

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

HAMPSHIRE ACTION TEAM TRANSPORTATION MEETING - GOSPORT

LOCAL AND STRATEGIC ISSUES

1. BRT Communications (paper attached)
2. BRT Works Update (verbal update)
3. Daedalus – ongoing consultation (Gosport LDF)
4. Quay Street (Tesco)
5. A and B Road Review (paper attached)

LOCAL AND STRATEGIC ISSUES**1. HATs Briefing Note on BRT Phase 1****Supreme Court judgement**

At the hearing at the Supreme Court on 19 January 2011 the judgment of the five law lords who heard the case was handed down, dismissing the appeal against Hampshire County Council. The legal challenge related to environmental issues and the planning permission granted for the BRT Phase 1 route from Fareham to Gosport, rather than the merits of the scheme itself, and had already been dismissed by both the High Court and the Court of Appeal.

The case hinged on the interpretation of the European Habitats Directive in respect of protected species – in this case, bats, and how the County Council has dealt with this in granting permission for the scheme. The decision of the Supreme Court confirmed that the County Council had followed the correct planning procedures and that the decision to grant permission was sound.

The Supreme Court has produced a press summary (attached) which provides both useful background to the case and a concise summary of the reason for the judgment.

Works progress

Construction has been proceeding well since September 2010, with completion scheduled for late 2011 and operation commencing shortly thereafter.

- Wych Lane will be closed from early March 2011 until late 2011 to enable the lowering of the embankment and major reprofiling of both Wych Lane and the old railway line. During this work, pedestrian access across the busway will be maintained at all times. This lengthy closure is a consequence of the particularly complicated sequencing of work, which includes gas main, water main, telecom and electric cable diversion.
- Wych Lane bridge will be demolished in early March 2011 to enable the construction of the new junction with the BRT busway.
- There will be temporary traffic lights on Redlands Lane from now until the end of March, to allow two-way working under the rail bridge. These works will enable the construction of the new Redlands Lane junction with the BRT route. A footpath diversion is in place.
- Note: Redlands Lane/A27 Junction improvement also set to start in mid-March.
- Newgate Lane will be reopened on its original alignment in June following the construction of the new bridge over the busway.

Communications and marketing

We have achieved a balanced media coverage during the past two years, with very positive coverage of the Supreme Court judgment. Both the construction programme and the marketing activity will be fully supported by media communications plans.

Our communications activities have also been assisted by the computerised animation of the route as it will look when complete, which is available to view on Hantsplayer. Stills (and footage, in the case of BBC South Today) from this film have been used by the media to help illustrate news stories, and the film was also taken on a tour of local venues in Fareham and Gosport last autumn to help inform local residents about the scheme.

Work has been taking place to produce a brand, including name, colours and logo, for BRT, with six consumer focus groups giving largely positive feedback on the proposed brand in November 2010. Subject to agreement by all partners, the brand will be presented to the TfSH Board in April 2011. Designs for street furniture, bus stops and information pillars are proceeding to plan. A marketing programme will be implemented later this year, led by Hampshire County Council with input from colleagues within TfSH, Portsmouth City Council and SHBOA.

Background information about the scheme, together with frequently asked questions, can be found on the TfSH website at www.tfsh.org.uk/bus-rapid-transit, while for day-to-day construction matters and traffic information, BAM Nuttall's construction website is at www.bamnuttall.co.uk/hants-bus-rapid-transit.

LOCAL AND STRATEGIC ISSUES**5. Countywide 'A' and 'B' roads speed limit review**

This report was prepared for the Department Management Team to describe progress with the countywide 'A' and 'B' roads speed limit review, and is being distributed to elected members for information. It explains how the speed limit review has been undertaken, and makes a number of recommendations on how it will proceed to completion.

1. INTRODUCTION

Following a Service Stream meeting on 12 October 2010, it was agreed to report to DMT on the approach and expected outcomes of the 'A' and 'B' road speed limit review. This is to allow consideration to be given to how an implementation programme might develop to deliver any agreed recommendations bearing in mind the availability of future funding and the need to prioritize staff resources.

