

Speed Policy and Management Progress Report

1.0 Background

1.1 This report summarises the agreed actions, recommendations and proposals arising from the Scrutiny Committee Speed Task Group (SCTG) report (June 2019). In December 2019 a Speed Management Working Group (SMWG) was established, comprising Members, Devon County Council Road Safety Officers, Neighbourhood Highways Team, members of the County's Traffic Team, Public Health Team, Comms Team and Police Road Casualty Reduction and Traffic Management Officers.

2.0 Newton Abbot 20 mph Trial Scheme

2.1 The SMWG considered different options, based on extensive research of 20 mph schemes across the UK and beyond. Evidence demonstrates that while 85th percentile speeds reduce slightly by 1-2 mph, higher speeds can be reduced significantly, particularly on higher-speed main roads (which are normally excluded), leading to lower collision rates and severity. In addition, vulnerable road users feel safer, leading to increases in active/sustainable travel and an improvement in the character of the area. In order to gain the greatest potential benefit from the trial and to increase the value of lessons learnt, the SMWG agreed the following parameters;

- The scheme should be extended to include all roads through the built-up area, including main roads.
- Kingkerswell should be removed from the trial as it is a separate area.
- Extensive 'before and after' data will be gathered, including the views of local people, to measure the success of the scheme.

2.2 The results of the trial will inform future policy on 20 mph speed limits. Preliminary design work and consultations have already been undertaken.

3.0 SCARF Review

3.1 The Group has reached two main conclusions;

- The SCARF process remains a useful tool for its purpose but there are improvements which should be made to address some of the Scrutiny Group's concerns,
- Some of the Scrutiny Group's other concerns are valid but potential solutions lie beyond the scope of SCARF.

3.2 The Group recommends the following actions;

- Set up a dedicated SCARF website, to include a complaints tracker so the public can monitor the progress and outcome of their complaints, a map showing investigation sites, and a facility to upload new complaints on a set form.
- Where the evidence does not indicate a speed-related road safety issue, communities should be free to take self-funded actions. These could include;
 - Speed Watch,
 - Temporary Vehicle Activated Speed (VAS) warning signs,
 - Local safety campaigns.
- Introduce Remote Meetings and Data-sharing Protocol between agencies to make the SCARF process more efficient and quicker.

- Introduce a Matrix to Record Evidence of Environmental Factors as part of the site analysis.
- Revise the System for Evaluating Complaints at 20 mph sites, to reduce the incidence of slight speeding (i.e. 85th/ile speeds between 21-25 mph) triggering intervention which in reality is not required.
- Carry out a multi-agency review of technology to ensure we are making the best use of what is available. Some of the issues already identified for review include;
 - Use of ANPR to identify repeat offenders,
 - Average speed cameras on routes with multiple complaints,
 - Analysis of fastest speeds to evidence issues.
- Consideration of requests for new or changed Speed Limits where existing limits are deemed inappropriate, to include;
 - Inclusion of Highways Development Control and EDG schemes, potentially involving closer liaison with Traffic Team in setting new speed limits,
 - Review of recent departures from standard,
 - Move towards Safe Systems approach in setting and reviewing speed limits.
- Follow-Up of Engineering Measures to set up a priority waiting list for approved schemes which SCARF has identified as requiring engineering measures.

3.3 The Scrutiny Group recognised that if a community believes there is a speeding issue, and that causes them to change their behaviour and attitudes accordingly, then there is a problem, even if the evidence demonstrates that the road safety hazards are not significant. SCARF does not provide a solution in these instances.

3.4 A ‘Local Traffic Review’ is one potential action. It may be that while traffic speeds are not significantly high there may be other related concerns which generate speeding complaints, such as lack of crossing facilities or footways or parking issues. A review might identify these issues and suggest remedial actions, whereas currently the SCARF process simply determines that no action is justified.

3.5 It is noted the Scrutiny Group resolved to require; The ‘doing what matters’ team to take forward the recommendations and report with leaders to ensure maximum impact. The SCARF review Group believes the ‘doing what matters’ team is best placed to take this issue forward. It is recommended that officers engage with the “doing what matters” team to develop links to the SCARF process.

4.0 Review and refocus the Road Safety Strategy and current Speed Limits Policy;

4.1 The draft Devon Road Safety Strategy, upon approval, will commit Devon County Council to a Safe System approach to achieving a Vision Zero outcome. The Strategy’s Mission Statement is:

... to ensure that every mode and every route should be available to everybody free from the risk or fear of harm.

