

## **Speed Policy and Management Progress Report**

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

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.

**Recommendation:** that the Cabinet be asked to note the contents of this report, and that a further report on a framework for prioritising 20mph projects will be presented to the meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> December.

### **1. Summary**

This report summarises the progress made over the last twelve months on the review of DCC Speed Policy and Management following the Scrutiny Committee Speed Task Group (SCTG) report (June 2019).

### **2. Introduction**

In December 2019 a Speed Management Working Group (SMWG) was established, including (but not limited to) Members, Devon County Council Road Safety Officers, Neighbourhood Highways Team, members of the County's Traffic Team, Public Health Team, Communications Team and Police Road Casualty Reduction and Traffic Management Officers.

### **3. Progress Report**

#### Newton Abbot 20 mph Pilot Scheme

The Newton Abbot scheme has been in progress since September 2019 and is currently undergoing public engagement and consultation. The Working Group has proposed a comprehensive scheme covering the built-up area of the town including the town centre and some main roads, extending it beyond the original brief which was to restrict it to residential areas. This follows extensive research undertaken by the Working Group which has demonstrated that similar schemes across and beyond the UK have brought wide ranging benefits, as most speeding and road safety problems occur on main roads outside residential areas. The pilot scheme is intended to test whether introducing a default 20 mph Speed Limit (20SPL) will bring increased gains in:

- road safety by reducing the number and severity of collisions
- increased active travel and benefits to public health
- reduced congestion by improving traffic flows
- reduced emissions by encouraging modal shift for local trips by making walking and cycling safer and easier
- increased sense of public safety, making the streets accessible again to vulnerable road users who feel threatened by fast-moving traffic.

The pilot scheme is a major project and involves officers from the Traffic Orders and Policy Team, Road Safety, Communications Group, Data Collection, Public Health and Transportation. Regular input has been provided from the Town Council, District Council, Fire Service and Police as well as external consultants. Several working groups have been formed to manage data collection, public consultation and design works which meet every two weeks. A public perception survey of traffic conditions carried out in Newton Abbot generated approximately 3,000 responses and the results have been used to develop the proposals.

The data gathering exercise is programmed for autumn 2021 to capture:

- Vehicle speed
- Vehicle type
- Turning movements
- Air quality

Seventeen new monitoring stations will be installed allowing several months of baseline data to be gathered.

The Informal consultation document has been published and posters and information in public buildings are promoting the opportunity for community to have their say. This is primarily a web-based engagement exercise, but paper copies are available at the Library and Town Council building. A webpage has been built to provide an interactive platform for people to make comments and to track the progress of the project. A social media campaign has been launched to increase public awareness of the consultation process and provide background information.

It is expected that a final design for the Newton Abbot 20 will be developed ready for Advert before the end of the Calendar year. Implementation of the scheme, subject to consultation, is anticipated in spring 2022.

It should be noted that the data surveys were originally programmed to commence in spring/summer 2020, alongside a preliminary publicity and consultation exercise. However, the impacts of the Covid-19 virus and its effects on traffic made this impossible. Furthermore, the consequential redeployment of officer and police resources to public health tasks delayed the publicity and consultation exercise. Despite the delays the scheme has already produced some benefits. Knowledge and experience gained during the public engagement, data collection and design stages will help to improve these stages and process for future schemes. We have acquired advanced data collection and analysis technology which can be utilised elsewhere to improve our capabilities in this field. We are working closely with neighbouring authorities including Cornwall Council who are developing their own policies and pilot schemes. Cornwall have adopted a default policy to replace existing 30mph limits with 20mph limits and through this joint work we can share information, learning and ideas to our mutual benefit.

#### Speed Compliance Action Review Forum (SCARF) Review

The SCTG recommended to 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.

The SMWG formed a subgroup to review these concerns, which 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.

A commitment was made to progress a website. This would explain the process in more detail but using plain English, including FAQs. It is intended to allow the public to submit and follow up speeding complaints and to view the outcomes. There is scope to work with the police to coordinate websites or create a joint website to make it easier for people to find information and address correspondence to the correct agency and this is now to be taken forward under the Vision Zero forum<sup>1</sup>.

A new process for Variable Message Speed Indication signs has been adopted. Where the evidence does not indicate a speed-related road safety issue, communities are now free to buy and install their own sign units (subject to DCC technical approval and unless there are good safety reasons against it). Vision Zero provides the opportunity for 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
- Use of community funded speed cameras to provide evidence of a problem without compromising data protection, which can be used to identify sites where action is required.

A 'Local Traffic Review' is being piloted in Red Lion Hill, Brixton. It was acknowledged by the SCTG that where 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.

### Speed Watch

The police have reviewed Speed Watch to address organisational and logistical issues which had hindered implementation of new schemes. Additional resources have been made available and there is a welcome increase in schemes across Devon. They have also put additional resources into the Safety Camera Partnership and to speed enforcement in general.

1. Vision Zero is a Road Safety Partnership working to stop all fatal & serious collisions in Devon & Cornwall by 2040, and involves Devon & Cornwall Police, Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service, Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service, South Western Ambulance Service NHS Trust, National Highways, Devon Air Ambulance, Cornwall Air Ambulance, The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Devon County Council, Cornwall Council, Plymouth City Council, Torbay Council, Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust, University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust and the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS).

### Interim Process for 20 mph Speed Limit Requests

The SMWG is aware that requests for new 20 mph speed limits continue to be received. As a consequence, a further report on a framework for prioritising 20mph projects will be presented to the next meeting of the Cabinet on 8<sup>th</sup> December.

#### **4. Other Considerations**

The financial, legal, environmental, equality, risk management and public health considerations will be taken into account when the speed limit policy is revised.

#### **5. Conclusions**

Progress has been made over the last year but inevitably it has been restricted because of Covid, partly because traffic surveys had to be postponed due to the abnormal traffic conditions and partly because of officer redeployment from normal duties.

The ongoing adoption and implementation of Vision Zero has created an opportunity to take forward some of the SCTG recommendations and this is being actively pursued. The Newton Abbot pilot scheme continues towards implementation and will inform a large part of future policy. One lesson already being learnt from schemes across the Peninsula is that different policies for 20SPLs may be required on roads and in areas of different character.

Work will continue to develop initiatives for local communities to help themselves, including the production of a local speed management toolkit. The ongoing work with the police and neighbouring authorities will be continued with more joint initiatives, potentially through Vision Zero as well as other subgroups already established.

A methodology for assessing and prioritising requests for 20 mph SPLs is being refined and this will be presented to the next Cabinet meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> December.

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
Nil		

Speed Policy and Management Progress Report - Final