

Progress of the Recommendations from the Traffic Speed Task Group

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

1. Background

Cabinet resolved at its meeting of 13th June 2018 that the County Council's speed management policy be reviewed (Minute *189 (c)). The Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee formed a Traffic Speed Task Group (TSTG) to undertake this and has recommended a range of measures (Appendix I). Cabinet resolved at its meeting of 10th July 2019 that the relevant Cabinet Member and Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste be asked to take forward and progress/co-ordinate the recommendations contained therein, subject to available resources (Minute *378 (b)). This report provides an update on the progress of the recommendations.

2. Speed Management Working Group

A Speed Management Working Group (SMWG) has been established comprising members and officers from appropriate teams to manage the implementation of the recommendations. It includes local members (Cllrs Gordon Hook, Alistair Dewhurst, Jackie Hook), the local HATOC chair (Cllr Jerry Brook), Portfolio Holder (Cllr Stuart Hughes), the Police (policy and operational teams), and officers from the DCC Traffic Management Team, Road Safety, Public Health and Communications. teams.

Some of these representatives will attend on a permanent basis while others will attend occasional meetings which focus on specific issues. The Group will call-in representatives from other stakeholder and interest organisations as necessary, both internal and external.

The SMWG held its first meeting on 24th January 2020 with the next meeting scheduled for 19th March. Prior to these meetings officers had gathered information from other trials around the UK, and developed outline proposals for consideration. Between meetings it is agreed that officers will hold informal sub-group discussions and workshops to collate information or develop the elements of the schemes necessary to implement the recommendations and policies.

Initial focus for the group has been on proposals for the Newton Abbot trial with discussion on; community engagement, how the impact of any scheme should be measured; design options; timescale; and, funding.

The group also agreed Terms of Reference (Appendix I) and made a request for officers to put forward an overall programme for the delivery of the recommendations, as resolved by Cabinet.

At the next meeting scheduled for March it is proposed to continue discussion on the Newton Abbot scheme and overall programme, along with a review of the SCARF process (including how town and parish councils can be better supported when seeking to fund Vehicle Activated Signs for their communities).

It is also intended to agree a reporting mechanism back to Cabinet to track progress and provide regular updates.

3. Overview of Work to Date

The following work has been undertaken in support of key recommendations:

Recommendation

1.1 Review and refocus the Road Safety Strategy and current Speed Limits Policy to reflect;

- a) The wider consideration of health, sustainable travel and whole environmental impacts of speed management;
- b) Adoption of the safe systems approach;
- c) Inspirations from the TfL Healthy Streets Strategy;
- d) DfT 2013 Speed Limit Policy recommendations
- e) Public consultation on substantial changes.

Progress

The SMWG has reviewed a significant amount of material including evaluation reports of other authorities' speed management schemes and policies. It is felt that before a comprehensive change in Speed Limit Policy can be implemented the results of the Newton Abbot 20 mph trial scheme must be evaluated, as this will inform what the policy should be.

The wider considerations, inspirations and recommendations referred to will all be reflected in the Newton Abbot scheme. The SMWG will consider how new requests for 20 mph schemes should be managed in the meantime and make a recommendation.

In October 2019, the South West Peninsula Road Safety Partnership held its first meeting. This partnership is a strategic collaboration, which aims to reduce the number of personal injury collisions; particularly those resulting in killed or serious injury, across the area formed by the four local authorities of Devon and Cornwall which is co-terminus with the Devon and Cornwall Police force area¹. The partnership will have responsibility for overall strategy for road safety and road traffic collision reduction, agreeing interventions and monitoring performance.

A multi-agency and holistic approach will be adopted to solve common road safety issues across the Peninsula, which is consistent with a safe systems methodology. The shared vision for the partnership is for the road system of Devon and Cornwall to be free from death and serious injury, supporting an accessible, healthier and safer peninsula.

Recommendation

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

¹ The partnership members comprise Devon County Council, Torbay Council, Plymouth City Council, Cornwall Council, Highways England, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service, Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service, Devon and Cornwall Police, The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon and Cornwall, South West Ambulance Service NHS Trust, NHS Trusts and Public Health

Progress

This is DCC policy for all new developments.

Recommendation

1.3 Trial a default residential 20 mph limit in Newton Abbot and Kingkerswell.

Progress

The SMWG has reviewed a number of area-wide 20 mph speed limit schemes across the UK.

In particular the group have considered schemes in Brighton, Bristol and London, which have included the major A and B class through roads as well as the residential side roads. Results show collision injury rates dropped significantly; up to 42% and the greatest reductions were on the main roads, resulting in fewer and less severe injuries. Greater reductions in traffic speeds have been achieved; between 3 mph and 10 mph, with the fastest drivers slowing down the most. People said they felt safer; walking and cycling rates increased by up to 20% and more children started walking or cycling to school.

The group are considering if this is the correct model for the Newton Abbot trial.

In order to evaluate the full impacts of any trial scheme and learn lessons for future schemes it will be important to gather comprehensive 'before' and 'after' evidence and data. This will fall broadly into two categories; technical data (Such as speed and collision data) and subjective observations and thoughts from people who live in, or travel through, the scheme area. Surveys will be undertaken to assess the immediate and longer-term impacts of the scheme and further questionnaire surveys will also be undertaken.

Officers have developed a draft scheme and provisional programme for discussion at the March meeting. Officers are also reviewing existing data on driver behaviour in the community and previous feedback from the community including the Newton Abbot Neighbourhood Plan.

An initial meeting has been held with a representative of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) who is supportive of the proposals and nature of the trial in principle.

