

Committee	Cabinet
Date	19 April 2005
Report By	Director of Transport and Environment
Title of Report	Scrutiny Review of Setting Local Speed Limits in East Sussex
Purpose of Report	To provide an opportunity for the Cabinet to comment on the report of the Scrutiny Committee review of the setting of local speed limits in East Sussex.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1. note and welcome the report of the Scrutiny Committee; and**
 - 2. in considering the report of the Scrutiny Committee, the County Council be recommended to welcome the main recommendations set out in the report and to approve the response of the Director of Transport and Environment to the recommendations and their implementation.**
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1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 This report has no direct financial implications for the County Council. However, in respect of recommendation 1, the relaxation in the development criteria for setting 30 mph speed limits in villages could mean that far more villages will qualify for a 30mph limit but on the basis that they will require supporting traffic calming. With a typical traffic calming scheme costing about £100,000 it could be some years before all the villages meeting the revised criteria have their speed limit reduced to 30mph.

2. Supporting Information

Background

2.1 The County Council's current policy for setting local speed limits is outlined in Policy Summary PS4/2 (see Appendix 1) and is based upon national guidance produced in 1993 and contained within Circular Roads 1/93. The policy was developed in conjunction with West Sussex County Council, Brighton & Hove City Council and Sussex Police.

2.2 The Policy for setting speed limits is contained within the County Council's overall Speed Management Strategy which was published in September 2003. The purpose of the strategy is to provide a more effective response to the concerns of the public in relation to speeding traffic and encourage a change in driver attitude which recognises the detrimental effect of excessive speed on local communities. The strategy takes account of the effects of speed on the environment, the economy, quality of life, and casualty reduction. Its key objective is to improve community safety by reducing average speeds across the road network through engineering, enforcement and education and publicity.

2.3 Some parish councils have found difficulty in understanding the Speed Management Strategy and particularly that part associated with the setting of speed limits and how the policy is applied in a particular situation.

2.4 To address the concerns outlined in 2.3 above, a Transport and Environment Scrutiny Panel was set up on 3 December 2004 with the following terms of reference:-

- To consider and make recommendations on whether the County Council's speed strategy is of appropriate complexity and worded to enable a lay person

to check its application and the extent to which the strategy takes account of exceptional local circumstances when setting speed limits. This was to be achieved by:-

- Examining the current policy and its application to specific sites where there have been local objections to proposed speed limits,
- Visiting a selection of sites where speed limits have raised concerns, particularly those where requests for lower speed limits have not been supported
- Examining and commenting on alternative policies to setting speed limits such as the approach taken in Oxfordshire (Blanket 30mph limit in all South Oxfordshire villages)
- Taking account of the possible impact of the new government consultation on revisions to the national policy where relevant.

2.5 The Scrutiny Committee's report contains six key recommendations related to speed management.

2.6 The response by the Director of Transport and Environment to this report is attached as Appendix 2.

3. Commentary

3.1 The Scrutiny review brought a refreshing challenge to the work of the department in relation to speed management. The panel members worked constructively with the officers to try and understand the complexities of setting meaningful speed limits and came to understand that simply changing signs to a lower limit achieves very little without supporting engineering measures.

3.2 The feedback from the parish councils to the Speed Management Strategy was encouraging and it was clear that many thought that the County Council was trying to involve the parish councils more effectively and improve communications.

3.3 The recommendation that the County Council should publish, on a regular basis, the complete list of requests for speed reduction measures and show their relative priority is well founded and will help to demonstrate to parish councils where their request stands in relation to other councils.

4. Conclusions and Reason for Recommendations

4.1 The Scrutiny Review of setting local speed limits has brought a welcome challenge to this area of work. The Committee's recommendations are constructive and will undoubtedly assist in the development of an improved and better balanced speed management strategy for the county.

BOB WILKINS
Director of Transport and Environment
13 April 2005
Cabinet: C19 April-Speed Limit Policy report

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Local member: All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Speed Management Strategy; Policy Summary PS4/2; & Circular Roads 1/93.

EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL
CABINET COMMITTEE – POLICY SUMMARY

LOCAL SPEED LIMITS	PS4/2
<p><u>Purpose of Policy</u></p> <p>Definition of procedures within current regulations</p>	
<p><u>Specific Policies</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On trunk roads, speed limits [in common with other orders regulating traffic] are the responsibility of the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions [DETR]. The County Council has no jurisdiction over this class of road. 2. On all other roads, orders are made by the County Council subject to the statutory requirements for the advertisement of the proposals and consideration of any objections. 3. The principal determinant of a proposed speed limit should be the appearance and character of the road as described in Appendix A. <p style="text-align: right;">/ continued overleaf</p>	
<p><u>Supporting Statement</u></p> <p>Adherence to the criteria ensures consistency in the introduction of Local Speed Limits on a Countywide basis. Lower vehicle speeds are conducive to casualty reduction and, from an environmental aspect, produce an improvement for residents.</p>	
<p><u>References – Further Information</u></p> <p>Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 Department of Transport – Circular Roads 4/90 Department of Transport – Circular Roads 1/93 Department of Transport – Circular Roads 3/93 Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) – Circular 5/99 DETR – New Directions in Speed Management – March 2000 DETR – Tomorrow’s Roads – Safer for Everyone – March 2000. H & T Committee – 17 March 1993 Agenda Item 10 H & T Committee – 19 October 1994 Agenda item 18</p>	<p><u>Date of Approval</u></p> <p>17 March 1993 19 October 1994</p>

Specific Policies (continued)

4. Subject to paragraphs 5 and 6 below, wherever requested by a parish council to initiate an Order imposing a 30 mph speed limit on roads [other than trunk roads] through villages, between the village name signs, where :-
- a) the section of road in question is at least partially built up with frontage development extending to at least 50%. (for a 40 mph limit, frontage development should be at least 30%).
 - b) the distance over which the limit is to be applied is at least 600 metres.

5. Speed limits should be set in accordance with the table below :-

Speed limit	average speed	Equivalent 85th % ile speed
	<i>no greater than</i>	
20	21	25
30	32	39
40	41	49
50	51	61
60	61	73

6. Where the average speed is above the figures quoted in paragraph 5 for a particular speed limit being investigated then either :-
- a) where the history of crashes at the site justifies the necessary expenditure, engineering measures should be investigated to reduce speeds to an appropriate level. If this can be achieved an Order for the proposed limit can then be made.
 - b) where engineering measures are not justified by the history of crashes, an Order should be made for a higher limit than that originally proposed, if it is considered that vehicle speeds will reduce as a result to give some benefit to the area.
7. If a system of street lighting with street lights not more than 183 metres (200 yds) apart is installed along a road, then it is automatically restricted to 30 mph unless an order is made to de-restrict it or to impose a different maximum limit.

PROPOSED SPEED LIMIT CRITERIA – ROUTE ASSESSMENT

SPEED LIMIT/ CHARACTER OF ENVIRONMENT	CHARACTER OF ROAD	TRAFFIC COMPOSITION
<u>20 mph Speed Limit</u> (not part of the 1993 criteria, new legislation enacted in 1999)		
Access and local distributor roads. Residential, housing estates, shopping streets or routes near schools may be considered.	Either engineering measures have been undertaken to ensure that the average speed will be below 20 mph or the existing conditions control speed sufficiently.	High proportion of vulnerable road users.
<u>30 mph Speed Limit</u>		
Built up areas. Properties with frontage access, e.g. schools, private and commercial premises, usually exceeding 50% of frontages.	i) Urban streets. ii) Roads through villages and identified rural settlements.	Significant numbers of vulnerable road users.
<u>40 mph Speed Limit</u>		
Built up/partially built up areas. Some properties with frontage access, e.g. schools, private and commercial premises, usually exceeding 30% of frontages. May include undeveloped lengths between 30 and/or 40 limits are too short for a higher limit.	i) Urban distributor roads. ii) Roads through villages and identified rural settlements	A noticeable presence of vulnerable road users.
<u>50 mph Speed Limit</u>		
Limited development and frontage access.	i) Suburban or rural single carriageways. ii) Suburban dual carriageways with frequent junctions, or frontage/development access.	Few vulnerable road users, or segregated crossing facilities, or controlled crossing facilities with appropriate speed management measures.
<u>60 mph Speed Limit</u>		
Limited development and frontage access.	i) Urban distributor roads. ii) Roads through villages and identified rural settlements	Few vulnerable road users, or segregated crossing facilities

Note: Vulnerable road users include pedestrians (particularly children, the elderly and disabled) and cyclists.

