

17 September 2013

Agenda Item:

REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR HIGHWAYS

IMPLEMENTING 20MPH SPEED LIMITS IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek Committee approval for the implementation of 20mph speed limits outside schools, and the future review of local speed limits as detailed within this report and its appendices in line with the Department for Transport's guidance.

Information and Advice

2. The County Council continues to invest in providing a safe and efficient highway network with vehicles travelling at appropriate speeds that reflect the function of the road and its environment. This is undertaken through education, engineering and enforcement funded through both capital and revenue funding sources; and setting the most appropriate local speed limit plays a key role in the safe and efficient movement of goods and people.
3. Circular 01/2013, Setting Local Speed Limits, was issued by the Department for Transport (DfT) in January 2013. The guidance sets out the responsibilities and the framework highway authorities should follow when reviewing and setting local speed limits and a summary of the Circular is attached as Appendix 1. Highway authorities have the flexibility to set local speed limits that are appropriate for the individual road, reflecting local needs and taking account of all local concerns. Local speed limits should not, however, be set in isolation but as part of a package with other measures to manage vehicle speeds across the local road network and improve road safety.
4. A new speed limit appraisal tool has also been provided by DfT which can be used to assess the full costs and benefits of any proposed speed limit changes; and to help ensure a consistent approach to setting local speed limits.
5. The Circular also asks highway authorities to keep their speed limits under review with changing circumstances; and consider the introduction of more 20mph speed limits and zones in built-up urban areas and village streets that are primarily residential, to ensure greater safety for pedestrians and cyclists. More than 2,000 20mph speed limit schemes have already been implemented across the country and the Circular gives greater flexibility to help enable highway authorities to introduce more 20mph speed limits and zones.

6. The County Council has undertaken a review of all speed limits on the County's A and B road network, as well as a village speed limit review. The outcome of these reviews resulted in a comprehensive programme of speed limit changes on A and B roads and in villages over the last five years. The results of the reviews also continue to be used to help inform the assessment of appropriate speed limits on such roads when requests for changes are received.
7. It is not proposed that speed limits on every road in the county are reviewed based on the new guidance set out in Circular 01/2013 but the guidance and the appraisal tool will be used to determine requests for new and/or revised speed limits in a consistent and transparent way. The County Council will therefore continue to review the appropriate speed limit for a particular road(s), including buffer zones, on a case by case basis whenever requested. Speed limits will also be reviewed as necessary as part of accident remedial schemes.

20mph speed limits outside schools

8. There is clear evidence of the effect of decreased traffic speeds on the reduction of collisions and casualties; collision frequency is reduced at lower speeds and where collisions do occur, there is a lesser risk of fatal injury. Additional benefits of 20mph schemes include the encouragement of healthier and more sustainable transport modes such as walking and cycling, as well as quality of life and community benefits.
9. 20mph limits and zones are now available for highway authorities to introduce on residential and other streets where there are (or could be) significant numbers of journeys on foot, and/or where pedal cycle movements are an important consideration, and this outweighs the disadvantage of longer journey times for motorised traffic.
10. Given the high level of pedestrian activity and the high volumes of vulnerable road users at school start and finish times the County Council aims to introduce advisory 20mph speed limits outside schools where it is feasible to do so.
11. National research and practice has shown that where the mean speed is at or below 24mph introducing signing alone is likely to lead to general compliance with the new speed limit. It is therefore proposed that speed limits outside the main entrances to schools are introduced using signs without additional traffic calming measures on roads where it is considered that the mean speed outside a school is sufficiently low. Additional traffic calming measures will only be considered where speeds remain significantly higher than 24mph 12 months after the introduction of the new speed limit.
12. For most locations advisory speed limits which make clear the association with a school will be effective in achieving appropriate speeds and can be introduced more quickly. Some locations, however, may need a mandatory speed limit introducing with a Traffic Regulation Order.
13. Most schools are in residential areas so the introduction of a 20mph speed limit will have positive benefits for residents at all times of the day, weekends and

during school holidays. It is therefore proposed that 24hour advisory speed limits are introduced outside schools on residential roads.

