

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**Decision Report**

Decision Maker:	Executive Member – Environment and Transport
Date:	3 April 2012
Title:	Residential 20 Pilot Project
Reference:	3730
Report From:	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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1. Executive Summary

1.1. The purpose of this paper is to set out the need for the introduction of a Residential 20mph pilot programme and to agree the proposed approach to its development and implementation.

1.2. This paper seeks to

- outline the justification for a pilot programme of 20mph restrictions in residential areas;
- agree the principal considerations when assessing the suitability of a residential area for inclusion in the pilot schemes; and
- set out the proposed budgetary commitments for a programme of five pilot schemes.

2. Contextual information

2.1. The County Council receives regular requests for 20mph restrictions from residents and community groups concerned with the speed of traffic in residential areas. In addition to the implications on highway safety, residents often point to the adverse impact that excessive speed has on their quality of life with issues of threat, intimidation and vehicle noise often raised.

2.2. Over the years the costs associated with the introduction of 20mph limits and zones, together with the limited resources available for such measures, have resulted in a policy whereby 20mph restrictions have generally only been considered in locations with a history of injury accidents. The proposed 'Residential 20' programme is intended to move away from this historic casualty-led criteria and will instead focus on improving the quality of life for

local communities by introducing lower speed limits aimed at reducing the impact of motorised traffic in residential areas.

- 2.3. As part of the recent Traffic Signs Policy Review the Department for Transport (DfT) has introduced changes to the signing requirements associated with 20mph restrictions which are intended to provide more flexibility and make it easier for highway authorities to implement 20mph zones and limits. It is envisaged that these revisions will enable a long standing political priority to reduce traffic speeds in residential areas to be realised by helping to reduce the costs associated with 20mph schemes and minimising the red tape involved with their implementation.

The changes include:-

- allowing local authorities to use speed limit symbols painted on roads more often as repeater signs in 20 mph zones and limits. Upright signs will still be required to indicate the start and end of 20 mph schemes. – This provides greater flexibility when implementing zones and limits with the potential to reduce scheme costs. It is a useful change in relation to both residential and conservation areas where the impact of signing can cause concern; and
 - expanding the list of specified traffic calming measures allowable in 20 mph zones to include repeater signs and mini-roundabouts. This would allow zones to be introduced with fewer road humps or chicanes where appropriate – Although physical measures are still a requirement, this increases flexibility over the choice of speed reducing measures with a potential for reduced scheme costs.
- 2.4. As with the implementation of any mandatory speed limit, 20mph restrictions are subject to the making of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) which can be a lengthy process. The timescale for the making of a TRO is largely dependent on the complexity of the scheme and the outcome of the statutory consultation process.
- 2.5. The DfT has made it clear that it remains the decision of local Councils to decide whether or not to use 20mph schemes following robust cost-benefit of any such proposals. In its press release on this issue it was suggested that Councils are able to introduce 20mph limits in “lesser residential roads in cities, towns and villages, particularly where this would be reasonable for the road environment, there is community support and streets are being used by pedestrians and cyclists. Evidence suggests that in residential streets, and in town centres where there is likely to be a conflict between vehicles and pedestrians, carefully implemented 20 mph zones can contribute to an improvement in road safety.”.
- 2.6. It is recommended that five residential areas be selected for the pilot programme as this would achieve a suitable balance between having a sufficient number of sites to be able to establish their effectiveness whilst still being deliverable within the budget currently allocated to the programme. It is recommended that the five sites be spread across the County.

2.7. Due to the increased flexibility resulting from the DfT changes it is intended to implement 20mph speed limits primarily reliant on signing and lining, moving away from high cost physical traffic calming features. This approach can, subject to funding, be supplemented with low cost engineering measures at a later date on routes where traffic speeds have not dropped to suitable levels as a result of the 20mph restrictions.

3. Proposed Approach

3.1 To produce a programme for the pilot project and, if successful, possible extension to this scheme, it is suggested that officers submit a list of potential locations, together with any other schemes identified through the Town Access Plans/District Statements that would be assessed for suitability.

3.2 Officers will assess the locations against the following considerations:-

- urban, residential estate type roads currently subject to a 30 mph speed limit where the character/environment naturally lends itself to a lower limit;
- defined areas with a limited number of roads within a clearly distinct residential environment would be preferential to help ensure potential implementation costs fall within the budget available;
- clear evidence of local support for a lower speed limit including a commitment to organise a Community Speed Watch group; and
- areas with existing traffic calming/speed controlling features in place to also be considered.

3.3 Once agreed, extensive consultation with residents within the chosen areas will be required. This is to ensure that there is clear evidence of local support, which will be essential for a successful scheme. Depending on the areas identified, it is expected that informal consultation with all residents affected by the proposed speed limit will be undertaken. This would likely be in the form of a questionnaire and depending on the size of the scheme, could result in public exhibitions. It is probable that this part of the process will be time and resource intensive given the potential number of consultees, but this will obviously be dependant on the chosen pilot areas.

4 Finance

4.1 A sum of £200,000 of local resource capital has been agreed for 2012/13 to progress this project.

4.2 The implementation costs of the pilot programme will be dependent on the areas identified for inclusion in the pilot programme but any scheme will involve the following items:-

- Traffic Regulation Order Costs – Advertising of the proposal (typically £2,500/area);
- signing and lining of the speed limit (cost dependent on size and layout of the chosen area);
- additional physical speed reducing measures if necessary (dependent on the chosen area); and
- staff resources for the development, design, implementation and after study work including the use of consultants as necessary.

5 Performance

- 5.1 'Before' and 'After' speed measurements should be taken in a sample of the roads in each area in order to assess the success of the 20mph speed limits.
- 5.2 Public perception will be the most important measure of success. Therefore additional surveys with local residents will be required following the introduction of the schemes.
- 5.3 Customer complaints and compliments received will be monitored for the duration of the projects.

6 Other key issues

- 6.1 The success of the programme will largely depend on support from the local residents, given that the majority of drivers using the road will either be residents themselves or their visitors.
- 6.2 DfT guidance states that 20mph speed limits should generally be self enforcing and therefore, under the current police policies, enforcement is unlikely to be seen as a priority. If lack of enforcement is identified as a potential issue, residents in the pilot areas would be encouraged to enter into the Community Speed Watch programme, supplemented by Safer Neighbourhood Team enforcement if appropriate.

7 Recommendation

- 7.1 That the development and implementation of a programme of residential 20mph pilot schemes at a number of locations across the County be approved.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

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.)

DocumentLocation

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

- 1.1 The implementation of the Residential 20mph pilot schemes should benefit all sectors of the community in terms of safety and quality of place.

2 Impact on Crime and Disorder:

- 2.1 This proposal will have no direct impact on the Crime and Disorder Act but should contribute towards a safer and more secure community

3 Climate Change:

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

Lower speeds will help reduce energy consumptions and help reduce the carbon footprint.

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

There are no direct impacts on climate change adaptations from amending speed limits in Hampshire.