

## Speed Policy and Management Progress Report

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

### 1. Summary

This report summarises the progress for a number of the actions, recommendations and proposals arising from the Scrutiny Committee Speed Task Group (SCTG) report (June 2019) and following the previous progress report in November 2020 (<https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=427&MId=3935&Ver=4>) (Minute \*205).

### 2. Introduction

A Speed Management Working Group (SMWG) was established in 2020 comprising members and officers from appropriate teams to manage the implementation of the recommendations. It included local members (Councillors Gordon Hook, Alistair Dewhirst, Jackie Hook), the local HATOC chair (Councillor Jerry Brook), Portfolio Holder (Councillor Stuart Hughes), the Police (policy and operational teams), and officers from the DCC Traffic Management Team, Road Safety, Public Health and Communications teams.

In May 2021, membership changed to reflect the elections that month with Councillors Phil Bullivant and Janet Bradford replacing Councillors Gordon Hook and Jackie Hook as local members, and Councillor Martin Wrigley replacing Councillor Jerry Brook as local HATOC chair.

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 has met on a monthly basis to progress this and other areas of work.

This report updates on key areas of work for the past 12 months:

- Developing the Newton Abbot 20mph Trial
- Continued development of the SCARF process
- Innovation

### 3. Overview of Work to Date

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

#### Recommendation

1.3 Trial a default residential 20 mph limit in Newton Abbot

#### Progress

Throughout 2021 the Speed Management Working Group (SMWG) worked closely with the Newton Abbot Town Council and the community to develop proposals for a new 20mph speed limit in Newton Abbot.

During this period two surveys were developed along with a website to engage with the community. The first survey was designed to gather baseline data to understand the community's current feelings towards travel, modal choice, road safety, and speed. The second survey was designed to understand the community's views on the implementation of a new 20mph speed limit.

The consultation regarding the implementation of a new 20mph speed limit was available both online and on paper and was open between October and November 2021. The consultation asked those who work and live in the town 25 questions and invited people to add their ideas and comments to an interactive map depicting the proposed extent of the scheme. In total 1,489 responses were received, and of those that responded 84 percent live or work in Newton Abbot and 90 percent live or work in Teignbridge.

The consultation showed that:

- 21 per cent supported 20mph on the town's main roads, 79 per cent were opposed.
- 46 per cent were in favour of 20mph on the town's residential roads, 54 per cent were against.

However, the consultation, also showed that there was overwhelming support for 20mph limits outside the town's schools, nurseries, and pre-schools, with 77 percent of respondents in favour of this proposal.

Whilst proposals for a 20mph speed limit across Newton Abbot have now been withdrawn, officers will be engaging local County Councillors to identify sites to trial advisory and mandatory 20mph interventions around schools as was supported by the community. Any new scheme will be subject to the normal legal consultation process.

## **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**

The highways teams understand the importance of vehicle speed to our communities and the Speed Compliance Action Review Forum (SCARF) process exists to address those concerns; gathering speed data and reviewing via a multi-agency panel.

A new sub-group is being established to set up a dedicated SCARF website. This will include a tracker so the public can monitor the progress and outcome of their reported concerns. Additionally, a map showing investigation sites will be provided to avoid duplicate reports for the same site, along with a facility to upload new concerns on a set proforma.

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.

A 'Local Traffic Review' (LTR) is one potential action. It may be that while traffic speeds are not significantly high there may be other related issues which generate speeding concerns, 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 based on recorded speeds. Several LTRs have been set up and the early signs are that these can be a successful way of looking at problems and issues over a defined area in a coordinated manner. We have already expanded the trial to implement LTRs outside of the SCARF process, where concerns or requests indicate an open-minded and comprehensive study of a particular area might be the best way to identify problems and opportunities to develop appropriate measures.

