

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Report

<b>Committee:</b>	Economy, Transport and Environment Select Committee
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	21 January 2014
<b>Report Title:</b>	20 mph Speed Limits
<b>Reference:</b>	5548
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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#### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The proposed Traffic Management Policy and Guidance (TMPG) document, which will set out the County Council's approach to the use of various traffic management measures, includes a policy on speed limits. After the Committee considered the TMPG at its meeting on 5 November 2013 it requested further information on the draft policy relating to 20 mph speed limits.
- 1.2. This report gives further detail behind the proposed speed limit policy of the TMPG and background information relating to the current pilot programme of 20 mph limits in residential areas. This includes an explanation as to why a pilot programme is being conducted and how it is being assessed.
- 1.3. The Committee's views on 20 mph speed limits shall be reported to the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment when considering whether the TMPG should be adopted.

#### 2. Contextual Information

- 2.1. It is necessary for the County Council to have a policy on setting speed limits to ensure they are used appropriately and consistently. Although the proposed TMPG is the first time the County Council will have a comprehensive policy document covering a range of traffic management measures, it has had a policy on the use of speed limits for over 20 years. This policy has always been based on national speed limit guidance issued by the Department for Transport (DfT). The content on speed limits in the TMPG is consistent with the current national guidance, Circular 01/13 "Setting Local Speed Limits".<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Department for Transport, Circular 01/2013, Setting Local Speed Limits.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/setting-local-speed-limits>

2.2. It is important to highlight the distinction between 20 mph zones and limits. 20 mph zones can be used in roads where no part of the road is more than 50 metres from a traffic calming measure (as defined by Regulations). It is not necessary to use repeater signs throughout the zone. The terminal signs at the entry/exit of the limit state “zone”. 20 mph limits on the other hand do not require traffic calming measures but repeater signs or roundel markings have to be used.

### **3. Department for Transport guidance on 20 mph limits**

- 3.1. The current guidance from the DfT came into effect in January 2013. The previous guidance, Circular 01/2006<sup>2</sup>, stated that the DfT encouraged and supported the implementation of 20 mph zones and limits, although it only recommended using 20 mph limits on individual roads or across a small number of roads. It referred to research by TRL in the late 1990s that found where speed limits were reduced to 20 mph without any other measures, speed reductions of no more than 2 mph were achieved.
- 3.2. The guidance in Circular 01/2013 on 20 mph limits and zones goes into more detail than the previous circular on the benefits of such schemes, including encouraging cycling and walking, improving quality of life, and community and environmental benefits. It asks traffic authorities “... to keep speed limits under review and to consider more 20 mph limits and zones over time in urban areas and built up villages ...”
- 3.3. It also moves away from the previous circular’s advice on where 20 mph limits could be used and now states they should be considered over larger areas where mean average speeds are already at or below 24 mph. An important comment in the guidance is “schemes need to aim for compliance with the new limit”. This aim for compliance is a factor in the circular for assessing all speed limits, not just 20 mph limits.
- 3.4. Under the section on rural speed limits, the circular states that it is government policy for 30 mph speed limits to be the norm in villages and that it may be appropriate to consider 20 mph limits and zones in built-up village centres or where pedestrian and cyclist movements are high.
- 3.5. A significant change in how 20 mph limits are signed was made through an amendment to the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002, the statutory instrument that governs the use of traffic signs and road markings. The amendment, which came into effect in 2012, now enables ‘20’ roundel road markings to be used as repeater signs within 20 mph limits instead of upright signs. This slightly reduces the cost of introducing 20 mph limits.

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<sup>2</sup> Department for Transport, Circular 01/2006, Setting Local Speed Limits.  
<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/circular-1-06/circular-1-2006.pdf>

3.6. Whilst the most recent circular is more encouraging of local traffic authorities towards the use of 20 mph limits and zones than its predecessor, the advice that 20 mph limits are most appropriate for roads where speeds are already low and that they should not require additional enforcement to be effective has not changed.

#### **4. Research into 20 mph limits**

4.1. There is some research available about the effectiveness of 20 mph speed limits. Road Safety Great Britain<sup>3</sup> has provided a useful summary of research into 20 mph limits and zones that have been introduced across the country. It notes there is a lack of comparable data available in terms of assessing the impact of these speed limits on casualty rates. Out of six towns and cities where 20 mph limits have been introduced without traffic calming and where before/after data was available, it found: three (Portsmouth, Newcastle and Gateshead) had significantly greater reductions in collisions compared to roads in those areas without 20 mph limits; two (Warrington and Middlesbrough) had little or no significant reduction; and one city (Bristol) had a greater reduction in collisions outside of the 20 mph area compared to those roads within it.

