

A380 South Devon Highway: Average Speed Cameras

Report of the Chief Officer of Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.**Recommendations: It is recommended that:**

- (a) the principle of the installation of Average Speed Cameras on the South Devon Highway is approved; and**
- (b) formal approval for funding of the proposal be sought from Cabinet.**

1. Background/Introduction

The South Devon Highway was opened to the public on 15 December 2015. It is a dual carriageway that was built to by-pass Kingskerswell and reduce journey times between Torbay and Newton Abbot/Exeter.

According to traffic speed data recorded in the HATOC report (14 July 2016, HCW/16/58), the 85th percentile speeds exceeded the speed limit of 50mph, as shown in Table 1. Within the same HATOC report, the Devon and Cornwall Safety Camera Partnership and the Devon and Cornwall Police commented that an enforcement would be beneficial in reducing the traffic speeds on this dual carriageway.

The introduction of average speed cameras has previously been discussed in a number of the HATOC meetings, resulting in a desire for further information. The minutes from the meeting on 14 July 2016 detail that “Whilst Members were minded to support ... the introduction of average speed cameras... they wished to know the financial implications prior to making a decision.”.

Table 1: Recorded Traffic Speeds reported within the HCW/16/58 HATOC Report.

	85 th Percentile (mph)	Mean (mph)
Aller Brake Road 29/04/16 to 09/05/16		
Northbound	56.5	48.9
Southbound	53.0	46.1
Maddacombe Road – Yon Street 01/05/16 to 31/05/16		
Northbound – near side	58.4	51.6
Northbound – off side	65.9	58.5
Southbound – near side	58.4	51.6
Southbound – off side	65.9	58.5

Due to concerns expressed by Members of HATOC and local Councillors, the issue of speed and enforcement has been considered by the committee on four further occasions. The most recent being 2 November 2017 where the latest speed data showed the 85th percentile speed to be 62.8mph and the mean speed to be 54.2mph.

This report outlines the proposals for implementing an average speed camera system on the South Devon Highway in order to improve compliance with the existing speed limit.

2. Proposal

To reduce traffic speeds and help enforce the 50mph speed limit between Edginswell and Penn Inn, it is proposed that Average Speed Cameras (ASC) are installed to encourage motorists to drive within the speed limit.

The proposal consists of installing ASCs at four different locations. Each of these sites will be composed of two ASCs, one on the northbound and one on the southbound carriageway. The locations for the four sites are:

- Site 1, composed of cameras A and B as identified on the plan in **Appendix I**, will be located at the start of the 50mph enforcement zone, near Edginswell, to the south of Kingskerswell.
- Site 2, composed of the cameras G and H, will be located at the end of the 50mph speed limit zone, near Penn Inn, to the north of Kingskerswell.
- Site 3, composed of cameras E and F, will be located before the junction with Penn Inn, to the north of Kingskerswell. This site is needed for the cameras to cover vehicles joining and leaving the South Devon Highway at this junction.
- Site 4, composed of cameras C and D, will be located to the south of the Kingskerswell junction. These cameras will cover vehicles exiting and joining the South Devon Highway from the south side of the junction.

In addition to the speed cameras, additional signage will be required and the size of the existing signs will need to be changed.

To indicate the extent of the ASCs coverage, speed camera signs will be installed and to remind drivers that they are within the area covered by ASCs, repeater signs will be installed. These signs will be co-located with the speed limit signs to remind drivers of the speed limit.

The speed limit repeater signs are currently 450mm in diameter, in accordance with Chapter 3 of the Traffic Signs Manual, these signs will be replaced with larger 600mm signs to make them more conspicuous.

The changes to the signage along this section of road is required to give motorists sufficient notice of the speed limit on this road and to make the average speed cameras compliant with previous historical guidance. The locations of the existing signs are shown on the plan in **Appendix I**.

3. Consultations/Representations/Technical Data

The authorities responsible for the enforcement of traffic speeds, Devon and Cornwall Police and Devon and Cornwall Safety Camera Partnership were both asked to provide comment about the traffic speeds on this road and were recorded in the HCW/16/58 HATOC report in July 2016:

The Devon and Cornwall Safety Camera Partnership gave the following response:

“the speeds recorded seem to straddle the sort of speeds where some attention might need to be paid to the road in terms of enforcement (only some locations give cause for concern), however the relatively few injury collisions recorded to date does not suggest that this would require immediate attention, however I note the potential for under reporting of collisions due to the road not being on the police casualty mapping systems.