### **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**

#### **- A new approach to implementing 20 mph speed limits**

As previously reported, it was resolved that the implementation of any new 20 mph speed limits be deferred until after the Newton Abbot trial scheme has been completed and reviewed. Any requests received would be added to a central waiting list and initial speed data gathered.

The matter was reviewed further at Cabinet on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021, it was understood that there remained a significant demand from communities for 20mph speed limits and this was supported by elected Members. It was proposed that Members be invited to make representations for their communities where it was felt that the introduction of a 20 mph speed limit would be beneficial; this may be for the whole community or a discrete part of the community. Requests would be reviewed against a framework, and the proposals prioritised based on alignment with current Policy principles of - significant vulnerable road user activity and mean speeds were low (24mph or below) and additional factors as recommended in the July 2019 Scrutiny report.

All schemes would also be considered via safety audit prior to progression.

A budget of £100k has been earmarked for 20mph speed limits for 2022/23 through the Local Transport Plan or Section 106 contributions.

The framework includes additional factors to ensure that resource was directed to where there would be the greatest benefit, including speed related casualty collision history, community support, Community Speed Watch, deprivation Index ranking and existing Air Quality Management area information.

This aligns with the original Scrutiny recommendations and, also borrows themes used in the Torbay assessment matrix cited by the group.

A copy of the framework, as approved by Cabinet for assessing and prioritising requests for 20 mph speed limits in the preparation of schemes for delivery in 2022/23, is shown in Appendix 1.

An invitation has been sent to all elected Members and Town & Parish Councils to provide expressions of interest and scheme proposals via a web form. The deadline for expressions of interest is 31<sup>st</sup> March.

The aim will be to prioritise, design, advertise and implement schemes within the 2022/23 financial year.

- **A new approach to mobilising Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) for communities**

Another key outcome of the SMWG has been the review of Devon's Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) procedure.

The group investigated a more permissive approach to mobile VAS to allow communities to communicate to drivers in different ways, such as signs displaying the vehicle's speed, slow down text etc. The outcome is a new Traffic Management Procedure which allows the use of these signs (See Appendix 2).

The procedure is designed to enable the empowerment of local councils to bring about a behavioural change to speed within their communities. It will also provide another potential outcome from the SCARF process.

The procedure covers a number of criteria which must be met before a VAS can be installed on the highway. This includes the requirement for the locations to be reviewed at SCARF to ensure that there are no other interventions that may be required. It is also recommended that the device be moved to different locations on a regular basis so that the impact on drivers is maintained; this may be sites within a single community, or there may be opportunity for the same apparatus to be shared amongst more than one community.

Devices which are capable of data gathering are also supported. This could assist by providing data to evaluate how effective these measures are.

DCC will continue to deploy either fixed or mobile VAS in accordance with the current SCARF process. This option of the community deploying mobile VAS at its own cost is in addition to the DCC VAS programme.

An update was provided to all County Members on this in December 2020 so communities could be kept informed on new options to address speed concerns.

#### **4. Next Steps**

Work on the Newton Abbot trial will continue with a new focus on streets around schools. Officers will be engaging local County Councillors this month to identify sites to trial advisory and mandatory 20mph interventions around schools as was supported by the community.

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

Expressions of interest for new 20 mph speed limits will be reviewed and prioritised before reporting to Cabinet for approval to progress to deliver schemes in 2022/23.

Highways teams will continue to work with communities to allow them to deploy VAS to address speed concerns where appropriate.