2. BACKGROUND

The requirement to review all the speed limits on the County's entire 'A' and 'B' road network stems from the Department for Transport (DfT) Circular 01/2006 'Setting Local Speed Limits'. This guidance formed the foundation of the amended speed limit policy adopted by Hampshire County Council following the report to Cabinet on 18 December 2006.

The amended speed limit policy approved the use of the DfT guidance as a basis for the assessment and setting of all speed limits on the County road network. The overall aim being to ensure that speed limits on County roads are appropriate for the road conditions, in line with current national advice and therefore broadly consistent with other local authority areas.

As part of the published guidance, traffic authorities were asked to review the speed limits on all of their 'A' and 'B' roads and implement any necessary changes, where appropriate, by 2011. Within the guidance the DfT has developed a new framework for assessing appropriate speed limits. This takes into account various factors such as traffic flows, mean speeds, accident rates and road alignment. The assessment framework also helps determine whether other safety features such as traffic calming measures would be required to allow a speed limit to operate effectively. The amended Hampshire policy was still very much in line with existing practices and it was therefore anticipated that the outcome of the 'A' and 'B' road review would not lead to a substantial number of changes being made to the speed limits on these routes.

3. HISTORY OF PROJECT

As the project has evolved, the review has formed three key distinct stages. Stage one was the identification and initial review of all the routes, and is complete. Stage two which is now underway, is to check the collision rate against the accident threshold figure for each section of road where a need for changes has been identified. This stage of the review will recommend priorities for implementation. Stage three is to agree these priorities with the Executive Member for Environment and secure funding prior to publishing the results and consulting with elected members on the detail. This stage will also involve dealing sensitively with those members disappointed at not having their roads prioritised for change.

Initial scoping work was undertaken by the Area Traffic Management Teams to enable a programme for investigations to be established. Each Team produced a spreadsheet of all the routes, divided into manageable sections, within their respective District/Borough areas. For example, from this preliminary assessment the 'A' and 'B' road network covering the Test Valley Borough area alone consisted of 30 routes adding up to nearly 200 kilometres and county-wide there was a total of 292 routes, adding up to approximately 1,255 kilometres of designated 'A' and 'B' roads.

In view of the resources required to undertake an assessment of this scale, Mott Gifford was appointed (through the Professional Services Contract then in place) to progress the study as soon as its existing commitment to deliver the first tranche of the 'Village 30' programme was completed. This began in earnest early in 2009 at the same time as progressing the Tranche 2 'Village 30' schemes.

One of the first tasks Mott Gifford undertook was to arrange a meeting with the respective Area Traffic Management Teams and Police representatives to establish initial priorities based upon experience and local knowledge. A traffic light system for route prioritisation was adopted as follows:

- Red:** High priority routes – Mott Gifford to review by the end of September 2010. Proposals to be implemented 2011/12.
- Amber:** Medium priority routes - network of roads to be assessed as a second priority by HCC in 2011/12 and beyond but the majority of the network is likely to be assessed as 'no change proposed to existing speed limits'.
- Green:** Low priority routes - assessed to have no issues and unlikely to result in any recommended speed limit changes.

Route safety is a highly important issue in the prioritisation of the 'A' and 'B' road programme. To ensure that the routes with the most pressing problems were dealt with first, a joint review was held with HCC's Safety Engineering Team (SET). Using personal injury accident record data for the countywide rural main road network SET assigned and ratified route priorities. Accident

data was carefully examined and the individual routes driven by SET and Mott Gifford to enable recommendations to be formulated. As a result, the initial recommendations for routes in Area North, together with drawings illustrating the proposed changes, were completed by the end of March 2010.

Using the Area North model as an example, Mott Gifford progressed the remaining 'A' and 'B' road routes incorporating SET's studies into relevant injury accidents. This first stage of the project was completed at the end of September 2010.