ACTION PLAN

	Recommendation	Director's response & action	Timescale
R1	<p>The development criteria for speed limits should be clear and be defined along the lines of "20 property frontages within a 600m length of road" to meet the development criteria for a 30mph limit in a village.</p>	<p>The revised national guidance for setting speed limits is due out in the Summer 2005 and is likely to define the development criteria for a village as being " 20 or more properties which must be clearly visible to a driver and within a minimum length of 600 metres." Once the revised guidance is received, Policy Summary PS4/2 which covers the setting of local speed limits will be amended and referred to the Lead Member for Transport & Environment for approval.</p>	<p>New policy for setting speed limits to be approved within 3 months of receipt of the revised national guidance for setting speed limits.</p>
R2	<p>a) The County Council should continue to cooperate with districts, boroughs and developers in seeking planning contributions towards speed limit measures that arise in relation to new housing.</p> <p>b) The Council should seek to investigate ways to ensure that planning contributions are obtained from small developments that individually may have little impact but potentially have a significant cumulative impact on the road environment leading to a requirement for speed reduction measures.</p>	<p>The County Council in its capacity as Highway Authority has always sought to secure development contributions towards speed reducing features through the planning process. Opportunities to account for the cumulative impacts of small developments has been greatly enhanced by the adoption of Supplementary Planning Guidance on development contributions, which applies a sliding scale of contribution to developments dependent on scale and location. This enables monies to be pooled towards identified speed reduction schemes as appropriate.</p> <p>A full position statement will be agreed and reported to a future meeting of the Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee.</p>	<p>6 months - report back to scrutiny with position statement</p>
R3	<p>Mean speeds should be used by East Sussex in preference to 85th percentile speeds in determining local speed limits.</p>	<p>The Sussex Road Safety Group comprising East and West Sussex County Councils plus Brighton and Hove City Council has agreed that mean or average speeds should be used in the determining of local speed limits. East Sussex County Council's current policy for setting speed limits has been amended to reflect this recommendation.</p>	<p>March 2005</p>
R4	<p>The criteria for introducing vehicle activated signs (VAS) which support compliance with speed limits should be the same as for traffic</p>	<p>The current policy for the installation of Vehicle Activated Signs to support compliance with speed limits is contained within Policy Summary PS4/29. Work is currently in hand to amend the policy so that</p>	<p>As R1</p>

	Recommendation	Director's response & action	Timescale
	calming schemes which take into account a wide range of factors including casualty levels (especially vulnerable road users), traffic volume, traffic flow, pedestrian and cycling activity, schools and development levels.	it reflects more closely the policy covering traffic calming and the updated policy will be reported to the Lead Member at the same time as the revised policy for setting local speed limits.	
R5	<p>a) A guidance document should be produced alongside or within the speed management strategy to detail the costs associated with the various speed-reducing measures compared to the budget available in any one year.</p> <p>b) The complete list of requests for speed reduction measures should be published and regularly updated to show in some detail how the criteria have been applied together with the resulting priority order.</p>	<p>Work is currently in hand to update the Speed Management Strategy so that it includes a section outlining the budget costs for a whole raft of speed-reducing measures. This will be reviewed annually and the total budget for traffic calming in that year will be provided.</p> <p>All requests for traffic calming and Vehicle Activated Signs will be assessed and published on the East Sussex County Council web site. The site will be updated annually and will give details of how the criteria has been applied and the current priority for each request.</p>	<p>October 2005</p> <p>March 2006</p>
R6	<p>a) Parish representatives experiencing significant delays in implementation of approved speed reducing schemes should be advised to contact the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment to discuss the issues further.</p> <p>b) The Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment is requested to monitor future delays in implementation in speed reduction schemes and to take appropriate action after consulting local representatives.</p>	<p>The implementation of speed reducing measures will be agreed with the parish council in advance.</p> <p>The programme of approved schemes will be regularly monitored and any works experiencing delays in excess of 3 months will be reported to the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment.</p>	<p>Immediate and on-going</p>