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**

Contact for Enquiries: Christopher Rook

Tel No: 01392 383000 Room: County Hall, Exeter. EX2 4QD

<b>Background Paper</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>File Reference</b>
Nil		

Speed Policy and Management Progress Report - Final

## Appendix 1 to HIW/22/17 - 20 mph Assessment System

Name of Community / Location*		
Community Support (via local Elected Member and Local Town/Parish Council)	Pass / Fail	
<b>POLICY COMPLIANCE</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Sub Total</b>
<b>Traffic Speed (85<sup>th</sup>ile)</b>		
Below 24 mph	4	
25-30 mph	2	
Above 31 mph	0	
<b>Speed Related Injury Collision (3 year record)</b>		
Each Slight	1	
Each Serious	2	
Each Fatal	3	
<b>Vulnerable Road Users / Environment</b>		
School/Playground	1	
Health/Social Care Facility	1	
Community Facility	1	
Footway both sides	-1	
Footway one side	0	
No Footway	1	
Pedestrian crossing	-1	
<b>OTHER FACTORS</b>		
Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA)	2	
Community Speed Watch Scheme	2	
<b>Road Character</b>		
A road	0	
B road	1	
C class road	2	
Unclassified road	0	
<b>Deprivation Index</b>		
Decile 1 and 2	5	
Decile 3 and 4	3	
Decile 5 and 6	0	
Decile 7 and 8	-3	
Decile 9 and 10	-5	
<b>Total Score</b>		

\*Where multiple sections of highway are proposed for 20SPL, assessment will be made on a representative length(s)

## Devon County Council Traffic Management Fact Sheet

# TMFS – 02.1 – Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS)

### INTRODUCTION

Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) can be used for either warning of a hazard or to encourage motorists to comply with the speed limit. They are not to be used as an alternative to conventional permanently fixed traffic signs.

VAS have been shown to be effective in reducing vehicles speeds when sited appropriately and can also be an important element of a co-ordinated approach to Speed Management in Communities.

Speed related VAS are ideally sited where there is evidence of a speeding problem as deploying them where they are rarely activated is not good value for money.

VAS can be used as an enhancement to existing signs when recommended through the SCARF process.

SCARF stands for **Speed Compliance Action Review Forum** which is a joint meeting between Devon County Council Traffic and Road Safety Officers and Devon and Cornwall Constabulary Casualty Reduction Officers where speed complaint sites are assessed and appropriate actions agreed. (See TMT-01 SCARF Process)

### TYPES OF VAS

#### Permanent (fixed) VAS

- **Mains Powered** – these can sometimes be mounted on lamp columns and powered directly from the lamp column itself. If the lamp column is not strong enough to support the sign a separate post would be required. This type of sign would remain in place permanently. Purchase costs will vary depending on specification and supplier. Speed related VAS will be configured to activate at the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) enforcement threshold which is 10% + 2mph above the Speed Limit. E.g. for a 30mph Speed Limit, activation level would be 35mph.

The sign may also include the text “SLOW DOWN” beneath the roundel/warning symbol and would only be displayed at the same time as the roundel/warning symbol. A basic mains powered speed warning sign with SLOW DOWN beneath the roundel would be around £2,800\* VAT if attached to a lamp column. If a separate wide based post and connection are required the costs would be at least £1000 higher and potentially much more if no convenient power supply is available on the same side of the road. Mains

powered VAS will typically remain functional for over 5 years and often for as long as 10 years.

- **Solar Powered VAS** - these signs can be the correct choice where there is no power available but can be expensive to maintain and are sometime a target of theft of the solar panel. Costs can be around £5,000\*. The activation threshold and text are the same as a Mains Powered VAS.
- **Battery Powered VAS** – these permanently fixed VAS operate in the same way as the Mains or Solar powered VAS with the batteries being changed on site without removing the VAS. These VAS are not considered Mobile VAS. Therefore, the activation threshold and text requirements are the same as a Mains Powered VAS.

### **Mobile VAS**

- **Mobile VAS (MVAS)** –These would be battery powered. Recent improvements to technology mean that, depending on activation level, battery charges can last for up to a month. These devices must be moved between different sites on a regular basis. Ideally this will be monthly for speed related signs with the MVAS at the site for a month then away from the site for a month. Normally this monthly relocation would coincide with battery charging or replacement. Costs per unit would be between £1,200\*and £2,000\*. The speed related VAS will be configured to activate at the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) enforcement threshold which is 10% + 2mph above the Speed Limit. E.g. for a 30mph Speed Limit, activation level would be 35mph.
- **Speed Indicator Devices (SID's)** These operate the same as MVAS but display the speed of the approaching vehicle and may also show a Happy or Unhappy Emoticon.

