameras and other traffic calming measures.
- 3.5** An examination of the means by which the success of traffic calming measures should be judged.

4 Method of study and duration of project

- 4.1** It is proposed that the study commences with an analysis of issues raised through a presentation to a study group and that the study includes evidence from external organisations such as Police constabularies outside Nottinghamshire and RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) in order to gain an alternative perspective on traffic calming issues. The study group will focus on measuring the extent to which traffic calming measures can be said to be effective taking into account the available data on accidents. Regular feedback and the presentation of information will take place at Select Committee meetings.
- 4.2** The study group may wish to be briefed on technical aspects by way of examination of background documents, such as, the traffic calming design guide, and then progress to an analysis of relevant available data.
- 4.3** A detailed project plan will be drawn up once the Select Committee has decided on the area(s) it wishes to focus on in the scope of this study.
- 4.4** Upon concluding this study, the Select Committee may wish to make recommendations, for example, to Nottinghamshire County Council Cabinet to improve traffic policy and procedure, if appropriate.
- 4.5** It is proposed that the study is completed by the end of April 2005.

5 Recommendation

It is recommended that Members discuss and then agree the area(s) they wish to concentrate on in undertaking the study of the effectiveness of traffic calming measures.

6 Background papers available for inspection

- County Council Road Safety Service Plan (2003-2010)
- Highways Network Management Plan Summary Plan (November 2003)
- Report of Cabinet Member for Environment (15th May 2003) – Adoption of Revised Policy Principles for Urban Traffic Calming in Nottinghamshire.

Councillor Andrew Freeman
Chair of the Environment Select Committee