

Review of 20mph Limits and Zones in Exeter

Report of the Head of Highways and Traffic Management

Please note that the following recommendation is subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.

Recommendation: It is recommended that Committee supports the action taken to ensure that 20mph Limits and Zones within Exeter comply with current Department for Transport signing standards.

1. Summary

Following a recent expression of willingness from local police to undertake enforcement in 20mph zones and limits the County Council has agreed to review all of the 20mph limits and zones in the city to ensure they are compliant with current DfT standards.

2. Background/Introduction

Historically, the stance of the police on enforcement in 20mph zones and limits has been one of non-formal enforcement (i.e. police presence and education such as Community Speed Watch, but not generally to issue fixed penalty notices) except in instances where there is intelligence that would lead to focused enforcement (e.g. speeding vehicle driving at the same time every day). This approach was agreed on the basis that 20mph limits and zones should mainly be 'self enforcing' and the police having to deploy the available limited resource to other operational priorities. Discussions with the Roads Policing Unit confirm that there has not been a force wide shift in this stance, and that local policing views differing to this should be directed to the Road Policing Unit, to ensure coordinated policing views are maintained.

In the infrequent instances where formal enforcement action is felt required by the police, the agreement between the two organisations has been that before the police commit resource to enforcement they would contact the County Council in order for us indicate if the speed limit is compliant i.e. has a valid Traffic Regulation Order and appropriate signs in place.

It is important to note that even if part of a limit or zone is not fully compliant this may not render the whole limit or zone unenforceable. This is a decision to be taken before any enforcement action is undertaken.

3. Proposal

Although the central policing approach has not formally changed, it seems that there still may be a desire from local police to undertake enforcement on a much larger scale and more frequently. Therefore, the County Council has proactively been undertaking compliance surveys on its 20mph zones and limits in the city.

These surveys have now been completed, and any identified works needed to bring the entire limit or zone up to a fully compliant status are ordered or in the process of being ordered.

As part of the most recent amendment to the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions it has now been authorised by the DfT that repeater signs and/or repeater road marking roundels can be implemented instead of more intrusive and costly traffic calming measures, such as speed cushions. Therefore, the works identified will be implemented in line with the amendment in order to minimise disruption and cost.

Works identified will form part of a rolling programme and began on site the week beginning 7 April 2013.

4. Financial Considerations

The Speed Management Budget funded from the On Street Parking Account, approved at the March 2014 Cabinet, will be used to fund identified works.

5. Sustainability Considerations

In order to bring the limits and zones up to a fully compliant standard, it will be required to install further 20mph repeater signs and/or repeater road marking roundels. This will add to the existing signing on the network, which is counter to the usual approach of the County Council. However, this has been deemed to be the method having the minimal environmental impact.

6. Legal Considerations

This review is required in order for the County Council to be able to confirm full city wide compliance for 20mph limits and zones. This will give the police the appropriate statement of confidence of compliance they desire. They can then progress enforcement on a city wide scale, in line with the new expression of willingness to enforce indicated by local police.

7. Risk Management Considerations

Should this review not be completed it is likely that local police will continue to indicate that the County Council are not providing sufficient statement of compliance they desire for them to undertake increased levels formal enforcement.

8. Options/Alternatives

The alternative is to take no action and leave the zones and limits in status quo. As explained in Section 7 this may result in the police not progressing with the desire to increase formal enforcement.

9. Reason for Recommendation/Conclusion

This review is deemed to be the most appropriate mechanism to supply the police with a clear statement of confidence of compliance. When this is achieved this should lead to the police progressing with the desire to increase levels of formal enforcement.

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Electoral Divisions: All in Exeter

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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Background Paper	Date	File Reference
Nil		

jb080413exh
sc/cr/review of 20mph limits zones
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