4. CURRENT STATUS OF PROJECT

A summary of the present recommendations for each area, which could potentially lead to proposals being developed for detailed design, formal Traffic Order consultations and implementation of changes to speed limits are as follows:

AREA	DISTRICT/ BOROUGH	NUMBER OF 'RED' ROUTES	NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL SECTIONS OF SPEED LIMIT CHANGES
East	Winchester	12	22
	East Hampshire	10	22
West	New Forest	13	30
	Test Valley	9	22
North	Basingstoke	6	19
	Hart	5	11
	Rushmoor	1	1
South*	Fareham	2	2
	Gosport	2	2
	Eastleigh	2	3
	Havant	2	4
TOTAL		64	138

*In view of the largely urban characteristics of the area, such as Gosport, Havant and Fareham which forms part of Portsmouth conurbation, the majority of routes are subject to speed limits lower than the National Speed Limit. Hence only 8 routes (2 in each of the Borough areas) have been identified where changes to the speed limit have been initially recommended.

The total length of sections of routes where speed limit changes are recommended is approximately 180 kilometres which equates to approximately 14% of the entire 'A' and 'B' road network. This indicates that the speed limits on 86% of the whole of the 'A' and 'B' road network are set at an appropriate level, reflecting the general characteristics of the road and its environment. A key component and aim is to align the local speed limit so that the original mean speed driven on the road is at or below the new posted speed limit for that road.

Road safety is a further key component in the prioritisation process of identifying routes to be assessed in accordance with the DfT's guidance on setting speed limits. The criteria for considering lower speed limits is that they should be appropriate for the type of road, prevailing traffic conditions and be located where there is a significant number of personal injury crashes occurring. The DfT's suggested accident threshold for upper tier roads, which reflects expected levels associated with a road carrying a given level of traffic and an appropriate balance between safety and mobility, is 35 injury accidents per 100 million vehicle kilometres.

In order to determine if each of the recommended routes meets this accident threshold and that mean traffic speeds are at an appropriate level or additional measures to reduce traffic speeds are required, the following data needs to be obtained for each specific section of route where a change of the speed limit is recommended:

Number of personal injury accidents,
Traffic flows, and
Traffic speeds

Accident data for each section of route has been collated. The Traffic Monitoring Group are currently engaged in providing any relevant existing traffic volume and speed data. Where no existing data is available, traffic speed and volume checks will be requested as appropriate. Work to progress the recommendations of Area West has shown that the level of existing data available for all of the sections of routes was 43% , with the remaining 57% of sections of routes requiring speed and/or volume data to be obtained.

It is anticipated that Stage 2 of the project to be completed, with final recommendations for all routes, before the end of March 2011. Depending upon the level of traffic volume and speed data required to be obtained on site and the workload this entails, recommendations maybe available earlier.

5. FUNDING

Before a capital budget was set for the 'A' and 'B' road review an initial revenue budget of £95,000 was approved, to cover the preliminary work carried out by Mott Gifford. To the end of March 2010 approximately £98,000 was spent.

Of the original capital allocation, £175,000 remains. In addition to this amount there may be external funding available through developers' contributions to supplement this figure.

6. WAY FORWARD

The recommendations for these routes will be reported and shared with the Executive Member for Environment and the HATs at the earliest opportunity.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

To enable the 'A' and 'B' road speed limit review to be progressed further it is recommended that:

- (i) The contents of this report be noted.
- (ii) A further report be prepared for DMT detailing the final outcomes of the review process (Stage 2) and a proposed programme showing the schemes that can realistically be implemented (Stage 3) in accordance with future resource availability, taking into account those which meet the accident threshold and those where the mean speeds are already appropriate or where additional measures are required to obtain the appropriate mean traffic speeds.
- (iii) The recommendations for these routes to be reported and shared with the relevant HATs at the earliest opportunity.
- (iv) The effectiveness of the introduction of any speed limit changes implemented through this programme be monitored in terms of casualty reduction, as with all other safety led programmes of work.