4.2. Portsmouth was one of the first local authorities to introduce area-wide 20 mph limits. The DfT's report<sup>4</sup> into the interim outcomes of the Portsmouth scheme states that overall average speeds and casualties fell. Although casualty numbers fell nationally, the reduction was greater in Portsmouth's 20 mph roads. Whilst average speeds fell only 1.3 mph overall (from 19.8 mph to 18.5 mph), those roads that had average 'before' speeds above 24 mph saw average reductions of 6.3 mph. It is important to highlight that average speeds in many of Portsmouth's roads were already below 20 mph.

4.3. In Bristol<sup>5</sup>, where the city council has carried out a pilot scheme in two inner areas and is planning to extend the speed limits further, it found that speeds fell in 65% of the roads where surveys were carried out. The average reduction was 1.4 mph in one area and 0.9 mph in the other. Increases in the number of pedestrians and cyclists were also recorded.

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<sup>3</sup> Road Safety Great Britain, What happens to casualties and collisions when a 20 mph scheme is implemented?, 30 October 2013. <http://www.roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/3161.html>

<sup>4</sup> Department for Transport, Interim Evaluation of the Implementation of 20 mph Speed Limits in Portsmouth – Final Report, September 2010. <http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/speed-limits-portsmouth/speed-limits-portsmouth.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Bristol City Council, 20 mph Speed Limit Pilot Areas, Monitoring Report, March 2012. <http://www.bristol20mph.co.uk/sites/default/files/images/20mph%20Monitoring%20Report%20-%20pilot%20areas%202012.pdf>

- 4.4. RoSPA<sup>6</sup> has stated that evidence on 20 mph limits is generally positive, although it notes that the reductions in speed tend to be small. It has also commented that the data available is currently limited due to the 20 mph limit schemes in the UK not having been in place for long.
- 4.5. Whilst the use of 20 mph schemes elsewhere in the UK suggests that signed limits without traffic calming may bring about average reductions in speed of around 1 mph to 2 mph, the issue of compliance with the speed limit does not appear to be so well documented, particularly in terms of roads where 'before' speeds were significantly above 20 mph.
- 4.6. In 1999 the AA Foundation for Road Safety Research<sup>7</sup> reported results from research, which had involved interviewing over 1,000 drivers to find out what affected how fast they drive. The authors noted "drivers appear to set themselves an internal speed limit which, in their judgement, is the appropriate speed for them at that time and place under the prevailing conditions."
- 4.7. The Association of Chief Police Officers, in advising the House of Commons Transport Committee into Road Safety in 2012<sup>8</sup>, stated (in relation to 20 mph limits), "[if] it does not feel or look like it should be a 20 mph limit, then the vast majority of drivers will not self-police."
- 4.8. These comments are important because it suggests that if a 20 mph limit is introduced on roads where current speeds are closer to 30 mph, then there may not be a particularly good level of compliance.
- 4.9. In terms of public support for 20 mph limits, the campaign group 20s Plenty for Us would like to see 20 mph become the default national speed limit in residential and built-up roads. At the other end of the scale another campaign group, the Alliance of British Drivers, is opposed to the widespread use of these speed limits and believes they are being used inappropriately in many locations.
- 4.10. Public support for 20 mph speed limits varies from area to area, and this was found in the initial consultation for the County Council's pilot programme. Only 54% of those responding to the questionnaire about the proposed 20 mph limit in Hayling Island were in favour, but in the Fareham pilot 91% of respondents were in favour. It is worth pointing out that even in those areas where a majority of residents support 20 mph limits, the County Council receives correspondence from some people who question their purpose and whether they are a good use of resources.

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<sup>6</sup> RoSPA, 20 mph Zones and Speed Limits, Road Safety Information, November 2012.  
<http://www.rospa.com/roadsafety/advice/highway/info/20-mph-zone-factsheet.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> AA Foundation for Road Safety Research, What Speed Limits? Factors that affect how fast we drive, Interim Report, July 1999.