DCC are happy to advise on the suitability of any particular VAS products that communities may wish to purchase.

\*Based on 2017 prices

### **Devon County Council Funded**

Devon County Council (DCC) has funded a large number of VAS at permanent sites around the County. These will usually have been provided at collision sites either providing enhanced warning of a particular hazard such as a road junction or as an enhancement to existing speed limit signing. DCC continues to maintain these signs but will review the need for the sign and may not replace if the sign costs are beyond reasonable repair.

DCC has an additional 10 battery powered Mobile VAS (MVAS) which it deploys at community concern sites for a month at a time in response to recommendations from the SCARF process. The signs are deployed by the DCC's Term Maintenance Contractor.



## **Parish and Community Funded VAS**

DCC welcomes approaches from Communities interested in funding and operating their own VAS and has worked with several Parish Council's (PC's) who have funded the purchase of their own devices.

Purchase and servicing of speed related VAS was pioneered with Shaugh Prior Parish Council. The particular concern of the PC was the speed of vehicles across unfenced moorland where horses, cows and sheep roam freely. The PC agreed the sites for the VAS with the County Council (DCC) and the Police, the process of servicing the signs was risk assessed and covered under the PC's Public Liability Insurance. Other Parish Councils operating their own VAS include, Lifton, Milton Abbot and High Bickington Parish Council's.

Community funded permanent VAS will only be considered at sites approved by DCC's SCARF process. The Parish Council's sponsored sites mentioned above were all agreed in this way. Community funded MVAS or SID will only be considered at sites approved by DCC. The SCARF team will be informed and the records updated.

## **PRINCIPLES FOR COMMUNITY FUNDED VAS**

- VAS are considered following a SCARF assessment indicating that a VAS is appropriate or at sites approved by DCC with the SCARF Team members acknowledgement.
- DCC must approve all VAS installations prior to any works being started. DCC may refuse the request to install a VAS. Approval should be gained prior to the purchase of any equipment.
- The information displayed on the sign needs to be agreed with DCC.
- The PC/Town Council/Community Group will be responsible for:
  - all costs including purchase, installation and removal. No setup costs should accrue to DCC.
  - insuring the unit against claims for Injury, Accident or Damage. Public Liability Cover in the amount of at least £10m is recommended.
  - all maintenance not covered under the manufacturer's warrantee, including vandalism.
- It is recommended that the sign should carry an on-site warranty from the manufacturer for at least 5 years.
- Any VAS mounted on a lamp column will need the approval of the DCC Street Lighting Team.
- DCC will fund the cost of the electricity of mains powered permanent VAS.
- If a permanent VAS is to be battery or solar powered the VAS should be located on a dedicated post.
- A PC/Town Council/Community Group funded VAS won't be approved if the proposed location is in the vicinity of a DCC funded VAS, unless the DCC funded site is decommissioned.
- DCC will remove the VAS from site in the event of a collision and make the site safe but would not be responsible for its replacement.

- For a PC/Town Council/Community Group funded MVAS/SID (where the PC/Town Council/Community Group will be relocating the MVAS/SID on a regular basis), a risk assessment must be completed prior to the initial installation. The risk assessment must cover all the activities relating to the MVAS/SID. This must ensure that all personnel/operatives working on the highway at any sites have successfully completed the appropriate nationally recognised training and have been successfully assessed for competency against national standards for temporary traffic management (NRSWA Signing Lighting and Guarding certificate (Chapter 8)). The risk assessment must be carried out by the PC/Town Council/Community Group.
- Installation on Telegraph or electricity poles is not permitted.
- New posts will be arranged by the Neighbourhood Team or Traffic Management Team paid for by the PC/Town Council/Community Group.