14. It is proposed that variable advisory 20mph speed limits using DfT approved signs and flashing amber warning lights are introduced outside schools on main traffic distributor roads. Variable speed limits outside schools would operate with 20mph limits during school start and finish times, Monday-Friday during term-time only; and 30mph (or appropriate) limits at all other times. The advisory speed limit signs to be used are shown in Appendix 2, mandatory signs may only use a standard roundel.
15. At a local level casualties occurring outside schools are very rare. Historically, at a national level there is evidence that child casualty rates are higher in areas of deprivation. The locations of the first 50 advisory 20mph speed limits outside schools have therefore been prioritised based on the highest levels of deprivation in each district (and these are detailed in Appendix 3). Advisory 20mph speed limits outside these schools will be delivered during 2013/14 starting in September 2013 (provided that additional traffic calming features are not required as part of the scheme).
16. Speed surveys will be undertaken outside each school to determine whether traffic calming features will need to be considered as part of the advisory 20mph limit. The surveys can only be undertaken during term-time so they reflect the true traffic speeds outside the school in question. It is also not possible to undertake surveys at every school at the same time due to the resources/equipment required to undertake the surveys. The speed surveys have already been undertaken at the first 50 locations and the remainder of the surveys have been scheduled from September 2013 to March 2014 so that a rolling programme of 20mph zones can be delivered throughout 2014/15 and 2015/16 (the survey schedule is attached as Appendix 4). A full delivery schedule will be produced once the surveys have been completed.
17. It is not possible to make an accurate cost estimate until speed surveys and site visits have been undertaken at each school (to enable the determination of the type of facilities required). It is estimated that the cost of introducing advisory 20mph speed limits outside the first batch of schools during 2013/14 will cost approximately £150k; and an initial allocation of £600k from the 2014/15 integrated transport block is suggested to continue delivery during 2014/15.
18. The County Council is currently working with the police to develop appropriate strategies for enforcement in 20mph speed limits.

Area-wide 20mph speed limits

19. It is proposed that one or two potential pilot feasibility study 20mph zones be introduced based on the latest DfT guidance (Circular 01/2013, Setting Local Speed Limits) published in January 2013. A key remit of the pilot study would be to assess the effectiveness of low-cost measures drawing on experience from around the country, as well as the two informal area-wide 20mph limits previously introduced in the county.

Other Options Considered

20. Other options considered are set out within this report.

Conclusions

21. The above package of proposed measures accords with the DfT's Setting Local Speed Limits guidance and will bring potential benefits of reduced levels of collisions, reduced risks of fatal injury, encouragement of more healthy, sustainable travel as well as quality of life and community benefits.
22. Each of the schemes included within the report are still subject to the necessary consultation, statutory undertakings and other issues arising from feasibility studies, detailed scheme investigation, design and consultation.

Statutory and Policy Implications

23. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, the public sector equality duty, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATIONS

24. It is recommended that Committee:
- a) note the contents of the DfT guidance Circular 01/2013, Setting Local Speed Limits as summarised in Appendix 1
 - b) approve the implementation of 20mph speed limits outside schools as outlined in this report and Appendices 2, 3 and 4.

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Service Director Highways

For any enquiries about this report please contact:
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Constitutional Comments (SLB 13/08/2013)

25. Transport and Highways Committee has authority to consider the matters set out in this report.

Financial Comments (TMR 13/08/2013)

26. The financial implications are set out in the report.

Background Papers

DfT Circular 01/2013 Setting Local Speed Limits
5 September 2013 Transport & Highways Committee report – Integrated transport
and highways maintenance capital programme 2014/15 and appendices
Nottinghamshire Local Transport Plan Strategy 2011/12-2025/26

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All