<sup>8</sup> House of Commons Transport Committee, Road Safety, 2<sup>nd</sup> Report, HC 506, July 2012.  
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmtran/506/50602.htm>

- 4.11. Whilst more 20 mph limits are being introduced elsewhere across the country, they are not universally accepted in all communities. For instance, last December Brighton & Hove City Council reduced proposals for further 20 mph limits due to opposition in some parts of the city, and in West Yorkshire, Kirklees Council has ruled out the use of blanket 20 mph limits.

## **5. The County Council's pilot programme and proposed policy**

- 5.1. Until 2012 the County Council's position on the use of 20 mph limits and zones was that they were only generally considered in locations with a history of injury accidents, largely due to the cost of installing them.
- 5.2. A growing number of requests were being made for 20 mph limits to the County Council, particularly as more 20 mph limits were being introduced in some other parts of the country. This, together with the change in signing regulations, highlighted that the County Council needed to investigate how 20 mph limits should be used in Hampshire in the future.
- 5.3. Although some research has been undertaken in other parts of the country on the effectiveness of 20 mph limits, it has tended to focus on urban areas. Also, no research has been found on 20 mph limits that use roundel markings as repeater signs, which could have a bearing on how drivers behave. Furthermore, whilst research elsewhere has focussed on the impact of 20 mph limits on vehicle speeds and accidents, there does not appear to be much data available as to the level of community support for these limits once they are in place.
- 5.4. The County Council's approach has therefore been to undertake a programme of pilot 20 mph limits across Hampshire to help determine whether these limits could be used on a wider basis. It is intended that the pilot programme moves away from the original casualty-led objective of 20 mph limits and zones and instead focuses on helping to improve the quality of life for local communities. Approval was given by the Executive Member for Environment and Transport on 3 April 2012. The specific locations for the programme were agreed on 11 September 2012 (after shortlisting locations put forward by Members), and following initial consultation with residents in the areas affected, the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment approved 20 mph limits in nine areas on 23 July 2013.
- 5.5. The locations of the pilot areas are listed in Appendix 1 together with an update on whether they have been implemented. The programme initially included ten locations but the one in Hayling Island was not progressed due to lack of support during the first stage of consultation. The nine areas are not being implemented on exactly the same date because the local consultation and process for introducing Traffic Orders is unpredictable, meaning one area could have held up the implementation of the others. A number of the speed limits have now been implemented. A fixed timetable for reviewing the speed limits had not been set because it was not possible to be certain as to when all nine would be in place. Assuming the remaining areas are implemented in the spring (subject to the outcome of the Traffic Order process), the speed limits would be

reviewed in spring 2015. This will involve a questionnaire to residents and speed surveys (although speed surveys will also be undertaken during the first three to six months of the new speed limit).

- 5.6. The cost of implementing the pilot programme in nine areas is estimated to be £200,000, including the legal costs for the statutory Traffic Order advertisements and publicity and funding at this level has been set aside. The proposed Traffic Management Policy and Guidance document's section on speed limits states that the possibility of implementing more 20 mph limits in residential areas will be dependent upon the outcome of the pilot programme and the availability of future funding. It is necessary to determine what impact the pilot programme has in terms of vehicle speeds and community support so that we know whether this is an effective traffic management measure that would bring benefits if used on a wider basis.
- 5.7. The success of the pilot programme is being measured through 'before' and 'after' vehicle speeds, public perception (through surveys) and monitoring of comments and complaints.
- 5.8. Although the cost of introducing a 20 mph limit in one village would only amount to a few thousand pounds, if this is repeated on a larger scale, and in some of the county's larger urban and suburban areas, the cost would be significant. An estimate of how much it would cost to implement in all of Hampshire's residential roads has not been undertaken as this would take some time to produce. As a guide, the cost of introducing 20 mph limits across Portsmouth cost the city council £573,000<sup>4</sup> (including implementation, consultation, surveys and staff time).
- 5.9. If the review of the pilot programme concludes that 20 mph limits could be used on a wider basis then a controlled approach will need to be established for determining where they should be provided. Funding would need to be identified at that stage. Community support will be important, which is why a list of requests has now been established
- 5.10. The County Council's policy on the use of 20 mph zones remains that they are an option where an area has sufficient traffic calming measures to comply with the Regulations (that is, a traffic calming measure every 100 metres). Installing traffic calming over a long length of road or a number of roads is expensive, and such schemes are only usually installed to deal with a history of accidents or significant speed/inappropriate usage issues. Due to the presence of engineering measures to slow traffic down, 20 mph zones are considered to be more effective at reducing vehicle speeds than signed-only 20 mph limits. A traffic-calmed area does not necessarily need a 20 mph zone, but a 20 mph zone must have traffic calming.

