

**13 February 2014****Agenda Item:9****REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR, HIGHWAYS****M1 JUNCTIONS 28 TO 35A: PROPOSED MAXIMUM MANDATORY  
SPEED LIMIT - PUBLIC CONSULTATION.****Purpose of the Report**

1. To inform the Transport and Highways Committee that the Highways Agency (HA) is consulting on proposals to introduce a mandatory maximum 60 mph speed limit on the M1 motorway between junctions 28 and 35A in place of the current national speed limit. The reduction of the speed limit is an essential requirement for the introduction of the smarter motorways project and the benefits that this will bring to Nottinghamshire.
2. To seek approval to provide a formal response to the Highways Agency's public consultation in this matter and provide a response to the consultation questions posed by the HA, as attached in Appendix A.

**Background**

3. The M1 between junctions 28 (the A38 junction in Derbyshire) and 35A (South Yorkshire) is part of the strategic trunk road network linking Nottingham and Leeds. Most of the link carries traffic in excess of the traffic level for which the road was originally designed, causing congestion and delays to all road users. The Highways Agency has developed proposals to implement motorway improvements which have been termed 'smart motorways'. This involves all lane running i.e. permanent use of the hard shoulder as extra carriageway, between junctions 28 and 31 and between junctions 32 and 35A, and to install variable mandatory speed limits between junctions 31 and 32.
4. It is expected that the smart motorway schemes between junctions 28 and 31 and between junctions 32 and 35A will:
  - Increase motorway capacity and reduce congestion;
  - Smooth traffic flows;
  - Provide more reliable journey times;
  - Increase and improve the quality of information for the driver.
5. The M1 in Derbyshire and South Yorkshire passes through or close to a number of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) and other sensitive receptors. The development of the smart motorway schemes includes a

detailed assessment of likely environmental effects, including any impact the schemes may have on local and regional air quality. These assessments indicate that, for operation at the national speed limit (70mph), the much needed extra traffic capacity and the increased traffic flows that these schemes will provide will also have adverse impacts on local air quality at AQMAs and other sensitive receptors.

6. Road traffic affects local air quality in a number of ways:
  - The volume of traffic, as generally more traffic will result in poorer air quality;
  - The flow of vehicles, as stop/start traffic will generate more emissions than smooth flowing traffic;
  - The speed of traffic, as emissions rise at low or high speeds.
7. In order to ensure that there is no significant adverse impact on local air quality, consideration has been given to a range of possible mitigation measures including installing barriers, use of absorptive materials, managing traffic composition, carriageway realignment, and other physical interventions (for example placing the motorway in a tunnel). None of these would either provide the necessary relief or be feasible and affordable. However reducing the speed limit would allow the scheme to proceed without a detrimental impact on noise and air quality. It is proposed to implement a maximum mandatory 60mph speed limit on this section of the M1 in place of the current national speed limit. The proposal is that a maximum mandatory speed limit of 60mph will operate between 07:00 and 19:00 seven days a week on the M1 between junctions 28 and 35A when the smart motorway – all lane running schemes are complete. The smart motorways improvements are planned for implementation in 2015 and are being funded in full by central Government.
8. The proposed maximum mandatory 60 mph speed limit will be in place only for as long as is necessary to mitigate significant air quality impacts. For the purposes of this consultation, the HA have advised that it should be assumed that the reduced speed limit will need to be in place for several years. The geographical limits of the reduced speed limit scheme are shown on Plan A attached.

### **Impact on Nottinghamshire**

9. The reduction of the speed limit is a necessary prerequisite for the introduction of the smart motorways project which will dovetail with the 4 lane section of motorway recently introduced between Junction 25 and Junction 28. In the absence of the smart motorways project the traffic and travel conditions on the existing motorway between J28 and J35A are predicted to worsen with a consequent reduction in travel speed, increased journey times, less journey time reliability and increased congestion. The traffic modelling undertaken to support the smart motorways project shows that even allowing for the 60mph maximum speed limit, improved journey times and journey time reliability would result when compared to the do nothing scenario. Furthermore, the traffic modelling shows that if the HA did not introduce the smart motorways project then the worsening of travel conditions along the M1 corridor are likely

to result in significant volumes of traffic seeking alternative parallel routes through adjoining communities, particularly the A60, A614 and the A38 to the detriment of travel conditions along these corridors. The introduction of the 60mph limit alongside the all-lane running scheme ensures that the traffic capacity of the M1 corridor is maximised when compared to the existing and likely future operating conditions.

10. The reduction of the speed limit between J28 and J35A should not impact adversely on northbound traffic leaving Nottinghamshire as the variable message sign technology already present in the J25 to J28 section of the M1 will allow traffic speeds to be progressively managed in Nottinghamshire and no 'shock wave' or disconnect in traffic flow should arise i.e. the reduction from the 70mph to 60 mph limits will be smoothed by advance signing. There would be no impact on traffic speeds in Nottinghamshire for traffic travelling on the M1 in a southbound direction.

### **County Council response to the consultation**

11. The following 5 consultation questions have been asked by the Highways Agency, see Appendix A for full details;
  1. Do you consider that the proposal to introduce a maximum mandatory 60mph speed limit is an acceptable measure to mitigate any adverse impacts that these schemes could have on local air quality?
  2. Which of the following times of operation do you consider most acceptable? There are 8 options to select from.
  3. Do you consider that different lengths of duration (by way of example only, two or three years as opposed to seven or eight years) might affect the organisation differently?
  4. Are there any aspects of the proposal to introduce a maximum mandatory 60mph speed limit on the M1 between junctions 28 and 35A which give rise to concerns?
  5. Are there any additional comments you would like to make?
12. In response to these questions and having considered the smart motorways proposals and the benefits this project will undoubtedly bring, the County Council would agree that the introduction of a maximum mandatory 60 mph speed limit is justified given the need to protect residents and ensure that there are no detrimental impacts on noise and air quality.
13. The County Council would ask the Highways Agency to limit the time that the maximum mandatory 60 mph speed limit is operational during the day to the minimum period possible without compromising the air quality and noise thresholds. The current proposal is for the reduced speed limit to operate for 12 hours per day seven days per week. If this could be reduced to the peak commuting periods in the morning and evening on weekdays only this is considered to be preferable.

14. The County Council would ask the Highways Agency to remove the mandatory maximum 60 mph speed limit at the earliest possible time and if possible remove this incrementally if parts of the corridor display improvements in air quality and noise levels sooner than other sections of the motorway. The shorter the length over which the restrictions apply the better.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

15. 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.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

16. It is recommended that Committee:
  - a) note the Highways Agency proposals to introduce a mandatory maximum 60 mph speed limit on the M1 J28 to J35A to accompany the introduction of the smart motorways improvements in 2015.
  - b) approve the Service Director Highways to supply the observations given in paragraphs 12 to 14 above as the formal response of the County Council to the Highways Agency proposed M1 J28 to J35A maximum mandatory speed limit public consultation.

**Andrew Warrington**  
**Service Director Highways**

For any enquiries about this report please contact:  
David Pick – Principal Officer Transport Planning

### **Constitutional Comments (SHB. 16.01.2014)**

17. Committee have power to decide the Recommendations.

### **Financial Comments (TMR 16.01.2014)**

18. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

### **Background Papers**

Highways Agency - M1 J28 to J35A Maximum mandatory 60 mph speed limit  
consultation report

**Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

All.