4.2 Devon County Council is a founder partner of the South West Peninsula Road Safety Partnership (SWPRSP) which is committed to an interim target of a 50% reduction in death and serious injury by 2030.

The following key principles combine to form the policy & practice foundation on which the Devon Road Safety Strategy, in its current form, would be based:

1. The preservation of life and the prevention of serious harm is a public health priority¹.
2. The elimination of death or serious injury arising from ordinary and predictable use of the highway is the statutory responsibility of the local authority acting as highway authority.
3. Road safety – specifically the elimination of fatalities and serious injuries arising from the ordinary and predictable use of the highway – is therefore a public health objective, with responsibility for delivery largely resting with the local highway authority.
4. All policies, decisions and actions will be based on best available evidence. Where there is no or limited evidence available every effort will be made to develop an evidence base sufficiently robust to support local decision making.
5. Wherever possible a collaborative, partnership-based approach to road casualty reduction will be pursued to help protect Devon citizens from risk on neighbouring networks, and to help reduce the threat of collisions arising from road users travelling in Devon but resident in neighbouring areas.

5.0 Interim Policy for 20 mph Speed Limit Requests

5.1 The SMWG is aware that requests for new 20 mph SPLs continue to be received. It has been resolved to defer implementation of any new 20 mph zones until after the Newton Abbot trial scheme has been completed and reviewed, as the success or otherwise of that scheme will directly impact future policy. In the interim period it is proposed to adopt the following policy (Appendix B);

- Add requests to a central waiting list.
- Review requests to identify those where other measures may be more appropriate.
- Undertake data surveys as resources permit.
- Revise 20 mph SPL policy after Newton Abbot scheme. Schemes associated with development, EDG or externally funded to be reviewed and implemented individually.

6.0 All new residential developments (over 50 houses) to be designed as 20mph from 2019 onwards.

6.1 This has been DCC policy for a number of years.

7.0 Develop a local toolkit

7.1 This will be for Communities and Town and Parishes to use to create Healthy Streets supporting a hyper local approach to communication on lower speeds as well as practical steps that can be taken in local areas. This should be supported where possible with practical support and training.

7.2 Similar toolkits have been produced by governments, local authorities, police forces and pressure groups around the world. Some of these have been analysed and the best or

most appropriate components have been assimilated. A Devon toolkit is being assembled. This is an ongoing process.

8.0 DCC to be more open to innovative trials, including associated monitoring, where safe to do so and funding can be secured.

8.1 As the SMWG has progressed with work on the project innovation has been embraced, notably it has been shown that the Newton Abbot scheme has been extended to include all of the roads in the built-up area, beyond the remit of the original recommendation. It is also proposed to extend the range of Actions in the SCARF process to include more scope for community involvement where enforcement or engineering measures are not justified.

7.2 Officers have consulted with colleagues in the other local highway authorities across the Devon-Cornwall peninsula. It has been agreed that a more consistent approach to speed management across the D&C Constabulary region would bring benefits to all parties. The results of trial schemes and innovative ideas is being shared and already this had enabled authorities to arrange to trial different ideas and methods so that results can be compared.

7.4 A common complaint from the public is that SCARF ‘ignores’ the fastest drivers by utilising 85th%ile speeds. It is believed that the fastest 15% of drivers are likely to be habitual speed limit breakers and officers are looking at potentially using Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR), Average Speed Camera or Speed Watch data to identify these individuals. Potentially by sharing the data across the peninsula the police can deal with the persistent offenders.

7.5 There is also a commitment to developing the idea of Route Reviews as an alternative to the specific ‘spot site’ technique used for SCARF. This could involve utilising cameras and vehicle identification technology on main routes across the peninsula where speed complaints have been made at multiple locations. The idea is being considered jointly to determine if the authorities could work together to deliver this idea effectively.

7.6 A new procedure is being adopted which will allow local Councils to deploy speed warning signs with permission from DCC without having to meet SCARF criteria for intervention.

8.0 Speed Watch

8.1 The police are currently reviewing Speed Watch to address organisational and logistical issues which have hindered implementation of new schemes. This will be the subject of a further report at a later date.

9.0 Next Steps

9.1 Work on the Newton Abbot trial scheme will continue. Proposals are being developed for;

- data gathering and analysis,

- communication strategy and promotion of the scheme,
- consultation,
- detailed design.

9.2 These tasks have inevitably been delayed due to the Covid-19 virus and are being held in abeyance whilst traffic conditions are disrupted until the road network stabilises.

9.3 Work continues to reform the SCARF process and implement the other changes described within this report.