Funding the first year of work to deliver the trial scheme will be included in the Transportation Capital Programme for consideration by Cabinet at their meeting on the 8th April 2020.

Recommendation

2.1 Review the SCARF process to reflect changes made to the Road Safety Strategy and Speed Limits Policy, ensuring local communities have a meaningful and transparent say on proposed local schemes, using a matrix similar to that used in Torbay.

Progress

Officers have undertaken an initial review of the SCARF process and will be presenting a proposal to take forward a full review at the March meeting.

It is understood that there is a need to ensure that the process is more transparent, and that outcomes from reviews must be communicated in a timely manner. The review will also focus on understanding what Town and Parish Councils want, and ensuring that they are supported in funding vehicle activated signs for their communities.

An initial meeting has been held with a representative for the PCC to discuss how SCARF may be remodelled to address issues raised in scrutiny report.

Recommendation

2.2 Develop a local toolkit that Communities and Town and Parishes can 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.

Progress

Local toolkits produced by other authorities are being reviewed by officers with a view to producing a specific tool for DCC. Lessons learned from the community engagement and promotional campaigns planned for Newton Abbot trial will be used to further develop the toolkit.

Recommendation

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

Progress

The Authority is supportive to innovation in speed management. The Newton Abbot scheme will trial a new and innovative approach, it will be carefully monitored and reviewed to inform future policy and schemes.

Through Exeter City Council's Sport England Local Delivery Pilot, the County Council is working collaboratively with a range of organisations to 'test and learn' a number of highway initiatives aimed at increasing peoples' physical activity but also creating healthy, low-traffic streets. Working in partnership with communities and schools, the programme will help local neighbourhoods more easily deliver school streets² and play streets³. These will help create a safer environment for young people to be more active in, whether playing with friends or travelling to school. This has the potential to be expanded to other parts of the County if they are proven successful.

An innovative project using light touch psychological and physical traffic calming measures outside St Michael's Primary School in Exeter has been approved and will soon be implemented. School children undertook a street audit to identify barriers to safety and co-designed with Sustrans an image of a dragon, which will be marked permanently on the highway – this aims to reduce speed by changing the appearance of the highway and increasing driver awareness of pupils on a main traffic route through the area. It is one of three pilots to be delivered across the UK and was made possible through funding secured

² School Streets have been trialled around the UK to close an area of highway immediately outside schools so that only pedestrians and cyclists can use them at school start and finish times

³ Play Streets are resident and community-led initiatives to enable children to play freely and safely in their own street

by Sustrans through the Road Safety Trust fund with £10,000 capital funding match from Devon County Council.

The County Council will also be developing and delivering more modal filters, which can be bollards, planters or bus gates aimed at filtering out different modes of transport. For instance, such filters can enable through access on residential streets for pedestrians and cyclists but not cars, thereby creating a low traffic environment, safer for more active travel.

Recommendation

3.3 Improving the approach and processes around Community Speed Watch to include;

- a) Clear lines of communication with County and Parish Councillors as well as local police
- b) Resolution of the blockages in accessing equipment
- c) Better access to training for volunteers
- d) Publicity of other opportunities for people in Devon to volunteer to support local police work including Speed Watch.
- e) Consideration of a shared database to share and publicise speed offences – e.g. as used in Kent and Sussex.

To ultimately increase the number of communities involved in the Speed Watch programme.

Progress

The initial meeting has been held with a representative of the PCC to discuss how Community Speed Watch may be remodelled to address issues raised in scrutiny report.

Recommendations

- 3.2 A named County Councillor to sit on the Speed Watch Community development group to lead on the planning and development of Speed Watch across Devon.
- 4.1 Sign up to the 'Driving for Better Business' initiative and promote across Devon.
- 4.2 The 'doing what matters' team to take forward the recommendations and report with leaders to ensure maximum impact.
- 4.3 Write to all Devon MPs to encourage Government to push for greater use of Intelligent Speed Adaptation for works vehicles eg. Buses, taxis etc.

Progress

These four recommendations will be discussed at the next meeting of the SPWG.

Meg Booth
Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste

Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Highway Management: Councillor Stuart Hughes

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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Background Paper	Date	File Reference
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Nil

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Appendix I To HIW/20/18

Terms of Reference:

A working group to set priority and programme for the review of the County's approach to managing speeds, as laid out in the Road Traffic Speed Working Group report.

The core group will comprise of effected DCC Members, Traffic Management Team, Road Safety Team, Communications Team and Public Health representatives. The group will draw on the expertise of other organisations as required, including the Police

The group will meet on a monthly basis to review progress. As tasks are nearing completion and resource permits further tasks identified in the report will be programmed for delivery.

Progress will be dependent on available budget and staff resource; best endeavours will be made by officers to secure both.

Regular updates will be provided to Cabinet on the progress of the group, along with recommendations on any matter effecting County wide policy or procedure.

Link to Cabinet minute 378

<https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=133&MId=3429&Ver=4>

TSTG Recommendations

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2.2 Develop a local toolkit that Communities and Town and Parishes can 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.

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b) Resolution of the blockages in accessing equipment

c) Better access to training for volunteers

d) Publicity of other opportunities for people in Devon to volunteer to support local police work including Speed Watch.

e) Consideration of a shared database to share and publicise speed offences – e.g. as used in Kent and Sussex.

To ultimately increase the number of communities involved in the Speed Watch programme.

4.1 Sign up to the 'Driving for Better Business' initiative and promote across Devon.

4.2 The 'doing what matters' team to take forward the recommendations and report with leaders to ensure maximum impact.

4.3 Write to all Devon MPs to encourage Government to push for greater use of Intelligent Speed Adaptation for works vehicles eg. Buses, taxis etc.