## **6. Conclusions**

- 6.1. Research into the use of signed-only 20 mph limits elsewhere shows there is a mixed picture in terms of their effectiveness in helping to reduce accidents, although there seems to be consistent reporting of speed reductions of 1 mph to

20 mph. Most published data on 20 mph limits has been from urban areas, and there is no known data on how these limits operate when roundel road markings are used instead of upright repeater signs, as with the County Council's pilot programme.

- 6.2. It is uncertain as to whether the use of 20 mph limits improves the quality of residents' lives and there is limited evidence that it could help increase levels of walking and cycling in some areas.
- 6.3. It is necessary to continue with the County Council's pilot programme so that the impact of the speed limit on vehicle speeds and community support can be established. The speed limit policy will be reviewed in 2015 once the pilot programme has been assessed.

## Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
Executive Member for Environment & Transport, Residential 20 Pilot Programme, 3/4/12.	<a href="http://www3.hants.gov.uk/councilmeetings/advsearchmeetings/meetingsitemdocuments.htm?sta=&amp;pref=Y&amp;item_ID=3730&amp;tab=2&amp;co=&amp;confidential=">http://www3.hants.gov.uk/councilmeetings/advsearchmeetings/meetingsitemdocuments.htm?sta=&amp;pref=Y&amp;item_ID=3730&amp;tab=2&amp;co=&amp;confidential=</a>
Executive Member for Environment & Transport, Proposed 20 mph Residential Speed Limit Pilots, 11/9/12.	<a href="http://www3.hants.gov.uk/councilmeetings/advsearchmeetings/meetingsitemdocuments.htm?sta=&amp;pref=Y&amp;item_ID=4210&amp;tab=2&amp;co=&amp;confidential=">http://www3.hants.gov.uk/councilmeetings/advsearchmeetings/meetingsitemdocuments.htm?sta=&amp;pref=Y&amp;item_ID=4210&amp;tab=2&amp;co=&amp;confidential=</a>
Executive Member for Economy, Transport & Environment, Residential 20 Pilot Programme – Update, 23/7/13.	<a href="http://www3.hants.gov.uk/councilmeetings/advsearchmeetings/meetingsitemdocuments.htm?sta=&amp;pref=Y&amp;item_ID=5007&amp;tab=2&amp;co=&amp;confidential=">http://www3.hants.gov.uk/councilmeetings/advsearchmeetings/meetingsitemdocuments.htm?sta=&amp;pref=Y&amp;item_ID=5007&amp;tab=2&amp;co=&amp;confidential=</a>

## **IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:**

### **1. Equalities Impact Assessment:**

- 1.1. The proposed policy in this report has been developed with due regard to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty and the County Council's equality objectives.
- 1.1. The Highways Traffic and Transport service has an up to date Equalities Impact Assessment for Objective 1.2 – Safe and well managed highways in Hampshire and Objective 1.4 – Develop Hampshire's highway network and transport systems. The proposed speed limit policy within the Traffic Management Policy and Guidance document has been checked against these assessments and no amendments are necessary.

### **2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:**

- 2.1. The proposed policy does not impact upon crime and disorder.

### **3. Climate Change:**

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

The proposed policy does not have a direct impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption.

- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

Climate change does not have a direct impact on the proposed policy.

**Residential 20 mph pilot programme**

Location	Status
Eastleigh (Cherbourg Road area)	Implemented
Fareham (Wallington area)	Implemented
Farnborough (North Camp)	Implemented
Hythe (town centre)	Implemented
Andover (Floral Way)	Traffic Order and signs implemented. Awaiting road markings
Fleet	Traffic Order and signs implemented. Awaiting road markings
Medstead	Public advertisement completed. Signs and markings to be ordered
Whitchurch	Public advertisement closed 6 December 2013. Objection report being drafted
Winchester (Stanmore Lane)	Public advertisement closed 20 December 2013. Objection report being drafted