... it might be of value to review the possibilities for enforcement so we know what might be feasible should it be deemed that this is required...”

Devon and Cornwall Police added that the general public are likely to view the dual carriageway as 70mph and felt that the recorded speeds indicated that occasional enforcement would be beneficial. In June 2018, they commented that they were supportive of putting Average Speed Cameras on the South Devon Highway.

4. Financial Considerations

The proposal is estimated to cost £285,000, which includes a one-year warranty and the first year's 3G costs for the equipment. The costs to purchase the equipment will be funded from the capital allocation for the South Devon Link Road. The warranty and 3G costs will be met from revenue resources. Because the level of funding required exceeds £250,000 formal approval will be required from Cabinet.

It is anticipated that future calibration and maintenance activities will be undertaken by Devon County Council at an estimated annual revenue cost of £4,000. The expected life of the cameras is 10 to 15 years after which replacement of the camera units is likely to be required. Approval for capital investment to replace the camera units will need to be requested at that time.

5. Environmental Impact Considerations

The environmental issues associated with excessive speeds are:

- Increased road noise
- Reduction in air quality

It is likely that there will be a reduction in traffic speeds on this dual carriageway when the ASCs are installed, which will decrease the road noise and improve the air quality.

6. Equality Considerations

There are no negative equality impacts recognised. There is the positive effect of reducing health inequality by improving air quality in this area.

7. Legal Considerations

The Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) of 2017 (Reference ID: 5598) for the 50mph speed limit along the length of the South Devon Highway has been implemented and is active since 14 April 2017. It states that *“no person shall drive a motor vehicle at a speed exceeding 50 miles per hour on the lengths of road specified below:*

- *Besigheim Way, from a point 610 metres north of its junction with Penn Inn roundabout southwards to its junction with the South Devon Highway including all slip roads.*
- *South Devon Highway, from its junction with Besigheim Way southwards until a point 395 metres north west of its junction with Hamelin Way including all slip roads.”*

The wording of this TRO will be reviewed to make sure it is legal and correct in light of the implementation of the ASC system.

The enforcement of the traffic speeds is the responsibility of Devon and Cornwall Police. The signage and TRO is the responsibility of Devon County Council.

8. Risk Management Considerations

There is a risk that there will be objections by motorists who do not approve of the 50mph speed limit on this section of the South Devon Highway. Some members of the public believe that the current speed limit is conservative for the type of road and given the design, should have a higher speed limit. This could lead to a higher number of infractions and complaints when the ASCs are first implemented.

9. Public Health Impact

The installation of the ASCs is expected to lead to reduced speeds along the South Devon Highway, which if there were to be a collision, should be less severe due to the lower speeds. The local residents will also benefit from reduced noise and air pollution.

10. Options/Alternatives

Other alternatives were discussed:

- Maintain existing arrangement/no change: this would require no funding but traffic speeds are likely to remain the same and could increase.
- Mobile enforcements: these would require lay-bys to be built for the police to use for their speed checks. This option would cost less than the ASC option but to achieve a comparable level of compliance as an average speed camera system, high levels of enforcement activity would be required. There would not be sufficient staff available to achieve this without removing significant amount of enforcement capacity from the rest of Devon's roads.
- Spot cameras: this option would cost less than the ASCs but is likely to only reduce the traffic speeds in the vicinity of the cameras. As this is a long section of road, the speeds before and after the spot camera are likely to remain the same but could increase.

The option to install Average Speed Cameras is considered to be the most efficient way in enforcing the 50mph speed limit along the South Devon Highway. Approximately 3 miles of the 3.2 miles, to which the 50mph speed limit applies, will be covered by the cameras which should reduce the speeds over the entire length of road.

11. Summary/Conclusions/Reasons for Recommendations

Recorded traffic speeds on the South Devon Highway indicate that the 50mph speed limit is frequently being exceeded thus action is required to encourage motorist to travel within the speed limit.

The proposal to install Average Speed Cameras should lead to slower traffic speeds and will help enforce the speed limit on the South Devon Highway by encouraging motorists to drive within the speed limit and sanctioning those that do not. This should increase the safety of motorist on this road and improve the local area by decreasing air and noise pollution. Although there is a significant cost to install the cameras, and there will be a yearly maintenance cost, it is considered that the benefits gained will offset the cost.

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Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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Background Paper	Date	File Reference
A380 South Devon Highway: Review of Traffic Speeds	14 July 2016	HCW/16/58

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Existing signs and proposed camera locations drawing