### **MVAS/SID Speed Threshold Settings**

<b>Device</b>	<b>Threshold Setting</b>	<b>Speed Display</b>	<b>Suitable Text Displays</b>	<b>Suitable Icon</b>
MVAS	Below the speed limit and up to a speed 10% of the speed limit plus 2mph	(blank screen)	(blank screen)	(blank screen)
	Speed exceeding the limit above	Speed limit	SLOW DOWN	(blank screen)
SID	Speed at or below the limit*	Actual vehicle speed	THANK YOU	Happy Emoticon
	Between the speed limit and a speed 10% of the speed limit plus 2mph higher than the speed limit	Actual vehicle speed	SLOW DOWN	Unhappy Emoticon
	Speed exceeding the limit above	Speed limit	SLOW DOWN	(blank screen)

\* For battery only units it is recommended the minimum detection speed is set at 10mph below the speed limit, so the sign is not on too often. However, this may lead to concerns that the sign is not working properly.

### **VAS Positioning**

When siting any highway sign, care should be taken to ensure that it can be seen by approaching drivers at an appropriate distance, that it is relevant to the hazard in question and that it is in a position where it can be safely maintained.

This is particularly true of VAS as the vehicle detector needs to have a clear line of sight to the approaching vehicle and the LED lighting on the sign needs to be aimed at the approaching vehicle much more accurately than a conventional static sign which can be seen from a much wider angle. In particular this can present problems if a VAS is sited at the top of a hill or on a bend where there might be limited scope for aiming the sign downwards or to one side.

The DCC as Highway Authority has a duty of care to ensure that all signs placed on the highway network are sited safely and will not present a danger to road users. The location and positioning of VAS must therefore be agreed with DCC before erection.

### **Information Required for the Approval of MVAS/SID Installations**

Information required from PC/Town Council/Community Group

- Plan of the VAS locations,
- How often it will be moved and the various locations it will be moved to. Details of who will be responsible for this especially if personnel are moving between areas/parishes.
- Power type.
- Device settings, for example
  - Type of message, (colour, speed, text) and the speed range to be activated.
  - Type of radar system (i.e. Doppler radar antenna)
  - Radar range
- Type and frequency of data recorded. Details of how DCC can access the data if required.
- Risk assessment for installation and maintenance. Including working at heights, traffic management arrangements and confirmation that all personnel/operatives working on the highway are properly trained and competent (for example, successfully completing the NRSWA Signing Lighting and Guarding certificate (Chapter 8)).
- The type of street furniture the VAS going to be fixed on to and that it is suitable for the weight and size of the VAS.
- How device is going to be fixed to the street furniture and the type of fixing.
- Confirmation that the security of the sign has been considered i.e. padlock, lockable case, Tamtorque straps, etc.
- Battery charging procedure including frequency and charging location.
- Maintenance agreement / arrangement.
- Confirmation that the VAS meets current TOPAS Requirements or other UK standards.
  - **Current TOPAS Standards (2022) - Specifications | Topas Group**
    - TOPAS 2541A Performance Specification for Control Systems for Vehicle Activated Discontinuous Variable Messages.
      - [Microsoft Word - TOPAS 2541A \(Final\) \(topasgroup.org.uk\)](https://www.topasgroup.org.uk)

- TOPAS 2516D Performance Specification for Discontinuous Variable Message Signs
  - [Microsoft Word - 2516D FINAL \(topasgroup.org.uk\)](#)

Link to the TOPAS list of the devices that meet their specification

TOPAS 2541

[Specification TOPAS 2541A | Topas Group](#)

TOPAS 2516

[Specification TOPAS 2516B | Topas Group](#)

[Specification TOPAS 2516C | Topas Group](#)

[Specification TOPAS 2516D | Topas Group](#)