

19 March 2015**Agenda Item: 8****REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR HIGHWAYS****NOISE ACTION PLANS****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to update Committee on the noise action plan work undertaken to date; and to seek approval to implement highways schemes that will reduce the impact of traffic noise in priority locations.
2. Approval at this time provides an opportunity to consider the inclusion of a small number of road traffic noise improvement schemes within the 2015/16 highways capital programme.

Information and Advice

3. Government adopted and published noise action plans for agglomerations (areas with a population of more than 100,000 and population density equal to or greater than 500 people per km²) and major roads (outside agglomerations) in March 2010. The noise action plans are designed to address the management of noise and effects from major roads in England under the terms of the Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006. These Regulations were required to address Directive 2002/49/EC relating to the Assessment and Management of Environmental Noise (commonly referred to as the Environmental Noise Directive or END).
4. The action plans identified first priority locations and other important areas that needed to be investigated further. These locations were identified through the strategic noise mapping undertaken on behalf of DEFRA to implement the Environmental Noise (Identification of Noise Sources) (England) Regulations 2007 and are the 1% of the population that are potentially affected by the highest noise levels from major roads (based on the traffic flows and a building's proximity to the road). This approach has been taken because the population at these locations is likely to be at the greatest risk of experiencing a significant adverse impact to health and quality of life as a result of their exposure to road traffic noise. The noise index LA10,18h dB is currently used to assess the impact of traffic noise where traffic noise is measured over the period 0600-0000. The current END states that where the dB(A), LA10, 18h is above 65 dB(A) (ignoring the effect of reflection from the façade of the relevant building) then mitigation measures should be considered.
5. The responsibility for investigating and implementing actions to address noise issues from road traffic lies with the relevant highway authority. The highway authority is tasked with examining locations on a prioritised basis and having regard to any ongoing noise mitigation initiatives, schemes and plans. The noise mapping identified a number of locations on the

County Council's road network that needed investigating further and the County Council is therefore currently investigating these sites as detailed below.

6. The noise action plans set out the national approach to address issues at prioritised locations through the use of:
 - a. control of noise at source – EU noise emission standards for individual vehicles
 - b. planning controls – the use of noise impact assessments when planning new or additional capacity on roads
 - c. compensation and insulation – providing compensation for dwellings affected by increased noise from new or improved highways
 - d. maintenance – the use of laying a low noise road surface, one that assists in reducing the noise generated by the tyre/road interface
 - e. specific initiatives – undertaking specific noise abatement initiatives (such as improved noise barriers) where they are feasible, offer value for money, and where funding permits.
7. The County Council, as highway authority, therefore has the responsibility to undertake actions c-e above, as well as contributing towards action b above by ensuring transport comments in response to planning applications include reference to noise abatement measures when appropriate.
8. Noise impact assessments are routinely undertaken when planning new roads or where additional capacity is added to existing roads, and mitigation against the impacts of increased noise are included within scheme designs. Similarly, the County Council provides compensation and insulation for dwellings affected by increased noise from new or improved highways when they are the scheme promoter.
9. The County Council has investigated each of the locations identified through the national noise mapping exercise to determine if any specific measures may be appropriate to reduce noise at the prioritised locations. The measures considered included:
 - re-routing of traffic (determining if a suitable alternative route is available and appropriate, or the construction of new roads)
 - use of laying a low noise road surface (one that assists in reducing the noise generated by the tyre/road interface) when the road is next resurfaced
 - reducing speed limits
 - noise barriers or other similar methods (such as landscaping).
10. The construction of new roads to bypass locations is not considered feasible as such schemes would be very costly and they would not offer sufficient other benefits to secure the necessary funding to deliver such schemes. All but two of the locations are on the A road network and therefore are on the strategic routes. Alternative routes were considered but it is not considered that traffic can be diverted elsewhere as any alternative would merely move the problem somewhere else, would affect a greater number of residents and force large volumes of traffic on to less suitable roads.
11. Speeds below 50mph are generally due to engine noise, rather than from tyre surface noise. Therefore any use of low noise road surfacing at locations where the speed limit is currently 50mph or less would not offer value for money in terms of the benefits (reductions in noise) that it delivers.

12. Similarly, the low noise reductions delivered by speed limit reductions where the posted speed limit is already 50 mph or below mean that such changes offer little value for money. Some of the locations identified in the noise mapping are, however, located along roads with existing 60mph or 70 mph speed limits.
13. Some locations may potentially benefit from additional noise barriers but firstly these locations require further investigation to determine if it is feasible and if the location actually requires any mitigation. Further assessments will now be undertaken at each of these locations to:
- determine if noise levels breach 65 dB(A), LA10, 18h to firstly determine if the County Council need to undertake any remedial measures
 - determine if the provision of noise barriers is feasible and acceptable given constraints
 - determine the likely noise reductions that would be achieved if noise barriers were provided, and therefore the value for money of providing such features
 - use the findings from the assessments to prioritise any locations that do breach the levels so that the properties most affected by noise are treated first (as funding becomes available).
14. It is therefore proposed that:
- greater weighting is given to requests for speed limit reductions when they would also benefit locations identified through the DEFRA noise mapping
 - additional noise barriers/landscaping is considered at locations identified in the noise mapping exercise where further noise assessments have identified that the locations exceed 65 dB(A), LA10, 18h and where it is considered feasible, affordable and value for money to provide such measures
 - the County Council ensures that any transport comments made in respect of proposed new development make reference to noise mitigation where appropriate and that sufficient funds are requested from developers to provide any required mitigation.
15. It is proposed that an annual prioritised programme of the above measures be developed and delivered as funding permits where road noise levels breach 65 dB(A), LA10, 18h; where such measures are feasible, acceptable and offer value for money. Schemes to address road traffic noise issues will be included within the highways capital programmes (integrated transport programme or highways maintenance programme depending on the type of measure to be introduced), which are subject to capital budget approvals at County Council meeting and this Committee. Each potential scheme will also be subject to the necessary consultation, statutory undertakings and other issues arising from feasibility studies, detailed scheme investigation, design and consultation.

Other Options Considered

16. Options considered are set out within this report.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

17. The provision of noise abatement measures will benefit the health and well-being of those most greatly affected by road traffic noise. Such measures will help ensure delivery of County Council priorities, national priorities and local transport goals and objectives. The packages of measures detailed in the report have been developed to reflect a balance of member, public and stakeholder requests and priorities, evidence of need (including

technical analysis), value for money (including the co-ordination of works) and delivery of the County Council's vision and transport objectives.

Statutory and Policy Implications

18. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) It is recommended that Committee:
 - a) note the contents of this report and
 - b) approve the development and implementation of schemes as detailed in this report, particularly paragraphs 13 to 15.

Neil Hodgson
Interim Service Director Highways

For any enquiries about this report please contact:
Sean Parks – Local Transport Plan manager

Constitutional Comments (LM 13/01/15)

19. The Transport and Highways Committee has delegated authority within the Constitution to approve the recommendations in the report.

Financial Comments (GB 13/01/15)

20. Schemes to address road traffic noise issues will be funded from within the approved Transport and Highways capital programme.

Background Papers and Published Documents

- Nottinghamshire Local Transport Plan Strategy 2011/12-2025/26
- Nottinghamshire Local Transport Plan Implementation Plan 2011/12-2014/15
- Nottinghamshire Local Transport Plan Evidence Base 2010
- Noise Action Plan Major Roads (outside first round agglomerations) – DEFRA March 2010
- Noise Action Plan Nottingham Agglomeration – DEFRA March 2010

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All